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Defoe's Birth

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a happy country marriage. The impulse toward a happy ending outweighs the ongoing need to interrogate the times.

SMITH, EMILY. "‘I would Write, too, if he would Bring me a Pen, Ink and Paper’: Katharine Evans, Sarah Chevers, and the Publication of Pain," *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, 17 (2010), 77–91.

In 1658 two English Quakers, Katharine Evans (c. 1618–1692) and Sarah Chevers (c. 1608–1664), planned missionary travels to Alexandria and Jerusalem; these plans were disrupted when they were detained in Malta by minions of the Inquisition. Held prisoners for three and a half years, the two women collaborated to produce a written account of their sufferings: a sympathetic English ship captain, Daniel Baker, smuggled that account out of Malta and subsequently edited it and saw it through the press in London. Their collaborative work appeared in 1662 under the title, *This Is a Short Relation of Some of the Cruel Sufferings (For the Truths Sake) of Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers, in the Inquisition in the Isle of Malta*; an expanded account appeared in 1663 after their release from prison.

Ms. Smith approaches these texts from

several angles. Baker was a skillful editor and his various adjustments and interventions make the narrative seem almost protonovelistic. At the same time, the fact that *A Short Relation* includes a miscellaneous compilation of hymns, songs, and letters offers a reminder of the extreme generic fluidity of autobiographical writings in this period. Ms. Smith also elaborates the multiple dimensions of textuality involved in the whole enterprise of missionary activity; spreading the saving word involves the interaction of written, oral, visual, and aural resources.

At the center of Ms. Smith’s argument are bodies and spirits in pain. This is “a testimony of trauma.” The women’s trials range from threats and physical abuse to self-starvation and false doctrine. But what is most striking about their account of their suffering is that it is neither desperate nor incoherent. What brings all of their adversities into focus is the transformation of bodily suffering into spiritualized suffering and spiritual suffering into publishable religious witness. Setting down these pains in the form of written testimonies and offering them to the world bring together concepts that might ordinarily seem separate: body and spirit, private and public, learning and teaching through shared experiences.

DEFOE’S BIRTH

J. A. Downie

In 1937, James Sutherland began his fine biography of the author of *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner* by describing the “unsettled and eventful world into which Daniel Defoe was born” before going on to point out, perfectly correctly, that: “The exact date of his birth is unknown.” “From various sources, however, one can make a fairly good guess,” Sutherland continued: “it is almost certain that Defoe was born in the autumn of 1660.”¹ In fact, the reasons adduced by Sutherland suggest that Defoe was born in the autumn of 1659 rather than in the

autumn of 1660. First, Defoe's age is given as "ab[ou]t 24" in the license dated 28 December 1683 (not 24 December, as Sutherland has it) which authorized his marriage to the twenty-year-old Mary Tuffley on 1 January 1684.² Second, in the Preface to *The Protestant Monastery*—included in both Maximillian E. Novak's list of Defoe's works in *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature: Volume 2: 1660–1800* (1971) and P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens's *Critical Bibliography* (1998)—"Andrew Moreton, Esq;" writes: "Alas I have but small Health and little Leisure to turn Author, being now in my 67th Year, almost worn out with Age and Sickness." *The Protestant Monastery* was dated 1727 on the title-page but actually published in November 1726. And a year later, in *Augusta Triumphans*, Defoe returns to his physical condition when he insists that: "I have but a short Time to live, nor would I waste my remaining Thread of Life in Vain."³

There is a complicating factor, however: according to the Parish Register of St Giles, Cripplegate, "Elizab' daugt' of James Foe tallowchand' & of Ailce [i.e. Alice?] not Christe[ned]: [was] borne June 19" in 1659.⁴ If this were the case, then Defoe patently could not have been born to James and Alice Foe in the autumn of 1659, let alone on 30 September—the date on which Robinson Crusoe is shipwrecked on his island, and which, according to some commentators, seems to have had some special significance for Defoe. Thus, in his study of *Defoe's Early Life*, Frank Bastian acknowledges that, "[w]ith so many improbabilities, it would be rash to be dogmatic," but nevertheless he goes on to explain that, "for the sake of convenience it will be assumed, when referring to Defoe's age, that he was born on 30 September 1660."⁵

Until recently, therefore, scholars have tended to assume, on the basis of the evidence of the Preface to *The Protestant Monastery*, that if Defoe had indeed entered his sixty-seventh year by November 1726, that he was probably born in the autumn of 1660. More recently, however, John Martin has asserted that the author, Daniel Defoe, who wrote *The True-Born-Englishman*, *The Shortest-Way with the Dissenters*, and *Jure Divino*, as well as the series of narratives which we now know as Defoe's novels, was born not in London in 1660, but in Etton, Northamptonshire, in 1644. The basis of Martin's assertion is an entry in the Parish Register of the Church of St. Stephen, Etton, which he has posted as a jpeg on the website of the discussion group of the Defoe Society (Defoe@lists). The relevant entry reads: "Daniel the sonne of Daniel Foe & Hellen his wife was baptized 3 December.1644."

What Martin has yet to do, however, is demonstrate that the author of *Robinson Crusoe* is the subject of this entry in the Parish Register of St. Stephen, Etton. Instead, Martin argues that, in the absence of an entry in the Parish Register of St. Giles Cripplegate of the baptism of a son of James and Ailce Foe called Daniel, anyone who does not accept that the Daniel Foe baptized at Etton in 1644 is the Daniel Defoe known to posterity must demonstrate that the latter was indeed the son of James Foe, tallowchandler. This is a decidedly odd method of proceeding, particularly when the significant number of documentary references to Defoe that appear to indicate he was born around 1660 in London are taken into account, but there is one piece of evidence emanating from Defoe himself that would appear to put the matter beyond dispute.

In a letter to Robert Harley written while he was in Edinburgh on government business and dated 24 December 1706, Defoe wrote: "I Confess myself in Some Disordr to night,

The Account of the Death of my Father Comeing just as I was writing this.”⁶ There can be no doubt that this refers to the death of James Foe, whose will, dated 20 March 1706, named his “son,” Daniel Foe, as his executor. This should come as no surprise because it was on the basis that he was the son of James Foe that, some eighteen years earlier, Defoe had applied for entry into the Worshipful Company of Butchers in January 1688.⁷

In addition to what would appear to be unimpeachable documentary evidence that James Foe was the father of the Daniel Defoe known to posterity, there are two pieces of evidence to suggest that Defoe was born in the early years of the Restoration. I have already mentioned the marriage license which states that in December 1683 “Daniel Foe, of St. Michael, Cornhill, Lond., Mercht, Bachr,” was “ab[ou]t 24.” Further evidence that Defoe was born in the early 1660s is provided in the important notice published in *The London Gazette*, No. 3879, for 11–14 January 1702[-1703] offering a reward for his discovery and apprehension on account of *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. Although scholars have frequently referred to this source, I do not believe it has ever been quoted *verbatim*:

St. James’s, Jan. 10. *Whereas Daniel de Foe alias de Fooe, is charged with writing a Scandalous and Seditious Pamphlet, Entitled, [The shortest way with the Dissenters.] Whoever shall discover the said Daniel de Foe alias de Fooe to one of Her Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State, or any of Her Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, so as he may be apprehended, shall have a Reward of 50 l. which Her Majesty has ordered immediately to be paid upon such Discovery.*

He is a middle Sized-Spare Man, about 40 years old, of a brown Complexion, and dark brown coloured Hair; but wears a Wig, a hooked Nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large Mould near his Mouth, was born in London, and for many years was a Hose Factor in Freeman’s-yard, in Cornhill, and now is Owner of the Brick and Pantile Works near Tilbury-Fort in Essex.

As Paula Backscheider rightly observes, this is “the longest description we have of Defoe.”⁸ For my present purposes I should like to draw attention to two aspects of the information given in the notice: first, that Defoe is believed to be “*about 40 years old*”; and second, that he “*was born in London.*” However one looks at this piece of documentary evidence, it does not support the argument that Daniel Defoe was born in Etton, Northamptonshire, in December 1644. On the contrary, the clear implication is that the “Daniel de Foe *alias* de Fooe” the authorities wished to apprehend was born in London in the early 1660s.

I should like to make two other points about Martin’s discovery that a Daniel Foe was baptized at Etton in 1644. First, when he was writing his essay, “The Ancestry of Daniel Defoe,”⁹ P. D. Munday enjoyed the assistance of the Revd Mr. J. A. Humphries, who consulted the Parish Register of St. Stephen on his behalf. Patently, the Revd Mr. Humphries would have seen the entry stating that “Daniel the sonne of Daniel Foe & Hellen his wife was baptized 3. December.1644.” I would suggest that the Revd Mr. Humphries did not jump to the conclusion that the entry referred to the author of *Robinson Crusoe*

because he regarded it as perfectly reasonable that Daniel Foe would name his first-born son Daniel for his own father—Defoe’s grandfather, Daniel Foe of Etton. This would not make the Daniel Foe baptized on 3 December 1644 “our” Daniel Defoe, rather the reverse. Second, the Daniel Foe who was the father of the Daniel baptized on 3 December 1644 died in 1647 and, as Frank Bastian remarks, “it is not known what became of his infant family.”¹⁰ But if, as everyone seems to agree, James Foe of London—who was first a tallowchandler and then a butcher—was the younger brother of the Daniel Foe who died in 1647, then it would have been a mark of love and respect for him to name *his* first-born son Daniel for his father and elder brother, neither of whom was still alive in 1660.

As a secondary challenge to those who would continue to argue that Defoe was born in London in or around 1660 rather than in Etton in 1644, Martin asks for evidence that Defoe was in London between 1660 and 1 January 1684, when he married Mary Tuffley at St. Botolph’s, Aldgate.¹¹ While there are several references to James Foe in Parish and Wards records from these years, including Poll Tax records for Broad Street Ward dating from 3 April 1678 indicating that the household of James Foe included his wife, two children, and a servant,¹² no documentary evidence of this sort exists to confirm that the man known to posterity as Daniel Defoe was in London prior to the 1680s. But of course this should not be at all surprising, for the simple reason that, if Defoe was born in or around 1660, he would not have been an adult until 1681 at the earliest, and therefore unlikely to have been named in Parish and Ward records. It is therefore not unreasonable that the earliest documentary evidence of the existence of “Daniel Foe, of St Michael, Cornhill, Lond., Mercht,” is dated 28 December 1683.

There are, however, a number of indications in Defoe’s writings, particularly the *Review*, to suggest that he was in London during the 1660s and 1670s. He claimed to have seen the consequences of the Fire of London of 1666. “I remember very well what I saw with a sad Heart, *tho’ I was but Young*,” he wrote in 1713, “the whole City was laid in Ashes.”¹³ This sounds more like the recollection of a child of six than that of a twenty-one-year-old adult born in December 1644. Further evidence that Defoe was not an adult in the 1670s is offered in *More Short Ways with the Dissenters* (1704) in which he maintained that: “the Author of these Sheets happens to be one that had, what little Education he can pretend to, under . . . Mr. Charles Morton of Newington Green”—a claim he repeated eight years later in *The Present State of the Parties in Great Britain* (1712):

There was, some Years ago, a private Academy of the *Dissenters* not far away from *London*. . . . Here were produced of Ministers, Mr. *Timothy Cruso*, Mr. *Hannot of Yarmouth*, Mr. *Nathaniel Taylor*, Mr. *Owen*, and several Others; and of another Kind, Poets *Sam. Wessley*, *Daniel De Foe*, and two or three of your *Western Martyrs*. . . .¹⁴

As Morton’s Academy ran from the 1670s to the 1680s it would have made perfect sense for Defoe to have attended it in his teens, rather than in his late twenties or early thirties, as he would have had to have done had he been born in Etton in 1644.

Recalling his experiences “between the Years, 1678, and 1688” in the *Review*, Defoe also appears to provide clear indications that he was a boy in the 1670s. On 22 December

1705 he advised “all the *Dissenters* in *England*, of what sort soever” to “Be CONTENTED,” for the simple reason that: “Whoever among the *Dissenters*, Pleases to look back to the Times in *England*, between the Years, 1678, and 88, and will please but to Review the Face of Affairs then, either Religious or Civil, will find more than Ordinary Arguments to back this Motion, Founded upon the Convictions of their own Reason.” “How Terrible Apprehensions we had of the Growth of Popery, and its Introduction into this Kingdom, Hand in Hand with Slavery,” he continued. “And what Extravagant things, did those Apprehensions drive some well meaning People upon, in order to prevent it.” While up to this point it might be possible to argue that Defoe was not arguing from his own personal experience of being in London during these years, it is significant that on two separate occasions in the same essay he insists that he was “a Boy” at the time. The first of these concerns the fears of the Dissenters that a restoration of popery would lead to the banning of English translations of the Bible. “I my self then, but a Boy,” Defoe wrote, “work’d like a Horse, till I wrote out the whole *Pentateuch*, and then was so ty’rd, I was willing to run the Risque of the rest.” When considering, later on in the same essay, whether the Popish Plot was fact or fiction, Defoe explained that although he “firmly believ[ed in] the reality of a [Plot]. . . . I Confess, tho’ a Boy, I could not then, nor can now come up” to the more exaggerated claims of the contemporary scaremongers who sought to whip up the fears of the Dissenters. He then went on to maintain that “my Reasons were as they still are,” and proceeded to enumerate them. This was not the only occasion on which Defoe, in the *Review*, insisted that he was in London in the 1670s. “I remember in the Time of the *Popish Plot*,” he wrote on another occasion, “when Murthering Men in the Dark was pretty much in fashion, and every honest Man walk’d the streets in danger of his Life, a very pretty Invention was found out, which soon put an end to the *Doctrine of Assassination*, and the Practice too, and clear’d our Streets of the Murthering Villains of that Day, and this was a *Protestant Flail*.” That Defoe was clearly insinuating that he was speaking from personal experience is indicated when he goes on to say that: “I have frequently walked with one about me, in the Old *Popish* Days, and tho’ I never set up for a Hero, yet when Arm’d with this *Scourge for a Papist*, I remember I fear’d nothing.”¹⁵

What, then, do we do with this kind of compelling autobiographical evidence that Defoe was not only in London during the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, but that he was “then, but a boy?” Do we regard it as strong supporting evidence that the Daniel Defoe known to posterity was the son of James and Ailce Foe and that he was born in or around 1660 in London? Or do we discount it on the grounds that it does not fit in with the discovery that a Daniel Foe was born to a Daniel Foe in Etton in 1644? Mr. Review’s insistence that at the time of the Popish Plot scare he was “then, but a boy” seems to me to amount to clear testimony that “our” Defoe was not born in Etton in 1644, but that, as is indicated by other evidence, he was “ab[ou]t 24” in December 1683, “about 40 years old” in January 1703, and “in [his] 67th Year” in November 1726.

¹James Sutherland, *Defoe* (London: Methuen & Co., 1937), p. 2.

²“28 Dec 1683 Daniel Foe, of St Michaell, Cornehill, Lond., Mercht, Bachr, abt 24, & Mrs Mary Tuffley, of St Bottolph’s, Aldgate, Lond., Spr, abt 20, with consent of her father; alleged by Charles Lodwick, of St Michaell’s afsd; at St Bottolph’s afsd, St Lawrence, Jewry, or St Giles,

Cripplegate, Lond” (England; Canterbury—Marriage Licences Issued By The Archbishop of Canterbury, 1679–1694). Cf. G. A. Aitken, “Defoe’s Birth and Marriage,” *The Athenaeum*, 1890, vol. II, p. 257, quoted in Sutherland, *Defoe*, 283n2.

³*Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe: Volume 8: Social Reform*, ed. W. R. Owens (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), pp. 240, 259.

⁴St. Giles Cripplegate Parish Register, June 1659, cited in Frank Bastian, *Defoe’s Early Life* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), p. 9; and Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions: His Life and Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford, 2001), p. 21.

⁵Bastian, *Defoe’s Early Life*, p. 8.

⁶*The Letters of Daniel Defoe*, edited by George Harris Healey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 180. The holograph letter, in Defoe’s hand, is extant in the Harley papers in the British Library.

⁷Guildhall MS 6443.1.26^v, cited in Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1989), p. 549n2: “At a court held in Pudding-Lane, Daniel Foe, son of James Foe, citizen and butcher, of Fore-Street, Cripplegate, attended to apply for his admission by patrimony, and was admitted accordingly, and paid in discharge of serving all offices, L 10 15 s.” Although Martin discounts out of hand the evidence of James Foe having a son called Daniel, let alone his being the father of the Daniel Defoe known to posterity, he cites an entry in Freedom Admissions Record Book of the Worshipful Company of Butchers which reads: “1687/8. Jan 12. Danl. Foe fil Jacobi Foe cet. LL Libre Fact per patrimony & sol” (CLC/L/B1/C008/MS06446).

⁸Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life*, p. 102.

⁹See P. D. Munday, “The Ancestry of Daniel Defoe,” *N&Q*, 174 (1938), 112–114.

¹⁰Bastian, *Defoe’s Early Life*, p. 11.

¹¹St Botolph’s Aldgate Register of Marriages c. 1675–1695, 1711–1722 P69/BOT2/AMSO 9230, item 001.

¹²City of London Record Office, Ass. Box 11/9, cited in Bastian, *Defoe’s Early Life*, p. 323n54.

¹³*Review*, I[X], p. 115.

¹⁴Defoe, *More Short Ways with the Dissenters*, p. 5; *The Present State of the Parties in Great Britain*, p. 319. Martin simply does not accept that Defoe attended Morton’s Academy.

¹⁵*Review*, VIII, p. 614.

Goldsmiths College

BOOK REVIEWS

DUSTIN GRIFFIN. *Swift and Pope: Satirists in Dialogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge, 2010. Pp. xiv + 260. \$115.

The argument of this scholarly and nuanced book is that Pope and Swift were in a continuous dialogue with one another throughout most of their writing lives; that one of the most significant determinants of their respective literary forms and meanings was that conversation. The conversation, though, became increasingly testy and, especially on Pope’s side, manipulative, as they aged. Whereas, in older thinking about Swift and Pope, they have sometimes been taken to stand together as representative of Augustanism, emblemizing the values of eighteenth-century neoclassicism and pre-Enlightenment rationality, *Swift and Pope* argues that such a coupling is unwarranted. Modern writers who have been the victims of such critical elision—Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge as