

Narrating Friendship and the British Novel, 1760–1830

Katrin Berndt



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Friendship has always been a universal category of human relationships and an influential motif in literature, but it is rarely discussed as a theme in its own right. In her study of how friendship gives direction and shape to new ideas and novel strategies of plot, character formation, and style in the British novel from the 1760s to the 1830s, Katrin Berndt argues that friendship functions as a literary expression of philosophical values in a genre that explores the psychology and the interactions of the individual in modern society. In the literary historical period in which the novel became established as a modern genre, friend characters were omnipresent, reflecting Enlightenment philosophy's definition of friendship as a bond that civilized public and private interactions and was considered essential for the attainment of happiness. Berndt's analyses of genre-defining novels by Frances Brooke, Mary Shelley, Sarah Scott, Helen Maria Williams, Charlotte Lennox, Walter Scott, Jane Austen, and Maria Edgeworth show that the significance of friendship and the increasing variety of novelistic forms and topics represent an overlooked dynamic in the novel's literary history. Contributing to our understanding of the complex interplay of philosophical, socio-cultural, and literary discourses that shaped British fiction in the later Hanoverian decades, Berndt's book demonstrates that novels have conceived the modern individual not in opposition to, but in interaction with society, continuing Enlightenment debates about how to share the lives and the experiences of others.

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Introduction

There is no friendship without equality. As the democratic element in human relationships, friendship allows people to practice acceptance. [. . .] Friendship wants parity; few things are feared more in friendships than to discover a potentially demeaning property in a friend. Friendship neither wants to be served, nor does it wish to serve, apart from acting towards beneficence.¹

This study investigates the impact of friendship on formal and thematic developments in the British novel from the 1760s to the 1830s. It argues that friendship, a key concern of Enlightenment thinking, gives direction and shape to new ideas and novel strategies of plot, character formation, and style in these decades. Through analyses of exemplary texts, the study demonstrates that the narration of friendship was an essential element of the diversification of the genre in the second half of the long eighteenth century.² Friendship influenced themes and narrative perspectives, and it endowed plots with coherent meaning by providing a narratological means to conjoin story development and character motivation. The motif also allowed for an exploration of individuals and their values as presented in the novels: with the textual focus on portraying the concerns of ordinary characters from various walks of life, novelists treated friendship not merely as an abstract,

- 1 'Keine Freundschaft [. . .] ohne Ebenbürtigkeit. In den Beziehungen unter Menschen [. . .] ist sie das demokratische Element, Einübung ins Geltenlassen. [. . .] Freundschaft [. . .] will Gleichwertigkeit, und wenig fürchtet sie mehr, als im Freund plötzlich einen Charakterzug zu entdecken, der ihn herabsetzen könnte. Sie will weder bedient sein noch dienen, es sei denn im Sinne des Wirkens zum Guten.' Ernst Halter, 'Freundschaft: Perspektiven eines Begriffes', in *Ars et amicitia: Beiträge zum Thema Freundschaft in Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 23 (trans. Katrin Berndt).
- 2 The 'second half of the long eighteenth century' as a historical period was introduced by J. C. D. Clark and made popular by Frank O'Gorman, historians who discussed continuities over the entire period from the 1660s to the 1830s. See J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1660–1832: Religion, Ideology, and Politics during the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688–1832* (London: Arnold, 1997).

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philosophical concept; they also investigated the virtuous practices conducive to its realization in private and public interactions.

The fictional significance of friendship mirrored the comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon in eighteenth-century culture, which considered friendship a moral engine of enlightened feeling and conduct. British Enlightenment thinkers, who will be discussed in more detail below, commended friendship as an original property of mankind and as a yardstick for the civilizing progress of their nation. They understood friendship as an independent relationship marked by disinterested affection, as a condition of happiness, and as a virtuous quality that contributed to civilizing public and private relations in familial, conjugal, political, and legal contexts. While waning in interest to English radical philosophers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the pluralistic meanings of enlightened friendship continued to be important in the realm of fiction, where they contributed to developments in the novel.

This book offers a synchronic analysis of the literary historical period in which the British novel is ‘coming of age’, that is, the momentous stage in which it acquires a distinct and complex character to eventually become established as a modern genre in its own right.³ It discusses how novelists in the second half of the long eighteenth century conceived an intrinsically heterogeneous idea of prose fiction by combining established literary conventions with formal and thematic experiments. Against this background, this study argues that friendship as a motif and as a structural principle has informed the diversification of the genre most identified with the psychological exploration of the individual in society. It establishes a connection between two major characteristics of the novel between 1760 and 1830 – the significance of friendship on the one hand, and the increasing variety of novelistic forms and themes on the other – arguing that they together represent an overlooked dynamic in the novel’s literary history. As subsequent chapters will show, the most notable innovations of the genre, such as the focus on the various challenges to individuals in modern society, the alternating discourse of different narrative perspectives, the turn to a causally sound plot progression, and the conceptualization of public and private interactions, are linked with the idea of friendship.

The selection of novels includes both canonized works and lesser-known texts that demonstrate the significance of friendship in establishing the novel as a modern genre in the second half of the long eighteenth century. Forms of friendship in the texts are identified according to the comprehensive perspective of Enlightenment thought, which encompasses homo- and heterosocial

3 I am adopting James Raven’s term here because it emphasizes the processual character of the novel’s development in the second half of the eighteenth century (James Raven, ‘Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age’, in *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, Bd. I: 1770–1799, ed. James Raven and Antonia Forster [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 15).

bonds, disinterested affections shaping romantic attachments and familial relations, and friendship as a quality of communal interactions.⁴ Novels that contain only minor friend characters, or use friendship as a *deus ex machina* explanation for serendipitous narrative twists, are referred to, but are not examined in detail. A similar approach is taken with a common strategy of writers in the period to use the term 'friend' in titles and subtitles, which is not tantamount to a relevance of the motif in the text, but was believed to enhance the novels' appeal to readers. While illustrating the omnipresence of friendship references in eighteenth-century literature, such occurrences are merely nominal and have not been found to have influenced developments of the novel genre. When discussing the popular eighteenth-century genre of epistolary novels, I have selected texts whose correspondents are main characters in the story who actually exchange letters rather than serving as otherwise mute reference points, and whose friendship is instrumental for aspects of genre diversification, such as accounting for different character perspectives, or the progress of the plot.

The structure of this book connects friendship with four central developments that distinguish the establishment of the British novel in the later Hanoverian period. Every substantive chapter begins with a short introduction that critically situates and conceptually links the two novels selected for each; it then investigates them to demonstrate how the genre development discussed in the chapter is related to friendship. Chapter 1 problematizes the ethical soundness of values that are either derived from friendship or closely identified with it: sympathetic other-regard and (the longing for) companionship.⁵ With Frances Brooke's *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1763) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), I demonstrate how friendship exemplifies ideals of virtuous interaction in both individual and communal contexts, and how it serves to verify the ethical value of conventions such as benevolence and sympathy. Chapter 2 explores friendship as a quality that bridges the presumed gap between private and public spheres. With a focus on Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762) and Helen Maria Williams's *Julia* (1790), novels that deploy friendship both as moral virtue and structural

4 The study uses the terminology of Emma Donoghue, who prefers the attribute heterosexual to cross-sexual when defining friendship between men and women in order both to avoid sexual connotations and to emphasize that the sociability of the sexes was an issue of debate in the eighteenth century. See Emma Donoghue, 'Male-Female Friendship and English Fiction in the Mid-Eighteenth Century' (PhD diss., Girton College, University of Cambridge, 1996), 6, 9–10.

5 Lisa Hill introduced the term 'other-regard' in her discussion of Adam Ferguson's insistence on the 'explanatory power [of] the other-regarding passions', which include 'more diffuse, altruistic, and less calculated impulses' that provide a contrast to the 'rational [...] self-interest embraced by [Adam] Smith.' Lisa Hill, *The Passionate Society: The Social, Political and Moral Thought of Adam Ferguson* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 16. In the context of my study, 'other-regard' designates feelings of compassion, sympathy, and an active kindness seeking to contribute to the well-being of another.

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principle, the analyses examine the capacity of either mode to reform socio-economic convention through benevolent practice. Friendship in individual and communal form, for instance as active sensibility and philanthropy, is shown to have shaped both utopian fiction and the sentimental novel by providing alternative models of economic participation and social engagement. Chapter 3 shifts the focus to the contribution of friendship to the development of different narrative perspectives. Proceeding from the idea that changing points of view constitute a pluralistic approach to historical and cultural transformations, I suggest that epistolary novels such as Charlotte Lennox's *Euphemia* (1790) and Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824) define friendship as a quality of enlightened citizenship. While being formally indebted to established narrative techniques, they share an agenda to confront patriarchal authority (associated with omniscient narration) and lean towards egalitarian ideas, which they realize through friend characters as homodiegetic narrators. Chapter 4 investigates how friendship influenced the emergence of the causally coherent plot. Focusing on Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1817) and Maria Edgeworth's *Helen* (1834), it shows how friendship introduced an alternative to the storyline of heterosexual romance by problematizing the socio-economic and political situation of women and promoting equality in marriage. In this context, it also demonstrates how friendship has contributed to the development of psychologically complex characters that are designed on the basis of, and that change through, their affective relationships.

This study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the complex interplay of philosophical, socio-cultural, and literary discourses that shaped British novels in the decades from 1760 to 1830. Friendship, situated at the interface of Enlightenment notions of civilization and the turn to subjective perception in the Romantic period,⁶ is an ideal lens through which to explore how novels have conceived the modern individual not in opposition to, but in interaction with society. The study does not aim to be a comprehensive investigation of all forms and aspects of friendship referred to in

6 The 'Romantic period' has been a contested label among literary scholars, and the years marking its beginning and end often depend on the genre the individual critic is discussing. Scholars who examine different literary genres as well as British culture tend to locate the onset of the Romantic period in the middle of the eighteenth century, where it was inaugurated by the first Gothic novels, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), by 'the poetic innovations that followed the deaths of Pope and Swift in the 1740s [. . . and by the] influential aesthetic treatises of [. . .] Edmund Burke and Edward Young.' Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee, 'Preface', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740–1830*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xii. See also Rolf Breuer, *Englische Romantik: Literatur und Kultur 1760–1830* (München: Fink, 2012). Devoney Looser ironically refers to the unresolved issue of periodization of the Romantic period when she identifies the latter's beginning as either '1780, 1789, or 1798' and its ending as '1830, 1832, or 1837' (preface to *The Cambridge Companion to Women's Writing in the Romantic Period*, ed. Devoney Looser [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015], xiii).

novels of the later Hanoverian period. It rather is intended to draw attention to the impact of one of the central concerns of Enlightenment philosophy on crucial developments of the novel in the decades that saw it become established as a genre. Like the novel, friendship represents an opportunity to participate in and share the experience of lives and knowledges other than one's own. It is hoped that the explorations into fictional friendship conceptions presented in this study will substantiate our understanding of how the novel came to represent what it is like to share lives in the modern world, and that it will encourage further debates on the genre's potential to narrate the pluralism inherent in human companionship.

Convention and Experiment: the Novel from 1760 to 1830

Why focus on novels published in the decades from 1760 to 1830? My decision was encouraged by the texts themselves: in the second half of the long eighteenth century, the novel becomes the dominant genre of literary expression not least because it takes up and responds to a new cultural interest in the involvement of socio-economic obligations and individual interests. In these decades, historically also referred to as the later Hanoverian period,⁷ friend characters and friendship themes are omnipresent in fiction, where they contribute to developing psychologically complex characters who explore their own selves with regard to their situation, their community, their responsibilities, and their personal relations in an increasing variety of novelistic styles. Several renowned writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including Frances Brooke, Charlotte Lennox, Sir Walter Scott, and Jane Austen, not only present friendship as a central relationship in their novels, but they employ the motif in order to shape and convey social knowledge, and to develop aesthetic and structural aspects of the genre. For all of these reasons, novels of the period offer a fertile ground for an investigation of the strategies that made the genre flourish after it had been devised in the first half of the long eighteenth century by authors like Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry and Sarah Fielding, and Eliza Haywood. Incidentally, friendship had also been an important element in the genre's early years. The bond designated 'homosocial ties between male gentility' in the late seventeenth century until 'Behn [used]

⁷ The phrase 'later Hanoverian period', beginning with the reign of George III and ending with Victoria's succession to the throne, is used here as a historical frame for the decades focused on in this study. See Philip Rush, *Strange People: The Later Hanoverians, 1760–1837* (London: Hutchinson, 1957); British History Online, 'Chronological Survey 1660–1837: The Later Hanoverian Household, 1760–1837', in *Office-Holders in Modern Britain: Volume 11 (Revised), Court Officers, 1660–1837*, ed. R. O. Bucholz (London: University of London, 2006), cv–cxxxi, accessed 20 January 2016, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/office-holders/vol11/cv-cxxxi>; Robert Bucholz, "Every Inch Not a King": The Bodies of the (First Two) Hanoverians', in *The Hanoverian Succession*, ed. Andreas Gestrich and Michael Schaich (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 149.

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the term in a more locally and incidentally gender-neutral fashion', demonstrating that 'the formal conception of male friendship was capable of extension to female relations as well', a radical move that had an equivalent in seventeenth-century poetry, as 'the innovative example of Katherine Philips in particular demonstrates.'⁸ The inclusion of female affections inaugurated eighteenth-century literature's fascination with friendship, which encompasses women and men and their various forms of social interaction.

The decades from 1760 to 1830 do not so much mark a radical break with the period identified with writers like Behn, Richardson, and the Fieldings, as represent an era in which the novel begins to be taken seriously as a genre, gaining the prestige it would enjoy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the major, critically acknowledged, and 'most widely read form of imaginative writing'⁹ in British culture. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the idea of the novel was still 'a concept with which most serious writers would not have chosen to be linked', a caution illustrated by the fact that the 'combined prefaces of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews* and *Roderick Random* (to cite only the most famous examples) do not mention the word.'¹⁰ From the 1760s onwards, 'there is a marked change in the status of the novel, culminating in [...] the "institutionalisation" of the genre.'¹¹ As Christoph Bode points out, 'the term "novel" first became established at the end of the eighteenth century', the word itself advertising a 'novelty' that claims to reject 'traditional, universally valid content and stories' for the sake of narrating the '*individual, new, one-off experience*' of characters that are 'ordinary [...] but recognizable individuals.'¹² It has been the novel's preference for common characters that earned it a reputation for realism, which was supposed to reflect the 'rapid change or expectation of change' of a period whose 'restiveness is conveyed in literature and the other arts long before' the need for reform culminated in the American and French Revolutions.¹³ Characters both common and complex certainly contributed to the success of the genre that became 'a central player in the [eighteenth] century's formation of a new sphere of civility.'¹⁴ For as much as the novel is concerned with explorations of the self, it has always undertaken its quests with explicit or implicit

8 Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 816 n 11.

9 Gary Kelly, 'Romantic Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 189.

10 John Skinner, *An Introduction to Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Raising the Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 4.

11 Skinner, *Introduction*, 36.

12 Christoph Bode, *The Novel: An Introduction*, transl. James Vigus (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 35 (emphasis in the original).

13 Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 11.

14 Deidre Shauna Lynch, 'Novels in the World of Moving Goods', in *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 137.

reference to the culture that has shaped its characters. The novel is, above all, a genre that thrives on a critical reflection of the social particularities that conceived it.

Historically, the decades witnessing the institutionalization of the novel are distinguished by a secured Hanoverian dynasty, the establishment of Britain's imperial hegemony, and 'the birth' of what was described as 'the modern British cultural landscape.'¹⁵ This emerged in what has become labelled since as a coherent period shaped by the subsequent establishment of wealth and political power in the middle classes and the emergence of a reading public resting on a growing and increasingly literate population.¹⁶ Reading as an aspect of consumer culture became generally fashionable among the new professional classes, whose social and geographical mobility was mirrored by the circulation of books that were both 'representing and providing [. . .] formative occasions of social motion.'¹⁷ In the context of prospering commerce and manufacture, of urbanization and industrialization, it was the possibility and importance of socio-economic change, in addition to the thematic focus on the formation of an individual self, that emerged as a significant and constitutive feature of the eighteenth-century novel.¹⁸ It is no surprise, therefore, that a bond like friendship, which was associated with virtuous ideals, reliable guidance, and emotional comfort, while also holding the potential of transgressing social and economic boundaries, was addressed and employed frequently in the literature of the time.

In literary criticism, the second half of the eighteenth century had long been dismissed as a 'novelistic vacuum'¹⁹ whose fictional works were 'worthy of consideration only as a convenient vehicle for political propaganda or social

15 Keymer and Mee, preface, xii. The Battle of Culloden (1746) put an end to the Stuart dynasty's hopes for restoration, and the succession of George III, who not only spoke English but also came to embody the domestic virtues associated with the new middle-class consumer culture, helped to firmly establish Hanoverian rule. Britain's imperial dominance was secured by the Seven Years' War, which expanded the trading empire, brought new means of socio-economic transgression and economic development, and encouraged a 'political rationale [. . .] derived from a sense of political superiority' that idealized 'English liberty, together with a belief in the gradual and inevitable progress of political development' (Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction 1660–1800* [London: Virago Press, 1989], 103).

16 The population in Britain is estimated to have doubled in the second half of the long eighteenth century, and the literacy figures rose to an estimated two thirds of the men and about half of the women by 1800 (J. Paul Hunter, 'The Novel and Social/Cultural History', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. John Richetti [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 20; Michael Scrivener, 'Literature and Politics', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740–1830*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 43).

17 Lynch, 'Novels in the World', 137 (emphasis in the original).

18 '[N]ovels of this period were as much associated with an emergent idiom of transport, transaction, commercial traffic and social mixing as they were with an idiom for the representation of separate selves' (Lynch, 'Novels in the World', 123).

19 Clive T. Probyn, *English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century 1700–1789* (London: Longman, 1987), 149.

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uplift.²⁰ This verdict has been challenged significantly in the past three decades, in which scholars have begun to chart the era's parallel but seemingly incongruous narrative developments with regard to genre aesthetics, literature's engagement with socio-historical context, and the themes and tropes preferred by writers of the later Hanoverian period. As a result, the decades from the 1760s to the 1830s are now considered an age of diversity rather than as indicative of a uniform literary style, and novels of the time are characterized as steeped in 'a spirit of experimentation' that was fuelled by 'a civic unrest traceable throughout Europe and North America.'²¹ Michael McKeon had identified what he describes as 'categorical instability' already in the early-eighteenth-century novel, clarifying that the genre was formed 'not in the isolated emergence of a great text or two, but as an experimental process consisting of many different stages.'²² By exploring how a particular meaning can be conveyed in what kind of story, McKeon established a correlation between form and content that has influenced both philosophical studies and literary analyses.²³ Consequently, scholars critically engaging with eighteenth-century fiction are no longer occupied with re-examining authors already canonized but seek to comprehend the novel's 'definitional volatility' as a particular and historically significant quality that accounts for the genre's

tendency to dissolve into its antithesis, which encapsulates the dialectical nature of historical process itself at a critical moment in the emergence of the modern world. [. . . T]he volatility of the novel at this time is *analogous* to that of the middle class. But [. . .] the emerging novel also has *internalized* the emergence of the middle class in its preoccupation with the problem of how virtue is signified. [. . .] In this way, questions of truth and virtue begin to seem not so much distinct problems, as versions or transformations of each other, distinct ways of formulating and propounding a fundamental problem of what might be called epistemological, sociological, and ethical 'signification.'²⁴

20 Joseph Bunn Heidler, *The History, from 1700 to 1800, of English Criticism of Prose Fiction* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1928), 41.

21 Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, ed. Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

22 Michael McKeon, 'Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel', in *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 383, 389.

23 Notable studies in the field are philosophers Martha Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) and David Parker's *Ethics, Theory, and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), both of which discuss the epistemological function of literature, while literary scholar Eva M. Dadlez examines the influence of David Hume's philosophy on Jane Austen's novels in *Mirrors to One Another: Emotion and Value in Jane Austen and David Hume* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

24 McKeon, 'Generic Transformation', 396.

From the 1760s onwards, the generic instability of the novel gave rise to a variety of subgenres such as the Gothic tale, the novel of manners, the radical novel, and the historical novel, which codified ‘the experience through which writers engage with the world [. . . by assuming] cultural responsibility [. . .] constructed in dialogue [. . . and introduced] as experiments yet to be completed.’²⁵ The novelistic genres’ distinctive approaches to the key problems ‘truth’ and ‘virtue’ contributed to what Ina Ferris has identified as a literary ‘assumption of authority’ that ‘actively participated in a larger middle-class project of their transformation on behalf of a precisely modern allegiance to what [Maria Edgeworth’s] *Castle Rackrent* [1800] called “the present times”.’²⁶ Patricia Meyer Spacks also relates the emergence of different novelistic subgenres to the productive tension between fact and fiction,²⁷ while Sandra Macpherson considers eighteenth-century novels as a source of extra-textual knowledge, because they ‘make questions about agency and responsibility central to their formal innovations.’²⁸ It seems that it is exactly their complication of (the dialogue between) enlightened virtues adhered to and realized in modern society that distinguishes the contributions of later Hanoverian novels to the history of the genre. After all, they

pioneer exactly the themes (investigations of perverse desire, the legacy, persons’ relation to social context or ‘the system’), the forms (novels of manners and Gothic romances) and the formal innovations (the free indirect discourse that an omniscient narrator employs to render a character’s hidden mental life) that will remain central to novel writing through the nineteenth century.²⁹

As the analyses in this study will demonstrate, several of the characteristics that emerged and became established as key features of the novel genre in the second half of the long eighteenth century were closely connected with, and realized through, the narration of friendship. Novels of the period bestowed much attention to issues such as sentiment and sensibility, moral conduct and individual responsibility, subjective feeling and its expression, and the

25 Tilottama Rajan, ‘The Epigenesis of Genre: New Forms From Old’, in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 508.

26 Ina Ferris, ‘Transformations of the Novel – II’, in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 473–474.

27 Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Novel Beginnings: Experiments in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 3.

28 Sandra Macpherson, *Harm’s Way: Tragic Responsibility and the Novel Form* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 4.

29 Deidre Lynch, ‘Transformations of the Novel: I’, in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 454.

critical engagement with the configuration of civil society and its values in changing circumstances. Friendship was instrumental in addressing these concerns because it has the potential to embody established conventions as well as revolutionary ideas, problematizing the validation of either in novelistic explorations of individual experience.

Friendship and Eighteenth-Century Literature: Critical Approaches

Research on friendship and the British novel is situated within the increasing scholarly interest in literary and cultural representations of individual and communal relations in the long eighteenth century. In the wake of Lawrence Stone's pronouncement of an eighteenth-century movement towards 'affective individualism',³⁰ scholars have investigated how friendship exemplifies modernity's changing conceptualizations of gender, and explored it in connection with other relationships defined by family, marriage, the community, and romantic attraction. Most studies concentrate on particular forms of friendship, focusing on either homo- or heterosocial bonds, or they examine either private relations or public dimensions of friendship in civil society and political allegiances.

Janet Todd's groundbreaking study *Women's Friendship in Literature* (1980) was the first to highlight the many and varied representations of female friendship in eighteenth-century literature by analysing sentimental, political, erotic, and manipulative friendships in selected British and French novels. Todd emphasized the importance of friendship as a central sentiment, whose influence on character formation outweighs that of heterosexual romance because '[f]emale friendship is the only social relationship we actually enter in the novel and the only one the heroine actively constructs.'³¹ In *The Sign of Angellica* (1989), Todd returned to the subject to contend that the 'female communities of Manley and Haywood' have become exhausted as a literary motif by the mid-eighteenth century, when friendship in sentimental novels 'moves towards the escapism of noneconomic, nonpolitical female bonding' that becomes 'the great support and defence against male social and sexual depredations.'³² My analyses proceed from and challenge Todd's readings by not only showing that female friendship continued to be imagined as a political and communal principle in the later Hanoverian decades, but also demonstrating that, in novels of the period, comfort and escape was provided by both male and female

30 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977), 221. Stone acknowledged that the meaning of 'friend' in the eighteenth century encompassed both a particular and private affection and a more public dimension that included family members, neighbours, and business partners (97).

31 Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 2.

32 Todd, *Sign of Angellica*, 174, 281.

friends alike, a function connected with the significant impact that friendship had on the diversification of plot and narrative perspectives.

The thematic focus on homosocial attachments tends to investigate both female and male friendships with regard to their erotic and romantic implications. Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981) successfully established the interpretation of women's platonic, sexual, and romantic relationships in European and North American life and literature from the Renaissance to the twentieth century as a form of love. In *Passions between Women* (1993), Emma Donoghue takes up Faderman's definition to argue that romantic friendship was not only 'widely employed in the eighteenth century to refer to a loving relationship (usually between women of the middle or upper classes) of varying degrees of romance and friendliness' but also used to render harmless the 'threat to male power' such bonds represented, for they were often 'lifelong emotional partnerships, more like marriages than friendships.'³³ While my study does not share these scholars' focus on friendship as a form of romantic passion, I build on their findings on female friendship as an important and socially accepted form of relationship in eighteenth-century society.³⁴

Several scholars have investigated the connection between the novel's narrative commitment to human relationships and the increasing popularity of the genre in the second half of the eighteenth century. In *Novel Relations* (2004), Ruth Perry identifies novels as an ideal literary form to problematize an individual's position in a network of relations, because 'narrative conventions and thematics of this [then] new genre were [particularly] suited to exploring concerns about family membership and individual obligation in this society in transition.'³⁵ Referring to friendship occasionally as a thematic device, and acknowledging it as a quality that distinguishes emotionally intimate familial relations, her configurations approach to personhood highlights the significance placed by recent research on the connection of subject and community when examining the production of socio-cultural knowledge in fiction. Chris Roulston substantiates Perry's contention in her analysis of the narration of married life, claiming that, '[w]ith its protean flexibility, its focus on realism, its attention to detail and to the everyday, and its engagement with the ordinary individual, the novel both reflected and made possible the cultural dominance of bourgeois values, specifically

33 Emma Donoghue, *Passions between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668–1801* (London: Scarlet Press, 1993), 109.

34 Homosocial male friendship is often discussed with regard to its sexual implications, for example in Eric Daffron, 'Male Bonding: Sympathy and Shelley's *Frankenstein*', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 21, no. 3 (1999): 415–435; Emrys D. Jones, *Friendship and Allegiance in Eighteenth-Century Literature: The Politics of Private Virtue in the Age of Walpole* (London: Palgrave, 2013); and George Haggerty, *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

35 Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture 1748–1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6–7.

in terms of privileging domestic and affective family life.³⁶ According to Christopher Flint, the novel's preoccupation with domestic issues was both channelling and contributing to the 'rise of the nuclear family at the birth of the modern, industrial, capitalist state in Britain' that, he argues, was 'essentially a semiotic event' during which 'a variety of sexual and domestic practices [became aligned] with authorized national interests, while the purpose of this refashioning [was] to affirm the sentimental family's central role in managing civil behavior.'³⁷ Domestic life and business customs were addressed in Naomi Tadmor's cultural-historical study *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England* (2001), which discusses the fictional portrayals of communal and kinship relations in Eliza Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) and Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) as influenced by the friendship conceptualizations of seventeenth-century essayist Jeremy Taylor.³⁸ Understanding friendship as both an equal complement to familial bonds and a qualifying principle of otherwise institutionalized relationships, Tadmor demonstrates that these novels' friend characters 'perform many of the deeds that both propel the plot, and provide it with a backdrop of plausible social, economic, and amicable interactions.'³⁹ She also problematizes the manipulative power of friendship language, which endows individual 'sentiments [with] an air of solidity and virtue, presenting personal experience in the pattern of well-known truths.'⁴⁰

Drawing on these works of literary scholars and cultural historians, my study substantiates their claims that friendship was a prolific reservoir of character constellations, plot, and narrative action, and takes into account further scholarship in its discussion of friendship as a thematic linchpin for literary complications of personal relations and social obligations. Alan Bray's *The Friend* (2003) uses selected historical examples mainly of upper-class male friendships from the medieval to the early modern periods to identify 'the beginnings of modernity' with the moment in the early sixteenth century when friendship becomes 'an essentially private relationship that is necessarily set apart from the commerce and practice of the world' because it turned into a 'noninstrumental' relationship exclusively 'based in affinity' and therefore not interfering with the 'wider

36 Chris Roulston, *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 4.

37 Christopher Flint, *Family Fictions: Narrative and Domestic Relations in Britain, 1688–1798* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 10.

38 More recently, Amy Culley has extended the textual range of friendship discussions even further by examining women's life writing in the second half of the long eighteenth century with regard to the 'range of [...] interpersonal relationships, including friendship, patronage, political or national affiliation, spiritual belonging, and social and literary networks.' Amy Culley, *British Women's Life Writing, 1760–1840: Friendship, Community, and Collaboration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), 5.

39 Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 245, 248.

40 Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, 198.

world of public affairs.⁴¹ Several scholars have contested this relegation of friendship to a private matter both as an abstract notion, and in practice. For example, Laurie Shannon claims that '[m]any of the principles that the phenomenon of Renaissance friendship made familiar in "personal", affective, or embodied terms persist, in senses now more commonly abstracted in the idioms of political ideology: consent, "liberty of speech", self-determination, affective autonomy, "public" institutions, "public" figures, and "bureaucratic" (neutral and impersonal) justice.'⁴² Friendship, she argues, has been a crucial factor in the formation of the individual because it 'registers as a set of laws, a doctrine by which to live, a prevailing code on which the behavior of individual subjects may be modeled and by which their condition may be measured. [. . .] Friendship takes shape, then, as a law of the subject – but not of his subordination.'⁴³ Another analysis that significantly complicates the distinction between private and public interactions by demonstrating how friendship informs both is Irene Q. Brown's seminal essay on heterosocial domesticity in female aristocratic culture in the first half of the long eighteenth century. Challenging the critical privileging of homoerotic attraction as well as the idea of an early modern relegation of friendship to the private sphere, Brown has shown that homo- and heterosocial attachments in fact continued to be present in both domestic and public domains until well into the eighteenth century. In an Enlightenment culture that 'stressed sociality over sexuality',

all major institutions came under scrutiny[;] the family too was reexamined, and not only by men. The resulting culture of domesticity was not limited to the private sphere, but contained public dimensions as well. [. . .] Enlightenment domesticity had a far-reaching effect on family culture in a modernizing society because of its emphasis on reason, choice, egalitarian moral responsibility, and heterosocial as well as homosocial friendships.⁴⁴

Based on a principle of friendship that 'transcend[ed] gender and social hierarchy', several studies have shown that enlightened domesticity continued to influence 'the tradition of rational criticism in the later eighteenth' and nineteenth centuries, where it was realized, for example, in the novels of 'Jane Austen and George Eliot.'⁴⁵

41 Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 44, 43, 41.

42 Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 14.

43 Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*, 6.

44 Irene Q. Brown, 'Domesticity, Feminism, and Friendship: Female Aristocratic Culture and Marriage in England, 1660–1760', *Journal of Family History* 7, no. 4 (December 1982): 421, 415, 406.

45 Brown, 'Domesticity', 419, 407. A study that has explored male friendship as an aspect of eighteenth-century political culture is Jones, *Friendship and Allegiance* (2013).

The ability to both manifest and challenge gender conventions as well as distinctions of social and economic domains is discussed also in studies on heterosocial friendship. Engaging with the findings of Amanda Vickery, who shows that the notion of separate ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres in the eighteenth century cannot be maintained since private rooms often served functions of sociability and business that ‘tied the individual to their many communities’,⁴⁶ Jennifer Golightly demonstrates that ‘female radical novelists are not content to exercise power as the “angel in the house”; they want to make clear that the basic components of the “private” realm, home and family, marriage and sex, are inherently political.’⁴⁷ In their novels, they conceived of heterosocial friendship as ‘alternative relationships that circumvent[ed] the realities of eighteenth-century marriage’, privileging the advice of male friends and celebrating the ‘companionate marriage’ built on friendship between equals.⁴⁸ As my analyses show, the belief that a successful marriage must be built on friendship is an essential aspect of philosophical friendship discussions in the long eighteenth century, whereas male friend characters who offer radical advice that contests societal conventions are a recurrent plot element not only in radical novels of the later Hanoverian period.⁴⁹ Since heterosocial friendship rarely forms the main motif of a novel, but runs independently from the main (courtship) plot, it has attracted only occasional critical attention.⁵⁰ Emma Donoghue points out that ‘short summaries of long eighteenth-century novels tend to distort them by giving undue prominence to “what happens in the end” – an emphasis that disadvantages friendship between female and male characters that ‘is rarely a destination, [but] often a journey.’⁵¹ A critical appreciation of heterosocial friendship must acknowledge that it follows ‘its own rules and boundaries’, and that it is ‘not simply a theme’ in eighteenth-century

46 Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 222.

47 Jennifer Golightly, *The Family, Marriage, and Radicalism in British Women's Novels of the 1790s: Public Affection and Private Affliction* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2012), 26.

48 Golightly, *The Family*, 30, 44.

49 Novels that feature male friend characters who encourage their female counterparts to defy societal conventions are, for example, Frances Brooke's *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1762) and Harriet Lee's *The Errors of Innocence* (1786).

50 Scholarship has shown a marked preference for investigating homosocial friendships in literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The latter has been examined by the following studies: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Tess Cosslett, *Woman to Woman: Female Friendship in Victorian Fiction* (Brighton: Harvester, 1988); Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton, *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). A notable distinction is Victor Luftig, *Seeing Together: Friendship between the Sexes in English Writing, from Mill to Woolf* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

51 Donoghue, ‘Male–Female Friendship’, 57.

writers' works 'but an important factor in their production' that was motivated by the 'distinct movement towards heterosociality in England in the eighteenth century'.⁵²

Friendship, Gender, and Genre: Conjunctions and Dissociations

In contrast to classical philosophers like Cicero, and early modern thinkers like Montaigne, who denied women the strength and virtue to form ideal friendships,⁵³ Enlightenment philosophy endorsed homosocial bonds as well as friendships between the sexes, granting both women and men the sentiment and the ability for disinterested affections.⁵⁴ This view reflects the overall cultural notion of an essential similarity of women and men, still prevalent in the eighteenth century but soon to be succeeded by the Victorians' 'belief that men and women were opposite sexes, different in kind rather than degree, [which] took hold in almost every class' after 1830.⁵⁵ It is therefore imperative not to distinguish categorially between homo- and heterosocial relationships in this study, but to investigate the interplay between the different forms, meanings, and contexts of friendship in the later Hanoverian novel.

The texts analysed in this study present a considerable variety of forms of friendship, with most of them portraying both hetero- and homosocial attachments. Brooke's *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, Austen's *Persuasion*, Edgeworth's *Helen*, and Lennox's *Euphemia* feature heterosocial affections between female and male characters and portray homosocial bonds between women, which are complemented by examples of male friendships in Brooke's and Austen's novels. In Scott's *Redgauntlet*, the central male friendship accounts for both the plot and the novel's narrative perspectives, and is accompanied by a heterosocial bond derived from what begins as a romantic interest. In addition to homosocial bonds, heterosocial affections are pursued by many characters as a valued and accepted form of civil interaction. When reading novels of the later Hanoverian decades, it is intriguing to observe that not only are friendships not limited to homosocial affections, but that what dooms amicable bonds is, in fact, exaggerated passion of whatever provenance rather than an association of heterosexual romance and friendship. A notable exception is Helen Maria Williams's *Julia*, where the passion that renders impossible a heterosocial friendship and almost destroys the homosocial affections of the female main characters

52 Donoghue, 'Male-Female Friendship', 107, 3, 25.

53 See Marcus Tullius Cicero, 'De Amicitia', in *Friendship*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Francis Bacon, and Ralph Waldo Emerson (Amsterdam: Fredonia Books, 2002), 32; Michel de Montaigne, 'Of Friendship', in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, transl. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965), 138.

54 An overview of the philosophical discourse on friendship in the long eighteenth century can be found below.

55 Marcus, *Between Women*, 6.

is romantic in origin. As Shelley shows in *Frankenstein*, however, narcissism is just as fatal to the pursuit and establishment of disinterested relationships as romantic infatuation. In both cases, friendship is rendered as a potential antidote to emotional excess, irrespective of the gender of those involved. In addition to forming connections with characters of similar or different social background, friendship plays an important role as a desired quality of familial and marital relations. Again transcending the limits of gender and in line with several Enlightenment thinkers' praise of its beneficial influence, Brooke, Scott, Lennox, Austen, and Edgeworth insist that, to be stable and mutually agreeable, relationships both between parents and their children and between partners in marriage must observe the rules of friendship. In Brooke's *Julia Mandeville* and Scott's *Millenium Hall* friendship also serves as a principle of communal interactions, and as a trope of civil engagement and national unity in Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet*.

In addition to various narrative realizations of friendship, my research has taken into account works by female and male writers, adopting Patricia Meyer Spacks's (only partly ironic) strategy to 'treat male and female novelists as members of a single species.'⁵⁶ In literary criticism, as outlined above, friendship has often been considered through the lens of gender, a focus that defined not only the socio-cultural context, but also the inherent values assigned to the relationships in question. Many scholars have, not unreasonably, established a connection between the form of friendship and the gender of the writer(s) on which they conduct their research – one reason, presumably, why there is little scholarship on male friendship in the novels of Jane Austen. Studies on female friendships such as Lilian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981) and Sharon Marcus's *Between Women* (2007) have immensely enriched our understanding of the varieties of women's homosocial relationships, whereas the focus on heterosocial bonds in literature, as applied by Emma Donoghue in 'Male–Female Friendship and English Fiction in the Mid-Eighteenth Century' (1996), has successfully de-eroticized friendships between women and men. Both of these gendered gazes engage in one way or another with what is presumed to be the counterpart of friendship: romantic affection. Since my study includes literary representations of friendship as a quality in romantic relationships, including marriage, such a distinction would be unwarranted.

It is in both grateful appreciation of, and deliberate contrast to, established gendered approaches that my study discusses friendship according to its significance for the diversification of the novel genre rather than with regard to the gender of the characters involved. Moreover, neither does it distinguish between male and female writers' treatment of the bond, nor does it explore whether the philosophy of a male thinker influenced the work of a female writer in different ways than it affected the writing of a male novelist. And just as the philosophical background is not segregated

56 Spacks, *Novel Beginnings*, 5.

along the lines of gender, neither are the forms of friendship deployed in the novels, which explore homo- and heterosocial bonds as well as disinterested affection in romantic affiliations, familial relations, and communal and socio-economic structures. Instead, the discussion demonstrates the connection between the comprehensive conception of friendship in Enlightenment philosophy and the diversity of friendship forms and qualities in the later Hanoverian novel.

While a gendered gaze has not been applied to either the novels in question or the motif of friendship, a cursory glance at the texts chosen for detailed discussion shows a majority of female novelists, which suggests that women writers in the later Hanoverian decades showed a stronger interest in advancing and substantiating the novel genre with the structural and thematic means offered by friendship. Several contextual circumstances of literary history, while not categorially excluding male writers, explain the dominance of female authors in a study on the significance of friendship in novels from 1760 to 1830. To begin with, in the last third of the eighteenth century, the 'proportion of named women authors [was] overtaking that of men'⁵⁷ for the first time, a phenomenon that continued a development begun in the late seventeenth century. Literary scholars have come to acknowledge that 'the period from Behn to Austen [was] remarkable for the quantity and quality of its women writers', which is why they 'now regularly refer to the "feminization" of the key new literary form in the second half of the eighteenth century.'⁵⁸ As Janet Todd has shown, late-eighteenth-century fiction in particular was distinguished by a 'conjunction of genre and gender' that bestowed moral authority on women novelists such as 'Fanny Burney, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, and a little later Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen[, who were] unrivalled by any male writers until the rise of Walter Scott.'⁵⁹ John Skinner claims that women writers were 'attracted [. . . to the demotic quality of the novel genre in the eighteenth century] because it did not require classical education; and as female novelists from Behn to Austen helped to perpetuate the form, they in turn consolidated this popular or vernacular element',⁶⁰ which explains why a large number of women writers included stories of friendship, among other aspects of everyday life, in their novels. In addition, gynocritical discussions of eighteenth-century literary history have argued that female authors were more likely candidates to be attracted to, and to translate into narrative, Enlightenment ideas of sociability. Anne K. Mellor emphasizes the stronger inclination of women writers 'to celebrate, not the achievements of the imagination nor the overflow of powerful feelings, but rather the workings of the rational mind, a mind

57 Caroline Franklin, 'The Novel of Sensibility in the 1780s', in *English and British Fiction 1750–1820*, ed. Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 165.

58 Skinner, *Introduction*, 53.

59 Todd, *Sign of Angelica*, 228.

60 Skinner, *Introduction*, 21–22.

relocated [. . .] in the female as well as the male body. They thus insisted upon the fundamental equality between women and men.⁶¹ Women writers, according to Mellor, tended to promote 'gradual' social change that involved an extension of 'the values of domesticity into the public realm.'⁶² I will take up this contention to argue that friendship is, in fact, not only a form of sociability and intimacy that combined passion with reason, but also a literary means with which female writers accomplished the transfer of domestic values, turning the later Hanoverian novel into an interface of private domain and public sphere.

As emphasized above, this study discusses novels whose engagement with friendship substantiates and/or advances aspects of the novel genre in the second half of the long eighteenth century. Therefore, texts that show little interest in the thematic potential and narratological qualities of the bond at the interface of Enlightenment sociability and Romantic notions of the self have not been selected for in-depth analysis. Several novels by male writers, such as Oliver Goldsmith's picaresque *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), were considered but ultimately found to display only a passing or perfunctory inclusion of friendship that merely continues the early-eighteenth-century *deus ex machina* strategy of the picaresque. These novels are referred to in the context of the substantive analyses, but they were not selected for detailed discussion. Other texts present early examples of the destructiveness of a self-absorbed sensibility that fails to attend productively to the needs of others: the male protagonists of Henry Mackenzie's sentimental classic *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and the anonymously authored *Death's a Friend* (1788) anticipate what I define as the narcissistic impotence of the Romantic longing for friendship in the discussion of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). It is Shelley's rather than Mackenzie's novel that deserves centre stage in this study, for it stands out as connecting a critique of Rousseauvian solipsism with Gothic conventions, creating the trope of the self-destructive Gothic protagonist that was to be taken up by authors such as Sir Walter Scott.⁶³ Other novels by male writers – such as William Hayley's *The Young Widow* (1789), Henry Mackenzie's *Julia de Roubigné* (1777), and Thomas Holcroft's *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* (1794/7) – demonstrate the thematic variety of the epistolary genre, but they neither feature exchanges between friend characters as means of introducing different narrative perspectives nor consider the values and virtues associated with enlightened ideas of friendship developed by both male and female thinkers from Jeremy Taylor to Mary Wollstonecraft. Incidentally, Holcroft's *Anna St. Ives* (1792) does feature an intimate exchange between Anna and a close friend, who is a source of strength for the eponymous

61 Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1993), 2–3.

62 Mellor, *Romanticism*, 3.

63 See Ina Schabert, *Englische Literaturgeschichte: Eine neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997), 399–400.

protagonist, but she writes far fewer and considerably shorter letters than the novel's other correspondents.⁶⁴

The later Hanoverian period produced a considerable number of female novelists – from Sarah Scott and Elizabeth Inchbald to Mary Wollstonecraft and Helen Maria Williams – who combined their promotion of enlightened sociability with their interest in political developments. They used friendship as a 'liberatory'⁶⁵ trope precisely because it was not confined to a particular gender, but transcended socio-economic and sexual boundaries. It is the transgressive quality of friendship, employed for and translated into developments of the genre, that is often absent from the works of male writers who otherwise include friendly relationships. For example, John Hawkesworth's oriental tale *Almorán and Hamet* (1761) contains general references to the virtues of friendship, but the motif influences neither narrative form nor central themes of a novel describing the rivalry between twin brothers.⁶⁶ As Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) already demonstrated, male characters do not need friends to challenge social conventions: the eponymous protagonist enjoys a picaresque *Bildung* that combines a quest, erotic adventures, and romance without having to sacrifice his reputation or future. Another influential novel of the mid-Hanoverian period is Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), which features a short, embedded story about the reunion of long-lost friends,⁶⁷ but the text's entertaining satire of Enlightenment ideas of human perception and experience shows little interest in an exploration of friendship. Other male writers of the period appear to have been attracted to experimenting with the short-lived novelistic genre that featured non-human protagonists. Deidre Shauna Lynch defines novels such as Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal; or, The Adventures of a Guinea* (1760–65), Tobias Smollett's *History and Adventures of an Atom* (1769), and Thomas Bridges, *The Adventures of a Bank-Note* (1770–71)⁶⁸ as 'narratives that [. . .] were more intent on imagining society than imagining the self and that only with difficulty can be said to have central characters in

64 See also Hilary N. Fezzy, 'Examining Jacobin Sexual Politics in *Anna St. Ives*', in *Re-Viewing Thomas Holcroft, 1745–1809*, ed. Miriam L. Wallace and A. A. Markley (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 134.

65 Alessa Johns, *Women's Utopias of the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 15. Johns uses the term to characterize feminist utopian writing in particular.

66 *Almorán and Hamet* was conceived as 'a thinly veiled allegory and compliment to George [III] whose character [was] favourably represented [as] close to that of the virtuous twin, Hamet.' Ros Ballaster, 'Philosophical and Oriental Tales', in *English and British Fiction 1750–1820*, ed. Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 360.

67 Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, ed. Howard Anderson (New York: Norton, 1980), 176–196.

68 For a detailed discussion of novels with non-human narrators, see Robert Adams Day's 'Introduction' to Tobias Smollett's *History and Adventures of an Atom* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), xli–xlii.

the first place.⁶⁹ Lynch's analysis corroborates an observation made over the course of my research: in the later Hanoverian decades, female novelists appear to be more interested in creating literary characters that complicate the experience of the modern individual, and who depict their characters' perceptions, their actions and interactions in society through the friendship trope in ways that are less pronounced in novels by male authors. To give an example, while the relationship between Mary and her friend Ann both accounts for the progression of the plot and for complicating the characterization of the protagonist in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Mary: A Fiction* (1788), William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), while also significantly interested in the exploration of human psychology, features but passing references to friendship that serve to do little more than indicate general goodwill.⁷⁰ Literary scholar Nancy Armstrong had claimed 'that the modern individual was first and foremost a woman' who came into being through 'written representations of the self [in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic fiction, which] allowed the modern individual to become an economic and psychological reality.'⁷¹ Acknowledging Armstrong, Skinner insists that 'feminocentric novels [must not be] naively [equated] with the biological sex of the writer', but contends that male authors like Fielding and Smollett display a 'striking' preference for 'autocratic [. . .] narrators' that

suggests a fictional equivalent to the historians that Armstrong wittily describes as representing the history of male institutions – *to a man*. In the long run, it was the 'documentary' or 'feminizing' tendencies which prevailed in English fiction, at least until Sir Walter Scott: in pure *novel* terms, the burlesque of Fielding's mock-epics-in-prose and the misogyny of Smollett's Juvenalian satire came to seem outmoded male aberrations.⁷²

Indeed, this study will show that Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824) broke new ground by depicting a group of three friends whose shared experiences combine to facilitate their respective development, and whose friendship not only accounts for different narrative perspectives but also serves as the domain where private and public values combine to promote an enlightened vision of a unified British citizenship.

69 Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 7.

70 The 'complex fascination' that connects the two main characters – Falkland, the protagonist who committed murder, and Caleb Williams, who pursues him for it – has been described as 'anticipat[ing] the relationship between Victor Frankenstein and the Monster in the great novel written by Godwin's daughter Mary Shelley.' Jon Mee, 'The Novel Wars of 1790–1804', in *English and British Fiction, 1750–1820*, ed. Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 206.

71 Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 8.

72 Skinner, *Introduction*, 24.