Introduction

Reading and Experiencing the Past

Debates within the philosophy of history—as well as within history and literary studies—have long been stuck on the question of whether or not history can tell the truth about past worlds. Literature, when it has entered these debates, has generally been taken to offer an answer in the negative: if history is or is like fiction, it cannot also be truth. In this book I argue that it has been a mistake to view a relation of literature to history as necessarily an invitation to skepticism. Many eighteenth-century writers are confident that the case is just the opposite: literature is a means of thinking about the reality that we all attach to the past. Such a claim—part of British literary history since its inception—is visible still in the work of current writers such as Stephen Greenblatt, David Carr, and F. R. Ankersmit, who in very different terms argue that we must pay attention not just to what history means but to how we experience it. The eighteenth-century context allows us to understand more fully the stakes of current discussions, revealing a history of phenomena such as Greenblatt's well-known "desire to speak with the dead."[1] I do not suggest that we make of Greenblatt's supernatural claim a philosophy of history. But eighteenth-century representations of literature and history do encourage us to ask how literature allows us access to the past; indeed they demand that we move beyond the terrors of skepticism and toward an understanding of history as an aspect of experience.

At the center of *Literary Historicity* is the claim that the historical novel began before the nineteenth century and Sir Walter Scott and that it began with less certain ideas of the past than those in Scott's texts. When the past appears in eighteenth-century novels, it can seem like an afterthought or even like a mistake: historical events are often out of sync with the present of the novel or pointedly removed from the

minds of characters. This is not, however, simply an awkward early phase of the historical novel genre. It is, rather, the result of authors considering the place of the past in their modern world and grappling with the idea of historical consciousness. If the novel is the genre of modernity—and many in eighteenth-century Britain thought that it was—my study shows a wide range of authors thinking critically about that modernity: about the possibility that it might not include an easy means of understanding its own relation to the past, and about the problems of historical consciousness more generally. These authors investigate to whom such consciousness is available, and under what conditions it is possible. The Enlightenment of *Literary Historicity*, then, is one that, far from subscribing to some unqualified notion of history as "progress," asks insistently about how the past bears on the present and about what qualifies people to be modern, historical subjects.

Although some of the important discussions in this book focus on fiction, I more broadly consider the relation between the novel's engagement with history and examinations of the relation between literature and history that take place elsewhere: in essays, philosophical treatises, literary criticism, and history writing. Here at the outset I want to clarify my use of "literature" and "literary" in defining my objects of study in a wide variety of genres: from Samuel Johnson's Preface to *A Dictionary of the English Language* and biographies, to Henry Fielding's fiction, to Edward Gibbon's narrative history. It is now widely acknowledged that the term "literature" did not come to possess its current meaning of creative writing until the late eighteenth century, probably near the end of the span of this book, and that during earlier decades it carried a much different sense: initially denoting "knowledge of letters" or scholarly activity, then referring to the textual productions of such learning in books.[2] In a manner appropriate to the historical meaning of the term, the texts in this study include genres that we would now associate with literature's fictionality (poetry and the novel) as well as those we might not (encyclopedia, biography, history). Since for most of the eighteenth century history and fiction are not separated by the great generic divide of our contemporary moment, we see authors making sense of the kinds of texts they are writing—and the purchase those texts have on representing the past—before fact and fiction necessarily constitute the most important division between them. It is striking, for instance, that nearly every writer in this study compares her or his work to poetry, no matter whether it is an encyclopedia, a work of prose

fiction, or a narrative history. It is even more striking that such comparisons are frequently not about marking a text's fictionality but instead about its organizational principles—looking back, that is, to Aristotle's discussion of poetry's universality in the *Poetics*. I will have more to say on this last issue in my discussion of literary form later in this introduction. For now, I want to make plain that "literary historicity" does not point simply to the fictionality of our representations or understanding of past worlds; rather, I more broadly consider how authors declare the historicity, or historical quality, of written texts by reflecting on their functions as historical objects and as representations of the past. In this way eighteenth-century discussions—though cast in different terms—may sometimes intersect with our current attempts to see beyond genre and to find other connections between "species" (to use an eighteenth-century term) of writing.[3]

Reading and Writing History in the Present

Eighteenth-century Britain is not usually understood to possess an important formal philosophy of history; indeed, the period often is cast as the age of writing, rather than of thinking about, history. After decades of complaints about the absence of serious history writing, the midcentury masterpieces of David Hume and Edward Gibbon raised Britain to the stature of France and Italy, as a country that could write about the past—and importantly its own past—on the classical model of Livy, Thucydides, or Tacitus.[4] But this model of great prose history, far from leading to new theories of the relation between present and past, might even be seen to work against such thinking. As Laird Okie, writing on histories of England in the eighteenth century, puts it rather bluntly: "The detailed narrative form of historical composition inhibited the development or elaboration of a distinct philosophy of history."[5]

In what follows, I suggest that Okie, as well as other critics who have written on narrative history with this assumption, have been looking for a philosophy of history in the wrong place. I argue that eighteenth-century British thinking about the nature of historical knowledge can be seen most strikingly in prefaces, novels, and literary criticism, rather than in formal philosophical or historical discourse. There is good reason for this: the writers I consider here frequently generate their ideas about history by positioning themselves against the prevailing philo-

sophical discourse of the day—empiricism—or (even if narrating themselves) against the continuity of narrative history. Thus the writers who lay out terms for the relation between history and experience are not in the main the century's most famous historians. Lord Bolingbroke, Samuel Johnson, Henry Fielding, Charlotte Lennox, Horace Walpole, Laurence Sterne, and William Warburton wrote about the past but in a variety of genres. The middle decades of the century that are the focus of this book, roughly 1735–76, are the years of some of the most provocative new history writing in Britain and France, writing which evidenced a new interest in the relation between history and society. Although writers such as Lennox and Walpole do not contribute to this new historiography by writing, strictly speaking, within it, they address some of the philosophical issues that are at the very foundation of its composition.

From the late seventeenth century onward, drastic social and political changes within Britain began to reshape historiography generally, turning it toward what Mark Salber Phillips has described using the eighteenth-century phrase "manners and customs."[6] There is no single historical event that defines the new social focus of historiography, but as the eighteenth century wore on, Britain's still relatively new commercial society put pressure on older models of history writing, particularly on the narrative history that focused on the political actions of great men. In his study of historiography, Phillips observes that by the mid-eighteenth century there was especially intense pressure for writers to confront the "inadequacy of the inherited instruments of historical writing" in the face of social change massive enough to demand a new history that "took society, not politics, as its definition."[7] Hugh Blair, assessing the situation in 1785, describes "a more particular attention than was formerly given to laws, customs, commerce, religion, literature, and every other thing that tends to show the spirit and genius of nations."[8] This impulse toward "manners" and "customs" as subject matter was felt within and beyond Britain; in intellectual-historical terms it is usually thought to begin with Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois* (1748) and to be followed significantly by Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751) and *Essai sur les moeurs* (1753–54); in the Scottish Enlightenment it was the dominant mode in the work of Adam Ferguson, John Millar, and Robert Henry. Such a shift toward manners is a matter of content that frequently makes itself felt, too, on the level of the history's structure, as a problem for narrative: Voltaire's *Louis XIV* is famously split

down the middle with accounts of military history and social history that are not explicitly connected; Henry attempts to structure his history of Britain with seven simultaneous narratives, only one of which includes politics; Hume includes manners in appendixes to the *History of England*, keeping them well away from the main political narrative. This interest in manners was certainly not unique to narrative histories of this kind; antiquarian histories and literary histories took the same modern focus.[9] The first literary histories—in the main heavily influenced by earlier antiquarian writings—make their appearance during these same decades of midcentury. Robert Lowth's *De sacra poesi hebraeorum* (1753; English translation 1787), Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* (1754), Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope* (1756), Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), and Robert Wood's *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1769), to name only a prominent few, were all published within twenty years' time. The first volume of Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry*, often considered the first literary history in a more modern sense, appeared in 1774. Literary histories, as well as the antiquarian writings they often recall, necessarily describe the past in ways that move beyond traditional narrative history. In so doing, I argue, they are often explicit about problems of historical continuity—indeed, of the availability of the past at all—that narrative history was unlikely to raise.[10]

Over the course of this book I argue that we should include a wide variety of texts within the philosophy of history, but I want to begin by looking at the work that continues to be labeled the most important philosophical text on history in Britain in the period: Lord Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (written 1735–38; published 1752). It is widely agreed that the philosophy of history in the eighteenth-century context is not a new intellectual innovation but the end of a long reign of the classical idea of exemplar history. Reinhart Koselleck observes that *historia magistra vitae*, history understood as "the great teacher of life," "lasted almost unbroken into the eighteenth century."[11] George H. Nadel, working with the same assumption, argues that in the British context the primary theorization of history before the nineteenth century is specifically to be found in manuals on exemplar history, which advocated the imitation of the actions of great men in history for the current, reading man's political life.[12] The writers of manuals on exemplar history based their observations on Roman sources, which in the classical world had stressed a focus on example and practical

history against Greek philosophy's focus on precepts. By the early eighteenth century, there was a large canon of exemplar histories, written in England and on the Continent, all of which were insistently derivative of their classical sources. The most significant English Renaissance example of this sort of text is Degory Wheare's *The Method and Order of Reading both Civil and Ecclesiastical Histories* (first Latin edition, 1623), of which I will have more to say in the second chapter;[13] and the most famous case of the genre in the eighteenth century is Bolingbroke's *Letters*. Bolingbroke's text is thoroughly within the tradition of the *ars historica*, often quoting from Roman historians like Polybius, Cicero, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, all of whom focused on history as the examples of great men. The latter's famous phrase "history is philosophy teaching by examples" is quoted by Bolingbroke and is to some extent the *Letters'* guiding principle.[14] Bolingbroke's contemporary, Peter Whalley, articulates exemplar history's universalist assumption in his history-writing guide of 1746: "Now human Nature hath, in all Ages and Nations, a great Conformity to itself; and by a Knowledge of the Tempers of Men, and their present Circumstances, we may be able to give a Guess what their Conduct will be, and what will be the Event, by an Observation of the like Cases, in former Times."[15]

Although Bolingbroke follows this classical agenda, his work is more complicated in its aims. As Isaac Kramnick points out, alongside a very pronounced model of exemplar history is an entirely different model of historiography; he argues that Bolingbroke's "most original contribution" to the philosophy of history is his "conviction that economic change was the primal historical force."[16] In the *Letters*, Kramnick argues, Bolingbroke saw past his personal hatred for Sir Robert Walpole and was able to assert that "[t]he alleged sorry state of England under Walpole in the 1730s is not a result of a wicked prime minister's evil passions, nor is it due to some general decline among the English. Its origin was structurally determined and material."[17] Unfortunately, however, Bolingbroke was not permanently committed to this "more modern tendency," this explication of "economic determinism," and as Kramnick explains it, ultimately falls back on his old humanist models.[18]

It is interesting that in the *Letters* Bolingbroke not only presents these two different, conflicting models of historiography; he also periodizes his own understanding of economic causation. As the letters progress, Bolingbroke considers explicitly what the economic environment of the 1730s requires of the historian; in this vein he presents two examples,

"one past, the other actually present" (*L*, 187). Here is the first, "past" example:

> When the revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight happened, few men then alive, I suppose, went farther in their search after the causes of it, than the extravagant attempt of king James against the religion and liberty of his people. . . . King James's mal-administration rendered a revolution necessary and practicable; but his mal-administration, as well as all his preceding conduct, was caused by his bigot attachment to popery, and to the principles of arbitrary government, from which no warning could divert him. His bigot attachment to these was caused by the exile of the royal family; this exile was caused by the usurpation of Cromwell: and Cromwell's usurpation was the effect of a former rebellion, begun not without reason on account of liberty, but without any valid pretence on account of religion. During this exile, our princes caught the taint of popery and foreign politics. We made them unfit to govern us, and after that were forced to recall them that they might rescue us out of anarchy. (*L*, 187)

This explanation of historical cause looks behind James's Catholicism to Cromwell, pointing out that even Cromwell is the "effect of a former rebellion." On one level, this is simply a defense of the Stuart kings, holding the English people responsible for the popery that was James's downfall. But compare this account of causation to Bolingbroke's description of what has "succeeded the revolution," namely the "new constitution of the revenue" (*L*, 187):

> Few people, I say, foresaw how the creation of funds, and the multiplication of taxes, would increase yearly the power of the crown, and bring our liberties, by a natural and necessary progression, into more real, though less apparent danger, than they were in before the revolution. . . . No, they saw the measures, they took singly, and unrelatively, or relatively alone to some immediate object. The notion of attaching men to the new government, by tempting them to embark their fortunes on the same bottom, was a reason of state to some: the notion of creating a new, that is, a moneyed interest, in opposition to the landed interest or as a balance to it, and of acquiring a superior influence in the city of London at least by the establishment of great corporations, was a reason of party to others: and I make no doubt that the opportunity of amassing immense estates by the management of funds, by trafficking in paper, and by all the arts of jobbing, was a reason of private interest to those who supported and improved this scheme of iniquity, if not to those who devised it. (*L*, 187–88)

Predictably, Bolingbroke offers here a critique of this awful Whig "new government." But along the way he also reveals that he finds himself in an age that newly configures how men act in relation to government. In

the first example, the revealed causal chain is almost overdetermined: James's bad government "was caused by" popery, which "was caused by" his exile, which "was caused by" Cromwell, who "was the effect of" the Scottish rebellion. But there can be no such chain in the second example, which explains the situation after 1688, when men "saw the measures they took singly, and unrelatively, or relatively alone to some immediate object." The awkwardness of Bolingbroke's "singly, and unrelatively, or relatively alone," reveals that contemporary history does not resemble a chain of events, traceable as a string of intentional acts on the part of society or the politicians themselves, but rather exists as a network of causes ("a reason of state to some," "a reason of party to others," "private interest" to the remainder) that conspires to produce the "new constitution of the revenue." Bolingbroke offers these two examples of English history casually, as though they just happen to come from before and after 1688, but what they emphasize is a clear shift in kinds of causation: a transformation from a chain of events to a field of independent yet interrelated causes.

Bolingbroke is best known for his party politics, including the ideological history he disseminated in the *Craftsman* (1726–35) by adopting the formerly Whig theory of the Ancient Constitution and giving it new life as an anti-Walpole Tory principle.[19] In seventeenth-century debates, the theory of the Ancient Constitution involved an interpretation of the Revolution of 1688 as a return to and demonstration of the fundamental liberties established in the balanced constitution of the Anglo-Saxon Witenagemot (which according to some had reached its perfect form in Henry I's twelfth-century assembly of barons and knights). Opponents—most prominently Robert Brady—argued that there had never been this kind of continuity, that William I had really conquered England, and any later granting of subjects' rights was merely an act of grace. In the *Craftsman* articles, Bolingbroke uses the idea of ancient liberty to argue that England should be protected against authoritarian kings and their favorites. Thus in arguing for the Ancient Constitution, Bolingbroke puts in play an old idea of continuity but reverses its political affiliation, arguing that continuity now is being violated by the style of Whig governance embodied by Walpole.

In the *Letters*, however, Bolingbroke reveals an idea of historical continuity that goes beyond that which can be picked up and asserted for obvious political gain. Here Bolingbroke is fascinated by the apparent inevitability of discontinuity when one looks at the past. He explains

that "however closely affairs are linked together in the progression of governments, and how much soever events that follow are dependent on those that precede, the whole connection diminishes to sight as the chain lengthens; till at last it seems to be broken, and the links that are continued from that point bear no proportion nor any similitude to the former" (*L*, 238). Bolingbroke's description suggests that the chain that "seems to be broken" has instead shifted to a different kind of link. This division should be respected, he argues, because it is grounded on a fundamental transformation: "New interests beget new maxims of government, and new methods of conduct. These, in their turns, beget new manners, new habits, new customs" (*L*, 239). Indeed, "[t]he longer this new constitution of affairs continues," Bolingbroke says, "the more will this difference increase" (*L*, 239). What emerges here is the definition of "an epocha or an era, a point of time at which you stop, or from which you reckon forward" (*L*, 239). These periods of time, then, follow the form of Bolingbroke's examples of causation: they are necessarily linked chronologically but not (at least apparently) causally, since the "analogy" that connects them will "soon become an object of mere curiosity, not of profitable inquiry" (*L*, 239).

Bolingbroke despises the new economic order, but he also sees it with the eyes of a historiographer. He registers, that is, what both Kramnick and Phillips take to be the most important dramatic shift in history writing over the eighteenth century: the turn toward social history, of which economic history is one branch. In the world Bolingbroke shares with the young politician Henry Hyde, the direct addressee of the *Letters*, old history writing simply will not do. New history must reflect new "manners" and new "customs."[20] In the examples of Voltaire and Henry, classical narrative models burst at the seams in attempts to accommodate a much more expansive conception of what "history" is.[21] But Bolingbroke's text is important because it reminds us that such a modernization of history writing is not strictly concerned with the very real problem that the terms of modern society do not fit into the narrative of the actions of great men. Rather Bolingbroke foregrounds what is at stake in turning toward social history: a change in the relation between history and experience. For in Bolingbroke's account alongside the case of the historical exemplar stands a model of history that removes individual action as the force of historical change and that thus makes the experience of history something hard to imagine as a guide or simply as experience to add to one's own store. What modernity

requires is not only a new model of causation but also new ideas about the relation of reader and writer to the text of history.

In the next section of the introduction I examine in greater detail the philosophical underpinnings of the relation between experience and historical representation. For the moment, I want to focus on Bolingbroke's particular terms for historical experience, terms that are both autobiographical and philosophical, when in writing the *Letters* he confronts directly the conventional relation between the experience of the history writer and the text of history. Bolingbroke wrote the *Letters* roughly two decades after his most famous action on the European political stage, his negotiation of the Treaty of Utrecht in April 1713. After the treaty was signed, the sudden end of the Tory government under Anne and the arrival of George I forced Bolingbroke's exile in France, where he stayed for the next ten years. He returned to England in 1725 and took the most powerful political avenue open to him vis-à-vis the Whig government, in the journalism of the *Craftsman*. He wrote the *Letters* during his second exile in France ten years later (1735–38). In this trajectory of action to exile as writerly retirement, Bolingbroke follows a classical model for the historian, that of Thucydides, who wrote his *History of the Peloponnesian War* after being banished due to a failed naval campaign, a model that had been imitated most importantly in the recent past by Lord Clarendon, who wrote his history of the English Civil War in exile in France.[22] Clarendon is no incidental predecessor of Bolingbroke, for he was the writer of the best recent English history and the great-grandfather of the man, Henry Hyde, to whom Bolingbroke's letters are addressed. Furthermore, Bolingbroke combines his account of a radical division between his own time and Clarendon's with an apparent declaration of continuity, himself borrowing from the same tradition of statesman-historian and telling Hyde of his role as "an honor to his country, and a public blessing": "such I trust, your lordship will be in this century, as your great-grandfather was in the last" (*L*, 179).

Despite this insistence, however, it is clear from the very genre of Bolingbroke's text that this direct transfer of experience, past to present, might not be possible in any simple form. For although Bolingbroke's exile looks almost identical to Clarendon's, it ultimately produces a text in the tradition of the *ars historica* rather than one in the tradition of Thucydidean narrative history. The Bolingbroke of the *Letters* takes as his main project not the telling of events he witnessed but the instruction on how history should be read. It is still noble, of course, to write an *ars historica*. But in relation to Clarendon's example, how to study

and use history is also apparently a topic of necessity, for a changing notion of experience and its relation to historical change requires reexamination of the assumptions that govern history writing.

Bolingbroke's letters emphasize that the turn toward social history in the mid-eighteenth century not only redefines what will count as history but must reconfigure the way in which that history will be understood.[23] The writing of a history like Clarendon's assumes easy relations between acting, writing, and reading history—a kind of experiential continuum connecting all three. When Bolingbroke conceives of history as split between the exemplar and the economic, he emphasizes the breakdown of this conception of the past's relation to the present. In so doing he offers a local instance of a much greater trend within eighteenth-century Britain to divorce the narrative of history from the writer's historical actions. It isn't just that there are no more Clarendons; historical change is being experienced in such a way as to make a Clarendon figure—the statesman-historian—look irrelevant. As Devoney Looser points out, this has some positive consequences: it is precisely the move away from history as the actions of great men that opens up a gap between history making and history writing, and so opens up the possibility of women writing about a history in which they could not participate.[24] The severing of this link between lived experience and the history written and read in books also opens profound philosophical questions about how historical experience now should be understood. Whose experience can count as "historical"? How is one qualified to be a historical subject? These are problems for women—as I explore directly in my chapter on Charlotte Lennox—and for men as well. The question that emerges in Bolingbroke about personal experience and the past runs deep: how is experience of the everyday present world related to experience of the past? This question is not answered in the conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment, which equate the history of the species with the history of the individual.[25] Nor is it answered exclusively, as many historians have assumed, by making history and personal experience the same thing, turning history toward the memoir or biography, or toward the novel's first-person narratives—though of course this is one possible answer and indeed a widespread one.[26] The writers I consider here offer a much different set of responses to what becomes of the experience of history after the continuity connecting past to present begins to vanish and exemplar history along with it. Rather than view history as individual experience, they often understand the former to call the latter into question. In other words,

they turn "history" back on "experience." They call for a new definition of "experience" that is relevant for the past, and they investigate the effects of their definitions on ideas of subjectivity.

In their interrogations of "experience" and "history," the writers I examine here frequently verge on—or even articulate—questions we now associate with the philosophy of history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Eighteenth-century writers may at times seem close to Hans-Georg Gadamer's historicization of the historical subject in *Truth and Method*; or to Joan Wallach Scott's critique of the essentialism of "experience" as a historiographical term; or to F. R. Ankersmit's attempt to bring back historical experience in terms of the "historical sublime."[27] Although these connections are important for understanding the history of current debates and positions, they do not suggest a prescient set of writers, but an earlier world in which the central terms that came to dominate historical subjectivity in later centuries had not yet solidified. Not only are "literature" and "history" concepts in the making during the Enlightenment; so too is "experience." Although it is a central—indeed, foundational—philosophical term of the day, "experience" had no consistent definition even within British empiricism. Thus, in the following chapters I show writers engaging with the implications of Bacon's "experience," Locke's "experience," and Hume's "experience"—each of which has its own set of requirements for historical subjectivity.

When I use the term "historical experience" in this study, then, it does not shroud a reference to the idea of historical experience or reality in the work of any particular philosopher; nor does "historical experience" here mean only one thing.[28] Rather, my object of study is the relation of "history" to "experience" in eighteenth-century writing: how the two terms reinforce each other or call each other into question in definitions that work through and often beyond the strict confines of eighteenth-century philosophy.

Experience, Representation, and Historical Consciousness

Immediately before he presents the influential term "formal realism" to describe the perceptual habits of the eighteenth-century novel, Ian Watt specifies the boundaries of his discussion of realism. He says that he will not discuss the work of "the scholastic Realists of the Middle Ages,"

but instead "[m]odern realism," which "begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses."[29] This is the "characteristic kind of correspondence between life and literature" that emerges in Watt's "novel," beginning with and extending beyond the writings of Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson. This realism is, Watt makes clear from the outset, philosophically based but somewhat approximate in its philosophical concerns, and he thus leaves aside the "distinctive tenets of realist epistemology," focusing instead on its "general temper."[30] Without contesting Watt's larger, influential claim that many novels borrow a focus on the individual's perceptions from philosophy, I would like to suggest that, beyond this, novels and other contemporary texts are frequently concerned with the particulars of philosophical debates over realism. Indeed I will contend that a reworking of the idea of representation is part and parcel of the early novel's attempt to specify the bounds of individual experience, specifically the relation of individual experience to an experience of history in its separation from the everyday present world. In this, early novelists offer an especially visible and consistent set of terms for a widespread contemporary concern with the role of texts in knowing the past; related questions about history occupy writers like Johnson and Gibbon, who though not writing novels make claims about historical personhood by unpacking the most basic assumptions of empiricism: the connections between the individual, experience, and consciousness.

In Watt's famous account of the novel's realism, John Locke's foundation of individual identity in consciousness rather than in body or soul is reflected in the novel's presentation of individual experience as the primary means of constructing temporality: the novel's histories are for the most part not histories of nations or epochs but those of individual persons like Pamela Andrews or Tom Jones.[31] In the clearest cases, like those of Robinson Crusoe, Pamela and Clarissa, the novel's focus on individual character seems to be in step with Locke's presentation of his own "true *History of the first beginnings of Humane Knowledge*; whence the Mind has its first Objects, and by what steps it makes its Progress to the laying in, and storing up those *Ideas*, out of which is to be framed all the Knowledge it is capable of."[32] And indeed Locke's idea of consciousness does suggest that history and memory might be synonymous. Take his account of identity as not residing in the "Soul":

> But though the same immaterial Substance, or Soul does not alone, where-ever it be, and in whatsoever State, make the same Man; yet 'tis plain consciousness, as far as ever it can be extended, should it be to Ages past,

> unites Existences, and Actions, very remote in time, into the same Person, as well as it does the Existence and Actions of the immediately preceding moment: So that whatever has the consciousness of present and past Actions, is the same Person to whom they both belong.[33]

Locke's point here is that consciousness "unites Existences," both present and past, into the "same Person." But in order to insist that consciousness has its own extension, distinct from that of body, Locke posits from the outset a past beyond the individual's life span, imagining that the individual's past could be "Ages past." Thus, Locke continues, "Had I the same consciousness, that I saw the Ark and *Noah's* Flood, as that I saw an overflowing of the *Thames* last Winter, or as that I write now, I could no more doubt that I, that write this now, that saw the *Thames* overflow'd last Winter, and that view'd the Flood at the general Deluge, was the same *self*."[34] Of course Locke's point is not that any of us actually lived through Noah's flood, but that if I had "consciousness" of it, it would be as much a part of my "self" as the flood I saw yesterday. At this point Locke's thought experiment is concerned with consciousness and not really with "Ages past," except insofar as that past is able to demonstrate that "self" is not bounded by an individual body's life span but by our awareness of our own experiences of the world.

But if Locke is not so much invested in the *Essay* in actually having experience "remote in time" as part of one's consciousness, it is easy to see how his account might serve as a kind of starting point for writers interested in historical knowledge. For what, after all, is history if not an attempt to establish a relation—perhaps even a relation of consciousness—to events or experiences beyond our own individual lives? Indeed, Locke's hypothetical account of having seen the ark sounds very much like Hume's description of what reading history can do for individual experience.[35] Hume's central claim about reading history, in his essay on the topic, is that it can allow us to experience things beyond our own physical existences. As Hume puts it in "Of the Study of History" (1741), "if we consider the shortness of human life, and our limited knowledge, even of what passes in our own time, we must be sensible that we should be for ever children in understanding, were it not for this invention, which extends our experience to all past ages, and to the most distant nations; making them contribute as much to our improvement in wisdom, as if they had actually lain under our observation." The "invention" to which Hume refers is history, and his

claim is that we experience it as though firsthand. He continues: "A man acquainted with history may, in some respect, be said to have lived from the beginning of the world, and to have been making continual additions to his stock of knowledge in every century."[36]

In Hume's essay, he refers to "that experience which is acquired by history," thus suggesting that history is just a subset of experience.[37] More needs to be said, however, about the particular means by which Hume allows an individual to "extend" experience in this way. In a larger argument concerned with reading fictional texts, rather than pointedly historiographical ones, Catherine Gallagher makes a strong case for considering how Hume—in his definition of "sympathy"—might help us to understand how eighteenth-century novelists considered their work to have purchase on readers' lives.[38] In *A Treatise of Human Nature* Hume describes the intersubjective relation he calls "sympathy" as involving "an evident conversion of an idea into an impression."[39] Hume's "sympathy," while it seems to be about knowing another mind is, as many commentators have pointed out, only ever about knowing the self. What is remarkable about Hume's account is the very direct means with which the self borrows others' feelings, by a kind of reversal of the process of representation. Whereas Hume relates elsewhere in the *Treatise* that "ideas" are "copies" of "impressions," what happens in the process of sympathy is that an impression first follows its usual course, and the feeling of another is converted into an idea of one's own; but this in turn is converted into an impression: "When any affection is infus'd by sympathy, it is at first known only by its effects, and by those external signs in the countenance and conversation, which convey an idea of it. This idea is presently converted into an impression, and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity, as to become the very passion itself, and produce an equal emotion, as any original affection."[40] Through the process of sympathy, I experience the feeling that began as another's. As Hume insists, the idea I have of that feeling is then so forceful "as to become the very passion itself."

Gallagher argues that eighteenth-century readers and authors may have understood something like Hume's process to allow the reader a means of accessing the novel by allowing her to adopt as her own the thoughts and feelings of another, fictional person. What makes sympathy and reading go so well together in Hume's terms is that both make good use of what is really a problem of telling the difference between a representation and its original: experience can go from being someone

else's to being yours precisely because representations are not stuck with a secondary status. This ambiguous relation between copy and original is pervasive in Hume's writing: it is a problem of all ideas. As Catherine Kemp points out in her discussion of "idea" in the *Treatise*, the relation between "impression" and "idea" is always fluid in its account of which term is representative of the other. As she puts it, "[w]hat is unusual . . . about representation in the *Treatise* is that the sense in which one is a representative of another is *entirely reciprocal*: there is not any strong sense to the distinction between represented and representative *per se*, because the only priority which would ordinarily appertain to the represented is for Hume solely temporal and causal, in Hume's sense of that term." As Kemp explains, when Hume says that in general ideas are copies of impressions, he means only that impressions come first; thus, it is most accurate to say about the relation that "these 'perceptions' are 'exact representations' of *each other*."[41] Sympathy is a particular intersubjective version of this, but for Hume all experience is representational in this way.

Given their shared interest in Locke, it should not be surprising to find Bolingbroke writing of an experience of history in terms that resemble Hume's psychological ones. Bolingbroke claims that in reading history, "[w]e are cast back, as it were, into former ages: we live with the men who lived before us, and we inhabit countries that we never saw. Place is enlarged, and time prolonged" (*L*, 186). What is usually referred to as "historical transport" is consistent with Bolingbroke's idea of how examples work on the mind. Although his idea of the historical exemplar as the way to make "use" of history in the world is utterly conventional, he does exhibit a greater interest than do his classical and Renaissance sources in how exactly examples in books make their way to the political stage in what we might call the psychology of example.[42] Bolingbroke begins by offering an account of the power of examples we store in memory: "[T]he force of examples is not confined to those alone, that pass immediately under our sight: the examples, that memory suggests, have the same effect in their degree, and a habit of recalling them will soon produce the habit of imitating them" (*L*, 178). Further expanding the time frame, Bolingbroke goes on to insist that examples easily persist in the world after the exemplar's death; learning from example therefore does not involve "living under the same roof with Epicurus" or seeing Socrates in person.[43] It is only a small additional step, then, to argue that examples can be preserved outside the mind as well as within

it and that visual representations are especially good at doing this: "But your lordship knows that the citizens of Rome placed the images of their ancestors in the vestibules of their houses; so that, whenever they went in or out, these venerable bustoes met their eyes, and recalled the glorious actions of the dead, to fire the living, to excite them to imitate and even to emulate their great forefathers" (*L*, 179). Bacon and Locke already had paved the way for thinking about the mind as a room, a storehouse; Bolingbroke is more interested in how such storage might be enabled by representation—a statue, or perhaps a book.

Bolingbroke's consideration of examples as particularly good at making mental impressions leads him down a path that ends in something akin to the Humean ambiguity about the differences between impressions and ideas. Bolingbroke has already asserted that "[t]he school of example, my lord, is the world: and the masters of this school are history and experience" (*L*, 179). And he goes on to attempt to sort out the difference between these two masters, showing how one is dependent on the other. Thus he stresses against Cicero's account of Lucullus that "the study of history, without experience, is insufficient" (*L*, 179): "[T]he truth is that Lucullus was made a great captain by theory, or the study of history, alone, no more than Ferdinand of Spain and Alphonsus of Naples were cured of desperate distempers by reading Livy and Quintus Curtius" (*L*, 181). History, as Bolingbroke sees it, is preparative, not sufficient in itself, but it is crucial in readying a young man for the world, for "experience cannot begin to teach them [our parts] till we are actually on the stage" (*L*, 182).

At the same time, however, Bolingbroke's discussion makes clear that while it is possible to say that history is insufficient and that it should not substitute for real-world experience, history is not therefore actually different in kind from that experience. For "impressions" are made by books as well as by men, since impressions are made first and foremost by examples:

> In fine, to converse with historians is to keep good company: many of them were excellent men, and those who were not such, have taken care, however, to appear such in their writings. It must be, therefore, of great use to prepare ourselves by this conversation for that of the world; and to receive our first impressions, and to acquire our first habits, in a scene where images of virtue and vice are continually represented to us in the colors that belong properly to them, before we enter on another scene, where virtue and vice are too often confounded and what belongs to one is ascribed to the other. (*L*, 183)