

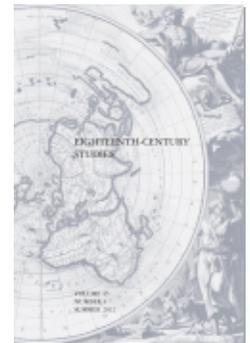


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DANIEL DEFOE AND APPLEBEE'S ORIGINAL WEEKLY JOURNAL: AN ATTEMPT AT RE-ATTRIBUTION

Maximillian Novak

William Lee's argument that between 25 June 1720 and 14 May 1726, Defoe was the main contributor to *The Original Weekly Journal* (later titled *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*)¹ was an accepted fact by every Defoe scholar until 1997. In that year, P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens published an essay with the title, "The Myth of Defoe as Applebee's Man," in which they questioned Lee's ascription, arguing that any connection between *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* and Defoe was pure speculation, without the slightest external evidence.² They noted that this involved dismissing over 300,000 words: a substantial amount of writing, even for so prolific a writer as Defoe. "Of course," they wrote, "it could turn out that these scholars are right in believing in Defoe's connection with Applebee, but it is not clear what they base their present confidence on. For the moment, we suggest, it would be better that this article of faith should be given up."³ The purpose of this article is twofold: first, to explain why so many Defoe scholars (including myself) believed they were reading Defoe in Lee's selections from *Applebee's* in his two volumes of Defoe's later journalism and to return it to the status of "probably by Defoe," a category that constitutes approximately a third of Furbank's and Owens's *Bibliography* of Defoe's writings.⁴

Harold Love rightly classified the work of Furbank and Owens on the Defoe canon in the category he names "Confident discrediting of an existing attribution."⁵ Indeed, much of their labor and ingenuity in cleaning out some of the works claimed for Defoe in the *Checklist* of John Robert Moore is entirely convincing. They demonstrate that Moore sometimes used circular logic; they ascribe a work to Defoe on the basis of evidence provided from another work of doubtful

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authorship, in some cases providing evidence to suggest that Defoe was extremely unlikely to have been the author of a given work. Yet it must be noted that in their book on “de-attribution,” their method for dismissing many works from the canon relies upon a process that Love identifies as a forceful type of “rhetoric.”⁶ How absurd, they often write, to think that Defoe could have composed a work when he seems to disagree with similar ideas elsewhere! Yet we know that Defoe wrote many pamphlets for the Tory administration, with which he was associated between 1710 and 1714, that bear little resemblance to his true beliefs. The style, they argue about other writings, does not seem like Defoe’s, or, in other cases, the authorship is unproven. Many of the works dismissed have as much claim to Defoe’s authorship as, say, *The Commentator* (1720), which no contemporary identified with Defoe, but which they consider to be his. Their dismissal of Lee’s claims about Defoe’s contributions to *Applebee’s* is a masterly piece of rhetoric. Aside from pointing out the lack of external evidence supporting Lee’s arguments, they have a “concession” section in which they pick out three of the introductory letters printed in *Applebee’s* as having a remote relation to passages from known works of Defoe, leaving the impression that these are the only possible resemblances to Defoe’s manner of thinking that might be found in Lee’s selections from the journal.⁷ In fact, as I will argue, the internal evidence for Defoe’s involvement with *Applebee’s* is far stronger than Furbank and Owen suggest.⁸

THE PROBLEM WITH DE-ATTRIBUTION

Furbank and Owen’s phrase “article of faith” suggests that no one before them had thought to question Lee’s ascriptions or to examine the content and style of the pieces in *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*. According to this theory, previous scholars had merely accepted what Lee had to say without questioning his evidence. Yet it is clear that Sutherland had no qualms about questioning Lee’s judgments in his biography of Defoe.⁹ Why, then, should Furbank and Owens have believed that so acute an expert on both Defoe and contemporary newspapers would have accepted Lee’s premise as an “article of faith”? They state that “On mere grounds of style and tone, much of the material is a kind of sub-*Spectator* whimsical foolery” similar to the *Spectator* contributions of Eustace Budgell.¹⁰ I can only assume that their suggestion of Budgell as someone capable of writing the pieces in *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal* is not a serious one,¹¹ but the implications are that these essays were all fluff, lacking the seriousness that Defoe usually displayed. Such a judgment is likely to discourage future scholars from examining *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, where, to my mind, an author resembling Defoe reflected a variety of interests on such serious subjects as atheism, the plague, contemporary morality, marriage problems, and mortality. According to Furbank and Owens, the tone of the contributions to *Applebee’s* was somewhat lighter than what appeared in the *Review* or the *Commentator*. However, contrary to their assertion, the content of *Applebee’s* was as serious as the materials in those journals. Also, it should also not be forgotten that in his *Review*, particularly in the “Advice from the Scandal Club” and “Little Review,” Defoe was capable of treating many light subjects in an amusing manner.

Before examining a large number of the letters in *Applebee’s*, I want to mention three that must certainly have caught the attention of those scholars interested

in Defoe.¹² On 16 July 1720, a writer signing herself “Moll” relates the story of how she had been an “eminent *Pick-Pocket*.” She states that her downfall was being “unhappily drawn aside out of my ordinary and lawful Calling, into the dangerous Business of *Shop-Lifting*” (*DD*, 2: 257). Sent to Newgate and transported, Moll complains that, having decided to return to England, she is being blackmailed by a former acquaintance who has recognized her. Lee titled this piece “*Precursor of Moll Flanders*,”¹³ and with good reason. Defoe’s Moll, of course, is captured when she tries to steal from a shop. Also, she calls the women who eventually catch her “two fiery Jades”¹⁴; and so, too, does this Moll refer to the women who judge that she is pregnant as “*Jades*” (*DD*, 2: 257). Just as Moll considers herself “the greatest Artist of . . . [her] time” (*MF*, 214) *Applebee's* Moll considers herself “eminent” in her “Trade.” Just as Defoe’s Moll refuses to give up her profession despite having sufficient wealth, so *Applebee's* Moll refuses to retire. Defoe drew upon many sources for his *Moll Flanders*, which was published just six months after this letter appeared. Of course this could have been one of them, but it is even more likely that Defoe was the author of this piece. At the very least, it suggests that Defoe was reading *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* very carefully. The second piece, published on 17 December 1720, simply reproduces an issue of Defoe’s journal, *The Director*, crediting that journal for its excellent arguments.¹⁵ In a literal sense, then, *Applebee's* does contain work by Defoe. The third notable letter is by an author who, on 9 September 1721, signs himself, Problematick. Problematick quotes a line from Defoe’s poem, *The True-Born Englishman* (1700): “*Restraint from Ill is Freedom to the Wise*,”¹⁶ and attacks the “printing of Atheisticall . . . obscene and Heretical Books” (*DD*, 2: 425). It may be pointed out that Defoe was in the habit of quoting himself, and that although this allusion was from Defoe’s most popular poem, not many were quoting his poetry by 1721.¹⁷

THE WISE MAN, THE FOOL, AND THE KNAVE

In approaching the task of showing resemblances between Defoe’s ideas and mannerisms and those displayed in the letters to *Applebee's*, I intend to organize my discussion around particular subjects, starting with attitudes toward education. On 30 October 1725, a writer discussed a subject that was dear to the heart of Defoe—the notion that learning did not consist in a knowledge of the classics but rather in wide reading. That Lee had a note stating “Although in the third person, Defoe undoubtedly speaks here of his own learning” (*DD*, 3: 435) may overstate the case, but he certainly has an arguable point. The writer speaks of an author “upbraided with Ignorance, and called an ‘Illiterate Fellow’ by some of the *Beau-Monde* of the last Age.”¹⁸ He visited the man and found him “translating some Latin Paragraphs out of *Leubinitz Theatri Cometici*.” He checks and discovers that this writer had understood that author well enough. “In short,” writes this contributor, “I found he understood the *Latin*, the *Spanish*, the *Italian*, and could read the *Greek*, and I knew before that he spoke *French* fluently,—yet *this man was no Scholar*” (*DD*, 3: 435–36). This final phrase becomes a refrain as the writer catalogs this man’s knowledge of modern languages, science, geography, history, and trade throughout the world—yet this man cannot claim the title of a scholar, at least as Defoe’s contemporaries conceived of that word. In the next issue, the writer compares this person to someone who knew classical languages well but

could not write a good English sentence: “In a Word, he knows Letters, and perhaps could read half the Polyglot Bible, but knows nothing of the World,—has neither read Men nor Things; and this, they say is a Scholar. Why then that Scholar is a Learned Fool” (*DD*, 3: 439).

Lee was perhaps overly confident in his assessment. This is a fiction, with the observer speaking of having been at the “University.” Nevertheless, it is easy enough to understand why he seemed so certain. After all, Defoe used this “no Scholar” formulation frequently. One example appeared in his *History of the Principal Discoveries and Improvements in the Several Arts and Sciences* (1727).¹⁹ In *The Compleat English Gentleman*, which remained unfinished at Defoe’s death, there is a similar scene in which such a “NO SCHOLAR” is idealized:

He speaks French as fluent as the English. He speaks Spanish and Italian and something of the Sclavonian, for he has convers’t very much among the Poles and Muscovites, and he has also some thing of the Portuguese . . . and yet he is NO SCHOLAR. . . . He is a master of History, and indeed, I may say he is an universal historian, especially of all the historys [*sic*] that are written or translated into the English tongue, and those that are not, he has read them in French or Italian: but he is NO SCHOLAR.²⁰

The young man in this work, who is seeking a way out of ignorance, succeeds eventually in obtaining a knowledge of history and modern languages, and Defoe leaves no doubt that this constitutes a true scholar. The concept may also be found in Defoe’s *Colonel Jack*, who is given an extensive course in history and geography that constitutes a necessary part of his quest to become a gentleman. And it is noteworthy that Defoe was doing a great deal of work on geography and history at this time for his *Atlas Maritimus* (1728). Although the position of both the author in *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal* and Defoe may seem sensible enough to the modern reader, it may have seemed absurd to those committed to the education in the classics that granted social and (ultimately) economic status to those who participated. In a similar vein, a letter from 1724 (*DD*, 3: 291), commented on “the Cruelty of “denying . . . [women] that early Erudition, which would make them Equal, if not Superior in all manner of Science, and even more capable of all possible improvement than the Men.” Defoe had famously expressed a similar opinion in his *Essay upon Projects* (1697).

Next, I will move on to what is sometimes the very opposite of this quest for learning—the subject of fools and folly, a favorite theme of Defoe from his early years as a writer, which found its fullest expression in *Serious Reflections during the Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1720)²¹ and *Mere Nature Delineated* (1726). After a writer had urged “Mr. Applebee” to pursue serious subjects, another urged the usefulness of a comic approach: This writer calls the first, “an Ignorant Wise-Fellow” (*DD*, 2: 262), a formulation similar to Defoe’s “wise fools.” On 12 June and 19 June 1725, *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal* devoted two essays to Fools. The writer notes that “of all the Sorts of Fools the world has been troubled with of late, I think the wise Fools have disturbed the World most” (*DD*, 3: 393). The first essay ends with a commentary on the Macclesfield case, in which a distinguished jurist was found guilty of bribery, echoing a previous essay with its comment on judges who pervert justice. But what is most important here is the concentration on fools and folly, since in 1726, Defoe’s book *Mere Nature*

Delineated developed a long section on this very subject, including “wise Fools.”²² The issue for 26 June is about wisdom and the fact that in the “wisest Men . . . there is a Mixture of the Fool” (*DD*, 3: 398).²³

In the formula of Defoe’s favorite poet, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, the world was divided into fools and knaves; as a publisher, Applebee specialized in knaves, in accounts of criminals. But aside from the letter from Moll mentioned above and tracking the lives of Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild, the letters to the editor did not dwell very much on these types of crimes. Rather, particularly during 1720 and 1721, it was very much concerned with the knaves who had almost succeeded in destroying Britain’s financial system through the South Sea Bubble. Lee’s entry for what he thought to be Defoe’s first contribution to *Applebee’s*, on 25 June 1720, depicted a scene in which ordinary workmen and women had gone back to their regular occupations instead of trying to sell everyone stock. Although there are occasional attacks on the directors of the South Sea Company and on Walpole for “screening” them from punishment, the author seems not very different from Defoe, who, as the writer of *The Director* (1720) tried to deflect public rage away from the government.

On 20 August 1720, a woman named “Florentina” wrote to complain that her fortune from the South Sea Company was £20,000 rather than the mere £2000 mentioned in *Applebee’s*. Although this piece is light enough, it demonstrates the ways in which the sums made during the great Bubble influenced the behavior of the entire society. Florentina’s comments on men demanding large dowries and her remark “that the Market was so much against us,” has strong echoes from *Moll Flanders* and Moll’s husband hunting, particularly the comment of one of the daughters in the Colchester house: “the Market is against our Sex just now” (*MF*, 20). On 27 August, a writer calling himself “Miser” wrote of the impending collapse of the Bubble and noted the ways in which avarice will overcome caution: “But such is the little Satisfaction that Mankind reaps from the Views of the Gain they make, and either so little Confidence have they in their Gain, or so boundless an Avarice in their Getting, that the Fear of Poverty does not always leave them, in the height of their Wealth” (*DD*, 2: 270). The notion that people are motivated by the fear of poverty runs throughout Defoe’s fiction, particularly *Roxana*, and Miser illustrates this amply by depicting the way that fear, rather than reality, has actually led to suicides.

The wealth accumulated by investors in the South Sea Company and its effect on them was the subject of the letter of 10 September by one “Hubble-Bubble.” Having been rejected by a woman because he was too poor, Hubble-Bubble is so sure that the lady will accept him after he has become wealthy that in their meeting he becomes sexually aggressive and says he assumes that she would be willing to have intercourse without marriage. He tries to grab her: “but how do you think this nimble Quean used me before the Words were quite out of my Mouth? She started up, in a kind of Fright, and was flying to the Door; however I caught hold of her by the Clothes,—at which she spit in my Face, and reach’d me a devilish Blow on the Head” (*DD*, 2: 276). Although there are scenes such as this in Defoe’s *Colonel Jack*, I am not familiar with any author but Defoe who would depict an attempted rape in quite this manner. The lady’s servants dip him in a horse pond even though he tells them how wealthy he is. This kind of realism and serious

description of sex and marriage also appears in a letter from “Eleanor” on 3 September. This time it is from a woman who is in love with a man whose intentions are anything but honorable. The subjects of such pieces concern the difficulties of women in contemporary society—a society warped by the disastrous speculation in the stocks of the South Sea Company. It was a subject Defoe was to explore in *Moll Flanders*, *Roxana*, and perhaps most fully in his *Conjugal Lewdness* (1727).

The writer for *Applebee’s* decided to narrate the bursting of the South Sea Bubble through the eyes of a country man who identifies himself as “Leicestershire.” This visitor tells of seeing men in Exchange Alley looking incredibly prosperous, and then finding them in a state of despair. He asks for an explanation from a chimney-sweeper who informs him that he could tell of the financial disaster by observing those with a “South Sea Face” (*DD*, 2: 284), that of a person “Pale, Frighted, Angry and out of his Wits.” Both Trent and Aitken noted the use of “frighted” instead of “frightened” as a Defoeism, and, in fact, the contrasting scenes are typical of Defoe. On 8 October a letter writer named “Callipedia” expanded on this notion of a face bearing the signs of grief from the South Sea disaster. Using the contemporary theory that imagination may impress a terrifying sight upon the child while in the mother’s womb, the author suggests that the sufferers avoid their pregnant wives. He concludes with the idea that such faces might also result in children with such appearances being sentenced to hang. In *Colonel Jack*, it should be noted, Captain Jack, the protagonist’s brother, has a similar “Hanging look,” which eventually has some influence on his being hanged.²⁴

One idea that gets full play in *Applebee’s* is that of the narrow line between trade and crime, a subject that Defoe explored at length in his *Compleat English Tradesman* (1725–27). A writer calling himself “Caution” tells the story of a highwayman who, after inheriting a considerable amount of money, “like other Tradesmen when they grow rich,” tried to abandon his dangerous work. “But meeting an accidental Booty on the road, he could not bauk the Craft he was bred to” (*DD*, 2: 389), and thus venturing unnecessarily, was captured. On 9 June 1721, *Applebee’s* treated a story of some desperately poor men who tried their hands at robbing a gentleman. They were so incompetent that the gentleman gave them each a shilling after they confessed their situation. This was followed on 16 June by an analysis of such a situation by examining the “Nature of Man” and the weakness of human nature: “I remember a poor Man that murder’d his Wife and two little Children, purely because he could not see them starve” (*DD*, 3: 16). Justifying theft in cases of “necessity” was a basic tenet of Defoe. He wrote about it in his *Review*, and he had discussed this subject relatively recently in *Serious Reflections* (33–43).²⁵ Quoting the same biblical texts as in Defoe’s writings on this subject, this author argues “that there would be some Difficulty to find an honest man in the World who would not Steal before he would Starve” (*DD*, 3: 17), and that under certain circumstances, all humans are potentially “Knaves.”

This is why the notion of transportation as a way of starting a new life seemed so attractive to someone like Defoe. On 26 January 1723 a correspondent wrote about the folly of those criminals who were transported to America and then return to London. *Moll Flanders* does this along with her husband, but this writer speaks of the opportunities available in the colonies: “Upon their being thus reform’d, and applying themselves with Honesty and industry to a due Course of

Business, they are as sure of rising in the World, as they are sure of Misery and Death in the contrary” (DD, 3: 96). This optimism about a new start in America was, of course, one of the messages of both Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*; both former criminals do extremely well on their various plantations. Whereas Defoe has Jack receive a pardon before returning to Britain, Moll’s return at the end of her account puts her life and the life of her husband, Jemy, in peril.

THE PLAGUE

In 1722, Defoe published two books on the plague of 1665, *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Due Preparations for the Plague*, but remarks in his *Review* showed that he had studied the Bills of Mortality much earlier.²⁶ A plague was raging in the South of France at this time, and many thought that the excesses of the South Sea Bubble might invite God’s wrath against Britain as well. *Applebee’s* had been printing numerous accounts of the plague in southern France, but most of these appear to be taken from contemporary news letters, with only some slight editing. On 29 October 1720, however, *Applebee’s* had a writer combine problems of the stock crash and the plague. He quotes a friend as maintaining that the accounts of the plague had been exaggerated in the journals, and that the collapse of the Mississippi Company had mainly affected the wealthy. This person blames most of the problems on the actions of the court of France in issuing paper money, wondering how, in a country without “Arbitrary and Tyrannick Power” (DD, 2: 296) a similar thing could occur. The following letter on 5 November also concentrated on the plague, and while the writer blames the journals for exaggerating the effects of the plague, he focuses on an event around Naples where four Frenchmen, who landed on the coast were executed because they could not produce certificates of health. The writer argues for some way of avoiding such horrific treatment in the future: “Suppose those four Men really came from some Part of France which was infected with the Plague, what are they to blame? Is it a Crime to fly from it? Let those that think so tell us how long they will stay when it is their own Case” (DD, 2: 297). The treatment of this subject has some of the same attitudes as may be found a little over a year later in Defoe’s *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), with its sympathetic treatment of the three artisans who flee from London.²⁷

One of the more vivid sections of *A Journal of the Plague Year* comes near the Beginning, when people claim to see visions in the clouds that seem to foretell the coming of some disaster, with fortune tellers and astrologers all opining on the ways in which the alignment of the planets suggests a coming disaster.²⁸ The letters in *Applebee’s* do much the same thing. On 2 February 1723, a writer attacks astrologers: “Such People as those, I observe are always best pleas’d, when they think they have something dismal to Foretell” (DD, 3: 97). This writer comments:

I remember so long ago as the great Plague Year, the People were just Alarm’d in this Manner, by the same sort of Folks, and after the Plague was broke out, they made loud Noise of its being Occasioned by the Conjunction of the said Planets that Year; but it was very remarkable, not one of them thought of its being a Plague that was to follow, till after it was broken out. (DD, 3: 98)

Similarly, on 10 July 1725, a writer criticizes astrologers for “always filling our heads with terrible affrighting Notions and Predictions, of Famine and Want on the one Hand, and Plague and Pestilence on the other” (*DD*, 3: 403). Although they were fair game for wits, as the attacks on the astrologer Partridge by Swift and others had demonstrated, this particular association of astrology and the plague seems to have been a particular fascination for Defoe.

Perhaps the best combining of the plague and the psychological and financial depression caused by the bursting of the South Sea Bubble appeared in *Applebee's* account of the plague at Toulon on 20 May 1721. The report on the soldiers killing those fleeing from the plague is given in graphic and numeric detail, the writer speaking of the news “Letters” he has on hand (*DD*, 2: 379). Since Defoe was a translator of such letters, he would be a likely candidate for writing such an essay. Thus, after recounting the details of using vinegar on letters to purify them from the plague²⁹ and the story of a furrier named Durand who was executed for importing and concealing goods from the afflicted area (*DD*, 2: 401), *Applebee's* on 29 July used that story in a letter signed by someone named “Quarantine” to moralize about human greed:

It is a just Observation, which I might enlarge on here, how Avarice hardens Men against all Dangers of every kind; and how men will risk their Lives, and the Lives of a whole City, nay, a whole Nation for their present Profit; by not putting any Dangers, any Disasters which they may fall into, in the Scale with their present Advantages. Give them the Gain they have in View, and the present Advances of their Fortunes and Estates; and as for the Consequences, leave it to them, and leave them to their Fate. (*DD*, 2: 408)

In its style and movement, such a passage must have appeared typical of the Defoe of *A Journal of the Plague Year* to Defoe scholars coming after Lee.³⁰

Defoe's two books on the plague provide various reactions to the sickness. H. F. remains in the city, while the three artisans flee into the countryside. And the family in *Due Preparations for the Plague* finds a ship in the Thames, in which they isolate themselves from the contagion. But there is one essay in *Applebee's* in which the entire fervor over the South Sea Bubble and the possibility of a plague are mocked in a parody of the Bills of Mortality. After the cause of death is listed (South Sea) is put in parentheses as the cause of death. Thus both the hysteria over the economic collapse and the fear of the plague come together in a Bill of Mortality that blames every kind of death on the collapse of the South Sea Bubble. Other journals of the time treated the plague in France, but *Applebee's* was focused on the subject in an almost obsessive manner.

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES, MORALITY, AND THE OCCULT

Contrary to the impression left by Furbank and Owens, that grave subjects such as religion would not be found in *Applebee's*, that journal frequently plunged into religious controversies. The journal was being published during the aftermaths of the Bangorian and Salter's Hall Controversies, the former raising questions about the role of the Church of England in British politics, the latter

raising questions about the Trinity. In addition to these controversies, this was a period in which a number of writers seemed to be advocating a form of deism in which God had only a distant role in governing the world. *Serious Reflections*, published in August 1720, at much the same time that Defoe was reputed by Lee to have joined *Applebee's*, contains a long defense of the Trinity, along with attacks on deism and atheism, especially in the form of the supposed "Hell-Fire Clubs" that were purportedly spreading atheism throughout the nation. Several letters to *Applebee's* were precisely on these themes. Lee even has a note stating that the King had issued a Proclamation on this subject on 28 April 1721 (*DD*, 2: 372), and Defoe was often in the habit of following up on the monarch's statements with supporting material.

On 18 March 1721, a writer in *Applebee's* calling himself "Orthodox" attacked the growing tendency to doubt the tenet of the Trinity among members of the Low Church. The writer speaks of every "good Christian," "Friend of Religion, and of the Church of *England*" being concerned. Since, as we have seen, Defoe defended the Trinity during the Salter's Hall crisis among the Dissenters, attacked Arianism in *Serious Reflections*, and was to write a long poem on the Trinity in his *New Family Instructor* (1727), this was clearly a significant cause for Defoe.³¹ The writer is obviously a Dissenter (He is a "Friend . . . of the Church of England," not a communicant). In a contribution to *Applebee's* at the end of 1723, an author raised the issue of the differing dates for Christmas according to the Julian and Gregorian calendars, which were eleven days apart. This contributor apparently intended mainly to criticize the inappropriate revelry with which the holiday was celebrated but also its accuracy and authenticity as the date of Christ's birth. The writer states that he was "not Puritan enough" (*DD*, 3: 319) to condemn Christmas, with its church going and charity, entirely, but he then indeed condemns the revelry and drunkenness associated with the holiday, imagining people saying, "Why every Body is merry at *Christmas!*" (*DD*, 3: 221). The author proceeds to attack this notion; for him drunkenness and religion cannot go together. If the author denies being a "Puritan," he is certainly close to being as much of a Puritan as Defoe, who always attacked drunkenness as a sin against society.³²

An essay appeared in *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* on 1 August 1724 attacking a pamphlet by Bernard Mandeville titled *A Modest Defense of the Publick Stews*. The author appears to have known of the work only by its advertisements, since he gets the title wrong; but it is hardly surprising that once again Mandeville was attempting to shock his audience in much the same way he had done in his *Fable of the Bees*.³³ The author of the piece in *Applebee's* does not believe that prostitution could be justified as protecting wealthy and bourgeois families from the inevitability of sexuality. He sees it as "Mobbing God Almighty himself, and playing liberty against Religion, and the Laws of Men against the Laws of God" (*DD*, 3: 288). Defoe was a close reader of Mandeville, and in his *Compleat English Tradesman* (1725–27) showed some ambiguity about Mandeville's arguments about public vices being public benefits and luxury a good. But he was also an early proponent of the Societies for Reformation of Manners that started up in the middle of the 1690s. This essay in *Applebee's* is written in a reformist mode and much in Defoe's manner.³⁴ In the issues published toward the end of 1725, the author staged a series of debates on whether this was a time of evil and corruption or of

good and progress. On 13 November, a letter writer criticized the age as declining in morals and as ruined by French fashions. In the next issue, he was answered by a letter denying the premise. To the contrary, the “Popish Times” were much worse, and contemporaries have none of the kind of “Lewdness, in defiance of Justice and above the reach of Law,” such as prevailed during the times of “King Charles II, of Pious Memory” (DD, 3: 444). On 4 December, under the name “Democritus, the laughing philosopher,” the author takes an ironic approach to the immorality of the age. Women from the upper orders have taken to drinking “like the Fish Wives” (DD, 3: 448); adultery is not considered a crime; and as for heresy, the author thinks that religion itself has become a “kind of Mirth” (DD, 3: 449) in Britain. In somewhat different terms, Defoe staged a similar internal debate in his *Compleat English Tradesman*, which noted the ways in which luxury might be said to have caused a decline in morals at the same time that it was central to England’s prosperity.

On 27 November 1725, an author devoted an essay to comparing a mountebank, who pretends to benefit the public, with journalists. He speaks of the mountebank as being dressed “*Tout Brilliant* as the French call it,” a phrase that appeared in *Roxana* in 1724 and before that in an essay in Mist’s *Weekly Journal*, for which Defoe was writing.³⁵ This was the time of Rich’s *Harlequin Dr. Faustus*, and everyone was aware of such commedia dell’arte figures as Harlequin. But it is noteworthy that Defoe discussed Rich and his production in his *Political History of the Devil* (1726), and very specifically at the beginning of his *System of Magick* (1726).

A writer calling himself “Anthony Tom Richard,” writing on 20 February 1720, approaches *Applebee’s* as if that journal were equivalent to the oracles of the ancient world, comparing them to “such like Conjurers, to tell us our Fortunes; as men did to the like senseless Devils, in the Days of Yore, at *Delphos, Atri, Chios*, and other places” (DD, 2: 303). Other aspects of this letter, such as the report on Dutch hieroglyphic representations of the South Sea Bubble and the economic interest in the attempt of the Bank to guarantee the stock of the South Sea Company at a certain percentage, represent interests that Defoe had, but the discussion of oracles should remind us that Defoe was already embarked on the research into oracles and devils that was to inform *The Political History of the Devil* and his two other books on the occult.³⁶ On 23 May 1724, *Applebee’s* published an essay on the way contemporaries had been attempting to eliminate thoughts of death and the Devil. Accusing a writer of being “*a Devil in Masquerade*,” he argues that “This is that Perfection of Devilism, which, as I said above, if we can but attain, we shall be the merriest Generation that ever lived” (DD, 3: 267). The ironic tone is certainly much like that of Defoe’s *Political History of the Devil* published two years later in 1726. And the quotation from Rochester’s poem “On Nothing” may be significant, since Defoe used that poem throughout his *Serious Reflections*. (Rochester, of course, was the poet Defoe quoted most often.) A similar interest in popular beliefs in the supernatural probably informed an essay on the accusation against a woman of being a witch, and her survival after attempts by a mob at drowning her. The people believe she was eventually carried off by the Devil, but the author remarks that she was merely “a Devil of a Scold” (DD, 3: 277).

But if *Applebee's* author could write in terms of mockery when treating superstitions and the devil, he appeared to be shocked and indignant at the attitudes toward Providence and suicide in the *London Journal*, later collected as *The Independent Whig* or *Cato's Letters*.³⁷ On the matter of Providence, the authors of this journal, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, argued that Humphrey Prideaux's lengthy work attempting to connect the Old and New Testaments to the history of the times appeared to regard the assassination of Julius Caesar as part of a naive providential conception of history.³⁸ Similarly, they objected to Prideaux's contemptuous view of the suicide of Cato as part of that scheme.³⁹ More than many of his contemporaries, Defoe believed in God's immediate intervention in human affairs, and his *Serious Reflections* had expressed such a view fervently. It is notable, then, that *Applebee's* defended Prideaux's view of history, finding the views of Gordon and Trenchard blasphemous.

On 25 September 1725, *Applebee's* devoted an entire issue to mortality, beginning, "Sir, such are the Vicissitudes of Human Life—such the Chequer Work of its Outside, or Surface; the Light, the Dark, the Rough, the Smooth—so many various Stages do we make, and so many Strange ways pass through the world, that I think it is not capable of a Delineation or Description" (*DD*, 3: 430).⁴⁰ This is the second time this comparison appears in *Applebee's* (see *DD*, 3:55). Readers of *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* might have recalled a similar passage on life as a "chequer work":

How strange a Chequer Work of Providence is the Life of Man! and by what secret differing Springs are the Affections hurry'd about as differing Circumstance present! To Day we love what to Morrow we hate; to Day we seek what to Morrow we shun; to Day we desire what to Morrow we fear; nay even tremble at the Apprehensions of; this was exemplify'd in me at this Time in the most lively Manner imaginable.⁴¹

But the *Applebee's* writer is contemplating the horrors of death, whether by natural disaster or by war, and then focuses on those being carried to execution. While he finds the latter horrible, he does not see that dying among one's family is much better: "In a Word, Life may be a Scene of Pleasure, but Death is a Scene of Horror; and nothing but Virtue, and a Mind fixed upon a State of Blessedness beyond Life, can support it" (*DD*: 432). This essay, more reminiscent of the sober manner of Samuel Johnson's future publication *The Rambler* than of the light-heartedness of *The Spectator*, is enough to make one wonder what Furbank and Owens had in mind when describing the "frivolous" nature of the essays in *The Original Weekly Journal*.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS, WOMEN, AND MARRIAGE

In taking up the ways in which the relations between the sexes were impacted upon by the South Sea Bubble, I have already shown scenes of discord from *Applebee's*, but a considerable number of essays in this journal were devoted to such subjects. On September 29 and 6 October 1722, *Applebee's* had two items about the difficult marriage of John and Joan and the quarrel that erupts between them when John gets drunk and stays out all night. The first letter outlines how the quarrel develops, with the help of a female neighbor suggesting that Joan should

go out and pay John in kind, and how they even come to blows. The second tells of how John, a porter, goes out on a job that takes him to Croyden at the time of a fair. On the way home through the fields, John encounters his wife on an outing and is furious. The author compares married life to a sea that has its violent storms, and on the whole blames the husband, who, in a sense, started the violence. This may be the kind of piece that Furbank and Owens associated with Eustace Budgell and *The Spectator*, but Budgell's treatment of this subject was always distanced and amused. In contrast, the letters in *Applebee's* treat it with considerable seriousness. It is also true that Defoe was writing about marriage at this time (*Religious Courtship* appeared in February 1722), and had previously written about violent relationships between couples in the second volume of *The Family Instructor* (1718).

In August 1720 there was a witty exchange in *Applebee's* about marriage and politics. A correspondent wrote in to say that, as a Tory, he would rather marry a wife who is a Whig. That way, he reasons, they would simply quarrel all the time, which he considers better than the scenes of constantly quarreling and making up that inform many marriages. He is answered by a writer named "Quietness," who argues that "good Humour" (*DD*, 2: 267) will conquer a difference in politics. As suggested before, Defoe, who treated family quarrels at length in the second volume of his *Family Instructor* (1718), would have been a good candidate for the author of these two letters. On another occasion, the discussion dwells on the complications of a Quaker marriage. This letter, supposedly written by a Quaker correspondent named "Obadiah Blue Hat" (*DD*, 3: 237–39), reports on how the proposed husband was actually impotent, probably from a venereal disease, and how the woman rejected him and chose another husband. Defoe, of course, specialized in writing in a fake Quaker dialect, even having to apologize to the Quaker community for so doing. It was an amusing stylistic device he could apparently manage quite easily, and it is not improbable that he was using it here.⁴²

In three issues from 8 August through to 22 August 1724, *Applebee's* published a series of essays about women, marriage, and divorce. At one point, the supposed author writes of "the inhumanity of setting up to Tyrannize over the Sex" (*DD*, 3: 291). What begins as a complaint against a wife deceiving her husband by taking a lover, and the difficulty of obtaining a divorce, ends with the author's confessing to having adulterous relationships; the same is true about a friend whose case somewhat resembles his. He confesses that had he not been such a "loose, cross, reprobate Fellow" (*DD*, 3: 295), his wife would never have strayed. The author's wife promises to be faithful to him if he reforms, and he is willing to accept this agreement. Although this might not seem odd by modern mores, such acceptance of a woman having had sexual affairs would have been rare enough in contemporary literature. That Defoe's Colonel Jack remarries the wife he had divorced years before,—remarries her after she has become a prostitute and a transported felon—may have been one of the reasons why, even long after the favorable critique of Charles Lamb in 1830, *Colonel Jack* was included among Defoe's novels considered too "low" to be considered proper reading.⁴³

On 23 January 1725, a woman who calls herself "Termagant" tells of how her husband rouses her passions by his "provoking Tongue" (*DD*, 3: 356). She refers to him as "This Fool of mine." After he strikes her with his cane, she knocks him down, reducing him to tears and submission. Every reader of Defoe's fictions

knows of Roxana's comments warning women against marrying a "Fool" (R, 8), and the general subject of folly has been discussed above. The tale of Nelly, who deceives a man into believing she has a fortune (DD, 3: 365–67), has its parallel in *Moll Flanders*. The debates over marriage among a group of women and by various correspondents (DD, 3: 67–69) is reminiscent of those in both *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, as well as in the two volumes of *The Family Instructor* (1715, 1718) and in *Conjugal Lewdness* (1727; 1728 as *The Use and Abuse of the Marriage Bed*). And the 3 April 1725 account of the adventures of Tom Manywife, who marries ten times, should remind any Defoe scholar of the unfortunate marriages of the many-wedded protagonist of *Colonel Jack*.

JOURNALISM AND THE ROLE OF THE WRITER

When *The Original Weekly Journal* had nothing else to write about, it would often turn self-consciously to the subject of journalism itself. The section in Lee for 9 March 1723 includes a portrait of a journalist who "is said to keep five Presses at Work. . . . So that the Public is indeed rabbled by him, and he may rather be said to rain upon them with his Lucubrations every Day" (DD, 3: 113). Lee saw this as an attempt on Defoe's part to avert suspicion by depicting himself; certainly it fits the portraits of Defoe that had appeared in Boyer's *Political State* and Read's *Weekly Journal* not many years previously. Defoe, of course, had no problem with depicting himself in this role of the journalist who controlled the news, and did so for De La Faye in his letters to him.⁴⁴ This piece was followed on 16 March 1723 by a letter praising *Applebee's* for avoiding the "Scandalous Method of News Writing Authors" (DD, 3: 116), and raising the question of what to do with such libels and falsehoods. Putting aside the violent punishments of journalists during the time of Queen Elizabeth, the author laments the harm done by those who are willing to print anything just to "make a Paragraph" (DD, 3: 117). If this might seem odd coming from someone who was often in trouble for his writings, such as Defoe, it should be said that he always argued for a degree of restraint on the freedom of the press.

"Solomon Waryman" preached caution in *The Original Weekly Journal* of 18 February 1721, after the arrest of Nathaniel Mist, who ran a rival *Weekly Journal*, with which Defoe was involved. The writer raises the question of freedom of the press, and while advising the journal to be "honest and be wise," he suggests "acting the prudent Part" and the use of indirection such as "Satyr" that is "sharp but not sour" (DD, 2: 341). The writer who called himself "Talionis" on 25 February took a somewhat different line, arguing through the comments of an "elderly Gentleman" in a coffee house, that those journals which engage in false attacks on individuals deserve to be punished by the law, since such is equivalent to acting as judge and jury to the persons involved. Toward the end, the writer mentions the journalist John Tutchin who was "drubb'd to Death" (DD, 2: 345) for attacking some sea officers in his paper. One might think that Defoe would hardly write a letter defending the use of the pillory against "Printers," but the scene in the coffee house resembles Defoe's manner.⁴⁵ Defoe, of course, would have said that he never libeled anyone himself but merely told the truth.

A frequent, perhaps paradoxical, theme in Defoe's writings was the concept of writing as a craft or profession like any other. It is notable, then, that a

contributor to *Applebee's* attacked Pope's translations of Homer on 31 July and 7 August 1725 in what was not so much an exercise in literary criticism as an essay on writing as a profession and the ways in which the concept of a single, distinct author may be faulty:

Writing, you know, Mr. *Applebee*, is become a very considerable Branch of the English Commerce; Composing, Inventing, Translating, Versifying, etc. are the several Manufactures which supply this Commerce. The Booksellers are the Master Manufacturers or Employers. The several Writers, Authors, Copyers, Sub-Writers, and all other Operators with Pen and Ink, are the Workmen employed by the said Master Manufacturers, in the forming, dressing, and finishing the said Manufactures; as the Combers, Spinners, Weavers, Fullers, Dressers, etc., are in our Clothing Manufactures, by the Master Clothiers, etc. (*DD*, 3: 410)

The writer goes on to note that the weavers or clothiers who put their names to the product were not necessarily those who actually did the weaving, comparing this system to the way booksellers keep various authors in their pay, and how Homer himself was the equivalent of a master balladeer by weaving the work of others into his finished poem.

In the second letter, the writer ("Anti-Pope") wondered at the notion of famous writers using their names to sell works that were at least partly written by assistants, as was the case in particular with Pope's translation of *The Odyssey*. He argues that what is important is the excellence of the performance, not the name of the author. Of course, Defoe was writing some of his major economic works during these years, from his *Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724–26) to *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728), and the specific relationship between weaving cloth and weaving a literary work would have come easily to him, even if he had not made a similar comparison between the writer and the weaver while defending the weavers against the importation of calicoes in *The Manufacturer* (1720).⁴⁶

In *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* for 21 and 28 August 1725, there were letters on what journalists do during a dearth of news. The answer was that they invent material, create possible wars where there are none, and "to tell you the Truth, we marry Couples that never woo'd, bury those that never die, bankrupt those that never break, and rob those that never met a Thief." Again, in the *Manufacturer*, Defoe used similar tricks to keep his journal going. On 1 July 1721, *Applebee's* published a letter from "Jack Indifferent" arguing that those members of the press who are arrested for libel have mainly themselves to blame. Comparing such libel against the monarch or the government to a form of warfare, he notes that it lacks the honor associated with war, and that the writers are usually abandoned by those who set them on. In referring to such writers as "the *forlorn Hope*" of an army (*DD*, 2: 398), the writer uses a term that Defoe used frequently in his *Memoirs of a Cavalier*.⁴⁷ The exception made for "Authors who, having made themselves formidable by their Wit, and by their Popularity" (*DD*, 2: 399), who have been rescued by "Ministers of State," sounds a little like a self-reference for someone like Defoe, but, says the author, the combination of such wit and popularity refers only to "Ages pass'd." Indeed, in 1713 Defoe had

been rescued by Harley after publishing three pamphlets about the succession to the throne which were considered libelous.

Again, on 29 May 1725, the author took up one of Defoe's favorite subjects, the writers of newspapers and their effect upon society—a subject on which, as has been shown, he had already commented upon in his journal *The Manufacturer* (1718). Supposed to be written by a “Journal writer” (DD, 3: 387), the author takes pleasure in how he and his fellow writers shape the age. He names the time an “Age of Clamour,” and speaks of how the journalist is courted by men in government, so “capable are we to Save or to destroy a sinking reputation” (DD, 3: 389). Defoe, it should be noted, loved to give names to the various ages in which he lived, from the “Projecting Age” of the *Essay upon Projects* in 1697 to the “Age of Disguise” in 1709.⁴⁸ On 5 June 1725, *Applebee's* published a defense of those who write for money as being like any other member of a profession, or perhaps somewhat better:

Does not the whole World swim down the same Stream? Are not all employed the same Way, and all act from the same End or Worse? . . . If we then, Mr. Applebee, who are capable of both doing good and hurt by the extensive Power of our present Office as Journal-Writers, act from the common ordinary Principles of Mankind, viz. for Money; how much more do we Merit of the World than the rest of our Fellow-creatures can do, in that we do honourable and just Things for Money. . . . How do the Judges pervert Justice, the Masters of Consciences take Bribes, Courtiers sell Places, and governors of garrisons sell Towns? Nay, in a Word, have we not heard of Kings that have sold their People, and People that have sold their Kings; and to sum up all, we have heard of some that sold their Selves, and others that have bought the Devil. (DD, 3: 391–92)

Compared to such betrayers of society, professional writers (such as Defoe himself) must be considered relatively harmless.

ALLUSIONS, QUOTATIONS, REFERENCES

The *Applebee's* author alludes to a variety of writers, but what is striking is that almost all of them are from the Restoration, particularly from Rochester or Marvell. Equally surprising is the lack of quotations from Greek and Roman writers. Allusions to the poetry of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester abound. Defoe continued to quote him throughout his life, with a full development of what he considered to be Rochester's philosophy of society in *Serious Reflections* in 1720. How unusual this might be is suggested by the attack upon Libertinism in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele protested against the antisocial elements in such plays as *The Country Wife*, *The Man of Mode*, and in Libertinism in general, and by the 1720s the poetry of Rochester was far from popular.

As shown above, on 23 May 1724 *Applebee's* included a quotation from Rochester's poem “On Nothing.” On 29 August, an author wrote an essay on courage, quoting Rochester's “*All Men would be Cowards if they Durst*” (DD, 3: 297), arguing that fear was the motivation for most of what people call courage. I am not certain how many people could quote Rochester's *Satyr against Reason and Mankind* with such obvious familiarity, but Defoe had used it as a serious moral and political statement in his *Serious Reflections* and clearly knew much of

it by heart.⁴⁹ Similarly, on 19 December, an author wrote on one of Defoe's favorite themes, gratitude and ingratitude. While allowing for some extraordinary examples of friendship and gratitude, the correspondent concludes that, for the most part, the mores of the age incline to the notion that "*Self, in a Word, governs the whole World*" (DD, 3: 346). And he quotes one of Defoe's favorite lines from Rochester, an ironic depiction of contemporary egotism: "*In my dear Self I centre every Thing, / My God, my Soul, my Country, and my King.*"⁵⁰ But perhaps nothing appears as odd as his aligning a quotation from Rochester with one from Isaac Watts's recent (1719) translation of Psalm 90. On 21 July 1722, *Applebee's* published a letter that was a contemplation of history, warfare, and the fame of the hero by way of considering the death of the Duke of Marlborough (DD, 2: 28). The author argues that the most famous general may leave behind little more than a ballad to be sung by children or on street corners. Only the virtue of the hero will pass into Eternity, for glory without virtue is useless. Although the hortatory style might have been used by any number of writers, the two quotations in this letter, one from Rochester's *Satyre against Reason and Mankind* and the other from Watts, might give the reader pause.⁵¹ As I have suggested, Defoe was surely one of the few persons who in 1722 continued to regard Rochester as a serious philosophic poet and would quote him at length, as he did in *Serious Reflections*. As for the quote from Watts's translation, "Death like an overflowing Stream/ Sweeps us away; our Life's a Dream," it is notable that the author chooses to use a version different from that familiar to most contemporary Britons.⁵² But it is the combination of the two quotes—one from a poet associated with pornography, the other from a writer on religion—that is so unusual, and therefore perhaps suggestive of Defoe's authorship.

Another poet who appears in the pages of *Applebee's*, on 26 August 1721, is Andrew Marvell, whose satires Defoe imitated. In this issue, a character named Jonathan Problematick wrote of founding a society on the model of a Portuguese academy that examined difficult questions. The writer quotes from Andrew Marvell's "Dialogue between Two Horses" (lines 150–51), a poem also quoted later in *Applebee's*. On 22 June 1723, in contrasting the new method of the opposition—using innuendo and insinuation—with former types of satire, a writer compares such satire with that of "Old Andrew Marvel, the King of Satyrs," who argued that "*Truth's as bold as a Lion*" (DD, 3: 148–49). Defoe happened to have quoted from the poem from which this line is taken, Marvell's "The Two Horses," in *The Review* in 1713,⁵³ as well as having imitated Marvell's poetic style in his own poem, *The Spanish Descent* (1702). By 1723, Marvell's poetic satires would have been remembered and admired mostly by those who were alive during the reign of Charles II.

If Defoe was indeed writing many of the letters in *Applebee's*, it might have been expected that there would have been more allusions to or quotations from Milton than in the selections Lee provides, especially since Defoe was clearly rereading Milton during the 1720s. He alluded to "Satan's palace of Pandemonium" in *Serious Reflections* (273), and wrote a poem "after the Manner of Milton" in his *New Family Instructor* (1727).⁵⁴ On 17 March 1722, *Applebee's* had a letter moralizing on the death of John Toland, the militant opponent of orthodox Christianity, which included the discussion of a "*Hell Fire Club*" whose members took their names from the devils of Milton's "Pandaemonium" (DD, 3: 501). And if, just

for once, I may go to an essay in *Applebee's* not included in Lee's collection, I wish to note that a letter of 9 June 1725 told the story of Milton's belief that *Paradise Regained* was superior to *Paradise Lost*, an anecdote that Defoe had told in his *Review* of 18 August 1711. If, then, there are not as many allusions to Milton as might have been expected, there are certainly some.⁵⁵

In addition to such direct allusions to these poets, there also appear what might be interpreted as allusions to Defoe's own writings. As remarked above, one quotation in *Applebee's* is from his *True-Born Englishman*, and the journal devoted two essays to life as a "Chequer Work" much in the manner of the moralizing in *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. There also seem to be other fairly direct references to works by Defoe. For example, a letter in *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* of 28 March 1724 was from a man who called himself "a great Lover of Projects." Noting the interest in "any *New or Extraordinary* Engine or Machine for raising the largest Quantities of Waters," he proposes an engine for the body which he calls an "Elevator" that would raise water to the brain to wash away "Knavery" (*DD*, 3: 246–47). This may seem like an odd association to the age's attempt to find an economically feasible steam engine to pump water for cities or from mines, but it would have made sense for one author. Defoe, who was fascinated by the account and illustration of the Savery steam engine in John Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* (1704), made it into an allegorical image of the English Parliament in his political satire *The Consolidator* (1705). More importantly, in Defoe's lunar world there might also be found other machines, also called "Elevators," that enabled the mind to reach beyond its usual abilities.⁵⁶ *Applebee's* has a similar echo of *The Consolidator* in a discussion of war and the lack of what a writer called "*Publick Faith*" in foreign relations that might promote peace (*DD*, 3: 168–70).⁵⁷ Although such verbal borrowings as these may not be unique, there are also many parallels between the ideas expressed in *Applebee's* and those appearing in Defoe's writings, some of which, such as those on the plague and on family relations, have already been discussed here. But there are a number that are fairly particular to Defoe. For example, on 14 December 1723, he commented on tyrants and how, in the modern world, the "Mob" may appeal to the monarch to obey the law, and if he does not, "the People appeal to their Arms to support Law. So that it is not now the Wrath of the King, but the Wrath of the Mob, that is as the roaring of a Lion" (*DD*, 3: 215). Such equanimity about the mob was extremely unusual in Defoe's time, and he was one of the thinkers who recognized the mob as an important element for change and revolution in government—even though, in the end, it would be the propertied classes who would rule. In this case, then, there is a clear resemblance between the politics of *Applebee's* and those of Defoe.⁵⁸

Less uniquely traceable to Defoe are the many sympathetic discussions of debtors and bankruptcy in *Applebee's*, but it is noteworthy that the letters on this subject generally match his writings on this topic, from *An Essay upon Projects* (1697)⁵⁹ to *The Compleat English Tradesman* (1725–27). For example, three letters in *Applebee's*, from 15 April to 29 April 1721, were about the sufferings of debtors in Britain; although the first and third are signed "Gyaris" and the second "Misericordia," they might be supposed to be by the same person. The comparison of the debtor, who may be forced to stay in prison forever, to the felons who are allowed to be transported and "have an Opportunity to retrieve their Disaster"

(*DD*, 2: 363) sounds like the Defoe who was in the process of writing *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*. The plea for mercy from creditors is typical. The third letter, with its attack on *The London Journal's* stance against such places of refuge for debtors as the Mint, uses the metaphor of men suffering shipwreck being allowed refuge among “the most Barbarous Nation in the World,—Cannibals and Savages excepted” (*DD*, 2: 369), an image that would come easily enough from the author of *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. *Applebee's* also printed several essays during autumn 1723 devoted to the ill treatment of debtors. The writer was responding to an attempt at relief of debtors by Parliament, but he raises the difficulty of trying to decide who are the honest debtors and who the “tricking Bankrupt” (*DD*, 3: 194). On the other hand, the sympathy expressed for the debtor and the vocabulary are very much like Defoe's:

When shall the Time come, that common Compassion shall prevail
between Man and Man; and that no Violencies, more than Justice makes
necessary, shall be used? It is true, that the Knavery of Debtors may have
been originally the Cause of the Cruelty of Creditors; but all Debtors sure
are not Knaves, and Something is due in the Right of Human Nature to
the honest Unfortunate. (*DD*, 3: 194)

In addition to such themes, there are also in *Applebee's* a number of odd geographical references and discussions of trade that would seem appropriate for someone who was working on economic surveys, such as Defoe's section of *Atlas Maritimus* or his *Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724–27). For example, a writer drops a reference to the Davis Straits between Canada and Greenland (*DD*, 3: 132)⁶⁰; another speaks of the many estates in Britain raised by “Fraud” (*DD*, 3: 33). In the *Tour*, Defoe would dwell on similar estates raised by “Trade.” Viewing a seemingly deserted London at the end of the summer, on 11 September 1725, led an author in *Applebee's* to meditate on the amazing amount of building going on in what was then the western part of the city, Covent Garden and Leicester Square. At the same time, the older sections appeared to be empty of citizens. The author sees this as a false kind of growth, new building that has abandoned older places. Then he moves on to Palace Yard, recalling, as did Defoe in several places, how during the plague “Grass grew in the Streets” around the Royal Exchange, so great was the feeling of desolation.⁶¹ Somewhat similar to this time of plague, states the writer, is the absence of people in Palace Yard. Here he meets a “Projector,” who conceives of turning it into “two very fine Streets” (*DD*, 3: 425), And confesses that he was thinking along the same lines. (Of course, we know that Defoe once had lodgings in Palace Yard and had some thoughts about how the area might be improved.) He muses on the sense of emptiness in Westminster Hall and finds himself brooding over the trophies of old battles hung there, on fame and mortality: “In a Word,—there was the venerable Old Pile, the vacant Throne of Justice stood at the upper End, and the Ruins of the most eminent Shops for Trade remained; but for all other Things, all was silent, empty and void, and put me in mind of the Ruines of the old World after the Deluge” (*DD*, 3: 426). This, in turn, puts me in mind of those moments in the *Tour* when Defoe conjures up images of the games of ancient Rome while at the horse races in England, and of Roman grandeur when at Carthage in *Atlas Maritimus*. Certainly, in these years, Defoe was good at imagining such vivid moments.

To conclude this section, I might have discussed the presence of verbal tics that many commentators on Defoe have noted,⁶² but a full treatment of the stylistic resemblances between Defoe's writings and the letters in *Applebee's* would lengthen this essay disproportionately. Suffice it to repeat that between 1869 and 1997, all the critics and scholars working on Defoe believed that the selections in Lee's volumes matched what was thought to be Defoe's mannerisms. Furbank and Owens have always disparaged attempts to ascribe works to Defoe based on style alone, and it must be admitted that William Trent was sometimes led astray by his "tests" of Defoe's style. Nevertheless, I will mention one stylistic habit that has appeared in my quotations from *Applebee's*. The phrase, "in a Word," appears five times in the quotations from *Applebee's* that I have used in this essay, a small sampling of its frequent employment in those letters selected by Lee as being by Defoe. Its use, particularly at the beginning of a paragraph, was a habit of which Defoe himself was probably unaware.⁶³ Any number of writers, including Eustace Budgell, employed it occasionally, but Defoe used it all the time, and so did the author of many of the letters to *Applebee's*. One writer, signing himself "Bankrupt," in a letter of 25 March 1721 used it twice to begin paragraphs, and twice within paragraphs (*DD*, 2: 354–55).

THE CONTRIBUTOR

I will conclude this discussion with a composite character of the letter writer. Of course, some of the letters in Lee's two volumes may have been sent in from genuine correspondents and only lightly edited, and some pieces are simply news items available in any contemporary newspaper. But the author of a large number of letters in *Applebee's* seems fairly consistent. I will call him "C," for contributor. C is old enough to have lived through the reign of Charles II. C is a Dissenter, but one who sees no difficulty in quoting Rochester alongside Watts's version of the Psalms. C is a firm believer in the workings of Providence. C is a supporter of the government, and while he is disturbed by the South Sea Bubble, remains strong in his support of King George. C is an admirer of Gustavus Adolphus and William III. C is an ardent supporter of education for women and of their greater independence, and believes that the study of modern languages, geography, and history constitutes a good education as well as the education of a gentleman. C has an interest in criminal behavior and in the Weekly Bills of mortality associated with the plague. C is a defender of the poor who are forced to steal from necessity. C likes to write about the various categories of fools in the world. C can be a stern moralist and a sharp satirist, but also has a sense of humor. C has an odd habit of using phrases and turns of thought that are similar to those used by Defoe. Small wonder that so many scholars, without placing any particular faith in the acuity of William Lee, believed that these letters were actually written by Daniel Defoe.

In writing this article, I have tried to follow Harold Love's advice about tempering "boldness" with the "faithful squire Scepticism and the dwarf Incredulity."⁶⁴ I am fully aware that writers other than Defoe used "frighted" rather than frightened, as well as "in a word." And, although Robert D. Hume has warned against giving too much deference to past scholars,⁶⁵ I must confess to considerable admiration for the careful scholarship of James Sutherland and even for the wildly adventurous and often wrong guesses of William P. Trent. I have not offered this

discussion as incontrovertible proof that Defoe was the writer for *Applebee's*, but to remove the notion that only three pieces in *Applebee's* bear any resemblance to his ideas and style, and as an explanation for why so many scholars working on Defoe were convinced that Lee had indeed discovered a new source of journalism by this writer. With this article, I hope to keep the subject open for future examination by improved methods of stylometrics and to return the materials that Lee drew from *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* to the classification "probably by Defoe." Furbank and Owens began their investigations of the relationship between Defoe and Applebee by rightly questioning Lee's basis for the assumption that Defoe was a kind of crime reporter for the publisher, but beyond this they appear to have made one of *their* articles of faith the notion that Defoe had absolutely no connection with Applebee. To my mind, they have by no means proven their case. At one point in their essay, they suggest a more moderate goal: to argue against a "blanket attribution" of everything in *Applebee's* to Defoe.⁶⁶ Had they pursued that objective, they would have been more convincing.

NOTES

1. For the various names of this journal, see R. S. Crane and F. B. Kaye, *A Census of British Newspapers and Periodicals 1620–1800* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1927), 82 (item 662). I will refer to it as *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal*, *The Original Weekly Journal*, and *Applebee's*.

2. P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, "The Myth of Defoe as Applebee's Man," *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 48 (1997): 198–204.

3. *Ibid.*, 204.

4. P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, *A Critical Bibliography of Daniel Defoe* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998).

5. Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 216.

6. *Ibid.*, 215.

7. Furbank and Owens, "The Myth of Defoe," 203.

8. That Defoe chose *Applebee's* as the newspaper to advertise his discontent when he wrote as Andrew Moreton on 21 September 1728, complaining about someone trying to steal his ideas on reducing crime, may not be very significant. It may suggest, however, that the arguments of Furbank and Owens rejecting any connection between Applebee and Defoe are less strong than some have thought. See their *Bibliography*, 260 (item 261).

9. See James Sutherland, *Defoe*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1950), 271. William Trent was so critical of Lee's obtuseness that when he came to the latter's attribution of the letters in *Applebee's* to Defoe, he was so certain of the correctness of this attribution that he felt he had to apologize for his "injustice" to him. See William Trent, "Original typescript," 1036–369, f. 49; typed bibliography, "Periodicals," f. 72, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

10. Furbank and Owens, "The Myth of Defoe," 202.

11. During the 1720s, Budgell was away in Ireland for much of the time. He also had a number of physical and mental ailments. I assume that Furbank and Owens have in mind some of Budgell's contributions to *The Spectator*, such as two facetiously devoted to the question of whether women are able to remain "chaste" during the month of May. See *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 3: 371–74 (No. 369); 3: 480–82. See also Leslie Stephen's entry for Eustace Budgell in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; and Paul Baines's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

12. For the purpose of this essay, with one exception I have limited myself to the selections in volumes two and three of William Lee, *Daniel Defoe: His Life and Recently Discovered Writings*, 3 vols. (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869). (Hereafter cited parenthetically as *DD*.)

13. Lee provided sometimes misleading titles to the essays in *Applebee's*, but, as with this title, he could be helpful both from a literary and a historical viewpoint.

14. Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, ed. G. A. Starr (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 276. (Subsequent references will be indicated in the text as *MF*.)

15. *DD*, 2: 310–15. The letter writer recommends this piece as “written with a good Design,” and therefore worthy of being reprinted. But it should be obvious that Defoe might have felt that this was a way of saving the trouble of writing a new piece. *The Director*, first ascribed to Defoe by John Robert Moore, appears in Furbank and Owens, *Bibliography*, 256 (item 256).

16. Daniel Defoe, *The True-Born Englishman*, in *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660–1714*, ed. Frank Ellis et al., 7 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1963–75), 6: 287, lines 662–63.

17. This raises the question of Defoe's popularity in 1721 and how likely it would be that someone else would quote lines from him, especially on such a serious moral issue as the relationship between liberty and restraint. Defoe was thought to be a Jacobite and a turncoat. It would be much more likely that a writer would recall lines from Dryden, Congreve, and Pope, or the Latin or Greek poets, were he trying to impress his readers. Although Defoe's cultural capital was on the rise at the end of the century, the *Whitehall Evening Post* of 13 February 1787 reported an exchange concerning the historical events leading up to the Union of England and Scotland, a subject on which Defoe had written with considerable knowledge and on which he had been quoted. Lord Loughborough replied that he could not consider Defoe as “a respectable authority,” advising the speaker, the Lord Chancellor, to see what Pope had to say about Defoe. A search of the Burney Newspaper Collection for the period 1715–1800 shows no quotations from Defoe's poetry until the 1760s.

18. Jonathan Swift used the word “illiterate” in referring to both Defoe and John Tutchin. See *The Examiner*, no. 15, 16 November 1710, in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Herbert Davis et al., 14 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941–68), 3: 13.

19. Daniel Defoe, *History of the Principal Discoveries and Improvements in the Several Arts and Sciences* (London, 1727), 218. Defoe refers to the notion of a “Scholar” as limited to those with a mastery of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and excluding other forms of learning as “a gross Error in the common Judgment.”

20. Daniel Defoe, *The Compleat English Gentleman*, ed. Karl Bülbring (London: David Nutt, 1890), 200. See also *The Commentator*, no. 45, 11 July 1720.

21. Daniel Defoe, *Serious Reflections during the Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, in *Romances and Narratives by Daniel Defoe*, ed. George Aitken, 16 vols. (London: Dent, 1895), esp. the poem “Eternity,” 3: 165. Subsequent references to this work will appear as *RN*; volume and page citations will be from this edition.

22. Defoe, *Mere Nature Delineated*, (London, 1726), 89. The section from 89 to 110 is devoted to the subject of fools.

23. It should be pointed out that this writer uses the phrase “the Nature of Man” (*DD*, 3: 393), not uncommon in the period but particularly favored by Defoe.

24. Daniel Defoe, *Colonel Jack*, ed. Samuel Monk (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), 12. See also the discussion of the facial characteristics of a Jacobite in *The Commentator*, no. 67, 22 August 1720.

25. For a discussion of necessity as a theme in Defoe and in contemporary thought on natural law, see Maximillian Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 65–88.

26. See, for example, *The Review* for 26 August 1712, in *Defoe's Review*, ed. Arthur Secord, 9 vols. in 22 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1938), 1 [9]: 15–16.

27. See Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. Louis Landa (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), 197–98, where the narrator H. F. concludes that, despite his own decision to remain in London,

“the best Physick against the Plague is to run away from it.” Subsequent citations from this work will be from this edition.

28. *Ibid.*, 20–27. The narrator is ready to believe that a plague might indicate God’s vengeance and display signs in the Heavens, but he rejects the astrologers and their predictions, arguing that the stars operate through “natural Causes” (20).

29. Compare with *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 78.

30. Compare with *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 83 on avarice: “the Power of Avarice was so strong in some, that they would run any Hazard to steal and to plunder. . . .” The word “Observation(s)” is used twenty times in this work, with the verbal forms used even more frequently. See also the “avaricious rage” that comes over the sailors in Defoe’s *A New Voyage Round the World*, in RN, 14: 313.

31. See *Serious Reflections*, 3: 79, 94–96, 114.

32. In a comment that appeared on 15 February 1724, on the possibility that the King of Spain might be abdicating and withdrawing from the world (*DD*, 3: 232–34), a writer for *Applebee’s* argued for the benefit of the active life, a subject Defoe explored in his *Serious Reflections*. If the attitude expressed might not qualify as exclusively “Puritan,” it did represent an aspect of Protestantism with which the Puritans concurred.

33. The writer of this essay makes clear that he is judging the content by the title. Mandeville himself accused some of his enemies of failing to read him carefully, basing their attacks merely on his deliberately shocking titles. He singled out Bishop George Berkeley for doing this; see *A Letter to Dion* (1732), ed. Jacob Viner, Augustan Reprint Society, no. 41 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1953), 7–8. If, as Paul Dottin and John Robert Moore have argued, Defoe was writing for *Mist’s Weekly Journal* during the summer of 1724, he is likely to have been the author of an equally severe but somewhat more informed attack on Mandeville (or a “wretched Imitator”) in that journal on 8 August 1724.

34. In a phrase that caught the attention of his contemporaries, in 1698 Defoe accused those practicing occasional conformity to the Church of England of being guilty of “*playing-Bopeep* with God Almighty.” See Maximillian Novak, *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 136.

35. See Daniel Defoe, *Roxana*, ed. John Mullan (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 247. Subsequent references to *Roxana* will be to this edition and indicated as *R* in the text. See also my discussion of this passage from *Roxana* and *Mist’s Weekly Journal* for 8 March 1718 in my *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions*, 619–21.

36. See Daniel Defoe, *The Political History of the Devil*, ed. Irving N. Rothman and R. Michael Bowerman (New York: AMS, 2003), 174–84, where Defoe dismisses the ability of the oracles and of the devil who inspired them to read the future.

37. Being shocked is one of Defoe’s standard effects. On 15 August 1722 there appeared an essay on flogging officers in the army, in which the author states that subjecting officers to whipping “has in it something so shocking to Nature, that, (to me, I say), . . . tis insupportable in the Thoughts of it” (*DD*, 3: 49). The phrase “so shocking to Nature” might seem common enough, and I am sure might occur in any number of contemporary writers; but like Claude Rains’s Captain Renault in *Casablanca*, Defoe specialized in characters being shocked or “frighted.” The Dutch Merchant in *Roxana*, after finding that his proposal of marriage has been rejected, remarks, “I must own there is something in it shocking to Nature” (*R*, 156). A poem in *Serious Reflections* has the lines: “*There’s something shocks our Nature in Rest:/ To make a God and then the Tool adore*” (3: 127). Moll Flanders finds living in incest “had something in it shocking to Nature” (*MF*, 89), and that the drunkenness of the Newgate’s Ordinary “had something in it so shocking” (*MF*, 277–78) that she could not stand him.

38. See Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews and Neighbouring Nations*, 3 vols. (London, 1718).

39. This discussion appeared in *The London Journal* for 2 and 9 December 1720. See *Cato’s Letters: or, Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious*, ed. Ronald Hamowy, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), 2: 367–88.

40. Prior to Defoe's use of it in *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists only two examples of "chequer work," both from relatively obscure texts.
41. See *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, ed. W. R. Owens, in *The Novels of Daniel Defoe*, ed. W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 172.
42. On 4 February and 3 June 1721, *Applebee's* printed attacks on deism and atheism by the purported Quakers Jeremiah Dry-Boots (*DD*, 2: 333–36) and Aminadab (*DD*, 2: 383–86).
43. See Spiro Peterson, *Daniel Defoe: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987), 118, 204, 227.
44. See Defoe, *Letters*, ed. George Healey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), esp. 450–55.
45. Both the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had popularized scenes in clubs and coffee houses, and Defoe was hardly unique in adapting such settings, not only early in his career with his *Review's* Scandal Club but also in sections of *Serious Reflections* and *Every-Body's Business, Is No-body's Business*. Nevertheless, the "elderly Gentleman, . . . with a great deal of Gravity and good Manners" (*DD*, 2: 343), pronouncing his opinion on the press, sounds much like Andrew Moreton, the persona of the public-spirited old man created by Defoe after 1725 for reproving the errors of the times.
46. *The Manufacturer*, No. 44 (18 May 1720). In *The Commentator*, no. 3, 8 January 1720, Defoe noted that writers "are almost as formidable a Body as the Weavers."
47. See Defoe, *The Commentator*, no. 23, 8 March 1720, where he associates this term with the contemporary condition of the Jacobites.
48. See Defoe, *A Letter to Mr. Bisset* (London, 1710), 10. See also his description of his time as the "Age of Miracles," *The Commentator*, no. 18, 29 February 1720.
49. I could find no quotation from Rochester in searching the Burney Newspapers. Bernard Mandeville was an exception to the rule, paraphrasing Rochester's "All men would be cowards if they durst" as a serious observation about human psychology; see *The Fable of the Bees*, ed. F. B. Kaye, 2 vols. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957), 1: 219. I owe this reference to Manuel Schonhorn.
50. See John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, *Poems*, ed. Harold Love (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 96, lines 7–8. See also *DD*, 2: 346, for a quote from Rochester's *Letter from Artemissa*, lines 199–200, on an egotistical lover.
51. See Rochester, *Poems*, 58, lines 29–30; Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David* (London, 1719), 228.
52. Though derided throughout the Restoration and the eighteenth century as an example of terrible poetry, *The Whole Book of Psalms in Metre*, by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, first published in 1562, continued to be popular with churchgoers.
53. *The Review*, 1[9]: 151 (28 March 1713).
54. Daniel Defoe, *New Family Instructor* (London, 1727), 368–84. His fullest discussion devoted many pages to Milton's heresies in *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), praising him as a poet but lamenting some of his theological principles.
55. See *The Review*, 8: 254–55. A writer to *Applebee's* on 16 January 1725 remarked that Milton favored divorce for incompatibility mainly because he had a bad wife (*DD*, 3: 356). A few years later, in his *Conjugal Lewdness* ([London, 1727], 117), Defoe expressed his disagreement with Milton on the question of allowing divorce on this basis, arguing that it would lead to immorality. He did favor divorce in cases of adultery and ill treatment of wives but opposed allowing adulterers to remarry.
56. See Daniel Defoe, *The Consolidator*, ed. Michael Seidel, Maximillian Novak, and Joyce Kennedy (New York: AMS Press, 2001), 46. Along similar lines are the various lunar methods to improve thinking, such as his "Cogitator" (40) and special "Glasses" (36). Related to this is the discussion in *Applebee's* of the advantages of not being able to see into the workings of the human mind (*DD*, 3: 179).
57. Defoe, *Consolidator*, 32. There are is an abundance of other repetitions. For example, Defoe often used the phrase "talk Gospel to a Kettle Drum" (*DD*, 3: 90), even after he acknowledged that

it had become obscure. Compare *A Hymn to the Mob* (London, 1715), 36; and *Compleat English Gentleman*, 70.

58. Defoe argued this position in *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted* (1701) and *Jure Divino* (1706). See, for example, *Jure Divino* (London, 1706), 11: 5.

59. See Daniel Defoe, *An Essay upon Projects*, ed. Joyce Kennedy, Michael Seidel, and Maximillian Novak (New York: AMS Press, 1999) esp. 75–82.

60. See *Atlas Maritimus & Commercialis* (London, 1728), 278–80.

61. For similar references, see Defoe's *Commentator*, no. 65, 15 August 1720; and *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 101.

62. For a sample of these, see *RN*, 16: xii, xiv, xv, xviii.

63. "In a Word" is used thirty-three times in the first volume of *Robinson Crusoe* and thirty-three times in *Moll Flanders*. See *A Kwic Concordance to Robinson Crusoe*, ed. I. J. Spackman, W. R. Owens, and P. N. Furbank (New York: Garland, 1987), 999–1000; and *A Kwic Concordance to Moll Flanders*, ed. W. R. Owens and P. N. Furbank (New York: Garland, 1985), 1013–14. Another frequent paragraph beginning for Defoe was "It is True," and this too occurs with some frequency in *Applebee's*.

64. Love, *Attributing Authorship*, 77.

65. Robert D. Hume, *Reconstructing Context: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 48.

66. Furbank and Owens, "The Myth of Defoe," 202.