

B C D E F G H I J K L

The Epistolary Novel

Representations of Consciousness

Joe Bray

Routledge Studies in Eighteenth Century Literature

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1 Introduction

Consciousness, the novel and the letter

This book attends to a type of novel whose stylistic influence has been neglected. Though it is indisputable that many early novels were in letters,¹ the epistolary novel has too often been treated as an isolated, digressive episode in the history of the novel as a whole, limited to the 120 years from Roger L'Estrange's first translation of *Les Lettres portugaises*² in 1678 to Jane Austen's decision in late 1797 or early 1798 to transform the probably epistolary 'Elinor and Marianne' into the third-person narrative of *Sense and Sensibility*.³ It is often seen as an exclusively late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century phenomenon; an early, experimental form which faded away once the third-person novel began to realise its potential in the hands of novelists such as Austen and George Eliot. English Showalter's view is typical: 'the epistolary novel, despite the prestige of Richardson and Rousseau, was obviously a technical dead end' (1972: 121).

One reason for this assessment may be the epistolary novel's perceived inferiority in a key area of the novel's responsibilities: the representation of consciousness. From its beginnings, the novel has been associated with some kind of an attempt to render individual psychology, to delve into the minds of its characters. The epistolary novel is often thought to present a relatively unsophisticated and transparent version of subjectivity, as its letter-writers apparently jot down whatever is passing through their heads at the moment of writing. 'Certainly the reader was meant to believe', Ruth Perry asserts, 'that the characters in such epistolary fictions were transcribing uncensored streams of consciousness. Thoughts are seemingly written down as they come, without any effort to control their logic or structure. Characters talk to themselves, reflect, think out loud – on paper' (1980: 128). Such uncensored transcribing would seem to preclude the subtle exploration of consciousness which is seen as the hallmark of the novel at its peak. The epistolary novel is rarely assigned a prominent role in the history of how the novel developed ways of representing consciousness. Though she admits that 'the rise of the consciousness novel would be

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unthinkable without *Clarissa*' (1996b: 171), Monika Fludernik allots the epistolary novel only a parenthetical place in her account of this rise:

there is an increased interest in consciousness, usually third-person consciousness, on the part of writers, resulting in an extended portrayal of the mind: early examples are Aphra Behn, Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Jane Austen, and – for the first person – Charles Brockden Brown and William Godwin. (Epistolary narrative participates in this emphasis on consciousness.)

(1996b: 48)

This study seeks to show that the epistolary novel is more than an incidental participant in this 'increased interest in consciousness'. Instead it regards this type as fundamental to the novel's development of increasingly sophisticated ways of representing individual psychology. Thoughts and feelings are not as unmediated and transparent in the fictional letter as has often been supposed. Rather, epistolary novelists such as Richardson explore with great subtlety complex tensions within the divided minds of their characters. As a result, the way the epistolary novel represents consciousness has significant consequences for the history of third-person narrative, beyond the date of its apparent demise. Linda S. Kauffman (1986, 1992) has shown that the 'epistolary mode' flourished in the nineteenth century and is also prevalent in recent fiction.⁴ This book takes her claims further by arguing that the style of the novel-in-letters had a penetrating influence on the way the nineteenth- and twentieth-century novel represents consciousness, thus establishing the epistolary novel as more than a digressive episode in English literary history. In Mikhail M. Bakhtin's words, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century epistolary novel 'has great stylistic significance for the subsequent history of the novel' (1981: 396).⁵

This book's focus on narrative style sets it apart from most book-length treatments of the epistolary novel. The earliest of these survey the genre and give brief accounts of the key works. Godfrey Singer, for example, aims 'to present as complete a survey as possible' of 'the novel cast in letter form' (1963: vii), and proceeds to trace 'a history of the epistolary impulse' 'in more or less chronological fashion' (215). He begins with Cicero's letters to Atticus and ends with A.P. Herbert's *Topsy* (1931), 'the rather diffuse trials and tribulations of a very modern girl' (180). Robert Adams Day covers a much narrower period, from the Restoration to the publication of *Pamela*, yet again is concerned primarily with surveying the work of early epistolary novelists, or, in his words, 'afford[ing] information on how much they had

accomplished before Richardson's time' in order to 'place him in proper historical perspective' (1966: 9).

More recent studies of the epistolary novel have tended to divide into two camps. On the one hand are those primarily concerned with its formal properties. According to Janet Altman, 'for the letter novelist the choice of epistle as narrative instrument can foster certain patterns of thematic emphasis, narrative action, character types, and narrative self-consciousness' (1982: 9).⁶ On the other hand are those who have sought to connect the novel-in-letters with theoretical or political debates. Thus epistolary fiction has been mined productively by gender theorists,⁷ and welcome attention has been given to the letter's participation in the turbulent politics of Romanticism.⁸ Thomas O. Beebee has taken this approach further by investigating epistolary fiction through the Foucauldian concept of 'genealogy', according to which 'the individual is only one level in a sequence of conflicts, appropriations, and resistances' (1999: 10). Thus Beebee treats the letter as 'a Protean form which crystallized social relationships in a variety of ways' and delineates 'various positions taken up by the letter within the network of European intellectual, discursive, and literary relations as generative mechanisms giving epistolary fiction its distinctive forms and social power' (3). While this study shares Beebee's interest in 'the historical or socio-political aspects of epistolary fiction' (5), this does not necessarily exclude analysis of its form. Though Beebee's view that 'the letter is not a particular form or object, but a set of functions and capabilities' (202) is attractive, this lack of formal essence does not mean that the changing styles of epistolary fiction do not interact with changing social and cultural realities. By combining close stylistic analysis with an attention to wider intellectual movements and debates, this book demonstrates how various critical tensions which preoccupied the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are represented within the consciousnesses of its epistolary heroes and heroines.

The novel's concern with consciousness has been emphasised by most of its historians. In Michael Holquist's words, 'since at least the German Romantics, conflating the history of literature with the history of consciousness has been a move that characterizes most theories of the novel' (1990: 73). One work in which this conflation is particularly evident is Georg Lukács's *The Theory of the Novel*.⁹ First composed in 1914–15, long before the Marxist formulations of his later career (for example, in *The Historical Novel*¹⁰), *The Theory of the Novel* is a lament for the loss of epic certainty and an account of the novel's role in the growth of self-consciousness.¹¹ Lukács famously states that 'the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God' (1978: 88). This new genre

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appears in 'an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality' (56). The 'antagonistic duality of soul and world' and 'the agonising distance between psyche and soul' in this new age results in what Lukács calls 'the autonomous life of interiority' (66). This 'interiority' is represented in 'the inner form of the novel' as 'the process of the problematic individual's journeying towards himself, the road from dull captivity within a merely present reality – a reality that is heterogenous in itself and meaningless to the individual – towards clear self-recognition' (80). The novel is thus associated for Lukács with a search for inner self in a world which no longer offers external totality. He claims that

the novel tells of the adventure of interiority; the content of the novel is the story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them, and, by proving itself, to find its own essence.

(1978: 89)

Bakhtin's essay 'Epic and the Novel' talks of a similar collapse of totality and 'elevation of interiority', also asserting that 'the epic wholeness of an individual disintegrates in a novel' (1981: 37). He argues that 'a crucial tension develops between the external and the internal man', and as a result 'the subjectivity of the individual becomes an object of experimentation and representation' (37). Yet while Lukács laments this rise of 'subjectivity', Bakhtin celebrates it, affirming the multiplicity of languages and meanings that arise from the disintegration of 'wholeness'. For him the loss of epic authority produces, in the hands of the great novelists, a dazzlingly open-ended variety of languages and voices. This reaches its peak in the novels of Dostoevsky, who, as 'creator of the polyphonic novel', 'created a fundamentally new novelistic genre' (1984: 7). For Bakhtin, 'the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels' is 'a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices' (6).

Some examination is required at this point of what Bakhtin and others mean by 'consciousness'. Much debate and contention has been provoked by attempts to define this term. As Christopher Fox observes: 'How did Locke define "consciousness"? This has proven a hard question, in his age and our own' (1988: 32). The most common modern sense of 'consciousness': 'The totality of the impressions, thoughts, and feelings, which make up a person's conscious being' can, according to the *OED*, be traced to Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the first

edition of which was published in 1689 (OED, 5a).¹² Yet this is just one approach to the meaning of the word. For Bakhtin, consciousness is inseparable from language. The point is made explicitly in 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse': 'To a greater or lesser extent, every novel is a dialogized system made up of the images of "languages," styles and consciousnesses that are concrete and inseparable from language' (1981: 49). In 'Discourse and the Novel' he notes that 'consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of *having to choose a language*. With each literary-verbal performance, consciousness must actively orient itself amidst heteroglossia, it must move in and occupy a position for itself within it, it chooses, in other words, a "language"' (295). Having done so, the 'linguistic consciousness' participates 'in the social multi- and vari-linguagedness of evolving languages' (326).

For Bakhtin then, consciousness is not concerned with 'impressions, thoughts, and feelings'. Instead he describes it 'speaking', negotiating its way among 'a variety of alien voices' (348) and becoming 'an active participant in social dialogue' (276). 'The fundamental condition' of novelistic discourse, 'that which makes a novel a novel, that which is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the *speaking person and his discourse*' (332). Bakhtin's 'consciousness' is thus inextricably bound up with social realities and the competing struggles of heteroglossia; it is, in his terms, 'socio-ideological' (276). In the 'double-linguaged novelistic hybrid' there are 'not only (and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents, as there are two socio-linguistic consciousnesses' (360).

This 'socio-ideological' and 'socio-linguistic' view of consciousness has found other adherents in the twentieth century, especially among Marxist thinkers. Elizabeth Kraft quotes Raymond Williams's view that all consciousness is 'culturally produced' (1977: 139), before setting out her own culturally-inflected definition:

With regard to fiction, consciousness then becomes the text itself, the reader's response to the text, the characters' response to events and other characters, the participation in the contemporary milieu to which topical references allude. In other words, consciousness is the reflection of a cultural process that includes the individual mind, but includes it as it regards the larger world, the community in opposition to which it emerges as individual.

(1992: xi)

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Definitions of ‘consciousness’ can therefore be divided into two main strands. On the one side are those which emphasise, in Lukács’s terms, ‘the autonomous life of interiority’, or ‘the totality of the impressions, thoughts, and feelings, which make up a person’s conscious being’. On the other is the notion of ‘consciousness’ as ‘socio-ideological’ and ‘the reflection of a cultural process’ which sets ‘the individual mind’ against ‘the larger world’, or ‘community’. The conflict between these two approaches to ‘consciousness’ animates the tensions within the mind which will be the subject of subsequent chapters. It also bubbles beneath the surface of most accounts of the role of consciousness in the ‘rise’ of the novel.

Ian Watt’s thesis that ‘the formal realism of the novel [...] allows a more immediate imitation of individual experience set in its temporal and spatial environment than do other literary forms’ (1957: 32) has dominated subsequent accounts of ‘the rise of the novel’. For Watt, Defoe and Richardson give a particularly strong ‘imitation of individual experience’; he praises their ‘psychological closeness to the subjective world of their characters’ (297). ‘The direction’ of Richardson’s narrative, he asserts, is ‘towards the delineation of the domestic life and the private experience of the characters who belong to it: the two go together – we get inside their minds as well as inside their houses’ (175). Maximillian E. Novak makes a similar claim for Defoe, arguing that although he was undeniably interested in ‘the social and political milieu in which his characters moved’, ‘he was always more interested in what went on in his characters’ minds’ (2000: 248).

Yet others who have followed recently in Watt’s footsteps have tended to emphasise other factors behind the novel’s development, such as its connection with journalism and history,¹³ or else taken issue with the whole notion of its ‘rise’ and located its ‘institution’ at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Some recent accounts of the early novel have even questioned its connection with Lukács’s ‘interiority’. Deidre Lynch’s 1998 study sets out, in her own words, ‘to challenge the idea that the British novel from the start represented individual interiority’ (2000: 347). Her alternative ‘pragmatics of character’ investigates ‘the material culture of sentimentalism’ (348), in the belief that ‘rather than looking for improvements in the mimetic powers of novels, we might instead contemplate how a new way of using characters might have been endangered by an era of consumer revolution’ (364). Similarly, in his discussion of the novel’s relation to a rapidly developing ‘print culture’ between 1684 and 1750, William B. Warner claims that Watt added ‘an important new dimension to the story of the novel’s rise’:

By aligning Richardson's 'writing to the moment' with the distinctly modern turn toward a rendering of private experience and subjectivity intensities, Watt redefines the object of novelistic mimesis from the social surface to the psychological interior.

(1998: 39)

Warner notes that 'now the most advanced novels – those, for example, of Joyce, Proust, Woolf, and Faulkner – are claimed by critics to effect a mimesis of the inner consciousness' (39). For him this is a result of the early twentieth century's 'turning inward', which led to 'the novel [being] reinterpreted as the medium uniquely suited to representing the inner life' (39). Emphasis on the 'psychological interior' of eighteenth-century novels is thus, for Warner, an indication of the twentieth century's preoccupation with 'subjectivity' and the 'inner life'.

Yet this perspective will be challenged by the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century epistolary novels studied here, which develop sophisticated ways of exploring 'subjectivity' long before Warner's 'distinctly modern turn'. The evidence supports Kraft's opposing view that novels of the period 'reveal a preoccupation with the workings of the individual mind, a preoccupation that is characteristic of the age as a whole' (1992: 17). Noting that in his 'epistolary dialogue' Richardson 'distanced himself from the epistemological premises of documentary historicity' (1987: 414), Michael McKeon quotes his response in *Clarissa's* Preface to Fielding's criticism of 'the epistolary Style'¹⁵:

A series of letters, Richardson says, offers 'the only natural Opportunity [...] of representing with any Grace those lively and delicate Impressions, which *Things present* are known to make upon the Minds of those affected by them,' and which lead 'us farther into the Recesses of the human Mind, than the colder and more general Reflections suited to a continued and more contracted Narrative.' Thus the letter becomes a passport not to the objectivity of sense impressions but to the subjectivity of mind.

(1987: 414)

This book will demonstrate that Richardson was not alone among eighteenth-century novelists in wishing to explore 'the Recesses of the human Mind' through the epistolary form. Indeed it will confirm his view that a novel in 'a series of letters' is especially well-suited to the exploration of 'the subjectivity of mind', a project which many critics, following Watt, have taken to be central to the novel. For example, in answer to his own question, 'What was new about the novel?', J. Paul Hunter lists ten features

that 'characterize the species'. The sixth of these is 'Individualism, subjectivity'. Hunter argues that the crucial difference between individuals in romances and novels involves 'the degree and quality of self-consciousness in novels' (1990: 23). He claims that in novels there is 'a strikingly different awareness of the processes of thought and feeling that affect individuals in relation to their world and their experiences in it' (24). This point is developed in the next of the novel's distinctive features, 'Empathy and vicariousness'. Since novels at their best 'probe so deeply and sensitively [...] the subjectivity of one individual', they 'typically give readers a sense of what it would be like to be someone else' (24).

Many critics agree that such probing is particularly frequent in the epistolary novel. The concern of this type of novel with 'the subjectivity of mind' has become a critical commonplace. Bakhtin's view is that 'the seventeenth and eighteenth-century novel that is in large part epistolary (La Fayette, Rousseau, Richardson and others), is characterized by psychology and pathos' (1981: 396). The letter leads the novel to 'the depths of everyday life, its smallest details, to intimate relations between people and into the internal life of the individual person' (396). For Watt, too, the letter is particularly adept at providing the 'immediate imitation of individual experience' which he sees as crucial to the novel form. 'What forces influenced Richardson in giving fiction this subjective and inward direction?' he asks. His answer is that

One of them is suggested by the formal basis of his narrative – the letter. The familiar letter, of course, can be an opportunity for a much fuller and more unreserved expression of the writer's own private feelings than oral converse usually affords.

(1957: 176)

Quoting Dr Johnson's famous comment in a letter to Mrs Thrale that "A man's letters [...] are only the mirror of his breast, whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process. Nothing is inverted, nothing distorted, you see systems in their elements, you discover actions in their motives" (191), Watt decides that 'letters are the most direct material evidence for the inner life of their writers that exist', and that the letter form offered Richardson 'a short-cut, as it were, to the heart' (195), resulting in 'a fuller and more convincing presentation of the inner lives of his characters and of the complexities of their personal relationships than literature had previously seen' (201). Thus, according to Watt, 'there are many equally probable and perhaps more interesting characters in literature

before Pamela, but there are none whose daily thoughts and feelings we know so intimately' (176).

Later critics of the epistolary novel have also emphasised its ability to offer a full and convincing representation of the 'inner lives' of its characters. Ruth Perry argues that 'so many epistolary fictions are about subjective realities – and what else could they be about, consisting as they do of the outpourings of lavish consciousness heightened by suffering and by isolation' (1980: 114). As 'the novelistic form which emphasizes the mental life of its characters' (xii), Perry believes the epistolary novel is particularly well-suited to fulfil 'the primary purpose of the novel', which she identifies as 'to make available to the reader another's state of consciousness' (135). 'Unfolding a story in letters', she claims,

automatically emphasizes the psychological angle of vision as no other narrative form does. Because the letter-writer's imagination is involved in the translation of experience into language, a fiction told through letters becomes a story about events in consciousness, whatever else it may be about.

(1980: 119)

Yet as we have seen, there is a belief that these 'events in consciousness' are represented relatively straightforwardly in the letter form. Perry's claim that characters in epistolary fictions transcribe 'uncensored streams of consciousness', that they 'think out loud – on paper', has been widely shared. Watt argues that 'the use of the epistolary method impels the writer towards producing something that may pass for the spontaneous transcription of the subjective reactions of the protagonists to the events as they occur' (192), while for Day one of the advantages of the epistolary form is that

the author may let his characters think on paper; he may try to show the actual motions of the mind, its veerings and incoherences, the shape which thoughts take before they are arranged for formal presentation: inchoate ideas, when the mind is tugged this way and that from its intended course by emotions and small happenings, or is wholly carried away on a new track in spite of itself. This method, now removed from the less 'realistic' convention of the letter, is called interior monologue or stream-of-consciousness technique.

(1966: 8)

It is one of the key arguments of this study that the representation of consciousness in the epistolary novel is not as transparent and unmediated as this. As Mary Favret notes, 'we accept too readily the notion that the letter allows us a window into the intimate, and usually feminine, self' (1993: 10). Describing the way in which the thoughts of letter-writers are conveyed as 'the spontaneous transcription' of 'uncensored streams of consciousness' misses the subtlety with which epistolary novelists can probe the 'recesses' of their characters' minds, and the tensions within the 'subjectivity' of the self that they can reveal.

In order to grasp the ways in which the epistolary novel can complicate the representation of consciousness, some consideration of the intellectual debates of the period is required. As we have already seen, John Locke is a crucial figure in this context. In Fox's words, he 'put identity and consciousness on the intellectual map' (1988: 38). In particular, the chapter added in the second, 1694 edition of his *Essay*, 'Of Identity and Diversity', initiated, and continues to initiate, vigorous discussion about consciousness and its relationship to personal identity.¹⁶ In it Locke makes his crucial distinction between 'Substance', 'Man', and 'Person', associating the '*principium Individuationis*' exclusively with the latter:

This being premised to find wherein *personal Identity* consists, we must consider what *Person* stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as it self, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness, which is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it: It being impossible for any one to perceive, without perceiving, that he does perceive.

(1975: 335)¹⁷

'Consciousness' here is neither 'socio-ideological' nor exactly consonant with the *OED*'s 'the totality of the impressions, thoughts, and feelings, which make up a person's conscious being'. The awareness of one's self 'as it self, the same thinking thing in different times and places' seems to be closer to the definition of 'consciousness' designated '*philosophical*' by the *OED*: 'The state or faculty of being conscious, as a condition and concomitant of all thought, feeling, and volition', 'the recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts or affections' (4a). Compare Locke's view that it is 'inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it: It being impossible for any one to perceive, without perceiving, that he does perceive'.

The *OED* cites the first source of this sense of the word as Ralph Cudworth, who claims in *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678) that 'Consciousness' 'makes a Being to be Present with it self, Attentive to its own Actions, or Animadversive of them, to perceive it self to Do or Suffer, and to have a *Fruition* or *Enjoyment* of it self' (1678: I, iii, 159). The *OED*'s second citation quotes Locke's definition in book II, chapter 1 of his *Essay*: 'Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man's own mind' (1975: 115). This quotation is also used to define 'consciousness' in Johnson's *Dictionary*, showing that this sense was still in use over half a century later.¹⁸ To a modern reader, this meaning of 'consciousness' seems closely related to 'self-consciousness', a term which also first appeared in this period. The *OED* equates its second definition of 'self-consciousness', 'Consciousness of one's own identity, one's acts, thoughts, etc.' with its '*Philosophical*' definition of 'consciousness', giving a quotation from book II, chapter 27 of Locke's *Essay* as the first instance of this sense: 'I being as much concern'd, and as justly accountable for any Action was done a thousand Years since, appropriated to me now by this self-consciousness, as I am, for what I did the last moment' (1975: 341).¹⁹ Throughout the *Essay*, and especially the crucial added chapter, 'consciousness' is thus used to indicate the perception of what is passing in the mind, something like our modern 'self-consciousness'. As Udo Thiel puts it, 'although Locke uses 'self-consciousness' only once in the chapter on identity (II.xxvii.16), his 'consciousness' [...] denotes a relating to one's own thought and actions' (2000: 237). Like the *OED*, Thiel traces this sense of the word to Cudworth, and claims it was still current for David Hume: 'By the time Hume was writing the *Treatise*, the English term "consciousness" as denoting a form of relating to oneself had become an established one in philosophical debates' (1994: 81).

'Consciousness' in this sense of 'relating to oneself' is for Locke the vital criterion of personal identity: 'it is impossible to make personal Identity to consist in any thing but consciousness' (1975: 343). 'Person' is equated with 'self' ('*Person*, as I take it, is the name for this *self*' (346)), and both are determined, or constructed, by consciousness: 'For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes every one to be, what he calls *self*; and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists *personal Identity*, i.e. the sameness of a rational Being' (335).

Consequently for Locke it is consciousness alone which can create identity and 'the sameness of a rational Being' across time: 'And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that *Person*; it is the same *self* now

as it was then; and 'tis by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that Action was done' (335). It is thus crucially identity of consciousness which creates identity of self and person, not identity of 'Substance', a point Locke makes repeatedly: 'Nothing but consciousness can unite remote Existences into the same Person, the Identity of Substance will not do it' (344); 'So that *self* is not determined by Identity or Diversity of Substance, which it cannot be sure of, but only by Identity of consciousness' (345). Change or diversity in 'Substance' does thus not necessarily affect identity: 'Thus we see the *Substance*, whereof *personal self* consisted at one time, may be varied at another, without the change of personal *Identity*: There being no Question about the same Person, though the Limbs, which but now were a part of it, be cut off' (337). As Kenneth P. Winkler puts it: 'Locke's account of personal identity is the ancestor of all those that dispense with sameness of substance (whether soul or body) or stuff (whether mental or physical) and concentrate instead on psychological continuity' (1991: 201).

Locke's equation of personal identity with identity of consciousness has often been commented upon. John O. Lyons, for example, claims that 'what Locke is certain about is that the working of consciousness verifies the existence of the self, and because the consciousness can entertain thoughts about distant times and places (he speaks of our imagining the experience of Noah) he suggests the self arches beyond its mere corporeal materiality' (1978: 21). Watt similarly observes that 'Locke had defined personal identity as an identity of consciousness through duration in time; the individual was in touch with his own continuing identity through memory of his past thoughts and actions' (1957: 21). He adds that 'such a point of view is characteristic of the novel; many novelists, from Sterne to Proust, have made their subject the exploration of the personality as it is defined in the interpretation of its past and present self-awareness' (21).

Yet this is perhaps a slightly partial account of Locke's link between consciousness and identity. Recall Locke's belief that identity of person and self is created only '*as far as [...] consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought*' (my italics). In fact he often acknowledges that consciousness cannot always be connected to past states of self. 'If there be any part of its Existence, which I cannot upon recollection join with that present consciousness, whereby I am now my *self*', he argues, 'it is in that part of its Existence no more my *self*, than any other immaterial Being' (1975: 345). Having claimed that 'if the same *Socrates* waking and sleeping do not partake of the same *consciousness*, *Socrates* waking and sleeping is not the same Person' (342), he adds that 'if it be possible for the