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The Public Voices of Daniel Defoe

by

Andreas Karl Ewald Müller

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

University of Huddersfield

March 2005

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Acknowledgements

There are many people and organisations who through their help, advice and criticism have enabled me to complete this thesis.

Many thanks to:

My supervisors Dr Philip Woodfine and Dr Glynis Ridley for their support, advice and criticism. Without their faith in my academic ability, this thesis might not have seen the light of day. The University of Huddersfield for the invaluable financial assistance it provided with a bursary. The Queen's University of Belfast and the University of Louisville for allowing Dr Ridley to continue the supervision of my thesis. My colleagues in the Department of Humanities, University College Worcester, for their moral support and academic advice (special thanks to Dr Mehreen Mirza). Staff within Huddersfield University library for obtaining photocopies of even the most obscure pamphlets. Staff within the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, and the University Library, Birmingham, for their knowledgeable assistance.

Particular thanks must go to my parents, Rudi and Karola Müller, for their financial and emotional support throughout my time as an undergraduate and postgraduate student. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

Finally, but not last, thanks to my wife Tina and my son Ethan, who have put up with a whole range of Ph.D. induced mood swings, financial restrictions and hours of neglect.

Note on Text

Unless otherwise noted, the place of publication for primary sources is London. I have reproduced as faithfully as possible contemporary spelling and punctuation, but have used the intrusive [sic] as little as possible. I ask the reader to take on trust the fact that all vagaries of spelling are there in the original.

Dates are given in the old style throughout but I have taken the year to begin on 1 January.

Abstract

This is a study of Daniel Defoe's political rhetoric and polemical strategies between the years 1697 and 1717. It explores and analyses a representative selection of what may be termed Defoe's 'public voices'. In its broadest definition, these public voices are understood to be the opinions expressed and the rhetorical stances taken by Defoe in those pieces of his writing which directly or indirectly relate to the sphere of official, governmental and national discourse and activity. In the most basic sense, this thesis attempts to highlight and explain the way in which the language, imagery and concerns of Defoe's publications were shaped by the events and attitudes of the historical moment at which they were produced. In the process, this study re-situates, and thus necessarily re-evaluates, the voices and apparent meanings of some of Defoe's better known texts, while offering extensive investigations of the rhetorical strategies of publications which have previously been neglected by Defoe scholars.

In the context of the above, an attempt is made to demonstrate that the poem *The True-Born Englishman* (1701) was not only a response to xenophobic sentiments prevalent in English society at the turn of the century but did, in fact, represent Defoe's final, summative contribution to the standing army controversy of the late 1690s. On a similar note, this thesis aims to show that the verse satire *Jure Divino* (1706) was the culmination of Defoe's involvement in the occasional conformity controversy of the early 1700s and constituted an important element of his campaign in favour of religious toleration. In addition, I argue that volume one of *The Family Instructor* (1715) was Defoe's response to the Jacobite-inspired unrest of the years 1714-15 and, as such, represented an important political act. Finally, this study offers an extensive investigation of one of Defoe's most problematic publications, *An Argument Proving that the Design of Employing and Enobling Foreigners, Is a Treasonable Conspiracy* (1717). The pamphlet, I suggest, represented a highly ironic attack on one of Defoe's old adversaries, John Toland, and only develops its full rhetorical force if read in the context of the standing army controversy.

Abbreviations

- Backscheider Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore & London, 1989)
- Critical Bibliography* P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *A Critical Bibliography of Daniel Defoe* (London, 1998)
- Dickinson H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property. Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1977)
- Hatton Ragnild Hatton, *George I, Elector and King* (New edition: New Haven & London, 2001)
- Harris Tim Harris, *Politics under the later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660-1715* (London & New York, 1993)
- Holmes Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (revised ed., London & Ronceverte, 1987)
- Horwitz Henry Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977)
- Novak Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions* (Oxford, 2001)
- Political & Economic Writings* W.R. Owens & F.N. Furbank (eds) *Political and Economic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, Vols. 1-8 (London, 2000)
- Rose Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Malden, Mass. & Oxford, 1999)
- Satire* W.R. Owens & F.N. Furbank (eds), *Satire, Fantasy and Writings on the Supernatural*, Vols. 1-8 (London, 2003-4)

Introduction

This is a study of Daniel Defoe's political rhetoric and polemical strategies between the years 1697 and 1717. It explores and analyses a representative selection of what may be termed Defoe's 'public voices'. In its broadest definition, these public voices are understood to be the opinions expressed and the rhetorical stances taken by Defoe in those pieces of his writing which directly or indirectly relate to the sphere of official, governmental and national discourse and activity. In the most basic sense, this thesis attempts to highlight and explain the way in which the language, imagery and concerns of Defoe's publications were shaped by the events and attitudes of the historical moment at which they were produced. In the process, this study re-situates, and thus necessarily re-evaluates, the voices and apparent meanings of some of Defoe's better known texts, while offering extensive investigations of the rhetorical strategies of publications which have previously been neglected by Defoe scholars.

The origins of this thesis may be found in a notion voiced by Geoffrey Holmes, namely that 'in the language of early-eighteenth-century politics are to be found some of the most valuable clues to its character.'¹ Holmes' foregrounding of language offers the point of departure for the individual discussions contained in this study and it is with this emphasis in mind that Defoe's rhetorical and polemical practices are examined in order to offer an insight into the character of his political writings. Moreover, the general importance Holmes attaches to the manner in which politicians and commentators spoke and wrote about political issues and events is echoed in Defoe's own development as a writer. From a young age, the concept of manipulating language to achieve a specific rhetorical effect represented a dominant aspect of Defoe's *Weltanschauung*. One of the main features of the non-conformist education he received at Charles Morton's Newington Green Academy was a focus on the classical humanist practice of conducting debates by considering at least two divergent points of view on a particular topic. A passage in one of Defoe's late pieces describes how Morton's pupils were actively encouraged to develop the ability to

¹ Holmes, 13

articulate a range of public voices, providing them with 'early practice in the assumption of authorial masks' and convincingly relating entirely fabricated stories:²

[Morton] had a class for eloquence, and his pupils declaim'd weekly in the English tongue, made orations, and wrot [sic] epistles twice every week upon such subjects as he prescrib'd to them or upon such as they themselves chose to write upon. Sometimes they were ambassadors and agents abroad at foreign Courts, and wrote accounts of their negociacions and recepcion [sic] in foreign Courts directed to the Secretary of State and some times to the Sovereign himself. Sometimes they were Ministers of State, Secretaries of Commissioners at home, and wrote orders and instructions to the ministers abroad, as by order of the King in Council and the like.³

The technique of considering a variety of viewpoints, taking a stand, and developing a consequential argument was, of course, a standard rhetorical element of the Medieval Trivium and as such it was firmly rooted in Western educational methods.⁴ Moreover, the seventeenth-century practice of the 'sceptical' method of argument, which involved establishing a paradoxical position through using a mask or persona, was still very popular and lent itself well to polemical and current affairs journalism. Collections such as *Poems on the Affairs of State* (1695), for example, drew extensively on the technique.⁵ That Defoe regarded the creation of different authorial masks as an effective rhetorical tool is evident from the regularity with which he used this strategy. During the period covered by this study, one may find him assuming the roles of a humble 'Plebeii', a 'Free-Holder', a Jacobite or a Quaker, to cite just a few examples.⁶

It is also worthwhile to highlight that Defoe acknowledged the significance of having received his education in rhetoric in 'the English tongue'. When the young Defoe entered higher education at Morton's academy in the 1670s, the official

² E. Anthony James, *Daniel Defoe's Many Voices. A Rhetorical Study of Prose Style and Literary Method* (Amsterdam, 1972), 21

³ Daniel Defoe, *The Compleat English Gentleman*, Karl Bülbring (ed), (London, 1890), 219

⁴ Backscheider, 15-18

⁵ Novak, 177

⁶ The pamphlets referred to here are *The Poor Man's Plea* (1698), *The Free-Holders Plea against Stock-Jobbing Elections of Parliament Men* (1701), *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover* (1713) and *A Seasonable Expostulation with, and Friendly Reproof unto James Butler* (1715).

language of instruction in the universities was still Latin. Morton, however, defied this tradition and delivered all subjects in the vernacular to ensure, as J.R. Moore has commented, that ‘his pupils could live in the world around them and could converse with mankind’.⁷ Defoe himself described instruction in English as a distinct advantage for the development of one’s public voices: those who had substituted their native language with Latin, he asserted, had ‘no style, no diction, no beauty in delivering themselves, that ‘twould be a shame to hear one of them declaim in English’.⁸ During his formative years at the academy, Defoe was thus not merely taught to use language in a highly instrumental fashion and to shape his rhetoric according to the specific nature of the argument, but he learnt to do so in his native language, or, to put this somewhat more polemically, in the “language of the people”. His ‘first conscious training as a writer’ was therefore not limited to the address of an elite audiences but conducted with a view to making an immediate impact on the opinions of a wide range of listeners and readers.⁹ Defoe clearly valued this element of his education and with some obvious pride he claimed that Morton’s pupils ‘came out of his hands finish’d orators, fitted to speak in the highest presence, to the greatest assem[b]lies, and even in Parliament, Courts of Justice, or any where; severall of them came afterwards to speak in all those places and capacityes with great applause’.¹⁰ While Defoe never spoke in the greatest assemblies, his future career would indeed require him to use his public voices almost ‘any where’ else.

The notion of a public voice presupposes that a public forum existed for its expression. The most influential recent model for this forum is the one offered by Jürgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. According to Habermas, a bourgeois public sphere in which ‘private people come together as a public’ was engendered by three events of the years 1694-95.¹¹ Firstly, he claims, the founding of the Bank of England in 1694 ‘signalled a new stage in the development of capitalism’. This new private

⁷ J.R. Moore, *Daniel Defoe. Citizen of the Modern World* (Chicago, 1958), 36

⁸ Defoe, *Compleat English Gentleman*, 199

⁹ Novak, 42

¹⁰ Defoe, *Compleat English Gentleman*, 220

¹¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: 1992), 27, 58

joint-stock company, supported by the ministry and lending money to the crown, represented a safe investment opportunity to the London mercantile elite, thus consolidating the growth of the politically independent 'bourgeois strata of the Protestant middle class' which became 'engaged in rational-critical debate'.¹² The initial forum for this debate were the 'centers of criticism', the coffeehouses, which had their 'golden age between 1680 and 1730'. It was in these establishments, Habermas asserts, where 'a certain parity' between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie began to emerge. The coffeehouse thus provided the arena for critical discussions between the nobility and a broad stratum of the middle-class, which now extended to craftsmen and shopkeepers, concerning topics such as literature, art, economics and politics.¹³ The second of Habermas's significant events is the expiry in 1695 of the Printing or Licensing Act of 1662, which freed the British press from pre-publication censorship. The lapse of the act gave the press 'unique liberties', which made it possible for the rational-critical coffeehouse debates to be transferred into print and, importantly, which allowed more extensive public scrutiny of political decisions. Newspapers, journals and pamphlets encouraged the discussion of news and opinions not only in 'clubs and coffee houses' but also 'at home and in the streets'. It was in the press where public authority was 'called before the forum of the public' and scrutinised by the literate.¹⁴ Thirdly, Habermas contends that William III's introduction of the 'first cabinet government' marked the beginning of the 'parliamentarization of state authority that led ultimately to the point at which the public active in the political realm established itself as an organ of the state'. This process, moreover, was aided by the fact that, in their effort to undermine ministerial policies, opposition politicians began to 'seek refuge in the public sphere and appeal to the judgement of the public'.¹⁵ In other words, the bourgeois middle class was now able to influence directly the sphere of official politics.

¹² Ibid, 62; for information on the establishment of the Bank of England see Rose, 133-35.

¹³ Ibid, 32-33

¹⁴ Ibid, 58-60

¹⁵ Ibid, 58, 63

Habermas's theory of the emergence of a public sphere at the end of the seventeenth century has been widely criticised. Several scholars have highlighted that he 'gravely postdated the arrival of the public sphere', offering a wealth of evidence which suggests that popular political opinion and debate did, in fact, emerge during the 1640s.¹⁶ Thus, it was during the hectic years of the English Civil Wars that acquiring domestic news on a daily basis became 'a habit for a sizeable share of the English population', a habit which was rapidly exploited by authors and booksellers alike.¹⁷ An important development which emerged from the explosion of publications in the 1640s was that of a partisan press. For the first time, newspapers espoused opposing political causes, publicly fighting out their differences of opinion with a hitherto unknown lack of restraint. Partisanship, writers and booksellers quickly realised, sold 'better than impartiality'.¹⁸ Therefore, by the 1690s, the attempt to influence public opinion had already been established as a feature of the English press. More recently, J.A. Downie has highlighted a number of further weaknesses in Habermas's theory of the bourgeois public sphere. In addition to questioning Habermas's chronology concerning the emergence of rational-critical debate in print, Downie points out that the linking of the Bank of England with a change in the mode of production 'antedates the arrival of the "industrial revolution" (if there was one) by up to a century, and is palpable nonsense'.¹⁹ The period in question was, in fact, dominated not by the mercantile bourgeoisie but by the aristocracy. Moreover, as the strict exclusivity of gentlemen's clubs demonstrated, the public sphere, in particular its spatial manifestation, the coffeehouse, was not characterised by a complete elision

¹⁶ Joad Raymond, 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century,' in J. Raymond (ed.), *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London & Portland, 1999), 114, 117. See also Steve Pincus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create": Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,' *Journal of Modern History* 67:4 (1995), 807-34 and C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford & New York, 1996).

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 34-45; Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London & Sydney, 1987), 5

¹⁸ Sommerville, *News Revolution*, 36

¹⁹ J.A. Downie, 'Public and Private: The Myth of the Bourgeois Public Sphere,' in Cynthia Wall (ed), *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (Malden, Mass. & Oxford, 2005), 75

of social distinction and universal accessibility.²⁰ In addition, Downie highlights that Habermas's contention that William III introduced a new style of cabinet government is misleading, since the king inherited the structures established by his predecessor, James II. He also draws attention to the fact that 'state control of the press did not cease with the expiry of the licensing system', since government intervention such as the imprisonment, and even capital punishment, of authors and publishers occurred well into the eighteenth century. Habermas's paradigm of the bourgeois public sphere, Downie concludes, 'did not – and could not – exist in Great Britain at the turn of the eighteenth century in the terms in which it was conceived'.²¹

In one sense, the issue of whether or not a Habermasian public sphere which encompassed a wide range of social groups actually existed is of no great consequence to a study on Defoe's public voices. Defoe, unlike Habermas, regarded critical debate and opinion as restricted to the privilege of the propertied classes. What emerges from Defoe's discussions of the concepts of political power and suffrage is the idea that the 'people' did not include every single inhabitant of the nation. Only those who owned a part of the country had a natural interest in, and indeed right to determine, its government:

I do not place this Right [to chose a government] upon the Inhabitants, but upon the *Freeholders*; the *Freeholders* are the proper Owners of the Country: It is their own, and other Inhabitants are but Sojourners, like Lodgers in a House, and ought to be subject to such Laws as the Freeholders impose upon them, or else they must remove²²

Defoe's division of the people into freeholders and tenants strongly echoed the Harringtonian tradition of circumscribing political society by distinguishing between 'freemen' and 'servants' (a discussion of this concept is offered in Chapter I). Importantly, this distinction denied the unpropertied a political voice and thus effectively excluded them from the political process. As a consequence, a large

²⁰ Ibid, 65, 72

²¹ Ibid, 60-61, 68-71, 74

²² Daniel Defoe, *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted* (1702), in *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol. 1, 121

section of English society had no part in Defoe's public sphere and played no decisive role in the rational-critical debate of political matters.²³

A more important issue for a thesis on Defoe's political rhetoric is that, in spite of the apparent weaknesses of Habermas's idea of a bourgeois public sphere, there was *a* public sphere in which opinions were debated publicly by those whom Defoe considered to have a political voice. Both traditional victualling houses and the more recent phenomenon of coffeehouses offered a social space in which news and opinions were exchanged and discussed by a clientele which either enjoyed political power itself or who had access to politicians. For centuries, taverns, inns and alehouses had acted as 'the centre point of a galaxy of commercial, governmental and leisure activities'.²⁴ From their beginnings, taverns and inns catered 'mainly for the more prosperous members of society', usually the upper and middling ranks, while the circle of customers of alehouses did not become 'respectable' and more gentrified until after the Restoration.²⁵ It might also be remarked that by the late seventeenth century the public nature of these establishments began to be consciously acknowledged in a new generic name: the term 'public house' was applied increasingly to all three types of victualling houses.²⁶

Many of the taverns and alehouses were well furnished and had an imposing physical appearance: London establishments, for example, tended to be of a considerable size, commonly boasting ten rooms or more. Moreover, the fact that they had spacious, individual drinking rooms and partitions between seating booths made them a favourite meeting place for political, literary and other shared-interest gentlemen's clubs; perhaps somewhat paradoxically, clients could thus enjoy some privacy in a public place and voice potentially subversive sentiments without the threat of legal consequences. One such club was the 'Calves-Head fraternity', which

²³ Defoe reiterated this notion again in Book V of *Jure Divino* (1706). Downie makes a similar point with regard to the radical Whigs Toland and Trenchard and Gordon. See 'Public and Private', 62-63.

²⁴ Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830* (London & New York, 1983), 14. Clark highlights that these terms were sometimes used interchangeably to describe victualling houses (5).

²⁵ *Ibid*, 9, 11, 15, 225

²⁶ *Ibid*, 11-12, 195, 197

will be considered in the first chapter of this thesis. During the 1690s, this group of radical Whigs regularly met at the Calves-Head tavern in order to debate their republican schemes and contemporary political events. Significantly, the voices and opinions of these discussions did not remain within the walls of the tavern, as, according to a contemporary observer, the club met ‘almost in a publick manner, and apprehended nothing’.²⁷ Moreover, the narrative of one of the most important publications of the so-called standing army controversy of 1697-99, Ludlow’s *Memoirs*, was shaped by the Calves-Head debates. One of the club’s attendees, John Toland, heavily edited the text to reflect the political sentiments voiced during the meetings. The perhaps most obvious link between the tavern debates and the official sphere of parliamentary politics was provided by the ‘close literary partnership’ Toland struck up with Lord Ashley, third Earl of Shaftsbury and Member of Parliament.²⁸

From the 1650s onwards, the public houses faced competition from the fashionable flurry of coffeehouses which were being established in London and in several other towns. Like taverns, they offered a public platform for debates on politics, religion, and culture but had the advantage that they sold a comparatively cheap beverage in coffee. Within the walls of the coffeehouse, as Steve Pincus has stated, ‘each political move that was made, and some that were not, was revealed, debated, celebrated, and vilified’.²⁹ Indeed, the coffeehouses soon became associated specifically with political debate: ‘So politically au courant, so ideologically up-to-date, so accurate a gauge of public opinion were the coffeehouses that they were the places that politicians and journalists went to collect news and opinions.’³⁰ The

²⁷ Cited in J. Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the crisis of Christian culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester, 2003), 95

²⁸ Blair Worden, ‘Introduction,’ *Edmund Ludlow: A Voyce from the Watch Tower* Camden Fourth Series 21 (London, 1978), 42-43, 46, 50; also see J.A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and public opinion in the age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge, 1979), 22-23

²⁹ Pincus, ‘Coffeehouses’, 821

³⁰ *Ibid*, 820-21; against Pincus’ evidence one might hold Downie’s example of a pamphlet which describes a group of coffeehouse visitors relocating to a tavern because they feel that the coffeehouse was ‘too public’ for their political discussion (‘Public and Private’, 71).

coffeehouse too became a forum for societies and clubs. Sometimes tavern and coffeehouse circles were able to join forces: the 'aristocratic' or 'Roman' Whigs who patronised the Grecian coffeehouse (a group which included Shaftesbury and the young Robert Harley) and the above-mentioned Calves-Head Whigs formed an alliance during the late 1690s which was mainly maintained through Toland's propaganda activities.³¹

Public houses and coffeehouses, then, provided a public sphere for political debate which was at times closely linked to the official sphere of parliamentary politics by the simple fact that politicians patronised these places in order to listen to public opinion. A frequenter of these houses, whether politician or propagandist, was inevitably exposed to a myriad of voices of 'all ideological stripes', although it should be pointed out that establishments carried a bias according to the political persuasion of their clientele.³² Defoe, as Backscheider has pointed out, shared the coffeehouse culture of his age enthusiastically. 'Always a clubbable man', he visited 'several of the coffeehouses around Guildhall and the Exchange', where he frequently took part in debating clubs.³³ Coffeehouses offered Defoe the chance to absorb the linguistic idiosyncrasies, opinions and thought processes of the many public voices around him. If the education Defoe received at Morton's academy represented his first conscious training as a writer, then the world of public debate in London's coffeehouses and taverns may be viewed as the second phase in his development as a polemicist.

Recent revisions of Habermas' chronology for the emergence of the public sphere should not distract from the fact that the year 1695 did constitute an important year in English history. The final expiry of the Licensing Act initiated a 'communications revolution' which not only changed the face of English journalism but also had a lasting effect on the political landscape.³⁴ The end of pre-publication state censorship resulted in an explosion of printed matter issuing from the presses. Within three months of the end of licensing, the 'confused and reticent' official

³¹ Worden, 'Introduction', 40-42

³² Pincus, 'Coffeehouses', 818-19

³³ Backscheider, 48

³⁴ G.S. DeKrey, *A Fractured Society. The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688-1715* (Oxford, 1985), 213, 218

London Gazette, which was published once a week, was overtaken by the tri-weekly newspapers the *Post Boy*, the *Post Man* and the *Flying Post*.³⁵ By the end of William's reign six years later, at least fourteen new London newspapers had begun publication, a number which rose to eighteen in 1709 (including one daily newspaper).³⁶ One historian has estimated that, between 1689 and 1727, the number of published titles, which included books, pamphlets, sermons, journals, and newspapers, saw an increase of over eighty percent compared to the three preceding decades. To put this into context, during the following three decades the number of publications only increased by fifteen percent.³⁷

The end of censorship allowed at least some of the voices of the coffeehouses and alehouses to be transferred into print and the emergence of an extensive, politically motivated newspaper press 'greatly facilitated the political education' of the population.³⁸ Indeed, a dialectic relationship developed between the press and these arenas for public debate, since many establishments placed regular subscriptions to newspapers and journals for the convenience of their patrons, as well as offering sets of books and pamphlets in their drinking rooms.³⁹ Thus, the voices of the public and coffeehouses at once shaped and were themselves shaped by the contents of pamphlets and journals. In some cases, printed materials were given a public voice in the literal sense, as it was not uncommon for newspapers and pamphlets to be read aloud to the patrons.

In this public sphere of opinion and debate, the nature of the reading public was dramatically transformed and this new, highly politicised readership helped to create a number of national best-sellers: Henry Sacheverell's *Perils of False Brethren* (1709) sold approximately 100,000 copies, Richard Steele's *The Crisis* (1714) 40,000 and Defoe's *The True-Born Englishman* (1701) reached around 80,000 sales.⁴⁰ The

³⁵ R.B. Walker, 'The Newspaper Press in the Reign of William III,' *Historical Journal* 17:4 (1974), 694, 698-99; Black, *Press in the Eighteenth Century*, 12

³⁶ Walker, 'Newspaper Press', 701; DeKrey, *Fractured Society*, 214; Black, *Press in the Eighteenth Century*, 12-13

³⁷ Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 178

³⁸ DeKrey, *Fractured Society*, 215; J. Black, *The English Press 1621-1861* (Stroud, 2001), 11

³⁹ Pincus, 'Coffeehouses', 819; Downie, *Harley*, 8-9; Clark *Alehouses*, 229

⁴⁰ Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 181; DeKrey *Fractured Society*, 214

craving for news and opinions appeared insatiable and between 60,000 and 70,000 single newspaper copies were issued each week.⁴¹ It is perhaps also important to emphasise here that the newspaper press was to a significant extent shaped by the market's competitive nature and overwhelming commercial pressures.⁴² The vast majority of newspapers were intended for profit and in an effort to establish and maintain sales outlets, journalists often wrote according to the political bias of the coffeehouses and taverns in which they wanted to see their product.⁴³ As a result, much of the newspaper press was characterised by party-political rhetoric and hyperbole, which sometimes reached a point where 'rational political discourse became scarcely possible'.⁴⁴ In an environment overrun by 'partisan monsters', many authors, in their efforts to outdo their opponents, were often forced to adopt a more extreme (and more changeable) stance than they would normally have subscribed to.⁴⁵

Defoe was one of the most frequent contributors to the debates of the public sphere. During his career as a writer and commentator, he produced a wide variety of public voices on topics such as party politics, international relations, constitutional theory, religion and theology, trade, discoveries, social reform, street crime, the supernatural, and travel, to cite but a few of the subdivisions offered by the latest edition of Defoe's collected writings.⁴⁶ Indeed, the range to which Defoe's voices did and could extend has been the focus of much scholarly debate in recent years and the list of published titles thought to be by Defoe has been subject to a number of large scale revisions ever since George Chalmers published the first substantial Defoe bibliography in 1790.⁴⁷ This initial list contained a 'mere' 101 items, which, after

⁴¹ DeKrey *Fractured Society*, 214; Hoppit *Land of Liberty?*, 178

⁴² Black, *English Press*, 11

⁴³ *Ibid*, 12,20

⁴⁴ DeKrey *Fractured Society*, 219

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 219-20; Also see Pincus, 'Coffeehouses', 813; Walker, 'Newspaper Press', 701; Black, *Press in the Eighteenth Century*, 12-13

⁴⁶ The publication of *The Works of Daniel Defoe* by Pickering and Chatto will be completed in 2008 and will comprise a total of 44 volumes. See the publishers's internet website for further information.

⁴⁷ G.Chalmers, *Life of Daniel Defoe*, 2nd edition (London, 1790)

several adjustments were made by four more Defoe biographers, eventually peaked at 572 items in J.R. Moore's *A Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe* (1971).⁴⁸

More recently, however, the research of P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens has shown that the nature of the evidence presented for the great majority of attributions made over the centuries ranges from 'very flimsy' to 'hopelessly flawed'.⁴⁹ Furbank and Owens' main objection to the work of previous Defoe bibliographers is the readiness with which they have made ascriptions on purely internal evidence, such as the particular style of writing of a piece or favourite topics and phrases of Defoe's.⁵⁰ Drawing on their extensive reading of texts acknowledged as his own by Defoe and of other eighteenth century materials, these scholars, in particular Defoe's most prolific bibliographer J.R. Moore, have applied various sets of verbal 'tests' to hitherto fatherless tracts in order to demonstrate Defoe's authorship of them.⁵¹ In other words, a significant number of Defoe attributions rested on little more than a scholar's supposed intimate knowledge of, and ability to recognise, Defoe's public voices. Thus, the great majority of items on Moore's extensive list of Defoe texts were attributed on the basis of 'madly unsystematic methods', which were usually guided by a notion of self-proclaimed scholarly authority.⁵² In a final rejection of these methods, Furbank and Owens have stated somewhat polemically that 'authority might have a rightful place in religion' but could 'hardly be said to do so in bibliography'.⁵³

In order to address what they perceived to be the errors of earlier Defoe bibliography, Furbank and Owens created their own set of criteria with which to test

⁴⁸ Walter Wilson *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel De Foe* (1830); William Lee *Daniel Defoe: His Life, and Recently Discovered Writings* (1869); James Crossley, manuscript list of Defoe attributions drawn up between 1869 and 1883; W.P. Trent, 'Defoe: The Newspaper and the Novel' in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 9, A.W. Ward & A.R. Waller eds (Cambridge, 1912); for a detailed recent discussion of the development of the Defoe canon see P.N. Furbank & W.R. Owens, 'The Defoe that never was. A Tale of De-Attribution,' *American Scholar* 66:2 (1997), 276-84

⁴⁹ *Critical Bibliography*, xvi, xix; also see their earlier publications *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe* (London, 1988) and *Defoe De-Attributions* (London, 1994).

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, xiv-xx

⁵¹ *Ibid*, xix; Furbank & Owens, 'The Defoe that never was', 281-82

⁵² Furbank & Owens, 'The Defoe that never was', 282

⁵³ *Ibid*

attributions for the validity. They assert that external evidence (defined as ‘contemporary’ ascriptions made within living memory of Defoe, i.e. before 1790) ‘has a kind of logical priority over internal’ evidence and have consequently made it a ‘strict rule not to treat a work as certainly by Defoe on the basis of internal evidence alone’.⁵⁴ While favourite phrases are discounted, ‘favourite *allusions* (anecdotes, historical references, legendary stories and the like) and also ... favourite quotations’ are taken into consideration when making an ascription.⁵⁵ Using these principles of author-attribution, Furbank and Owens have reduced the number of items included in their Defoe bibliography to some 276 texts.

This drastic revision of the number of publications attributed to Defoe has not gone unopposed within the scholarly community. Maximilian E. Novak, in particular, believes that Furbank and Owens have gone too far in de-attributing over 200 texts. Novak has asserted that Furbank and Owens’ research is ‘so far... from systematic’ that one may reach the conclusion that ‘they believe what they want to believe’.⁵⁶ Moreover, Novak, following in the footsteps of earlier bibliographers like Moore, feels that most of the de-attributions are ‘in defiance of all that we know of Defoe’, in particular his protean nature, and that Furbank and Owens have been too biographical in their approach, removing texts because they did not conform to what they thought Defoe might plausibly have written.⁵⁷ In his final dismissal of the revised bibliography, Novak claims that, because their ‘grasp of Defoe’s ideas and those of his period often seems fuzzy’, Furbank and Owens lack the necessary academic knowledge to de-attribute texts convincingly.⁵⁸ Novak, in contrast, feels that he possesses the necessary expertise to judge correctly the validity of items on the Defoe canon. In his recent biography he claims that in ‘judging what Defoe actually wrote’, he is able to draw upon his ‘years of reading his [Defoe’s] texts and those of his contemporaries’.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ *Critical Bibliography*, xxv-xxviii

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, xxvii

⁵⁶ Maximilian E. Novak, ‘The Defoe Canon: Attribution and De-attribution,’ *Huntington Library Quarterly* 59:1 (1996), 89

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 99

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 104

⁵⁹ Novak, 5

Any scholar working on Defoe's writings inevitably has to reach a decision with regard to which one of the several bibliographies will form the basis of the research to be undertaken. The present thesis broadly espouses Furbank and Owens' approach and uses their bibliography as the main point of reference for its selection of Defoe texts. Questioning Novak's assertion that 'Defoe's syntax, style, vocabulary, and use of proverbs and popular phrases was unique', this study shares the opinion that 'favourite phrases' are 'a false step and a dangerous delusion. ... it will always be the case that other writers use these phrases as well: they are not Defoe's private property'.⁶⁰ Since 'members of the same speech community will have various linguistic and communicative features in common', the supposedly idiosyncratic nature of favourite phrases becomes problematic.⁶¹ At the same time, the use of language is not rigid, and its constant evolution does not guarantee absolute linguistic homogeneity within a speech community. Indeed, linguistic homogeneity 'may well not be found even within an *Idiolect*'.⁶² A combination of the notion that speech communities share certain linguistic features and the idea that at the same time an individual's use of language is constantly subject to change makes any ascription on the basis of a supposed idiosyncratic use of language far too uncertain. With this in mind, it is contended that studying fewer texts of at least near certain status will result in a more reliable picture of Defoe than an inflated canon including texts that may well have not been written by Defoe. I agree with J.A. Downie that instead of generating order, 'a wrong attribution generates chaos and confusion' and 'could mean that we end up writing about the wrong man'.⁶³

Furthermore, Furbank and Owens have made the important point that 'ascriptions on the scale of those made to Defoe [by Moore, for example] could be said, in a sense, to create a new author'.⁶⁴ As an extension of this statement, one might also add that misattributions have distorted the interpretation of publications generally accepted to be by Defoe. A critical illumination of a Defoe text which draws

⁶⁰ Novak, 5; *Critical Bibliography*, xxvii

⁶¹ D. Graddol et al, *Describing Language* (Milton Keynes & Philadelphia, 1987), 20

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ J.A. Downie, 'Defoe's Early Writings,' *Review of English Studies* 46:182 (1995), 227

⁶⁴ *Critical Bibliography*, xiii

extensively on materials which are unlikely to have been produced by Defoe attaches meanings to the text which are misleading; in the worst case, it might even produce a 'new' text. Chapter IV of the present thesis deals with one such case, Volume One of Defoe's *The Family Instructor* (1715). Hitherto, scholars have agreed with I.N. Rothman's assertion that the conduct book was Defoe's response to the Schism Act of 1714. Rothman's argument relies largely on Defoe's continued opposition to the act in his pamphlet literature, yet only two of the five pamphlets listed by Rothman can be shown to be at least 'probably' by Defoe.⁶⁵ What an investigation of more convincingly attributed pamphlets of the years 1714-15 actually shows is that Defoe had become preoccupied with the issue of Jacobitism. Consequently, this thesis contends, it is far more likely that *The Family Instructor* was Defoe's response to the wide-spread Jacobite-inspired unrests of the period.

Even in the context of Furbank and Owens' reduced number of 276 items, Defoe's publication record is nevertheless considerable. The sheer multitude of different voices Defoe employed in his publications makes it difficult for the Defoe scholar to incorporate every one of his texts in his/her discussion. Even the most extensive of Defoe biographies typically does not cover all of the texts the author accepts to be by Defoe.⁶⁶ An in-depth analysis of all of Defoe's public voices would necessarily result in several volumes and thus extend beyond the scope of a doctoral thesis. Therefore, in order to offer a meaningful discussion of some of Defoe's rhetorical practices and polemical strategies, the present study focuses on the public voices which Defoe produced in response to four major socio-political events and developments of the period 1697-1717: the standing army controversy of 1697-99, the political crisis surrounding the issue of occasional conformity in the early 1700s, the resurgence of Jacobitism during the years 1714-16, and the Whig schism of 1717.

⁶⁵ I.N. Rothman, 'Defoe's *The Family Instructor*: A Response to the Schism Act', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 74 (1980), 213; *Critical Bibliography*, 145-46; idem *De-Attributions*, 64-65

⁶⁶ For example, Novak, who has asserted that Trent's and Moore's bibliographies, which cover up to 570 items, are more accurate than Furbank and Owens' list ('Defoe Canon', 85), essentially offers a selection of the Defoe texts he believes to have been authored by Defoe. Novak refers to fewer than three hundred Defoe publications in his *Master of Fictions*, which extends to over seven hundred pages.

These events required Defoe to comment on issues which dominated the political discourse of the early eighteenth century - constitutional theory, party political ideologies, the concepts of resistance and obedience, religious toleration, and standing armies - and inspired him to produce some of his most ambitious literary works. Finally, it is hoped that the limited number of texts referred to in this thesis constitutes a 'common denominator' for both Furbank and Owens' reductionist approach to the Defoe canon as well as Novak's more liberal method of author attribution.

The two decades covered by this study represent the period in Defoe's life during which he most closely engaged with matters of high politics. In the 1690s, as Novak has rightly stated, Defoe 'began finding his public voice as a writer on politics and moral reform'.⁶⁷ However, the publications used to describe the nature of Defoe's early public voices have not escaped bibliographical dispute. Recent revisions have seen the number of reliably attributed texts for the period 1688-1701 reduced from 45 to 30 items, with only two of these items published before 1697.⁶⁸ As a result, Defoe's first extended propaganda campaign for which reliably attributed texts exist was his contribution to the standing army controversy.⁶⁹ Indeed, the controversy is perhaps one of the best examples for the interplay between the public sphere of the taverns and coffeehouses and the official sphere of parliamentary politics. The anti-army opposition largely organised itself around the Calves-Head and Grecian or Country Whigs and saw an at times closely coordinated collaboration of propagandists and politicians in their effort to influence public opinion against William III's request for a significant number of military forces. Defoe, as is well known, was an 'enthusiastic propagandist' for William and in his defence of the king's request, he essentially

⁶⁷ Novak, 135

⁶⁸ Downie, 'Defoe's Early Writings', 225; idem, 'Ben Overton: An Alternative Author of *A Dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 70 (1976), 263-71; *Critical Bibliography*, 7-31

⁶⁹ Defoe published three pamphlets on this issue: *Some Reflections On a Pamphlet lately Publish'd, Entitled, An Argument Shewing that A Standing Army Is Inconsistent with A Free Government, and Absolutely Destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* (1697), *An Argument, Shewing, That a Standing Army, with Consent of Parliament, is Not Inconsistent with A Free Government, etc.* (1698), and *A Brief Reply to the History of Standing Armies in England* (1698); see *Critical Bibliography*, 11-15, items no. 7, 8 and 12, for an explanation of the attribution of these pamphlets to Defoe.

answered the coffeehouse voices referred to above.⁷⁰ The idea that Defoe aligned himself with the Court Whigs during the controversy has been widely accepted. That there were important differences between the rhetoric and arguments employed by Defoe and the other Court writers appears to have escaped scholarly attention, however. In this context, Chapter I provides a detailed analysis of Defoe's contribution to the debate on the army and argues that Defoe, by addressing directly the opposition's constitutional arguments, developed a public voice which was clearly different from those of his fellow pro-army writers. In fact, Defoe objected so strongly to the opposition's reading of ancient British history that he developed his pro-army voice in one of his best known publications, *The True-Born Englishman* (1701). The poem, as Chapter II demonstrates, continued Defoe's attack on Country Whig historiography, in particular its central notion of the Gothic balance and its model of virtue and moral integrity, the Gothic Barons.

The accession of Queen Anne in 1702 and the correlated revival of High-Church and Tory interests forced Defoe into a sharp re-adjustment of his public voices, since now he had to contend with writers from the opposite end of the political spectrum. The focus of public debate shifted from the extent of the king's powers to the threat which religious nonconformity allegedly posed to the stability of the nation. In other words, Defoe was no longer defending his political ideas and a much-admired monarch but, in essence, he was required to defend his identity as a Dissenter. The High Church attack on religious nonconformity eventually resulted in the occasional conformity controversy and Chapter III offers an account of the development of Defoe's public voices in this context. What becomes apparent is that he took two distinct stances during the controversy, which are neatly divided by his imprisonment for the publication of *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702). Insisting that occasional conformity was not a political but a theological issue, Defoe's initial strategy was to condemn the practice as damaging to the Dissenters' cause and, as the investigation shows, some of his arguments were surprisingly close to those of the High-Church propagandists at this time. However, once Defoe had been exposed personally to the anger of the extreme Anglicans and Tories, he altered his rhetorical

⁷⁰ Novak, 91

strategy and once more employed his constitutional ideas to defend both the practice of occasional conformity and the Dissenters' right to a toleration. This campaign, it is argued, found its culmination in a further verse satire, *Jure Divino* (1706). The poem employed the same polemical strategy as *The True-Born Englishman* in that Defoe focused on and attempted to dismantle what he believed to be a central aspect of the opposition's case. In the context of the occasional conformity controversy this aspect was the High-Church attempt to exert an almost totalitarian control over individual consciences. In *Jure Divino* Defoe countered the rhetoric of the extreme Anglicans by asserting the constitutional rights of the individual, thus offering his readers a comprehensive theory for the justification of the legality of religious nonconformity.

Both the standing army and occasional conformity controversies had seen Defoe employ his public voices in a highly vocal and overtly polemical manner. While Defoe's public voices showed a considerable amount of consistency during the standing army controversy, his campaign in favour of religious toleration had forced him to change his stance at least once. It might be noted that the shift in his rhetorical strategy can be linked to Defoe's dual identity as a Dissenter and a Whig. During the early months of the occasional conformity controversy Defoe was clearly writing as a Dissenter who was concerned about the negative implications of the practice for the theological integrity of nonconformity. After his imprisonment and punishment in the pillory, however, he began to write as a Whig who was defending the personal rights of the individual, in this case the Dissenter. Defoe was debating the effects of the political public sphere on the private/spiritual sphere of the individual and concluded that a strict demarcation between the two was required. Less than a decade later, however, we find a reversal of this stance in Defoe's writing. With *The Family Instructor* (1715), Defoe, as Chapter IV seeks to demonstrate, attempted to combat the growing, Jacobite-inspired social discontent, which he felt could potentially overthrow the Protestant succession. Private thought and action and the public sphere were no longer as clearly distinguished as they had been in his writings on religious toleration. Recent events in the streets of London had shifted the focus of Defoe's public voices from an assessment of matters of high politics to the regulation of private conduct. Consequently, his target audience too had changed from politicians

and fellow journalists to those who represented the main source of disaffection, crafts- and tradesmen and their families and apprentices. In the context of this crossover from the public to the private, Defoe's rhetoric of obedience in *The Family Instructor* did, of course, still represent a public political act: the conduct book, it is contended, was designed to promote the political stability of the kingdom.

The pamphlet which provides the focus for the final chapter of this study, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, in many ways represents a rhetorical 'bridge' between Defoe's first propaganda campaign supporting a standing army and what would be one of the last occasions on which he commented directly on matters of high politics, the Whig Schism. In the pamphlet Defoe revisited a number of topics he had already discussed extensively in the past: the nobility, foreign immigrants and standing armies. Yet, much of what Defoe had to say appeared to represent a complete volte-face to his former rhetorical stances: the nobility or barons were no longer the 'rascals' they had been in *The True-Born Englishman* but models of virtue, foreign blood was now 'spurious', and standing armies a tool of tyrannical rule. The key to understanding Defoe's rhetorical strategy in *Treasonable Conspiracy*, Chapter V argues, lies in the recognition of the ironic markers present in the text. Defoe, it can be shown, deliberately drew attention to his own earlier publications in order to ironically attack Toland and his unqualified support for the Stanhope administration. Indeed, in many ways, at this point Defoe's public voice became increasingly private, in the sense that some of his rhetorical strategies border on a joke which could have only been understood by himself.

The picture of Defoe which emerges from the present study, is that of an occasional writer who permanently rose to the challenge of a new occasion. His rhetorical strategy was often grounded in a very specific polemical goal; even treatises such as *Jure Divino*, which has been said to operate at 'a higher level of generality' than Defoe's pamphlets, can be shown to engage with issues of contemporary political rhetoric and party politics in a highly specific manner.⁷¹ Defoe was, moreover, clearly prepared to sacrifice rhetorical consistency in order to achieve polemical success. However, this is not to suggest that he also sacrificed his long

⁷¹ P.N. Furbank, 'Introduction', *Satire*, Vol.2, 18

held political beliefs. Even a problematic text like *Treasonable Conspiracy* offers some evidence for an unchanged stance on a number of Defoe's favourite topics.

Chapter I

**‘Exchanging one Tyrant for Three hundred’ –
Defoe and the Standing Army Controversy, 1697-99.**

The Standing Army controversy of 1697-99 represented the first real opportunity after the Glorious Revolution for the young Daniel Defoe to express his support for William III in writing and assert his notions on constitutional theory. Following the end of the nine-years' war against France in 1697, William III felt it was necessary to keep a large part of his army mobilised to counter the military threat France still posed. William, unlike some of his English subjects, had realised that the Treaty of Ryswick, by failing to solve the problem of who was to succeed the ailing Charles II of Spain, did not provide a framework for a permanent European peace.¹ Parliament, however, disagreed with the king. In the eyes of the vast majority of MPs, the principal cause of the war with France had been removed when Louis XIV recognised William as king of England. In addition, the nation was looking forward to lower taxes and demobilisation, as well as a return to 'normality'. The peace was also regarded as a perfect opportunity to reduce to a minimum England's connections with the hated Dutch. Despite continued pressure from William's ministers in favour of the king's request, the Commons defied the king and in December 1697 passed a resolution that all troops raised since 1680 should be disbanded, which meant a reduction in William's forces from over 90,000 to 10,000 men.² An army of this size was wholly inappropriate to lead any meaningful military campaigns against France, which had almost 400,000 soldiers in pay in 1690 and which recruited an average of 35,000 men a year during the first decade of the eighteenth century.³ A year later, parliament voted in favour of a further reduction of the army to 7,000 soldiers. However, the final insult to William came in 1699 when Parliament, indulging in its growing xenophobia, insisted on an army of native-born Englishmen. As a result, William had to send his Dutch Blue Guards back to the Republic. The king was so distraught at these developments that he briefly considered abdicating.⁴ Despite the fact that a small standing force survived the onslaught of parliament, by the time the

¹ Rose, 144; J. Hoppit, *Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford, 2000), 106-8, 156

² Stephen B. Baxter, *William III* (London, 1966), 360- 370; Rose, 93-99

³ See M.S. Anderson, *War and Society in Europe of the Old Regime, 1618-1789* (Leicester, 1988), 83-85, for the size of European armies during this period.

⁴ Baxter, *William III*, 370

controversy ended in 1699 the two Houses had virtually destroyed one of the most vital prerogatives of the crown – the monarch’s right to raise and maintain an army.

Defoe’s role as a Court propagandist during the Standing Army Controversy has received wide-spread scholarly attention and, in the process, two distinct views of Defoe’s relationship with William III and his Whig government have materialised. On the one hand are those scholars who have claimed that Defoe was in the direct employment of the king. John Robert Moore, for example, has stated that ‘it is certain that Defoe was acting as a trusted agent of the king and that he had accepted the task which he later referred to as “writing within doors” around 1692.’⁵ During the course of this employment, Defoe became William’s ‘friend’.⁶ Similarly, Frank Bastian has asserted that Defoe was ‘propagandist and confidential advisor to William III’, although not until the ‘last eighteen months of that monarch’s life’.⁷ Moreover, Bastian asserts that prior to his role as the king’s intimate, Defoe had already been working as a ‘government propagandist’; his standing army tracts contain indications that he was ‘applying himself to an imposed task’.⁸ Further, somewhat more tentative, support for this view comes from Paula Backscheider, who views an acquaintance between Defoe and King William as a distinct possibility.⁹

This notion of Defoe, the ‘Friend of William’, has been variously challenged. One of the first scholars to doubt Moore’s assertion was Lois Schwoerer, who thought Defoe ‘served the court as a paid pamphleteer’ but was not a particularly ‘close intimate of king and court’.¹⁰ Similarly, J.P. Kenyon has argued that any suggestion that Defoe could have been in the direct employment of William ‘misunderstands the relations which could possibly exist between a reigning monarch and a low-born Dissenting journalist’. Rather, one could reasonably suppose that Defoe was in the

⁵ J.R. Moore, ‘Daniel Defoe: King William’s Pamphleteer and Intelligence Agent,’ *Huntington Library Quarterly* 34:3 (1971), 256

⁶ Idem, *Daniel Defoe: Citizen of the Modern World* (Chicago & London, 1958), 70,73

⁷ F. Bastian, *Defoe’s Early Life* (London & Basingstoke, 1981), 7

⁸ Ibid, 206

⁹ Backscheider, 71-2,108, 558n

¹⁰ L.G. Schwoerer, ‘The Literature of the Standing Army Controversy, 1697-1699,’ *Huntington Library Quarterly* 18 (1965), 195n

‘employ of the Junto, severally or collectively’.¹¹ Recent attempts to shed light on Defoe’s relationship with his king and the government have offered more extensive accounts of this aspect of Defoe’s biography. For example, Downie has highlighted that, beside the problem of mis-attribution of texts to Defoe, ‘there is little or no actual evidence’ either amongst known biographical information or in his pamphlets which supports Defoe’s claim.¹² Therefore, claims that he wrote to the order of the government or that he enjoyed a close friendship with the king necessarily ‘remain in the realms of speculation’.¹³ A somewhat more forthright view is offered by the most recent essay on the issue in question. Furbank and Owens have advanced the notion that Defoe, after he had been imprisoned for publishing the seditious libel *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, invented his acquaintance with the king in order to save himself from the pillory. Having grown fond of this ‘ingenious ploy’, Defoe ‘would embellish [it] lovingly over the years to come’.¹⁴ It is this more sceptical view of Defoe’s position within the Court environment which the present chapter seeks to adopt.

Another focus of study has been the nature of Defoe’s contribution to the Standing Army Controversy. In this context, J.G.A. Pocock’s analysis of Defoe’s pro-army propaganda offers one of the most extensive accounts of the ideological position occupied by Defoe.¹⁵ Defoe is a ‘modern’, Pocock asserts, ‘writing to defend the Junto Whigs, the Bank of England, and the standing army’.¹⁶ Defoe’s ‘modernism’

¹¹ J.P. Kenyon, *Revolution Principles. The Politics of Party, 1689-1720* (Cambridge, 1977), 57

¹² J.A. Downie, ‘Daniel Defoe: King William’s Pamphleteer?’, *Eighteenth Century Life* 12:3 (1988), 106

¹³ Ibid, 114

¹⁴ P.N. Furbank & W.R. Owens, ‘Defoe and King William: A Sceptical Enquiry,’ *Review of English Studies* 52:206 (2001), 227-32

¹⁵ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* 2nd edition (Princeton & Oxford, 2003); idem, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge, 1985). It is perhaps worthwhile to highlight that Pocock’s account almost exclusively refers to just one of Defoe’s standing army pamphlets, *An Argument Shewing that a Standing Army, with Consent of Parliament, Is Not Inconsistent with a Free Government* (1698). Some of the points made with regard to this pamphlet are subsequently related to Defoe’s *The True-Born Englishman* (1701).

¹⁶ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 433-4

derived from his belief that 'true freedom ...could only be found in commercial society, where the individual might profit by wealth and enlightenment and did not risk his liberty in paying others to defend and govern him, so long as he retained parliamentary control of the purse strings.'¹⁷ Thus, Defoe's justification of a standing army was firmly anchored in the 'rapidly developing style of political economy', which, beside land, allowed trade and credit to become sources of 'political stability and virtue'.¹⁸ This, Pocock contends, may be seen in a 'confrontation' of the anti-army propagandist Andrew Fletcher with Defoe, which demonstrates clearly an 'antithesis between virtue and commerce, republicanism and liberalism, classicism and progressivism'.¹⁹

In contrast to Pocock's emphasis on the modernity of Defoe's ideological stance, Manuel Schonhorn suggests that Defoe's language and attitudes can, in fact, be viewed as 'old-fashioned'.²⁰ Unlike propagandists from both sides in the 1690s, Defoe did not believe that parliament was the bulwark of English liberties. Instead, he displayed a 'tendency to delimit the power of parliaments, and to reject their continuing and increasing antagonism to the institution of monarchy'.²¹ Especially, Defoe's notion of the 'magnipotence of parliaments' demonstrated his antagonistic attitude towards William's parliaments: Defoe, Schonhorn suggests, had invented the word 'magnipotent' in order to highlight the undue, even arbitrary, power parliament had assumed. This becomes most apparent in an essay of 1701, in which Defoe, 'perhaps unconsciously, connected his heady parliaments with the arbitrary despot [Louis XIV] by calling the latter "magnipotent."²² Echoing traditional royalist sentiments, Defoe saw parliaments as 'bodies dedicated not to the preservation but to the destruction of the perilous balance of the nation's constitution'. Defoe's 'deeply felt ideology of monarchy and war' meant that his language was different not merely

¹⁷ Idem, *Virtue*, 231

¹⁸ Idem, *Machiavellian Moment*, 426

¹⁹ Idem, *Virtue*, 231

²⁰ Manuel Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics. Parliament, Power, Kingship and Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge, 1991), 59

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid, 60

from that of the Country opposition but also from the language of the ministerial supporters.²³

The present chapter only partially accepts these readings of Defoe's pro-army propaganda by Pocock and Schonhorn. Defoe's argument that parliamentary control of the purse was a sufficient counterbalance to a monarch with a standing army certainly had its roots in the increasing political importance of commerce and trade, but it was not representative of the overall tone of Defoe's rhetoric. Rather, all of Defoe's publications in favour of standing forces are characterised by the language of royal prerogative. It is a sustained focus on the rights of the king and his function as a governmental estate, this study contends, which made Defoe's propaganda different from that of opposition and ministerial supporters. In this context, his warnings of a potential parliamentary tyranny are little more than a by-product of his central constitutional argument, the need to keep intact the full scope of the powers of the crown. In fact, if Defoe felt as antagonistic towards this governmental estate as Schonhorn suggests, then one has to wonder why he repeatedly asked for the army question to be left to 'Parliament, who are proper Judges of the Fact, and have always been very careful both of our Liberty and our Safety.'²⁴

It is important to highlight that the present chapter is not a biographical study which seeks to establish the exact details of Defoe's relationship with William III. Rather, it purports to be an analysis of the rhetoric Defoe employed in his efforts to support the king's request for a significant number of standing forces. A study of this kind may, of course, still provide important insights into Defoe's position within the Court Whig context and a further aim of this chapter is to question Bastian's suggestion that Defoe collaborated so closely with the government that he 'ghosted' or even co-wrote some of Somers' publications, including 'his famous *Balancing*

²³ Ibid, 49, 58-9

²⁴ Daniel Defoe *A Brief Reply to the History of Standing Armies in England* (1698), in *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol. 1, p.98; also see *Some Reflections On a Pamphlet lately Publish'd, Entitled, An Argument Shewing that A Standing Army Is inconsistent with A Free Government, And Absolutely Destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* (1697), *ibid*, 40, and *An Argument Shewing, That a Standing Army, with Consent of Parliament, is Not Inconsistent with A Free Government, etc.* (1698), *ibid*, 63.

Letter'.²⁵ To achieve this, this chapter endorses the point of departure suggested by Downie, who insists that any attempt to establish whether Defoe 'really was King William's pamphleteer, and not simply a volunteer... must turn to the pamphlets themselves'.²⁶ However, before a meaningful analysis of Defoe's contribution to the controversy may be undertaken, it is necessary to explore the political context in which the pamphlets were produced and to investigate the ideas to which Defoe was reacting.

That the dichotomy of Whig and Tory was the 'cardinal fact of English political life in the 1690s' is a commonplace of late seventeenth-century historiography.²⁷ Yet, the political landscape during the reign of William III, in particular its early years, was rather less polarised than this statement might suggest. Contemporaries readily associated the labels with 'two broad and mutually hostile political traditions', but beyond that, numerous cross-currents of political thought and sensibilities on either side meant that party affiliation could at times be highly elusive.²⁸ Several factors could, individually or collectively, influence party allegiance: loyalty to traditional party principles, one's attitude towards the power of the executive, and, rather more pragmatically, one's position with regard to the government.²⁹ Party allegiance was thus a complex hybrid and it was not unusual to find men from different ends of the political spectrum brought together temporarily by a shared concern about a specific political issue, material considerations, or simply by their exclusion from office. This type of strategic behaviour was particularly evident in the traditional opposition between 'Court' and 'Country', the strongest political cross-current of the period.³⁰ The Court-Country polarity 'manifested itself from time to time', usually when

²⁵ Bastian, *Defoe's Early Life*, 207, 306-7

²⁶ Downie, 'Daniel Defoe: King William's pamphleteer?', 107

²⁷ Rose, 63; H. Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977), 316-7

²⁸ Rose, 64; Hayton, *Land of Liberty*, 435, 438

²⁹ Harris, 148

³⁰ D. Hayton, *The House of Commons 1690-1715*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2002), 436; Harris, 161-69

traditional country issues dominated contemporary politics.³¹ On these occasions, Whig and Tory politicians, without ever entirely abandoning their basic party principles, collaborated under the banner of a Country party to oppose the king's administration. Indeed, a small number of Whig politicians, as we shall see, never entirely cast off their Country clothing. However, the Country party, as Hayton has asserted, 'did not have a continuous existence' and the majority of key political issues were still decided along Whig-Tory party lines.³²

William III's insistence upon a mixed administration during the early months of his reign did little to clear up the confusion surrounding party political alignment.³³ The new king considered the political disagreements of his subjects an unwelcome distraction from his military campaign against France. In order to avoid becoming a prisoner of party, William employed political managers who could, he hoped, help him implement his foreign policy efficiently, regardless of their political affiliation. The result was a 'hotchpotch administration' of politicians of violently opposed principles, which encountered considerable difficulties in carrying government proposals.³⁴ In particular, those who subscribed to Whiggish principles, enraged by William's reluctance to reward them for their support during the succession crisis of 1688-9 and punish the 'Jacobite' Tories, became increasingly partisan and obstructive.³⁵ The business of the House became so confused that one contemporary commentator observed that 'nobody can know one day what a House of Commons would do the next'.³⁶

After the failure of his plan for a mixed government, William, exasperated with the antics of the parliamentary Whigs, plumped for the Tories after the general election of 1690. However, the new Tory-dominated ministry too failed to manage the king's business effectively. After a very uncomfortable opposition enquiry into

³¹ D. Hayton, 'The "Court" interest and the party system, 1689 – c.1720,' in Clyve Jones (ed.) *Party and Management in Parliament 1660-1784* (New York, 1984), 40, 65; See below, 37-42, for a more detailed discussion of country ideology.

³² Hayton, 'The "Country" interest', 65; Harris, 150

³³ Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 438; Harris, 147-48

³⁴ Ibid, 64, 73-76; Hayton, *Commons*, 445-6; Horwitz, 98

³⁵ Rose, 75-76

³⁶ Sir John Lowther, cited in Horwitz, 208

government expenditure, the administration was forced to revise downwards their demands with regard to supply during the 1691-2 session and suffered further embarrassing defeats during the following session.³⁷ The Whigs, meanwhile, despite having been stung by the favour William had shown the Tories, decided to demonstrate to the king that 'whiggery produced more efficient and reliable royal servants than toryism'.³⁸ From the autumn of 1693, the Whig party, with the newly-established 'Junto' (John Somers, Edward Russell, Thomas Wharton and Charles Montagu) at its core, began to generate something like party unity by co-ordinating the activities of their followers on a large scale.³⁹ The Junto's control of parliamentary affairs gradually improved and William, hoping to finally find a reliable ministry, began to transfer power from the Tories to the Whigs, a process which was completed in early 1694. The Whigs, traditionally a party of opposition, had been drawn into the royal administration, while the Tories were forced to abandon their status as a government party and became increasingly alienated from the court.

However, despite their new-found unity under the leadership of the Junto, the Whig party retained a highly vocal Country section, which did not easily fall into the official party line. These backbenchers had retained the oppositional stance of the 'Old' or first Whigs and their traditional hostility towards the executive.⁴⁰ Advocating what they considered to be a pure brand of whiggery, these radical Whigs (who also referred to themselves as 'Real' or 'Modern' Whigs) felt that the Revolution Settlement had not gone far enough in curtailing the royal prerogative.⁴¹ Moreover, the growth of Crown patronage, these Whigs claimed, had undermined the independence of Parliament and caused wide-spread corruption within the government. In their eyes, the Modern Whigs of the Junto had been 'too ready to sacrifice their principles on the altar of political expediency' in order to gain the king's trust.⁴²

³⁷ Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 445-47

³⁸ Rose, 82

³⁹ Harris, 151; Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 447; also see below, 34

⁴⁰ Dickinson, 102

⁴¹ Rose, 78, 80; Dickinson, 103; B. Worden, 'Whig history and Puritan Politics: The *Memoirs* of Edmund Ludlow revisited,' *Historical Research* 75:188 (2002), 226

⁴² Rose, 83; also see Downie, *Harley*, 20-1

In the mid-1690s the dissenting voices of the Country element of the Whig party were muted somewhat by the dominance of the Junto in Parliament, which was demonstrated by the rather 'sedate' general election of 1695.⁴³ In addition, loyalty of the Whig backbenchers to the Court was strengthened by the fears raised by the Jacobite 'Assassination Plot' of 1696. However, the conclusion which the Treaty of Ryswick had brought to the War of the League of Augsburg in September 1697 proved to be the beginning of the end for the Whig Junto. The war had seen an unprecedented expansion of the army, which, in turn, had incurred enormous costs to a war-weary nation. It was now an absolute priority to reduce the forces to an acceptable size in order to lighten the burden which had been placed on English taxpayers. William, however, made it clear to his ministers that he intended to retain a substantial number of soldiers in his forces. Yet, the king's failure to name a figure - it is believed that he wanted sufficient funding to maintain 30-35,000 soldiers - made almost impossible the Court Whigs' task of successfully representing his request in Parliament.⁴⁴ The ensuing Standing Army Controversy once again polarised opinions along Court-Country lines. Indeed, the entire affair has been depicted as 'the *locus classicus* of the "Country" party's campaign against the Junto Whig ministry'.⁴⁵

The Standing Army Controversy was characterised by the two distinct arenas of Parliament and the press, although, as will be highlighted below, important connections between the two spheres did exist. In the House of Commons, discontented Whigs united under the leadership of Paul Foley and his nephew by marriage, Robert Harley.⁴⁶ Assuming the title of the 'New Country Party', the Old Whigs were joined by the Tories, who, out of office and unable to create a new 'Church in danger' agitation, had lost much of their parliamentary influence and naturally found themselves drawn to the opposition alliance.⁴⁷ The New Country

⁴³ Rose, 89; Harris, 189

⁴⁴ Rose, 94;

⁴⁵ D. Hayton (ed), 'Debates in the House of Commons 1697-1699,' *Camden Miscellany* XXIX (Camden Soc., 4th series, 34, 1987), 345

⁴⁶ Rose, 90-1; Horwitz, 317-18

⁴⁷ Lois G. Schworer "No Standing Armies!" *The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England*. (Baltimore & London, 1974), 161; Hayton, *Commons*, Vol.1, 489; Harris, 164

Party had been able to make an impact in the House as early as 1694-95 but the collapse of Foley's beloved Land Bank Scheme and the Assassination Plot had seriously harmed the opposition's political standing.⁴⁸ The king's request for a significant standing army was not only an ideal opportunity for Foley and Harley to regain political credit but also to unite opposition MPs once again on an issue that remained the litmus test of Country ideology.⁴⁹ The fact that many MPs 'still felt, as they had ten and twenty years before, that a standing army was as great a threat to their liberties as it was to their pocket books' is likely to have made the New Country men confident of success.⁵⁰ Moreover, Harley and Foley must have been aware of the support they would receive from those backbench opportunists who were simply unfriendly to the government and had identified the army question as an efficacious rallying cry against the court.⁵¹ After all, under the Triennial Act the next general election had to be held in 1698 and any successful attack on the government increased the likelihood of changes in Parliament.⁵² Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, it was Harley who led the way for the New Country Party at a sitting of the whole House on 10 December 1697. He moved that all troops raised since 1680 should be disbanded, which in effect meant a drastic reduction from 87,000 to 8,000 soldiers.⁵³ As a telling reflection of the general mood of the Commons, the motion was accepted by the House without division.⁵⁴

The collaboration between Country Whigs and Tories did not, however, go beyond the walls of Parliament. In contrast to the Commons, the press war surrounding the army was fought almost exclusively between Court and Country Whigs. In this context and somewhat misleadingly, John Childs has contended that the entire affair 'both inside and outside parliament, was a giant red herring', because on the one hand it would have been impossible to 'de-militarise the gentry and

⁴⁸ Horwitz, 214-18; Harris, 165

⁴⁹ Horwitz, 218

⁵⁰ Baxter, *William III*, 362

⁵¹ Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 162

⁵² Downie, *Harley*, 33

⁵³ Horwitz, 222, 226; Schwoerer suggests a figure as small as 6,500 soldiers (*Antiarmy Ideology*, 165).

⁵⁴ Horwitz, 226; Hayton, 'Debates', 349

aristocracy' and 'wipe out the military expertise accumulated', while on the other hand, 'nobody - neither king nor officers nor parliament - assumed that the army would be retained at full wartime strength after 1697'. As a result, Childs asserts, the controversy was 'a debate about details rather than principles'.⁵⁵ I accept Childs' comments only within the limits of the parliamentary debate, since the anti-army campaign in the press did, as we shall see below, argue for a complete disbandment of William's troops. Significantly, despite the ideological common ground one might fairly assume to have existed between the Court and Country Whigs, the affair proved to be highly divisive. There was, in fact, no real middle-ground to be occupied in the controversy: one either supported the retention of standing forces, regardless of the actual size demanded, or one advocated a complete disbandment of William's troops. Even pamphleteers such as the anonymous author of *Some Remarks Upon a late Paper*, who ostensibly positioned himself between 'Those who are for no Army at all, and those who are for All the Army', failed to occupy what may be described as a balanced position between the poles. Despite the author's initial assurances, the pamphlet turns out to be little more than an attack on anti-army propaganda, while, in the process, it reiterates some of the key arguments of the Court campaign.⁵⁶ It is not too much to say, therefore, that there were no shades of grey in this 'critical episode in English intellectual history'.⁵⁷ Ultimately, the decision was between William and the monarchical authority he represented and the power of parliament to limit, possibly severely, the influence of the crown. As the discussion below demonstrates, the debate outside parliament was not merely about details: Defoe's contribution to the press war was, in fact, largely characterised by a focus on political principles.

From the outset the press campaign was dominated by the Country Whigs. Indeed, it was a pamphlet generally ascribed to the Anglo-Irishman John Trenchard and the MP Walter Moyle, *An Argument Shewing, that a Standing Army is inconsistent with A Free Government, and Absolutely Destructive to the Constitution*

⁵⁵ John Childs, *British army of William III, 1698-1702* (Manchester, 1987), 190-91

⁵⁶ *Some Remarks Upon a late Paper, Entitled, An Argument, Shewing, that a Standing Army is Inconsistent with a free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* (1697), 1. The pro-Court nature of this pamphlet will be highlighted in the course of the discussion below.

⁵⁷ Worden, 'Introduction', 39

of the English Monarchy, which elevated the standing army question to the top of the political agenda in October 1697, almost two months before the issue was raised by Harley in the Commons. Much of the Country opposition's eagerness to carry their ideological quarrel into the highly public realm of the press can be related to contemporary political organisation. One of the key features of the rise to power of the Whig Junto had been their ability to generate party unity. To achieve this, the Court leaders had begun to disseminate important information and decisions to the Whig rank and file. During regular meetings at one of the peers' country houses, the Junto Lords discussed and agreed the broad outlines of their political strategy.⁵⁸ Once a general plan of action had been established, one or two of the Lords attended larger meetings at venues such as the Rose Tavern in London, during which a Junto-selected spokesman informed the Whig faithful of the party's tactics prior to activity in Parliament.⁵⁹ In those cases where party rhetoric alone did not produce the desired results, financial incentives were employed to further strengthen support for party policies.⁶⁰ Thus, the voting consistency of Court followers was improved, while the 'authority of the party leaders was regularly confirmed'.⁶¹ In an attempt to rival the effective party discipline of the Court Whigs, the Country opposition turned to the press.

The leaders of the New Country party, in particular Harley, realised that for any opposition group to be successful political attitudes had to be influenced on a large scale.⁶² For one, the electorate as a whole had to be persuaded to support Country candidates in the forthcoming general election. More importantly, however, in order to form the 'notoriously unorganised' body of uncommitted Country MPs into an effective organ of opposition, a tangible Country manifesto had to be established.⁶³ Similar organisational structures to those of the ministry would be necessary for this undertaking. However, in contrast to the Court Whigs, the Country opposition did not have recourse to royal pensions and patronage to bring into line the more obstinate

⁵⁸ Harris, 151; Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 468,470-1; Horwitz, 208-9

⁵⁹ Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 469

⁶⁰ Horwitz, 213

⁶¹ Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 486

⁶² The following section is largely based on Downie, *Harley*, 23-24, 33

⁶³ Downie, *Harley*, 23

MPs. In any case, financial incentives of this kind were considered to have a morally corrupting influence on the individual and were therefore unacceptable as an organisational tool. As a consequence, the opposition had to rely almost exclusively on their persuasive skills to generate something like a party identity. Success, Harley realised, could only be achieved through an extensive propaganda campaign which would disseminate 'country ideology' within and without doors.⁶⁴ The early success of Trenchard and Moyle's pamphlet had only served to highlight the growing importance of the press.

Like the Court Whigs, then, the Country Whig opposition undertook the necessary work of organisation and co-ordination through a political club, albeit in a somewhat less regimented fashion. Regular meetings were held at the Grecian coffeehouse in Devereux Court in an effort to create a 'respectable ideological and historical pedigree' for the Country opposition.⁶⁵ Beside Trenchard and Moyle, the Grecian was patronised by MPs such as Lord Ashley (later 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury), Robert Molesworth and Edmund Waller, as well as propagandists such as Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun and John Toland; Harley too was known to have frequented this coffeehouse.⁶⁶ Not only did these informal meetings provide the Old Whigs with an opportunity to discuss, shape and reinforce the political ideals of the Country Opposition, it also enabled them to coordinate their parliamentary and press activities. The appearance of individual opposition pamphlets was timed so that they either paved the way for forthcoming Country activities in the Commons or reinforced initiatives which had already been aired in the House or, indeed, both.⁶⁷ This required a well-organised, collaborative effort between the politicians and the propagandists. Trenchard, for example, who has been identified as the 'opposition *chef de propagande*', is known to have received 'assistance and information' from Harley for his pamphlets.⁶⁸ Harley also appears to have been involved in the publication of

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Worden, 'Introduction', 39; also see Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 471, and Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 177

⁶⁶ Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 471; Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 167; Downie, *Harley*, 22

⁶⁷ Downie, *Harley*, 31-32

⁶⁸ Ibid, 32-33

Toland's pamphlet *The Militia Reform'd*. Conversely, the politicians found inspiration in anti-army publications for their speeches to the House. For example, in his maiden speech in the House of Commons, the somewhat eccentric Country Whig Sir Richard Cocks borrowed extensively from Ludlow's *Memoirs*, one of the most important publications of the anti-army campaign.⁶⁹ The writers too used the meetings at the Grecian to inform their pieces of propaganda. Just how closely the group collaborated is shown by the significant extent to which the anti-army writers reproduced passages from each other's pamphlets.⁷⁰ Indeed, sometimes pamphlets were so similar in style and content that they appeared to have been produced by the same person: Defoe, for example, stated that Trenchard's *Second Part of An Argument* and Fletcher's *Discourse Concerning Militias and Standing Armies* 'seem to me to be wrote by the same Hand'.⁷¹ It should also be pointed out that many of the similarities were, as we shall see below, due to the fact that the Country writers drew on the same sources to inform their pamphlets.

Moreover, how centralised the country opposition's 'propaganda machine' was is indicated by the fact that a series of anti-army publications were 'hammer'd out' from 'the same Forge', namely the press of radical Whig publisher John Darby.⁷² Beside pamphlets such as Trenchard's *A Short History of Standing Armies* and Toland's *The Militia Reform'd*, Darby published politico-philosophical treatises such as Algernon Sidney's *Discourses concerning Government* (1698), Milton's *Historical and Political Works* (1698) and the first collected *Works* of James Harrington (1700), as well as a history of the Civil War, the *Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow* (1698). Toland, as Blair Worden has shown, appears to have had a hand in editing all of these new editions.⁷³ It might also be highlighted that the above named publications were not 'solitary but collaborative' projects, involving, beside Darby, 'a community of individuals of a variety of social and political status: dukes, earls, lords and MPs',

⁶⁹ Worden, 'Introduction', 47. See David Hayton, 'Sir Richard Cocks: The Political Anatomy of a Country Whig,' *Albion* Vol.20 (1988), 221-246, for an account of this particular Country MP.

⁷⁰ Worden, 'Whig history', 222

⁷¹ Defoe, *An Argument*, 64

⁷² Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 98

⁷³ Worden, 'Introduction', 18-21; also see Champion, *Republican Learning*, 97-98

who furnished Toland with manuscript materials, money for the printing costs, or who simply lent cultural status to the publications by accepting his dedications.⁷⁴ The Country opposition, it seems, was able to unite a broad political community behind itself.

One of the most important men who could be heard at the radical Whigs' favourite coffeehouse was Henry Neville, the 'father figure of the Grecian Club'.⁷⁵ Neville's death in 1694 meant that his personal influence on the emerging Harley-Foley opposition was limited but his influence on Country ideology was nevertheless significant, since he carried on what J.G.A. Pocock has termed the "neo-Harringtonian" style in English political discourse'.⁷⁶ In the rather thin guise of a utopian narrative, James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656) had established the most influential model for an English popular republic. Echoing the Florentine Niccolo Machiavelli, Harrington viewed the bearing of arms as 'the essential medium through which the individual asserts both his social power and his participation in politics as a responsible moral being'.⁷⁷ Moreover, the right to bear arms derived directly from the possession of property, which in turn guaranteed the individual's independence. Harrington's armed English 'freeholder' was modelled on the 'classical citizen', whose independent political personality made him the natural exponent of Greco-Roman civic virtue, a concept that was characterised by a strong sense of freedom and political innocence.⁷⁸ Importantly, in his discussion of the history of governments, Harrington recognised that England's monarchy was a Polybian or mixed form of government in which monarchy, aristocracy and democracy combined to balance one another.⁷⁹ The idea of a balanced constitution, the so-called 'coordination principle', had been in the mainstream of political thought ever since Charles I had inadvertently given rise to the notion in his 'Answer to the

⁷⁴ Champion, *Republican Learning*, 100

⁷⁵ Worden, 'Introduction', 40; also see Downie, *Harley*, 22

⁷⁶ J.G.A. Pocock, 'Introduction', J. Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics* (Cambridge, 2003), xi

⁷⁷ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 386, 390

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 385-6, 407

⁷⁹ Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 47-53

Nineteen Propositions of June, 1642'.⁸⁰ With this document the king's advisers had intended to naturalise into English political rhetoric the theory of the mixed constitution in order to remind his subjects of the importance of due subordination. Nothing, they argued, but the 'balance of the three estates stood between them and anarchy' and even the slightest form of insubordination could overthrow the highly fragile governmental system.⁸¹ However, the theory did little to reinforce the king's political powers but instead effectively opened the 'door to Machiavellian analysis', thus enabling political commentators to represent the government of England, 'without ceasing to manifest the element of monarchy, ...[as] a classical republic'.⁸² By the time he wrote *Oceana*, of course, Harrington had witnessed the regicide of Charles I and the subsequent demise of the English monarchy, which inevitably shaped his view of monarchical governments. He argued that in theory a mixed constitution, if it maintained the balance between the three estates at all times, had the potential to achieve 'the full perfection of government'.⁸³ However, in reality mixed monarchies, in particular the 'Gothic' or feudal type, were 'no other than a wrestling match' between the estates and consequently, they were an inherently unstable form of government.⁸⁴ The recent fall of the English monarchy had only served to reinforce this point.

Neville, who had been a close associate of Harrington's, was not the first author to interpret English politics in a neo-Harringtonian manner, but his tract *Plato Redivivus* (1680) may be taken as the 'culmination of the first attempt to restate Harringtonian doctrine in a form appropriate to the realities of the Restoration'.⁸⁵ Neville's arguably most important contribution to Country ideology was his neo-Harringtonian interpretation of English history and the 'remarkable prototype of an incorruptible country gentleman' which his *Plato Redivivus* established for the radical

⁸⁰ C.C. Weston & J.R. Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns. The Grand Controversy over Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1981), 3; Dickinson, 64

⁸¹ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 364-5

⁸² *Ibid*, 363

⁸³ Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 32

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 53; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 387

⁸⁵ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 406; Pocock cites the anonymous pamphlet *A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend in the Country* (1675) as the first neo-Harringtonian publication.

Whig cause.⁸⁶ The political aphorism which both Harrington and Neville made the cornerstone of their political thought was the idea that 'empire is founded in property'.⁸⁷ Only a man who owned a part of the nation could be expected to want to defend its liberties. Originally, property had been mainly in the hands of the nobility, who, with the help of their tenants or 'vassals', had defended the liberties of the nation. The last two centuries, however, had seen the decay of this structure, as the barons sold off much of their land to their vassals, which in turn meant that a significant amount of political power was transferred from the nobility to the commoners.⁸⁸ It is, in fact, because of this 'democratisation' of power that Neville believes that Harrington's principles, which were originally designed to prove that 'England was not capable of any other government than a democracy', could validly be applied to the kingdom's mixed constitution in order to restore it to its former glory.⁸⁹ Yet, to be able to make this assertion, Neville had to undertake a major revision of Harrington's interpretation of English history. He agreed with Harrington that the decay of the power of the nobility, whose traditional role it was to act as an intermediary between king and Commons, and who were the 'bulwarks of the government', had resulted in the destruction of the mixed or balanced constitution.⁹⁰ However, unlike Harrington, who considered the history of England's mixed monarchy to be a 'record of instability and successive degenerations' and who saw his republic as rising from the ruins of the balanced constitution, Neville viewed the 'Gothic balance' as an ideal and importantly, maintainable, form of government. A country such as Sweden, which had remained 'in point of constitution, and property, exactly as it did anciently', demonstrated this and as a result it was a 'well-governed kingdom'.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Worden, 'Introduction', 41

⁸⁷ Henry Neville, *Plato Redivivus* (1680), in C. Robbins (ed), *Two English Republican Tracts* (Cambridge, 1969), 87; Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 11

⁸⁸ Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 20, 44, 55-56; Neville, *Plato Redivivus*, 88, 145. See Chapter II, 88-90, for a more detailed discussion of the neo-Harringtonian interpretation of English history.

⁸⁹ Neville, *Plato Redivivus*, 69

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 133

⁹¹ Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 53, 61; Neville, *Plato Redivivus*, 136

The key to understanding the decay of the mixed constitution was not so much an inherent instability within the governmental triad, Neville asserted, as the manner in which individuals undertook their governmental duties. Indeed, personal morality was the very reason why the original Gothic constitution had been able to function so admirably: 'our ancestors were a plain-hearted, well-meaning people, without court-reserves, or tricks'.⁹² Modern politics, however, had fallen prey to a beast that was now threatening to destroy the entire constitution - 'corruption'. The decay of England's government had been accompanied by the emergence of a new species of politician, the 'court-parasite', whose primary aim it was to satisfy his own private interests, instead of protecting the public good.⁹³ The shift of property 'from the few to the many' had resulted in a large number of the nation's representatives drawing comparatively small annual incomes from their land. This had made previously honourable 'counsellors' susceptible to the 'tricks and malice of men', that is to say, 'bribes, gratuities and fees as they usually take for the dispatch of all matters before them.'⁹⁴ Of course, once a representative had accepted court favours, he no longer possessed Harrington's basic requirement for a well-functioning government, political independence, but was obliged to support the royal prerogative to the point where the balance between the three governmental estates all but disappeared and the king became the sole ruling power. The political solution to the problem, Neville asserted, was to limit the prerogatives of the king but this posed an almost insurmountable further difficulty, since corrupt courtiers would 'think it hard that the king should be so bounded and limited both in power and revenue, that he shall have no means to exercise his liberality towards them'. Consequently, the king's favourites will 'use their interest and eloquence, in both houses, to dissuade them from pressing so hard upon a prince'.⁹⁵

The most visible effect of court corruption was a standing army. Harrington himself had not addressed this issue in depth, although he did describe standing forces as 'something politically undesirable', comparing them to the 'guards used by ancient

⁹² Neville, *Plato Redivivus*, 121

⁹³ *Ibid*, 145

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 144, 146

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 170

tyrants to establish unlawful power'.⁹⁶ By the middle of the 1670s, however, the standing army had become 'common coinage of English political debate' and was coupled regularly with corruption and opposed to the ideal of the militia.⁹⁷ Standing forces were the symbol of the destruction of the balanced constitution: the sword had been transferred from the hands of the freeholder, who had a vested interest in protecting the freedom of the nation, into those of the monarch, whose unchecked will now took irresistible priority. Again, corruption was at the heart of the problem. The decay of the aristocracy's power meant that it could no longer raise military forces to defend its own and the nation's freedom. This responsibility had been wholly transferred to the monarch, who now had to rely on hired professional soldiers to defend the country. These soldiers were willingly financed by corrupt government ministers, who were intent on retaining royal 'bribes, gratuities and fees'. Thus, the king not only controlled parliament, originally the guard of the nation's freedom, but he also had at his hands the tool of a tyrant. Standing armies, therefore, constantly posed the sinister threat of military rule by an absolute government.⁹⁸ Following Harrington, Neville did not make great play of what was to become *the* bogey of Country ideology. Yet, his *Plato Redivivus* was clearly informed by the undesirable effects radical Whiggery associated with a professional soldiery: he discussed the 'ill consequences of a standing army' in the context of the 'mercenary' military forces of Roman and Greek tyrants, the 'slavery' inflicted on Scotland by Charles I and his attempt to intimidate the Long Parliament by using an army, the need to maintain unlawful governments by force, and the subversive nature of Cromwell's 'New Model Army'.⁹⁹

If the 'breach and ruin' of England's balanced constitution was to be avoided, the 'disease' called corruption which had infected the body politic needed to be

⁹⁶ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 411; Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 31, 45

⁹⁷ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 410

⁹⁸ J.G.A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century,' in J.G.A. Pocock ed. *Politics, Language & Time. Essays on Political Thought & History* (London, 1972), 120-22, 125-26; idem, *Machiavellian Moment*, 415-7; Dickinson, 103-4

⁹⁹ Neville, *Plato Redivivus*, 109, 143, 149, 165, 171, 177-179

remedied quickly and effectively.¹⁰⁰ The moral and political behaviour of the members of the two Houses had to return to the classical concept of civic virtue. This is where Neville's second major contribution to Country ideology comes into focus: his 'English Gentleman' represented a model 'senator', who advocated the 'great generosity and self-denial of the [Athenian] nobility; who sacrificed their own interest to the preservation of their country' and condemned court 'sycophants' and 'wicked' counsellors.¹⁰¹ His detailed knowledge of English and European history and his, in neo-Harringtonian eyes, excellent analysis of ancient and modern governments enables him to demonstrate the advantages of the democratic structure of frequently elected 'senates', to argue for a reduction of the king's prerogatives, to highlight the 'misspending of public monies' and the threat posed by a standing army, and to insist on the necessity of a complete renewal of the corrupted administration.¹⁰² A true counsellor, the reader learns, would have 'abilities and integrity enough to discover to [the king] the disease of his government, and the remedy'.¹⁰³ Neville's English Gentleman certainly matched this description.

Bearing in mind Neville's elevated position within the Grecian coffeehouse group, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the Country party's campaign in Parliament against standing forces had a distinctly neo-Harringtonian flavour.¹⁰⁴ Lord Ashley and his friends hoped that MPs would model themselves on Roman senators and resist the 'temptations of fear and favour' and rigorously subordinate 'private to public interest'.¹⁰⁵ In one of his disbandment speeches in the Commons, Harley followed Neville's neo-Harringtonian historiography by emphasising the fact that 'Caesar enslaved Rome by his Army'.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the Country Whig MP Sir Richard Cocks repeatedly turned to Roman history to illustrate his arguments.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, as

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 76, 81-82

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 96, 123

¹⁰² Ibid, 102-3, 122-3, 171-2, 175, 183-4, 191-7

¹⁰³ Ibid, 148

¹⁰⁴ Downie, *Harley*, 22

¹⁰⁵ Worden, 'Introduction', 46

¹⁰⁶ Hayton, 'Debates', 383

¹⁰⁷ Hayton, 'Sir Richard Cocks', 228. The fact that Cocks was not actually a member of the group of Whigs who met at the Grecian Tavern may perhaps be viewed as

one historian has suggested, 'the most pervasive personal influence on Cock's thinking may well have been that of Neville, especially in his call for a "reformation" of constitution and of society, and in the ideal of the incorruptible country gentleman fashioned in *Plato Redivivus*'.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, old 'Plato' Neville's lasting influence on the group is demonstrated by the fact that in 1698 his tract was reprinted as part of the anti-army campaign.

The literary campaign against the army bore an even stronger imprint of neo-Harringtonian sentiments, broadening into 'a general denunciation of the drift of whiggery under the Junto'.¹⁰⁹ The first pamphlet published by the Country opposition, Trenchard and Moyle's *Argument*, immediately picked up the notion of corruption by declaring that there was 'no Safety in Counsellors'.¹¹⁰ Rehearsing the usual neo-Harringtonian sequence, the authors declared that royal 'Preferments' had led the Court Whigs to support and even promote a standing army, which, in turn, was viewed as at once a 'Collateral Security' to future financial incentives and a tool which will 'teach us Passive Obedience'. The Junto's behaviour was no less than 'infamous Apostacy': at the Revolution these men could 'hardly afford the King the Prerogative that was due to him', but the same 'Gentlemen that could not with Patience hear of the King's ordinary Guards, can now discourse familiarly of twenty thousand Men to be maintained in times of Peace'.¹¹¹ Other Country pamphleteers gleefully continued the theme of Court Whig apostasy. Toland, for example, asked 'Who can enough lament the wretched Degeneracy of the Age we live in?' It was almost incomprehensible, he continued, how 'persons who were formerly noted for the most vigorous Assertors of their Country's Liberty' had suddenly fallen in with the 'arbitrary measures of the Court' and become the 'most active Instruments for enslaving their Country'.¹¹²

evidence for the strong influence of Neville's neo-Harringtonianism on Country Whig ideology.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 229

¹⁰⁹ Rose, 95

¹¹⁰ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, iii

¹¹¹ Ibid, iv, 5

¹¹² [John Toland], *The Danger of Mercenary Parliaments* (1698), 4. For further examples of the opposition's focus on court corruption see Toland, *The Militia Reform'd: Or An Easy Scheme of Furnishing England with a Constant LANDFORCE, capable to prevent or to subdue any Foreign Power; and to maintain*

The oppositions' disgust at the Court Whigs' willingness to abandon all thoughts of 'freedom' and sell the 'precious Jewel *Liberty*' was directly related to their neo-Harringtonian interpretation of the English constitution. England's government, *An Argument* stated, was 'a limited mix'd Monarchy' consisting of the King and the two Houses of Parliament. Every one of the three governmental estates was of equal importance in the running of the country, since 'without all their Consents no Law can be made, nor a penny of Mony [sic] levied upon the Subjects'.¹¹³ The 'Excellence of this Government consists in the due balance of the several constituent Parts of it', the authors asserted, but a king with a standing army at his hands would destroy this balance and the country would be under the perpetual threat of tyrannical rule and slavery. As a logical consequence, Trenchard and Moyle's argument went, a standing army during peace time would destroy the very basis of the nation and was therefore unconstitutional: 'if either one of them [the three estates] should be too hard for the other two, there is an actual Dissolution of the Constitution'.¹¹⁴ If 'we look through the World, we shall find in no Country, Liberty and an Army stand together', the argument ran, since only few monarchs would be able to resist utilising the power of an army against their own people. '[W]e have enough to do to guard our selves against the Power of the Court, without having an Army thrown into the Scale against us'.¹¹⁵

The idea that a standing army in the hands of the king would inevitably result in tyrannical rule was present in almost every anti-army tract. Moyle, in a continuation of *An Argument*, insisted that the 'Facility of Execution is generally the first Motives to an Attempt' and that a 'Standing Army has been the never-failing Instrument of enslaving a Nation'.¹¹⁶ Equally, Toland, in his edition of Edmund Ludlow's *Memoirs*, suggested that 'Men may learn from the issue of the Cromwellian tyranny that liberty

perpetual QUIET at Home, without endangering the PUBLICK LIBERTY (1698), 8, and Walter Moyle, *The Second Part of An Argument, Shewing, that a Standing Army is inconsistent with A Free Government, and Absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* (1697), 14

¹¹³ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 6

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 7

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 14,16

¹¹⁶ Moyle, *Second Part of An Argument*, 10, 14

and a standing mercenary army are incompatible'.¹¹⁷ The Reverend Samuel Johnson agreed that to allow the king standing forces would be to arm him 'against the Constitution, and to make him the Ricketty Head of a weak and languishing Body'.¹¹⁸ Andrew Fletcher, whose tract *A Discourse Concerning Militias and Standing Armies* gave the neo-Harringtonian reading of history its 'definitive form' within the context of the controversy, asserted that 'in our time most Princes of *Europe* are in possession of the Sword, by standing Mercenary Forces kept up in time of Peace, and absolutely depending upon them, I say that all such Governments are changed from Monarchies to Tyrannies'.¹¹⁹ Another pamphleteer was voicing anonymously what many other anti-army writers only dared to think:

Suppose I grant, we have a Prince, the best, most Just and Generous that ever sate upon a Throne, doth he thereby cease to be a Man? Is not Human Nature in every King attended with Imperfections, Frailties and Corruptions? It is impossible for them...to change and follow Evil counsel...?¹²⁰

Even William III was thus considered a potential tyrant, especially with a standing army at his disposal. However, few anti-army writers were prepared to put this thought into writing, as they felt that William, through his authority as a Protestant saviour, held an exceptional status. In order to overcome this tactical difficulty, opposition propagandists usually pointed to a possibly tyrannical future monarch.¹²¹ Trenchard typically declared that William was a king with no vices and if he was immortal the nation could happily 'abandon all thoughts of Self-preservation'. This naturally not being the case, 'we ought not to intrust any Power in him, which we

¹¹⁷ Cited in Worden, 'Introduction', 49

¹¹⁸ Samuel Johnson, *A Confutation of a late Pamphlet Intituled A Letter Ballancing the Necessity of keeping Land-Forces in times of Peace; with the Dangers that may follow on it* (1698), preface

¹¹⁹ Andrew Fletcher, *A Discourse Concerning Militias and Standing Armies. With relation to the Past and Present Governments of Europe and of England in particular* (1697), 6; Pocock, *Virtue*, 231. An extended edition of the pamphlet which made Fletcher's historical analysis applicable to Scotland was published in Edinburgh the following year under the title *A Discourse of Government with relation to Militias*. Also see Paul Henderson Scott, *Andrew Fletcher and The Treaty of Union* (Edinburgh, 1992), 58-9

¹²⁰ *Some Further Considerations about a Standing Army* (1699), 3

¹²¹ Worden, 'The Memoirs', 228

don't think proper to be continued in his Successors'.¹²² In a direct reference to William's current government, Fletcher insisted that 'not only that Government is Tyrannical, which is tyrannically exercised; but all Governments are Tyrannical, which have not in their Constitution a sufficient Security against Arbitrary Power of the Prince'.¹²³ Aligning himself with other anti-army propagandists, Fletcher eventually paid lip-service to the current monarch, stating that a standing army will always be a threat to the nation's liberties, 'tho not in this King's time, to whom we owe their Preservation'.¹²⁴

The cornerstone of the Country opposition's anti-army campaign, then, was the perceived threat which permanent military forces posed to the balance of the three governmental estates. Here, it is important to emphasise that the concept of the balanced constitution was not, of course, the sole domain of Country Whig ideology. The idea that the community had vested legislative sovereignty equally in the governmental estates of King, Lords, and Commons had been, as has already been noted, common currency in English political discourse since 1642 and, as Weston and Greenberg have shown, found its conclusion in the events of 1688-9. While the term 'co-ordination' was usually avoided at the Glorious Revolution, 'the co-ordination principle and the closely related theory of a legal sovereignty in king, lords, and commons' underlay 'the Bill of Rights, the cardinal document of the Glorious Revolution and the center-piece of the Revolution Settlement'.¹²⁵ On a general theoretical level, then, the Whigs more or less unanimously subscribed to the doctrine of an equilibrium between the three estates of government.¹²⁶ Indeed, it was this shared ideological commonplace of Whig ideology which shaped much of the Court Whigs' efforts to counter the Country offensive.

The first of the Court supporters to respond in print to the anti-army attack was the Lord Chancellor, John Somers, who appears to have overseen the Court

¹²² Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 9-10

¹²³ Fletcher, *Discourse Concerning Militias*, 7

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 15

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 247-50, 261

¹²⁶ Dickinson, 80, 103; also see Pocock, 'English Political Ideologies', 132

propaganda campaign.¹²⁷ Somers' main contribution to the debate over a standing army appeared within days of Trenchard and Moyle's *Argument* in November 1697 entitled *A Letter, Ballancing the Necessity of Keeping A Land-Force in Times of Peace: With the Dangers that May Follow on It*.¹²⁸ Scholarly opinions have variously described the tract as making a 'strong case' for and as being 'perhaps the most skilful defence of' a standing army, although, as this chapter shall argue, this is a somewhat misleading evaluation of Somers' pamphlet.¹²⁹ What is true is that Somers was certainly the 'most distinguished' of the pro-army campaigners, which drew considerable attention to his publication.¹³⁰ However, it is perhaps important to point out that occupying an elevated position within the government did, in fact, count for very little during the controversy, since William's uncooperative behaviour - in particular his refusal to name a figure for soldiers to be retained - made life extremely difficult for his ministers.¹³¹ The difficulties Somers and his fellow Court ministers and propagandists had to contend with when countering anti-army propaganda are clearly visible in the Lord Chancellor's pamphlet. Unable to construct his arguments around a specific figure which had been endorsed by the king, Somers' tract not only falls short with regard to making a concrete proposal but also remains unconvincing in the context of political principles.

It was political theory, however, on which the Country's case against professional military force rested. While it was 'acknowledged in the Commons as axiomatic (and without having to be explained) that a standing army threatened the liberty of the subject', the anti-army writers, as we have seen, were only too eager to provide their readership with an explanation for this axiom.¹³² Importantly, the idea that a standing army was a threat to liberty had not actually been questioned by the

¹²⁷ L. Schwoerer, 'Chronology and Authorship of the Standing Army Tracts, 1697-1699', *Notes and Queries* (1966), 382-90; Downie, *Harley*, 31

¹²⁸ In addition to authoring this pamphlet, Somers also arranged the publication of *A List of King James's Irish and Popish Forces in France, ready (when called for:) In Answer to an Argument against a Landforce, writ by A,B,C,D,E,F,G, or to whatever has been, or ever shall be writ upon that Subject* (1697). See Downie, *Harley*, 31

¹²⁹ Horwitz, 225; Rose, 96

¹³⁰ Bastian, *Defoe's Early Life*, 207

¹³¹ Rose, 96-7

¹³² Hayton, 'The "Court" interest and the party system', 58

Court Whigs in parliament, who 'floundered about in vague arguments of principle'.¹³³ The MP Edward Clarke, for example, when attacking the Disbanding Bill of 1698-9, asserted that 'a standing army will enslave us, but this [is] not the question'.¹³⁴ The Court Whigs agreed, at least implicitly, with the Country opposition that a standing army would have a detrimental, even destructive, effect on the balance between the governmental powers. Clarke's remark not only showed how deeply ingrained the association of standing forces in peace time with absolutism was in Whig ideology but demonstrated the Court Whigs' inability to challenge the anti-army writers on a theoretical level.

Indeed, Clarke's remark was in many ways a synthesis of Somers' attitude to a standing army. Somers' support for William's cause was at best lukewarm, hinting that he 'must have felt some reluctance in supporting a measure which violated a traditional Whig principle and...his own convictions'.¹³⁵ In his effort to counter anti-army propaganda, Somers typically never questioned the Standing Army equation. The only strategy open to Somers was to focus 'on necessity rather than theory and on international affairs rather than domestic liberties'.¹³⁶ This emphasis on necessity was, in fact, a precursor of what Reed Browning has identified as the 'axiomatic framework' of Court Whig ideology during the reign of Queen Anne.¹³⁷ With each additional year in power, Court Whig ideology aligned itself more closely with the notion that the nature of politics was 'essentially nonutopian'.¹³⁸ The 'perfect' government proposed by the Country Whigs was unattainable and as a logical consequence practical necessities rather than political ideology were held to be a legitimate foundation for political decisions. This attitude was, in fact, one of the strengths of the court Whigs. Ill-informed about international military and political

¹³³ Childs, *British army*, 193

¹³⁴ Hayton, 'Debates', 383

¹³⁵ Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 159; also see Horwitz, 249, for Somers' failure to offer convincing arguments on this point.

¹³⁶ Schwoerer, 'Literature', 203

¹³⁷ Reed Browning, *Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Court Whigs* (Baton Rouge & London, 1982), 176

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* It should perhaps be remarked that this idealist/utopian and realist/nonutopian dichotomy is a recurrent theme between oppositional and governmental policies, regardless of political affiliation and historical context.

affairs, the anti-army writers had asserted that with the conclusion of the peace, 'we can never disband our Army with so much safety as at this time'.¹³⁹ The King of France had been so weakened, Trenchard argued, that

his Kingdom is inferably impoverished and depopulated by this War; his Manufactures much impaired;...prodigious Debts contracted, and a most beneficial Trade with *England* lost. These things being considered, there can be little danger of their showing over much wantonness, especially for som [sic] years.¹⁴⁰

Fletcher reiterated this point by stating that '*Britain cannot be in any hazard from France*' because her rival was '*exhausted by War*'.¹⁴¹

This, however, had not actually been the case. France was, in fact, showing no signs of disarming and, if anything, the French seemed 'determined on a speedy resumption of the war'.¹⁴² The necessity for a standing army, Somers explained, was brought on by the continued military strength of England's continental neighbours: 'the whole World, more particularly our Neighbours, have now got into the mistaken Notion of keeping up a mighty Force, ...we may appear too Inviting, if we are in such an open and unguarded Condition'.¹⁴³ The 'best Guarantee of a Peace', he insisted, 'is a good force to maintain it: And the surest way to keep all our Neighbours to an exact Performance of Articles, is to be upon our Guard'.¹⁴⁴ Other Court propagandists too chose to make the issue of necessity the focus of their publications. The anonymous author of *Some Remarks upon a Late Paper* thought it was 'Absurd' to disband the army when 'France has 300000 Regular Troops in Pay'.¹⁴⁵ Echoing closely Somers' sentiments, he continued by asserting that necessity had persuaded him to support standing forces: 'I am no more a Friend to Armies than the Author [Trenchard and Moyle]; but the Law of Nature teaches every Man to Embrace his own Security, and

¹³⁹ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 18; also see Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 181

¹⁴⁰ John Trenchard, *A Short History of Standing Armies in England* (1698), 40

¹⁴¹ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 28

¹⁴² Baxter, *William III*, 366-67

¹⁴³ Somers, *Letter*, 4

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 2

¹⁴⁵ *Some Remarks Upon a late Paper, Entituled, An Argument, shewing, that a Standing Army is Inconsistent with a free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy*(1697), 7

that Point alone makes me a Friend to an Army.’¹⁴⁶ ‘*Can we be so supinely negligent,*’ another pro-army contributor wondered when considering the threat posed by France, ‘*as not to act in some proportion to avoid such an Impending [Jacobite] Storm?*’ Given the state of the ‘present *Confederacy*’, ‘a Regular Force’ was ‘absolutely necessary’.¹⁴⁷ In a series of rhetorical questions the pamphlet *Some Queries concerning the Disbanding of the Army*, which, incidentally, Moore ascribed to Defoe but which has been de-attributed by Furbank and Owens, again raised the point of the English nation finding itself between the Scilla of France and the Charibdis of standing forces.¹⁴⁸ Out of the ‘two Evils’, however, it was a French invasion which was a more ‘evident Danger’ than the potential threat posed by the army.¹⁴⁹ The ‘only Reason, that can be giving [sic] for the keeping a *Standing Force* in Pay’, the tenor of the Court campaign rang, ‘is *Necessity*’.¹⁵⁰

In essence, then, Somers and his fellow Court propagandists considered a standing army little more than a highly effective evil, which could secure the nation’s safety from the perpetual threat of invasion and war. In a conciliatory tone of voice Somers conceded that if ‘we were in the same Condition in which we and our Neighbours were an Age ago, I should reject the Proposition with Horror’.¹⁵¹ A sense of regret at the necessity of a standing force pervaded Somers’ and many other pro-army pamphlets and the Lord Chancellor’s closing paragraph again re-iterated the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 9

¹⁴⁷ *An Argument proving That a small Number of Regulated Forces Established during the Pleasure of Parliament, cannot damage our Present Happy Establishment And That It is highly necessary in our present Circumstances to have the Matter fully determined* (1698), i, 5

¹⁴⁸ J.R. Moore, ‘Defoe Acquisitions at the Huntington Library,’ *Huntington Library Quarterly* 28 (1964), 51-52; Furbank & Owens, *De-Attributions*, 8-9

¹⁴⁹ *Some Queries Concerning the Disbanding of the Army: Humbly offered to Public Consideration. Which may serve for an Answer to Mr. ABCDEFG’s Argument* (1698), 4-5;

¹⁵⁰ *The Case of a Standing Army Fairly and Impartially stated. In Answer to the late History of Standing Armies in England: And other Pamphlets writ on that Subject* (1698), 19. For further examples of the pro-army argument of ‘necessity’ see [Matthew Prior] *A New Argument to an Argument against A Standing Army* (1697), *The Case of Disbanding the Army at Present, Briefly and Impartially Consider’d* (1698) & [George Ridpath] *A (Second) Dialogue Betwixt Jack and Will, About A Standing Army* (1699).

¹⁵¹ Somers, *Letter*, 4

notion that a standing army was the last, unfortunate resort the country had to employ to secure its safety: 'I do not deny but several Inconveniences may be apprehended from a Standing Force, and therefore I should not go about to perswade you to it, if the Thing did not seem indispensibly necessary to our Preservation.'¹⁵² A standing army was an imperfect measure but it would be utopian to deny its necessity.

In this context, Schwoerer has asserted that the 'very reluctance' with which Somers, and, by extension, the other pro-army propagandists, recommended a standing army 'made the point of necessity all the more convincing'.¹⁵³ While the emphasis on necessity may have appealed to some of the undecided backbenchers, it appears questionable just how convincing an approach of this kind would have been to a Parliament 'which seemed determined to extinguish the last traces of the royal authority by attacks on William's person and policies'.¹⁵⁴ The Court writers simply failed to engage with the opposition on their terms. The great majority of the king's propagandists were unable to counter Country propaganda in the realm of political theory, especially on the issue of the balanced constitution. The anti-army men had produced a highly effective neo-Harringtonian interpretation of classical and English history. In particular, the cyclic nature of the story of Rome from Republic to despotism which had become something of a 'universal history', carried a rhetorical message that was easily comprehended by the political public.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, the Country writers' appropriation of ancient English history had hailed the country gentleman as the traditional, almost mythical, protector of the nation's liberties. That radical Whig historiography held a special appeal for these men, who, after all, bore the brunt of wartime taxation, appears too obvious to require further explanation.

In contrast to the anti-army writers, Court propagandists were asking the nation to continue to fund an army which had seemingly become superfluous with the arrival of peace. The Court's most forceful argument of necessity was easily countered by the radical Whigs, who, exploiting the general ignorance of the state of international affairs, claimed that the supposed on-going need for standing forces did not derive

¹⁵² Ibid, 15

¹⁵³ Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 178

¹⁵⁴ Baxter, *William III*, 370

¹⁵⁵ Pocock, 'Introduction', *Commonwealth of Oceana*, xviii

from the potential threat of a French invasion, but was little more than a smokescreen for more sinister Court intentions: the corrupt Whig Junto and its apostate followers were attempting to manoeuvre the nation into absolutism and slavery. Moreover, any military threat, the opposition argued, could be dealt with by the militia, which was far cheaper to run than professional forces and, more importantly, safeguarded the nation's liberties by placing the sword in the hands of the citizen.¹⁵⁶ In this context, the Court's tacit acceptance of the importance of an equilibrium between the governmental estates and their explicit acknowledgement of the threat an army posed to the balanced constitution played directly into the anti-army writers' hands. On a theoretical level, then, Somers and the majority of his fellow Court writers failed to effectively and unambiguously support and defend William's request.

The exception to this collective failure on the Court's part was, as we shall see, Daniel Defoe, whose contributions to the controversy constantly and consistently engaged with the theoretical arguments posed by the radical Whigs. That Defoe was a keen supporter of the army comes as no surprise. His first major tract *An Essay upon Projects*, published less than a year before the army question developed into a press war, contained a chapter which offered a detailed plan for an English military academy for professional soldiers, which, as Novak has highlighted, 'presupposes the existence of some kind of standing army'.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the entire section, Schonhorn has asserted, is a 'song of praise and triumph' for the king's war effort and, more importantly, it anticipated the 'future demobilization of William's trained but unEnglish army'.¹⁵⁸ In this sense, the *Essay* may be considered the 'earliest document

¹⁵⁶ The Country oppositions' ideas with regard to military organisation are discussed further below, 53-55

¹⁵⁷ M.E. Novak, 'Defoe and the Art of War', *Philological Quarterly* 75 (1996), 199

¹⁵⁸ Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 52. Schonhorn argues that Defoe 'offers reforms for militia training that were to be proposed by republican pamphleteers of the anti-army ideology', which implies a certain congruence between Defoe's and neo-Harringtonian ideas concerning the militia. This, however, is misleading. Defoe's academy was clearly intended to be operated by and to produce professional soldiers in order to constantly furnish the king with 'able engineers, gunners, fire-masters, bombadiers, miners, and the like' [*An Essay Upon Projects* (1696), x]. The basic premise behind Defoe's academy was therefore diametrically opposed to the one underscoring the occasional and temporary militia training camps Fletcher and Toland proposed. See below, 54-55

in the Standing Army Controversy'.¹⁵⁹ Significantly, Defoe's reasoning for a military academy rested on the notion that it was 'necessary to be in a condition for war in time of peace', since, even though the French king 'now inclines to peace', 'his armies are numerous and whole'.¹⁶⁰ This was, of course, the cornerstone of Court Whig rhetoric during the controversy and Defoe too drew heavily on the idea of necessity. The idea that 'it seems one of the most ridiculous things in the World to be wholly Disarm'd at such a time, when all the Nations in the World have Forces in Pay' ran through all three of Defoe's pamphlets on the topic.¹⁶¹ The past had demonstrated, Defoe argued, that an army was needed for the protection of the nation as well as a deterrent to England's ambitious neighbours. The French king's inclination not to 'account Leagues such Sacred things as to bind him against visible Advantage' had shown that treaties were no sufficient security against hostile action. There was no 'Guarrantee [sic] that the *French* shall not insult us, if he finds us utterly Disarmed'.¹⁶²

However, the anti-army writers did not, of course, intend for the nation to be 'wholly Disarm'd'. A 'Mercenary Army is fittest to invade a Country, but a Militia to defend it', the anti-army writers responded to the court Whig argument of necessity, 'because the first have Estates to get, and the latter to protect'.¹⁶³ The structure of the militia envisaged by the anti-army writers closely echoed Harrington's theory:

...there can be no danger from an Army where the Nobility and chief Gentry of *England* are the Commanders, and the Body of it made up of the Freeholders, their Sons and Servants; unless we can conceive that the Nobility and Gentry will join in an unnatural Design to make void their own Titles to their Estates and Liberties.¹⁶⁴

By placing the 'Sword in the hands of the Subject', the militia secured 'the Liberties of the People'. Consequently, it was the 'chief part of the Constitution of any free Government'.¹⁶⁵ In contrast to the army, which was repeatedly described as a

¹⁵⁹ Novak, 'Defoe and the Art of War', 199

¹⁶⁰ Defoe, *An Essay upon Projects* (1697), *Political & Economic Writings* Vol.8, 117

¹⁶¹ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 89; Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 50; Defoe, *An Argument*, 66-8

¹⁶² Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 51

¹⁶³ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 24; also see Toland *Militia Reform'd*, 19

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 44-45, *Discourse Concerning Militias*, 6; also see Toland, *Militia Reform'd*, 22

mercenary force that would turn itself 'to all manner of Debauchery and Wickedness, committing all Kind of Injustice and Barbarity against poor and defenceless People', the militia was 'as great a School of Vertue as of military Discipline'.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, a 'good Militia will always preserve the publick Liberty'.¹⁶⁷

The anti-army writers not only considered the militia to be a superior military instrument from a political and moral but also from a technical point of view. With some naivety they 'dismissed the idea that war had become so complex technologically that professional soldiers were necessary'.¹⁶⁸ The anti-army writers agreed that the militia was currently in a deplorable state, but with France too exhausted to make a war effort, the militia would be fully functional by the time she had recovered.¹⁶⁹ In any case, as an island and with the best of all sea-forces to protect its shores, England was almost invincible.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, even a weak militia, when combined with the navy, was 'sufficient to defend us'.¹⁷¹

Just how naïve the radical Whigs were with regard to the training and experience required for early modern warfare is perhaps best illustrated by Toland's proposal for a reform of the militia. In essence, Toland suggested a scheme which was in some ways akin to the modern Territorial Army. The freeholders of England and their servants were to assemble every Sunday 'on some Green or Plain', where they would be instructed by the 'Serjeants of the disbanded Army' to learn the 'use of Arms'. The only exception was to be in the case of 'foul Weather', when it was permitted that 'no Duty be perform'd'.¹⁷² The enthusiasm of the participants, Toland expected, would be spurred by the fact that the entire community, including wives and 'single Women', would be witnessing this regular 'Parochial Exercise'. In addition,

¹⁶⁶ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 34, 60; also see Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 28-29

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 45

¹⁶⁸ Schwoerer, 'Literature of the Standing Army Controversy', 201; see Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, 46-7, for information on technological developments during the Nine Years' War.

¹⁶⁹ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 24; Fletcher, *Discourse Concerning Militias*, 15; Toland, *Militia Reform'd*, 12; See J.R. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century* (London & Toronto, 1965), Chaps. 3 & 4.

¹⁷⁰ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 18; Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 61-62

¹⁷¹ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 61

¹⁷² Toland, *Militia Reform'd*, 26-28

the regional militias were to 'DISPUTE GAMES AND PRIZES' in the capital four times a year. On these occasions, an individual could not only show off his experience and progress and maybe even win a prize, but the parochial forces could be 'form'd into greater Bodies, and taught all that is peculiar to such' to become the '*London-Militia*'. '[B]esides the Necessity and Usefulness of all these Exercises,' Toland asserted, 'they will be extraordinary entertaining too.'¹⁷³ Toland's co-propagandist Trenchard was even more blasé about the knowledge and training required for warfare. Military exercise was, according to Trenchard, hardly necessary, because a busy freeman was always going to be in a superior physical shape than a lazy mercenary soldier. Moreover, the required military skills were so basic that they could be acquired in the early days of a war: 'a Standing Army in Peace will grow more effeminate by living dissolutely in Quarters, than a Militia that for most part will be exercised with hard Labour...a Standing Army in Peace will be worse than a Militia; and in War a Militia will soon becom[e] a disciplin'd Army'.¹⁷⁴ What he had failed to mention, however, was that, in its years of decay, the militia had actually met a similar fate to the one he was predicting for the army, as 'it almost ceased to exist in the long periods when there was no invasion or rebellion afoot'.¹⁷⁵

While Somers, Defoe and the other lesser pro-army writers would find it difficult to destroy the equation 'standing Army in peace time equals absolutism', their arguments concerning the current state of warfare represented the most effective part of their campaign. Once again, Somers exercised restraint in his approach, trying to find common ground rather than be divisive: 'All agree in one Thing, That we ought to maintain our Empire on the Sea with powerful Fleets'.¹⁷⁶ This point was indeed easily agreed upon, because the navy had generally become a source of national pride, growing into the largest fleet in the world during the 1690s.¹⁷⁷ However, the "Protestant wind" which had aided William's arrival in 1688, keeping James' fleet in the Thames estuary while blowing William's Dutch fleet down the

¹⁷³ Ibid, 27, 32, 39-40

¹⁷⁴ Trenchard, *Short History*, 42

¹⁷⁵ Western, *English Militia*, 63

¹⁷⁶ Somers, *Letter*, 2

¹⁷⁷ Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, 79-83

channel, was undeniable proof that the navy was not an entirely reliable method of defence: 'one would not put so great a thing, as the Safety of the Nation, to such a Hazard, nor depend upon a single Security when that is liable to Accidents'.¹⁷⁸ The author of *Some Queries* too doubted that even a 'great Fleet' could 'effectually shelter us from an Invasion', while the author of *Some Remarks* declared that, in the event of an invasion, the country could not be 'saved by Fleets, nor Militia, but by a *Standing Army*'.¹⁷⁹ Defoe made the same point, asserting that ''tis a mistake, to say we cannot be Invaded if we have a Fleet, for we have been Invaded tho' we have had a good Fleet; and Demonstration is beyond Argument'.¹⁸⁰

The pro-army writers' argument was potentially a very powerful one. As J.R. Jones has shown, the notion that the largely positive experiences of the Dutch Wars demonstrated the superiority of the English Navy over the naval forces of other nations was a popular contemporary misconception.¹⁸¹ In reality, English blockades off the continental coast never proved more than short-lived and while the French were able to evade squadrons blocking their bases, invasion troops could always reach peripheral coasts in the far west and north. The French had, in fact, landed 'sizeable numbers of troops and large quantities of supplies' on the Irish coast between 1689-91.¹⁸² However, what Defoe and his fellow Court propagandists chose to ignore was the important point that the French government had decided to lay up their main fleet in 1694, in order to concentrate on the 'guerre de course', commerce raiding by royal squadrons. The threat of a French invasion had subsequently weakened drastically.¹⁸³

The reason for this deliberate oversight by the pro-army campaigners is easily discernible. A groundswell of opinion against English entanglement on the continent had swept through parliament and the general emphasis was increasingly on the notion that any foreign war had to be clearly in Britain's interest. This, of course, was

¹⁷⁸ Somers, *Letter*, 6

¹⁷⁹ *Some Queries*, 7; *Some Remarks*, 11

¹⁸⁰ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 91

¹⁸¹ J.R. Jones, 'Limitations of British sea power in the French Wars,' in J. Black & P. Woodfine, (eds), *The British Navy and the Use of Naval Power in the Eighteenth-Century* (Leicester, 1988), 33-49

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 35, 42

¹⁸³ *Ibid*

exactly what many MPs believed William's foreign policy was not, especially as his visits to the Dutch Republic became more frequent.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, if the campaign in support of standing forces was to be successful, it had to be shown that the deployment of British troops to the continent was still important in the context of the nation's interests.

The Court's insistence on the notion that an invasion attempt was always likely as long as France had access to the ports on the neighbouring coast was, in fact, helped by the invasion scares of 1690, 1692, 1696, and 1697, which had all been ignored by the anti-army lobby.¹⁸⁵ If England was to be protected effectively from the French, the only reliable measure was to keep any kind of conflict off the island. Military action, Defoe asserted, must take place on the continent,

for a good Barrier between a Kingdom and a powerful Enemy, is a thing of such Consequence, that the *Dutch* always thought it well worth the Charges of a War to assist the *Spaniard*; for thereby they kept the War from their own Borders and so do we.¹⁸⁶

Defoe considered it essential for the nation's safety 'to beat the Enemy before he comes to our own door'.¹⁸⁷ It was England's 'Business to preserve *Flanders*' in order to deny the French a platform for an invasion. Significantly, the defence of Flanders could only be undertaken with a standing army, since a militia could not be sent abroad. During the Nine Years' War this had been achieved with an army which, between 1694-7, numbered approximately sixty thousand soldiers, almost half of which were foreign troops.¹⁸⁸ Parliament's sanctioning of fewer than ten thousand soldiers made a mockery of political and military necessity.

While Somers' tone of voice was reconciliatory when he explained that the strength of the militia was an imaginary one should the fleet fail to prevent an invasion, Defoe simply scoffed at the idea of an effective militia. His response to the anti-army writers was nothing short of mockery: 'the Militia are always brave Soldiers when they have to do with Children or Fools; but what could our Militia have

¹⁸⁴ Childs, *British Army*, 185

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 189

¹⁸⁶ Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 52; also see Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 90-91

¹⁸⁷ Defoe, *An Argument*, 67; Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 90

¹⁸⁸ Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, 46-7

done to the *P. of O.*'s old *Veteran* Troops, had they been willing to have opposed him; truly just as much as King *James* did, *run away*'.¹⁸⁹ Defoe was, of course, speaking from experience here. His first contact with the militia had come when he rode with the Duke of Monmouth in 1685. On their way to London, the rebels 'had no difficulty in brushing aside the militia who first opposed [their] progress'.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, this first encounter with the militia ended in some of the soldiers running away, while others joined Monmouth's rebellion.¹⁹¹ 'Under-drilled, abysmally armed and poorly officered', the militia had 'impressed no one'.¹⁹²

Defoe's initial impression of the militia must have had an effect on his comments about it six years later, which came in his first published poem *A New Discovery of an Old Intreague: A Satyr Level'd at Treachery and Ambition* (1691). In the poem he rather humorously described the City militia, which was not unlike Toland's 'London Militia', as they had appeared during the Queen's great review in Hyde Park in 1690:

And now the Queen advances to the view,
 Lord! How the ready Troops in order show,
 No more a Figure, their now dissolved Files,
 And one great Throng the well fix't line compiles¹⁹³

In his effort to discredit the anti-army writers' campaign, Defoe created the oxymoron of an effective military unit and the militia by contrasting what could reasonably be expected from any military organisation, namely orderly troops, with the actual state of the militia, who appeared a 'great Throng' of 'dissolved Files'. The militia lacked all discipline and coordination and displayed its incompetence even during a show-piece:

Whose ecchoing shouts when she no more can hear,
 Their Pot-gun Volleys charge Her Royal Ear;
 Whose regular noise, had she not known how tame,

¹⁸⁹ Somers, *Letter*, 9; Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 92

¹⁹⁰ It should be pointed out, though, that other sections of the militia did force Monmouth into various diversions on his way to London, eventually undermining the entire rebellion. See Western, *English Militia*, 54

¹⁹¹ Western, *English Militia*, 54-6

¹⁹² John Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe, 1648-1789* (Manchester, 1982), 59

¹⁹³ Daniel Defoe, *A New Discovery of an Old Intreague* (1691), 20-1

How unprepar'd, and how resolv'd they came¹⁹⁴

These part-time soldiers were in no shape to defend the country against an invasion. To Defoe, none other than professional soldiers could deal with the requirements of modern warfare:

War is no longer an Accident, but a Trade, and they that will be any thing in it, must serve a long Apprenticeship to it: Human Wit and Industry has rais'd it to such a Perfection; and it is grown such a piece of Mannage, that it requires People to make it their whole Employment...¹⁹⁵

Men could not, as Fletcher and Toland had suggested, simply turn from farmers to soldiers exchanging their spades for muskets, but had to be trained to be able to cope with the demands of a war:¹⁹⁶ 'Men must make the Terrors of the War familiar to them by Custom, before they can be brought to those Degrees of Gallantry'.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century warfare required enormous mental strength, as soldiers were subjected to 'the awful battles of the age of short-range weapons'.¹⁹⁸ Hundreds or sometimes even thousands of discharging muskets in addition to the screaming and shouting of the soldiers would have made for a terrifying level of noise. It took a great deal of courage to face

Long, straight lines of gorgeously dressed infantry marching with measured step towards their opponents, burnished muskets flashing in the sun, and then, halting to deliver a fearful volley – this was supposed to instil such terror into the waiting opposition that they would wilt and run before the ineffectual volley was actually delivered. Volleys were designed to be psychological as well as practical. Generally the theory worked.¹⁹⁹

Whilst a vast number of infantry volleys sailed harmlessly past, approximately forty per cent hit their intended targets.²⁰⁰ The injuries caused by the shots and by the pikes and swords meant that the visual images generated by eighteenth-century warfare were even worse than its audible impact. Contemporary accounts spoke of badly injured soldiers with 'half their faces cut off' and battlefields covered with severed

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 21

¹⁹⁵ Defoe *A Brief Reply*, 92; Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 51-4

¹⁹⁶ Fletcher, *Discourse Concerning Militias*, 6; Toland, *Militia Reform'd*

¹⁹⁷ Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 54

¹⁹⁸ Childs, *Armies and warfare*, 73

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 123

²⁰⁰ Ibid

hands, legs, heads and various other body parts.²⁰¹ Face-to-face combat therefore required 'superior courage, proficiency and discipline in each individual soldier', something which could only be achieved through regular practice.²⁰²

Many of the Court propagandists echoed Defoe's concerns regarding the militia's inadequacies. A pamphlet which had clearly been published in response to Toland's *Militia Reform'd* declared that a soldier needed to know 'the face of an Enemy, to feel the hardships of a Camp, and grow familiar with Dangers'.²⁰³ The author then moved on to describe a militia man preparing for "battle" in rather sarcastic terms:

...our Militia Soldier, without the Provocation of an Enemy, is call'd out of his Bed to Arms; he puts on his Armour of Buff that never Bullet yet enter'd; his Bandaleers he fills with Gunpowder, and his Pockets with Beef; [he leaves] thus drest for the War, and fearless of Dangers, in spite of Rain or Cold, his tender Wife and Children hanging at his Sleeve,...

The similarities between the picture of the ill-prepared militia man and the point Defoe had made are self-evident: How could a militia man possibly understand what dangers other than bad weather awaited him in war? Confronted with the real, unknown dangers of war, would he not run away as most of the militia men facing Monmouth's rebels had done? The return of the militia man from "battle" was described in terms of utter mockery and ridicule: 'After the Fatigue of a whole Day, the *Hero* returns with certain Triumph, settles himself in his arm'd Chair, and to his listening Progeny relates the Glories of the Field'.²⁰⁵ This sense of derision was maintained by most pro-army publications. '[D]oes any Man in his Wits think, that such a Rabble [Elizabeth's militia] could either have defended that Queen then, or would protect us now, against Disciplined Troops?', the author of *Some Remarks* asked his readers rhetorically, while another pamphleteer ridiculed the militia as a primitive 'Army of Scythe and Club-Men'.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, viii

²⁰² Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution. Military innovation and the rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1988), 20

²⁰³ *A Letter to a Foreigner on the Present Debates about a Standing Army* (1698), 6

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 7

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*

²⁰⁶ *Some Remarks*, 11; *Letter to A,B,C,D,E,F, etc*, 36

Defoe and his fellow pro-army writers' assessment of the international situation and the state of late seventeenth-century warfare may have been far more realistic than that of the Country propagandists but the proposal to use a militia to defend the nation held an appeal for the landed gentry, which was not easily undermined. After all, as the proposed leaders of the militia, the country gentlemen would be in control and, more importantly, a militia was by far the cheaper option. In addition, the Court campaign coordinated by Somers 'never dealt systematically' with the opposition's theory of a mixed, balanced government.²⁰⁷ Defoe, in contrast, did not make the same mistake, as he met the anti-army writers' focus on the notion of a 'Gothic balance' head-on.

Here, it is perhaps useful to briefly recapitulate the constitutional ideas of the radical Whigs. The anti-army opposition, especially those anti-army campaigners associated with the Grecian Tavern, readily subscribed to Neville's neo-Harringtonian interpretation of Europe's ancient history. They found a model of the perfect government in the period A.D. 400 to 1500, which had seen the introduction of a balanced constitution in Europe by the invading 'Goths, Vandals, and other warlike Nations'.²⁰⁸ The division of the conquered lands between the '*General of the Army*', '*the great Officers*' and the '*inferior Soldiers*', whose respective titles subsequently became 'King', 'Barons' and 'Vassals', created an important interdependence of these groups on one another: in return for the land, the Barons, or nobility, were obliged to assist their king in war, just as the Vassals were obliged to perform military services for the Barons, who allowed the 'commoners' to live on their estates. Beside the mutual obligations between the parties, all three would have a vested interest in defending their country, because, in essence, they were protecting their own property. The Barons, however, had one further significant function – they acted as the main balancing power between the king and the people. If the king tried to invade the rights of the commoners, it was the nobility's responsibility to offer them protection from

²⁰⁷ Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 185. Schwoerer acknowledges that only 'Defoe and the author of *A Letter to A, B, C, D, E, F, G, etc.* came to grips with the question of Gothic government' but her analysis of the two propagandists' contributions extends to less than one paragraph and is therefore necessarily superficial.

²⁰⁸ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 5-6

any unlawful royal attacks. Equally, if the Vassals attempted to harm the king, the Barons were obliged to come to his defence. As a constitutional construct, the shared interests of the three estates and the equilibrium between their respective powers made for a 'steady' and 'free' government.

Significantly, the Gothic constitution had also made standing forces superfluous: once the conquered lands had been parcelled out, 'every Man went to live upon his own Land; and when the Defence of the Country required an Army, the King summoned the Barons to his Standard, who came attended with the Vassals.'²⁰⁹ The notion that the Gothic constitution '*placed the Sword into the hands of the Subject, because the Vassals depended more immediately on the Barons than on the King*' was paramount for radical Whig theory, since it was only a nobility-led militia which, by protecting the nation from 'the Encroachments of the Crown', 'effectually secured the freedom of those Governments'.²¹⁰ The radical Whig practice of associating royal control of the military with absolute governments was readily discernable in all of the anti-army publications. Typically, Fletcher, in the above quotation, viewed the monarch's power as the greatest threat to the Gothic balance.

While Somers and other court supporters had at least implicitly acknowledged a correlation between a standing army controlled by the monarch and tyrannical rule, Defoe rejected the idea entirely: '[T]here are ways for a King to tyrannize without a standing Army,' Defoe insisted, 'if he be so resolv'd'. A standing army was a military tool which could be used in any kind of capacity. It was the character and intentions of the monarch which determined the nature of the rule, Defoe argued, since the 'Mischief does not lie in an Army, but in the Tyrant'.²¹¹ Standing forces may well be used to reinforce 'despotical Power', while at the same time 'there may be ways to prevent it with an Army'.²¹² Historical examples such as the reign of Henry VIII, who, 'without the help of a Standing Army', 'Govern'd this Nation with as absolute a despotical Power' as any tyrant, demonstrated beyond question that it was not a

²⁰⁹ Fletcher, *Discourse Concerning Militias*, 6

²¹⁰ Fletcher, *Discourse on Government*, 7-9; for a similar view see Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 2-4

²¹¹ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 87

²¹² Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 43

standing army which posed a threat to the English constitution.²¹³ Indeed, Defoe began his attack on radical Whig historiography by asserting that the origins of tyranny lay with the Barons, not the monarch. The anti-army campaigners, he claimed, had 'not been faithful Historians'.²¹⁴ According to Trenchard and Moyle, 'the Wisdom of our Ancestors' had created a 'middle State, viz. of Nobility, whose Interest it is to trim this Boat of our Commonwealth, and to screen the People against Insults of the Prince, and the Prince against the Popularity of the Commons'.²¹⁵ Defoe interpreted ancient history rather differently. Instead of protecting the constitution, the Barons had established an 'intollerable' tyranny over their Vassals: 'the Misery and Slavery of the Common People [was] insupportable, their Blood and Labour was at the absolute Will of the Lord'.²¹⁶ The Gothic balance was, in fact, based on a system of absolute rule, since the 'Barons took care to maintain their own Tyranny' in order to 'prevent the Kings Tyrannizing over them'. Therefore, the ancient constitution which had been idealised by the radical Whigs 'was but exchanging one Tyrant for Three hundred'.²¹⁷ It was not until the Vassals 'obtain'd Priviledges of their own, and oblig'd the King and the Barons to accept of an *Equilibrium*' that a true balance between the governmental estates was established. It was this 'Due Balance' between a strong popular element and the monarch which underscored the English constitution and, Defoe asserted, it was 'much nobler...than the old *Gothick* Model of Government'.²¹⁸ Interestingly, Defoe's view of the ideal government appears to have been closer to Harrington's than that of the neo-Harringtonians. Harrington too had highlighted the 'vast effusion of blood' of the vassalage caused by perpetually quarrelling lords, concluding that 'monarchy by a nobility is no perfect government'. Only a perfectly balanced popular government which involved the 'senate proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing' could achieve this feat.²¹⁹

²¹³ Ibid

²¹⁴ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 87

²¹⁵ Trenchard & Moyle, *Argument*, 2-3

²¹⁶ Defoe, *An Argument*, 73

²¹⁷ Ibid

²¹⁸ Ibid; also see Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 59

²¹⁹ Harrington, *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 31-32

Defoe was not the only Court propagandist to attack the opposition's theory of a Gothic constitution. The other publication which engaged with the constitutional issues raised by the Country Whigs was *A Letter to A,B,C,D,E,F,etc. Concerning Their Argument About A Standing Army*, published anonymously in 1698.²²⁰ The pamphlet constituted a lengthy discussion of the nature of England's government and in some respects, the author's position was remarkably close to the one occupied by Defoe. The notion that the 'constitution and English liberties were protected by any mechanical method of balance among the parts of government' was dismissed.²²¹ Instead, the reader learned that the 'collective Body of the People, who, with a King at the Head of 'em, have a fairer pretence to be the Government' than a meeting of the three governmental estates.²²² Like Defoe, then, this writer identified the people, as represented by the Commons and the executive, as represented by the monarch, as the axis on which the balanced constitution rested. There was, however, an important difference between the two men's perception of the balance of the governmental estate. While Defoe believed that the equilibrium between king and Commons was 'the Foundation on which we now stand' and, because it was 'the best in the World', needed to be protected from any interruption, the author of the *Letter* declared that the balance did not need to be, and indeed never had been, rigid.²²³ In essence, the exact nature of the English government was continually being shaped and re-shaped by political expediency:

The Ballance has been sometimes chiefly with the *Lords*, sometimes with the *Commons*; and, tho' the *Balance of Property* was never with the *King*; the great Merits and Reputation of some of our Kings, have placed the *Ballance of Influence*...chiefly in them²²⁴

The 'Essential Form' of the English government, the author continued, had only been preserved because the balance of power had been kept in 'due libration, turning it sometimes one way, and sometimes another, according to present Emergencies'.²²⁵

²²⁰ Schworer also makes this point but her comments on this pamphlet comprise a mere two sentences. See *Antiarmy Ideology*, 185

²²¹ Ibid

²²² *Letter to A,B,C,D,E,F,etc.*, 2

²²³ Defoe, *An Argument*, 73

²²⁴ *Letter to A,B,C,D,E,F,etc.*, 10

²²⁵ Ibid, 12

Importantly, in the event of military action all governments naturally 'chose one who was *Rex primus*, of the nature of a *Roman Dictator*' to protect and defend their country. Because the threat of an invasion by France was still very real and because William still displayed the 'Glorious Character of *Deliverer*', the balance of power necessarily had to be with the king.²²⁶

While the author of the *Letter* went to great lengths to refute radical Whig historiography – he convincingly demonstrated that the anti-army campaign had actually 'misinterpreted' Harrington's *Oceana* – his alternative explanation of the balanced constitution actually played directly into the opposition's hands. The *Letter*'s central argument essentially rested on the Court Whig notion of necessity: the balance of the governmental estates had to constantly adjust itself to the necessities of any given political situation in order for the constitution to survive. However, as has been shown above, the opposition writers had little difficulty in demonstrating that an army in the hands of the king was no longer necessary after the end of the war. Beyond necessity, there was no reason why the balance of power should not now return to Parliament. This, of course, was the central argument of the anti-army campaign.

Defoe's justification for a standing army did not involve the meticulous analysis of English and European history evident in the *Letter*, but his pamphlets offered what may fairly be described as the most solid defence of the king's request. Defoe's main complaint about the press war had been that the 'Person of a King is no part of the Consideration', and as a consequence, while all other Court campaigners discussed William's rights and privileges with a certain amount of ambiguity and chose to focus on the notion of necessity, he unequivocally asserted the importance of a strong monarch for the welfare of the nation.²²⁷ The past had shown that 'the Reputation and Influence of the *English Nation* ...has been always more or less according to the Power of the Prince, to aid and assist, or to injure and offend'. A king without an army was a rather sorry symbol for the power of the nation: one had only to remember what a 'ridiculous Figure' James I had made without sufficient military

²²⁶ Ibid, 14-15, 25-26, 31

²²⁷ Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 43

forces at his disposal.²²⁸ Again, Defoe pointed to France: ‘Why does the *French* King keep up an Army?’, he asked, ‘Tis not for fear, but to increase his Glory; and for that very reason it would be preposterous for us to be naked’.²²⁹ How, Defoe wondered, could a proud monarchy such as England’s possibly have an emasculated king at its head? No one should forget, he explained, that ‘*’tis not the King of England alone, but the Sword of England in the Hand of the King, that gives Laws of Peace and War now to Europe*’.²³⁰ Therefore, Defoe concluded, ‘this Character which *England* now bears in the World... can never Live... with no Force at Hand’.²³¹ A strong monarch backed by a strong army was absolutely necessary to deter England’s enemies and to protect the nation’s national and international interests.

Moving beyond the general court Whig argument of political and military necessity, Defoe engaged directly with the anti-army writers’ assertion that an army at the hands of the king threatened the balanced constitution:

But here is an author, who in the beginning of his Pamphlet says, the Safety of the Kingdom depends upon a due Balance; and at the same time tells us, our Armies, no nor our Magazines, are not to be trusted with the King; is that a due Balance?²³²

Defoe’s concluding rhetorical question alluded to an issue which was of major importance for his justification of William’s entitlement to a standing army – the separation of powers. Defoe equated the two Houses of Parliament with the legislative branch of the constitution, whose power to maintain or alter the nation’s laws derived from the tacit consent of the people of England. In practical terms, this allowed parliament to control fiscal policies via the imposition of taxes, thus representing ‘*the Purse in the Hands of the People*’.²³³ The king, in contrast, represented the nation’s executive power and, as symbolised by the sword in his hands, he controlled the army. This separation of powers resulted in the ‘*Equilibrium*’ needed for a stable government: ‘The Power of Raising Money is wholly in the Parliament, as a Balance

²²⁸ Defoe, *An Argument*, 68

²²⁹ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 90

²³⁰ Defoe, *An Argument*, 63

²³¹ *Ibid*

²³² Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 47; Defoe appears to have been unaware that Trenchard and Moyle co-authored *An Argument*, the pamphlet referred to here.

²³³ *Ibid*, 48; Defoe, *An Argument*, 73

to the Power of Raising Men, which is in the King'.²³⁴ Importantly, the relationship between the king and parliament was entirely symbiotic: 'the People [i.e. parliament] cannot make Peace or War without the King, nor the King cannot raise or maintain an Army without the People'. Time and again Defoe returned to this notion: 'The Power of making Peace or War is vested in the King: 'Tis part of his prerogative,' he explained, 'but 'tis implicitly in the People, because their Negative as to Payment, does really Influence all those Actions'.²³⁵ Within the realm of international politics, however, it was the king who represented the ultimate authority with regard to military action and in the interest of the country's safety, his decisions needed to be supported by the entire nation: 'Now if when the King makes War, [and] the Subject shou'd refuse to assist him, the whole Nation would be ruin'd'.²³⁶ Neither did the royal prerogative of controlling the army pose a threat to the constitution. The opposition argument that 'to limit a Prince with Laws where there is an Army, is to bind *Sampson* with his Lockes on' was simply not valid.²³⁷ Should a monarch abuse his right and use the army to establish absolutism, he would soon find that the '*Power of the Purse is an Equivalent to the Power of the Sword*'.²³⁸ Without parliament's cooperation, the king would be unable to raise the funds necessary to maintain his army and he would consequentially be forced to dismiss this supposed tool of oppression.²³⁹

Defoe's next, and arguably most important, point constituted the moment at which he went beyond merely addressing the anti-army writers' objections to standing forces to launch an outright attack on anti-army ideology, surpassing other Court efforts in the process. The potential abuse of power, Defoe contended, was of course not restricted to the governmental estate of the monarchy. If parliament rejected the king's lawful request for an army, and the necessity for an army had already been shown, it abused its power and destroyed the nation's balanced constitution. The Country party's demand for disbandment was nothing less than an attempt to 'strike at

²³⁴ Defoe, *An Argument*, 76

²³⁵ Ibid, 78

²³⁶ Ibid

²³⁷ Moyle, *Second Part of an Argument*, 9

²³⁸ Defoe, *An Argument*, 73-74

²³⁹ Ibid, 74-75

the Root' of monarchical government: wresting the sword from the king's hands, Defoe asserted, meant '*Disbanding him [William III] as well as the Army.*'²⁴⁰ The 'Maintainance of our Liberty', he insisted, could only be achieved 'with a due respect to the Honour and Safety of his Majesty'.²⁴¹ Instead, the Country Whigs were trying to reduce William to 'a Child, or a Madman' and render him 'unable to perform the Postulatas of his own part'.²⁴² The equation was simple to Defoe: it was 'of absolute necessity, that a Military Power must be made use of with a Regal Power; and as it may follow, *No King, no Army*, so it may as well follow, *no Army, no King*'.²⁴³ Denying the king the executive power an army represented essentially meant abolishing the monarchy, as the king no longer had the ability to counterbalance the power of parliament. In the context of the anti-army writers' association of standing forces with absolutism and the court Whigs' unwillingness to contradict this sentiment, Defoe insisted on his own axiom: 'sovereignty and the sword in the hands of the king march hand in hand'.²⁴⁴ That this notion had been a cornerstone of Defoe's political thought from the outset is shown by his plans for an English military academy. He proposed that the establishment, and consequently the army it produced, would be firmly in the control of the king, who was to pose as the 'founder' and leader. The king selected the general who was to oversee the academy, rewarded commendable service and, most importantly, represented the ultimate authority in the context of the 'King's Armies'.²⁴⁵ Importantly, however, the military power which was thus vested in the king did not make him absolute, since it was balanced with the fiscal power of parliament: the 'Royal Academy' was 'to be paid for by the Publick, and settled by a Revenue from the Crown, to be paid Yearly'.²⁴⁶

In conclusion, Defoe's defence of William's request for a standing army differed significantly from that of his fellow pro-army writers. In response to the anti-army opposition's claim that standing forces during peace time would destroy the

²⁴⁰ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 97; idem, *Some Reflections*, 39

²⁴¹ Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 59

²⁴² Defoe, *Brief Reply*, 97

²⁴³ Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 44

²⁴⁴ Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 58

²⁴⁵ Defoe, *Essay upon Projects*, 118-123

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 118

balanced constitution and inevitably result in an arbitrary monarch, the Court Whigs exclusively based their pro-army propaganda on the notion of political necessity. The international situation, as writers like Somers claimed with some justification, sanctioned what would otherwise be a dangerous tyrannical tool. However, as a direct consequence, this attitude left most pro-army propagandists unable to look beyond the issue of military necessity to substantiate their support for William's request. In contrast, Defoe, like the anti-army opposition, drew extensively on constitutional theory to provide a basis for his claim that standing forces were not only necessary in the face of the continued threat France posed, but also with regard to the notion of a balanced constitution. It was the king's executive power, as symbolised by his right to raise and control an army, which functioned as the counterbalance to the legislative power of the Houses of Parliament. Without this royal privilege, the equilibrium between the governmental estates would be destroyed and the English monarchy would cease to exist. This central aspect of Defoe's pro-army campaign is entirely absent from Somers' *Letter*, which makes Bastian's suggestion of a collaboration of the two men more than unlikely. Moreover, the distinctiveness of Defoe's rhetoric, in particular his sustained focus on the royal prerogative, also suggests that any potential connection with the ministry appears to have been rather loose. If Defoe's contributions to the Standing Army controversy really were the product of an imposed task, one would have expected him to take a stance much closer to that of Somers.

In addition, Defoe's pro-army rhetoric also clearly demonstrates that Childs' contention that the whole Standing Army debate was 'about numbers and not about principles' is a misrepresentation.²⁴⁷ It is the very fact that Defoe *did* engage with the principles of constitutional theory which made his contribution to the controversy arguably the most effective attack on the Country Whigs' campaign. Indeed, that Defoe saw the army question as essentially resting on political principles can be demonstrated by reading his verse satire *The True-Born Englishman* in the context of the controversy. The poem, as the next chapter will show, represented his final, eclectic attack on the political theory of the radical Whigs.

²⁴⁷ Childs, *British army*, 193

Chapter II

‘Old Britannia’s Youthful Days’: The True-Born Englishman and Country Whig Historiography

The final days of the year 1700 saw what may fairly be described as the pivotal moment of Defoe's literary activities during the reign of William III: the publication of his verse satire *The True-Born Englishman*.¹ The poem was an instant success and became one of the first best-sellers in English literary history: some twenty-two editions, authorised and pirated, have been identified as appearing in Defoe's lifetime, a number which rose to fifty by the middle of the eighteenth-century. The generally agreed number of copies sold lies at 80,000.² The success of *The True-Born Englishman* 'transformed Defoe from a relatively obscure pamphleteer to the most famous poet of the moment'.³ Significantly, the satire was not only of 'enormous value to William's cause', it also established instantly Defoe's public political identity, even in the minds of those who were little interested in politics.⁴ Tellingly, from this time onwards, Defoe, when he chose to acknowledge authorship of a publication, identified himself as the 'Author of *The True-Born Englishman*'. He was clearly not only proud of the commercial success of his satire but repeatedly chose to associate himself with the political values the poem celebrated; a pamphlet of 1717, for example, returned to the satire to support its ironical stance.⁵ In this context, it is perhaps also worthwhile to highlight that *The True-Born Englishman* became a standard against which his critics were able to judge him when he fell short of that character. Defoe's acknowledgement of his authorship thus cut both ways: it brought him considerable fame and established him as a target for satire.

Critical evaluations of *The True-Born Englishman* have predominantly commented on two aspects of the poem. Firstly, Defoe's satire has commonly been viewed as a response to the 'fires of English xenophobia', which had engulfed the

¹ F.H. Ellis has argued that, while the first references to *The True-Born Englishman* did not appear until January 1701, it is likely that the poem was in fact published in the preceding month. See Ellis (ed.) *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6 (New Haven & London, 1970), 263

² *Critical Bibliography*, 20; Novak, 149; Backscheider, 75

³ P.N. Furbank & W.R. Owens, eds, *The True-Born Englishman and Other Writings* (Harmondsworth, 1997), xiii

⁴ *Ibid*; Backscheider, 80

⁵ See Novak, 156, for Defoe's feelings about his poem. Chapter V advances the notion that Defoe's rhetorical strategy in his *Argument* against ennobling foreigners heavily drew on his verse satire.

nation at the end of the seventeenth century.⁶ A representative example of this view may be found in one of the most recent scholarly accounts of *The True-Born Englishman*: the poem's literary origins, the reader learns, 'can be found in a number of anti-Dutch texts printed in 1700, and in particular John Tutchin's *The Foreigners*'.⁷ Beside being a response to Tutchin's highly xenophobic poem, scholars have highlighted *The True-Born Englishman*'s engagement with wider political and social concerns. In particular, Defoe addressed the benefits of immigration for England, the absurdity of the concept of nobility by birth in the context of growing commercialisation and social mobility, and the relationship between historical and genealogical evolution and political authority.⁸

The latter point is closely linked to the second aspect of the poem which has attracted widespread attention, namely Defoe's emphasis on the contractual nature of government. Part II of *The True-Born Englishman*, in which Defoe exclaimed that the 'Mutual Contract' which existed between king and subjects was 'dissolv'd' should the monarch 'descend to Tyranny', has been viewed as the poet's attempt to legitimise the events of the Glorious Revolution and 'William's spectacular intervention in the English lineage'.⁹ In this context, the notion that Defoe's ideas on English constitutional order are 'poetic paraphrases of sections of Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*' has largely been replaced by the view that the contractual tenets evident in *The True-Born Englishman* reflected the commonplaces of allegiance pamphlets, rather than representing verifications of Locke's text.¹⁰ Furthermore, Defoe's theory of the English constitution and political authority, it has been claimed, 'exists outside history' because Defoe did not 'seek to locate it in some glorious and distant past'.¹¹

⁶ Rose, 55-6

⁷ Matthew Adams, 'Daniel Defoe and the Blooding of Britain. Genealogy, Gender and the Making of a National Public', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27:1 (2004), 2; for further examples of this view see Backscheider, 75; Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 69-70; Novak, 149; W.R. Owens 'Introduction', *Satire*, Vol.1, 18-19, 464n

⁸ Peter Earle, *The World of Defoe* (Newton Abbot, 1976), 148; Novak, 150; W.R. Owens, 'Introduction', 21; Adams, 'Defoe and the Blooding of Britain', 5

⁹ Adams, 'Defoe and the Blooding of Britain', 3; also Bastian, *Defoe's Early Life*, 235

¹⁰ Backscheider, 76; Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 71; for views similar to Schonhorn's see Novak, 151-52, and Adams, 'Defoe and the Blooding of Britain', 4

¹¹ Adams, 'Defoe and the Blooding of Britain', 4

Instead, he offered his readers a millennial vision in which the king became a messianic conqueror of England, who had saved the country from Catholicism. Making 'absolutely no mention of the English legislature as the supreme authority in the nation', Defoe assigned political leadership to the 'Moses-like' William, while parliament's function was reduced to sanctioning the contract between king and subjects and to initiating and supporting the dissolution of governments when the king abused his royal authority.¹²

Significantly, a number of critics have suggested that both *The True-Born Englishman's* attack on English xenophobic sentiments and the poem's ideas on political theory were informed by the Standing Army Controversy.¹³ However, the vast majority of critical accounts of this aspect of Defoe's poem are relatively limited in scope and do not move beyond rather general statements. Typically, one scholar, referring to Defoe's contract theory of government, states that the 'fundamental thesis underlying Defoe's Standing Army pamphlets' is 'stated, memorably, in the poem, *The True-Born Englishman*'.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the reader is offered no further insight into how exactly Defoe's poem engaged with the main issues of the controversy. An exception to this gap in Defoe scholarship is perhaps Pocock's brief discussion of *The True-Born Englishman*. Pocock makes the important point that in his satire, Defoe attacks the neo-Harringtonian version of English history by arguing that '[l]iberty and balanced government were modern, not ancient, and based upon the emancipation of the commons from feudal control'.¹⁵ However, Defoe's pro-army argument of the supremacy of fiscal over military power, which Pocock finds in a single couplet in *The True-Born Englishman*, is viewed as largely ineffective, since it 'did not of itself meet the Country objection that the very existence of a standing army corrupted parliament and lessened its ability to refuse supply, or that the power of money provided the executive with means of corruption unknown in former ages'.¹⁶ Regrettably, Pocock too offers very little detailed commentary concerning the way in

¹² Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 19, 70-71

¹³ See, for example, Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 69; F.N. Furbank, 'Introduction', *Political & Economic Writings* Vol.1, 19; Owens, 'Introduction', 17

¹⁴ Furbank, 'Introduction', 19

¹⁵ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 433-34

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 434

which Defoe might be undermining radical Whig historiography in his celebrated poem.

The present chapter is an attempt to address this gap in the field of Defoe studies. A detailed analysis of *The True-Born Englishman* in the context of the Standing Army Controversy demonstrates that Defoe's verse satire was not merely loosely anchored in the controversy and its aftermath, but did, in fact, constitute a highly specific attack on the Country opposition's campaign against the maintenance of a professional military force. Defoe's nomenclature, symbolism and iconography constantly and consistently echoed and satirically mimicked radical Whig anti-army rhetoric, which makes the discourse surrounding the king's troops the single most important context for any critical account of *The True-Born Englishman*. The poem, it will become apparent, represented Defoe's systematic dismantling of both the country Whig interpretation of history and the opposition's constitutional ideas.

In one sense, the outcome of the Standing Army Controversy must have had a distinctly bitter-sweet flavour for Daniel Defoe. The campaign of the Court supporters had ended in virtual failure: while the royal proposal of the retention of standing forces was eventually sanctioned by parliament in January 1699, the supply authorised by the Commons meant that William's army had to be reduced from 87,000 soldiers at the end of the war to a military force consisting of only 7,000 men.¹⁷ An army of this size was, in fact, still large enough for internal repression but far too small to undertake any kind of meaningful military action against France.¹⁸ Not only did the king have to suffer the indignity of having his requests for a significant standing army repeatedly brushed aside by MPs, who, for the most part, were utterly 'unaware of the realities and costs of international war', he also had to bear what was in essence a personal insult.¹⁹ Indulging in its growing xenophobia, parliament had decided to demonstrate its political power by moving that the 7,000 soldiers to be retained consisted solely of 'his Majesty's natural born subjects of England'.²⁰ As a result of this stipulation, William was forced to disband and send

¹⁷ Horwitz, 222; Rose, 97

¹⁸ Childs, *British Army*, 370

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 186

²⁰ Cited in Horwitz, 249; also see Rose, 54-55

back to the Republic his beloved Dutch Blue Guards. The Commons' attack on the king did not end there. Parliament's next target was the forfeited Irish estates, of which William had, rather unwisely, granted the greatest part to his foreign favourites, such as the Earls of Portland and Albemarle. William's preferential treatment of Dutch counsellors and generals had incensed the nation from the very beginning of the reign and, having already inflicted defeat on the king with regard to the army, parliament now decided that William's grants should be revoked. Accompanied by 'loud denunciations of the King's foreign servants', the Act of Resumptions was passed in April 1700.²¹ The Standing Army Controversy and its immediate aftermath had been nothing less than an 'unmitigated disaster' for the Whig Junto, and with the revocation of William's land grants, it had ended in the 'most humiliating episode of the King's reign'.²²

Paradoxically however, the very success of the anti-army campaign had actually demonstrated the validity of one of Defoe's main arguments, namely that the '*Power of the Purse is an Equivalent to the Power of the Sword*'.²³ If anything, by forcing William to disband the greatest part of his forces, parliament had shown irrefutably that the fiscal power it held was more than a match for the prerogatives of the king. Indeed, despite the disappointing result, Defoe's contribution to the controversy may be described as moderately successful, at least on a personal level. His attack on anti-army sentiments, as the previous chapter has shown, certainly represented the most forceful Court response to the radical Whig opposition, and the fact that both *Some Reflections* and *A Brief Reply* went to second editions indicates that he was making an impact as a propagandist.

The passage of the Disbandment Act might have put an end to the standing army issue in parliament but Defoe, as one critic has been pointed out, 'never let it die'.²⁴ His initial reaction to the success of the anti-army campaign came in the ballad *An Encomium upon Parliament* (1699), a highly sarcastic attack on William's fourth parliament, which sat from December 1698 to May 1699. The ballad largely echoed

²¹ Horwitz, 267-269; Rose, 55, 99

²² Rose, 97

²³ Defoe, *An Argument*, 74

²⁴ Novak, 141

sentiments Defoe had already expressed in his pro-army pamphlets, such as the ineffectiveness of the militia, the country's ingratitude towards William and his troops, and the excessive limitations which Defoe believed had been placed on the king's prerogatives.²⁵ Similarly, Defoe's next publications, *The Two Great Questions Consider'd* and *The Two Great Questions Further Consider'd* reiterated Defoe's thoughts on English foreign policy. The first tract is largely an exploration of the implications of Louis XIV's possible rejection of Charles II of Spain's will for the balance of power in Europe. However, Defoe included a number of pointed references to the nation's virtually army-less state: 'since her Troops are broke', the reader was told, England has made 'but a very mean Figure abroad'.²⁶ The sequel, issued in response to the anonymously published *Remarks upon a Late Paper* (1700) which accused Defoe of being a courtier and a supporter of standing armies, returns to the mould of Defoe's earlier pro-army tracts. *The Two Great Questions Further Consider'd*, published only three or four weeks prior to *The True-Born Englishman* in December 1700, rehearsed all of the main arguments Defoe had employed during the controversy: the fleet and the militia were no sufficient protection against a French invasion, any military conflict ought to be kept 'at a distance...by Leagues and Confederacies', which could only be achieved if England represented a worthy ally with a strong king and an adequate army, and, in any case, 'Provided it be by Consent of Parliament' a standing army in peace time was 'not against Law'.²⁷ Moreover, Defoe included a substantial attack on the anti-army 'Pamphleteering Club, who have set themselves to Blaspheme God, and Ruin their Native Country, and in Print to sow the Seeds of Misunderstanding and Distrust between the King and his People.'²⁸ More than a year after the end of the controversy, Defoe, it seems, still found the success of the anti-army campaign difficult to digest.

²⁵ Daniel Defoe, *An Encomium upon a Parliament* (1699), F.H. Ellis (ed.), *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6 (New Haven & London, 1970), 49-51

²⁶ Daniel Defoe, *The Two Great Questions Consider'd* (1700), *Political & Economic Writings* Vol.5, 33. Also see 37-39.

²⁷ Daniel Defoe, *The Two Great Questions Further Consider'd* (1700), *Political & Economic Writings* Vol.5, 46-48

²⁸ *Ibid*, 47

Importantly, Defoe was not the only propagandist who was reluctant to let the army question die. While the majority of anti-army writers had turned their attention to other matters, the Reverend Samuel Johnson, a long-time opponent of standing armies with a special interest in the 'history and complexities of a theory of resistance', continued to keep in the public mind the contentious issue of a professional military force during peace time.²⁹ Johnson, with whose writings and career Defoe appears to have been familiar, had published his first contribution to the controversy, *A Confutation of a late Pamphlet*, early in 1698.³⁰ In it he reiterated many of the commonplaces of opposition rhetoric: not only was a standing army unnecessary because of the improbability of a foreign invasion, but, more significantly, it destroyed the constitution and made governments 'absolute and arbitrary'. In contrast to mercenary troops, a militia was a safe and effective military force for the defence of the nation.³¹ Despite the fact that the controversy had come to an end in 1699, Johnson decided to continue his the campaign by publishing *The Second Part of the Confutation of the Ballancing Letter* and re-issuing his highly sarcastic 1685 pamphlet, *Several Reasons for the Establishment of a Standing Army, and dissolving the Militia*, in 1700.³² The standing army issue was clearly far from forgotten and at least some of the radical Whigs remained dissatisfied with the maintenance of even the smallest of professional forces.

Johnson's tracts were not only important in the sense that they helped to carry the army issue into the new century, they also represented a highly accurate reflection of contemporary xenophobic sentiments. As already mentioned, the contentious issue of the Irish estates and William's continued visits to his native Holland even after the arrival of peace had persuaded many an Englishman that the king 'loved no Englishman's face, nor his company'.³³ The king's extremely anti-foreign parliament had not hesitated to voice its dislike of foreigners. Typically, a speech in the

²⁹ Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 176

³⁰ Defoe refers to Johnson in his first pamphlet contribution to the army debate. See *Some Reflections*, 51

³¹ Johnson, *Confutation*, 'Preface' and 2-3

³² Schwoerer lists *The Second Part of the Confutation* as the final pamphlet in the controversy. See 'Chronology', 390

³³ Gilbert Burnet, *History of His Own Time* (Oxford, 1823), cited in Rose, 54

Commons against a bill for the naturalisation of foreigners concluded with the motion 'that the *Serjeant* be commanded to open the Doors, and let us first Kick the Bill out of the HOUSE, and then Foreigners out of the KINGDOM'.³⁴ Moreover, when the Lords threatened to block the passage of the Act of Resumptions, members of the Commons immediately turned to the popular bogey of foreigners:

The whole nation must be exposed to misery, and all for preserving the grants of those who would beggar the kingdom to enrich themselves; who were foreigners, and had not the bowels of Englishmen, but would be contented to see this country destroyed, when they are not to get their wills of it³⁵

A contemporary commentator observed that William's enemies saw 'fit for their ends, to let that prejudice go on, and increase in the minds of the people'.³⁶ Johnson was certainly one of those enemies and his *Confutation of a late Pamphlet* had clearly been designed to exploit the increasing antipathy with which William and his foreign entourage were being viewed. The final twelve or so pages of the pamphlet represented an all-out attack on non-English inhabitants of the kingdom. One way of 'diminishing the Strength of the Nation', Johnson declared,

is by letting Foreigners and Aliens amongst us...[because] for every Foreigner living in *England* we have an English-man the less. Because they not only are a dead weight to the Nation, and cannot be relied upon for any assistance, but perhaps they may be Enemies, for who can vouch for Inhabitants unknown?³⁷

Johnson's musings with regard to a potential lack of trustworthiness of people of other cultures soon developed into certainties: the experience of the American colonies had shown that it was futile to distinguish between 'Friend-Indians' and 'Enemy-Indians' because 'they all prove one', namely the latter.³⁸ Johnson's bigotry largely echoed the universals of xenophobic propaganda: foreigners regularly behaved disrespectfully towards the natives, placed an additional financial burden on the country, discovered the 'Secrets of the Realm to our Enemies abroad', did 'ill Offices' at court, were 'the

³⁴ *A Speech in the House of Commons, against the Naturalising of Foreigners* (1693)
F.H. Ellis (ed.) *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 224

³⁵ James Vernon to the Duke of Shrewsbury, 9 April 1700, cited in Rose, 57

³⁶ Burnet, *History*, 54

³⁷ Johnson, *Confutation*, 22

³⁸ *Ibid*, 23

constant Implements of Arbitrary Princes', drove up the price of land, and showed little understanding of the English way of life and the English constitution.³⁹ These were the reasons, Johnson claimed, that the 'Wisdom of the Nation in former Ages' was 'against the admission of Strangers, or suffering them to be here'. The modern 'Fetch' of the 'general Naturalisation' of foreigners should cease, while the ancient practice of keeping 'Strangers out of the Kingdom, or when ever they got in and encreased to any number, to expel them' ought to be reinstated. The 'Barons with Sword in hand', Johnson insisted, 'would see it done'.⁴⁰ His attitude remained unchanged two years later: the *Second Part of the Confutation* repeated almost all of the accusations Johnson had levelled at foreigners in his earlier tract. Admitting foreigners to the realm was, he maintained, 'according to the sense of all Antiquity, ...giving them our Country'. Therefore, the government, in imitation of King John, should ensure that 'all Aliens of whatsoever condition they were, or Nation, shou'd forthwith repair home, under the penalty of Life and Limb'.⁴¹ Almost from the outset, then, the press campaign against William's army had a clearly discernable undercurrent of xenophobic sentiments.

Because of the fame bestowed on the poem by Defoe's verse satire, John Tutchin's *The Foreigners* remains the most frequently cited publication to illustrate contemporary anti-foreign feelings. Tutchin's tract has been said to have 'furiously fanned' English xenophobia, yet the fact that *The Foreigners* did not prove popular enough to warrant a second edition appears to somewhat undermine this assertion.⁴² In any case, Tutchin did little more than revisit old anti-army ground in his poem. Published shortly after the passage of the Resumptions Act in 1700, *The Foreigner's* highly polemical couplets issued a long series of insults aimed at the king and his Dutch courtiers. Drawing on Old Testament imagery in the manner of Dryden, the

³⁹ Ibid, 24-26, 28, 31

⁴⁰ Ibid, 23-26

⁴¹ Samuel Johnson, *The Second Part of the Confutation of the Ballancing Letter, Being An Occasional Discourse in Vindication of MAGNA CHARTA* (1700), in *The Works of the late Reverend Mr. Samuel Johnson, sometime chaplain to the Right Honourable William Lord Russel* (1710), 340

⁴² Rose, 55

Dutch aliens were accused of having 'neither Blood nor Parentage' and as lacking the refinement of the natives:

...void of Honesty and Grace,
A Boorish, rude, and an inhumane Race;
From Nature's Excrement their Life is drawn,
Are born in Bogs, and nourish'd up from Spawn.⁴³

What was worse, however, was that these creatures were taking what rightfully belonged to the English. Echoing Johnson's complaints, Tutchin likened foreigners to vicious parasites:

Like Beasts of Prey they ravage all the Land,
Acquire Preferments, and usurp Command:
The Foreign Inmates the Housekeepers spoil,
And drain the Moisture of our fruitful Soil.⁴⁴

Finally, in a thinly-veiled reference to William, Tutchin returned to one of the main arguments of the anti-army campaign:

Unthinking *Israel!* Ah henceforth beware
How you entrust this faithless Wanderer!
He who another Kingdom can divide,
May set your Constitution soon aside,
And o'er your Liberties in Triumph ride.⁴⁵

The claim that an army in the hands of the king would inevitably result in absolute and arbitrary government had, of course, underscored virtually every opposition pamphlet.⁴⁶

Given that most of Tutchin's concerns about foreigners had already been voiced during the anti-army campaign and that his poem did not actually represent a commercial success, it seems unlikely that *The Foreigners* was Defoe's main inspiration for *The True-Born Englishman*. For tactical reasons, fifteen years later, Defoe may have allocated that honour to Tutchin's verse, but, as Bastian has

⁴³ John Tutchin, *The Foreigners* (1700), F.H. Ellis (ed) *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 236

⁴⁴ Ibid, 234

⁴⁵ Ibid, 244

⁴⁶ See Chapter I, 44-46

highlighted, Defoe's account of the genesis of his verse satire and the poem's structure do not lend much credibility to this assertion.⁴⁷ Tellingly, it was only the first edition of *The True-Born Englishman* which contained the thirty-line attack on the 'Shamwhig' Tutchin, yet all subsequent editions omitted this section and ignored completely both Tutchin and his poem.⁴⁸ The notion that Defoe's attack on Tutchin was a late insertion into the first edition is supported by the improved structural coherence of later editions of the poem: the continuity of the poem's argument, as Bastian has rightly highlighted, was greatly improved without the lines in question.⁴⁹ Another important consideration is the timing of the composition of *The True-Born Englishman*: some sections of the poem were, as Ellis has shown, written as early as the middle of 1699, thus pre-dating Tutchin's poem by up to six months.⁵⁰ The publication of Defoe's verse satire may have been triggered by *The Foreigners* but the available evidence suggests that it was not a direct response to Tutchin's work. Instead, *The True-Born Englishman* answered 'the whole chorus of abuse which over a number of years had been directed at the Dutch and foreigners in general and at the King in particular'.⁵¹ This chorus, as shall become apparent, consisted mostly of the voices of the anti-army campaign.

As we have seen, both the time of conception of *The True-Born Englishman* in 1699 and Defoe's ostensible subject matter, English xenophobia, already provide a solid link between the poem and the Standing Army Controversy. There is, however, further external evidence which supports this association. The instant popularity of the poem and its controversial subject matter had generated a crop of indignant replies, many of which asserted that an Englishman could not have authored this vicious slander of English genealogy. '[H]ad you been English', *The Female Critick* typically claimed, 'you had not certainly (how true soever) publish'd your own Parents to have

⁴⁷ In *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* (1715), Defoe explained that the rage Tutchin's poem had generated in him 'gave birth to a Trifle... I mean *The True-Born Englishman*'. See J.T. Boulton (ed) *Selected Writings of Daniel Defoe* (Cambridge, 1975), 168

⁴⁸ Bastian, *Defoe's Early Life*, 226

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ F.H. Ellis (ed) *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 762

⁵¹ Bastian, *Defoe's Early Life*, 226

descended of Rakes'.⁵² Defoe, another contemporary commentator asserted, was an 'unnat'ral' and monstrous cuckoo that had usurped another bird's nest and was now defiling it.⁵³ Interestingly, instead of the poem being assigned to Defoe, *The True-Born Englishman* was attributed to the radical Whig and deist John Toland, whose Irish origins and extreme political and religious views could readily be reconciled with an 'anti-English' and indeed, unEnglish publication such as Defoe's satire.⁵⁴ Toland had, of course, been one of the main anti-army campaigners during the Standing Army Controversy and in 1700 he was still publishing tracts which promoted republican and anti-army sentiments, such as Harrington's *Works*.⁵⁵ In the eyes of the public, it seems, the author of *The True-Born Englishman* showed 'the particular Characteristic of that Rebellious, and Whining Sect', the 'scandalous' Grecian Tavern cohort.

Another intriguing detail which connects *The True-Born Englishman* to the Standing Army Controversy is the poem's publisher, whom William Pittis identified as 'Captain Darby in St.Martin's-Lane'.⁵⁶ The title page of the first edition of Defoe's satire identifies neither a publisher nor a bookseller and Pittis may, of course, have derived the printer from the incorrect assumption that Toland was the author of the poem. As mentioned in the previous chapter, John Darby had been responsible for the publication of a number of anti-army tracts and was, in fact, the publisher of all of Toland's contributions to the controversy.⁵⁷ However, Defoe's introduction to the ninth edition of *The True-Born Englishman*, which appeared within twelve months of the first edition in 1701, bestows at least some credibility on Pittis' assertion. Here, Defoe explained that the '*Publisher of this has been News-Paper'd into Gaol*' for the

⁵² S.M. *The Female Critick: or Letters in Drollery From Ladies to their Humble Servants. With a Letter to the Author of a Satyr Call'd, The True-Born Englishman* (1701), 114

⁵³ *The Fable of the Cuckoo: Or, The Sentence on the Ill Bird that defiled his own Nest* (1701), especially 11-16

⁵⁴ Bastian, *Defoe's Early Life*, 236. Unfortunately, Bastian does not refer the reader to any publications which misattribute Defoe's poem to Toland, but an example is [William Pittis] *The True-Born Englishman, Answer'd, Paragraph by Paragraph* (1701), 49.

⁵⁵ Worden, 'Introduction', 20

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 86

⁵⁷ Chapter I, 36; cf. Worden, 'Introduction', 20 and Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 178

printing the poem.⁵⁸ On a number of occasions, Darby had been ordered to appear before the secretary of state to identify the authors of his publications and one of these did, in fact, occur in 1701.⁵⁹ It is not clear, however, if this was for *The True-Born Englishman*. Yet, if Pittis was correct, then Defoe's choice of printer is surely more than a coincidence. An association with Darby's firm situated Defoe's satire amongst a whole range of radical Whig publications, including those opposing a standing army, and added what appears to be a deliberate piece of piquancy to Defoe's attack on the Country opposition. That Darby was prepared to publish a tract which opposed the views of his other clients was not unusual: the Darbys were, as Worden has highlighted, 'capable of backing more than one Whig horse at once.'⁶⁰

While the subject matter of xenophobia and the contextual aspects discussed above establish some firm connections between *The True-Born Englishman* and the Standing Army Controversy, it was the actual content of Defoe's satire which offered unambiguous evidence with regard to its source of inspiration. The poem is littered with references and allusions to the controversy - some highly explicit, others more covert. Indeed, the very first sentence of the 'Introduction' clearly identified the historical event which was to constitute the poem's point of departure:

Speak, *Satyr*; for there's none can tell like thee,
 Whether 'tis Folly, Pride, or Knavery,
 That makes this discontented Land appear
 Less happy now in Times of Peace, than War⁶¹

It was, of course, the Nine Years' War with France, brought to an end with the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, to which Defoe was alluding in the above lines. Significantly, it was not the war itself or the peace treaty on which Defoe asked 'Satyr' to comment but the events of the aftermath, the 'Civil Feud' (5) which had disturbed the nation. The Standing Army Controversy, which had produced a significant amount of

⁵⁸ Daniel Defoe, *The True-Born Englishman. A Satyr* (1700), *Satire* Vol.1, 81. All references are to this edition.

⁵⁹ H.R. Plomer, *A dictionary of the printers and booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1668 to 1725* (Oxford, 1922), xx; also see Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 175

⁶⁰ Worden, 'Introduction', 18n

⁶¹ Defoe, *True-Born Englishman*, ll.1-4. Subsequent references are given in parenthesis in the text.

political tension inside parliament during the three years or so preceding the publication of *The True-Born Englishman* and generated a high-profile paper war outside the two Houses, was clearly the event Defoe had chosen as the context for his satire. This is reinforced by further explicit references to the war and the controversy: line 33 mentions the cost of 'Fifty Millions *Stirling*' which the war with France had incurred, line 200 hints at parliament's demand of the dismissal of William's Blue Guards, line 203 states that 'No Parliament his Army cou'd disband', line 674 again complains that the nation was '*Harder to rule in Times of Peace than War*', while line 1003 discusses the Earl of Portland's contribution to 'Managing the Peace' at Ryswick. Thus, Defoe consistently reminded his readers that the discussion surrounding William's military forces constituted an important key for the deciphering of his satire.

Defoe's early identification of the Standing Army Controversy as the central event with which *The True-Born Englishman* was concerned was followed immediately by a statement of the poet's political position within the controversy. 'Fools out of Favour grudge at Knaves in Place', Defoe attacked the Country opposition, '*And men are always honest in Disgrace*' (7-8). The phrase 'Knaves in Place' was, of course, a reference to what had become a 'hardy perennial' of Country policy, namely a bill barring all officeholders, or placemen, from the Commons, the most recent of which had occurred in April 1700.⁶² The continued efforts of the Country Whigs to exclude placemen from parliament was directly related to their neo-Harringtonian interpretation of history, which held that corrupt politicians, of which placemen were the embodiment, had caused the decay of the ancient constitution and destroyed the balance between the governmental estates. As highlighted in the previous chapter, corrupt placemen had also been held responsible for the establishment of standing armies, since they were reluctant to obstruct any of the king's wishes for fear of losing their place.⁶³

Importantly, Defoe's juxtaposition of 'honest' with 'Disgrace' strongly echoed radical Whig rhetoric. As part of their campaign against William's government, the

⁶² Horwitz, 137, 266-67; Rose, 85, 89; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 407

⁶³ Chapter I, 40-41

radical Whigs had developed a preoccupation ‘with the behaviour not of the Crown but of Members of Parliament’.⁶⁴ Insisting on the need for a complete reformation of parliament, the opposition Whigs not only repeatedly demanded the exclusion of placemen to re-establish the independence of the two Houses, but advocated that all members should ‘model themselves on Roman senators’.⁶⁵ An application of the ‘excellent Rules and Examples of Government which the Ancients have left us’, Fletcher exclaimed typically, would soon discover the ‘Ambition, Avarice and Luxury’ of the corrupt courtiers, while, at the same time, it would instil political and moral virtue in the public-minded individual.⁶⁶ In the context of the vocabulary of civic virtue, the notion that ‘men are always honest in Disgrace’ not only provided a linguistic marker with regard to the rhetorical context which informed *The True-Born Englishman*, it also heralded Defoe’s attack on Country Whig philosophy. Instead of taking seriously the opposition’s “reform plans”, Defoe ridiculed Country Whig sentiments as being little more than an example of the ‘*Railing Spirit*’ (26) which was so typical of men out of office. The Country Whig ideal of the politically disinterested and morally superior representative of the people is steadily eroded through the juxtaposition of the much cited ancient example with its modern imitator, the ‘Roman’ Whig. Court preferment, Defoe asserted, was the real aim of the Country opposition in parliament:

The Grand Contention’s plainly to be seen,
 To get some men put out, and some put in.
 For this our Senators make long Harangues,
 And florid Members whet their polish’d Tongue.
Statesmen are always sick of one Disease;
And a good Pension gives them present Ease. (15-18)

By using terms such as ‘senator’ and by referring to the classical tradition of public oratory, Defoe was, of course, once again echoing Country Whig rhetoric and, more importantly, drawing attention to their much revered Roman ideals. However, what became apparent in this context was that the behaviour of the ‘Roman’ Whigs was

⁶⁴ Worden, ‘Introduction’, 46

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 3-5

nothing like that of the ancient paragons of virtue. When, for example, Cicero famously indicted Catalina, he did so to save Rome from tyranny, rather than to win political preferment. The politicians of the Country opposition, in contrast, were simply trying to secure a 'good Pension'. Their rhetoric of virtue, Defoe suggested, was merely a smokescreen for their political ambitions.

The third couplet of the above quotation, moreover, offered an interesting verbal echo of one of the foremost radical Whig philosophers, Henry Neville. As has been stated already, in *Plato Redivivus* Neville had appropriated Quintilian's classical ideal to produce a prototype of an incorruptible country gentleman. In a particularly lengthy speech, this 'English Gentleman' lamented the moral failings of English politicians and offered an explanation as to why corruption had to remain a perpetual state for the nation: 'this is certain, they [MPs] have never endeavoured a cure, though possibly they might know the disease... [because] such a reformation might not consist with the merchandize they make of the prince's favour'.⁶⁷ Neville was, of course, drawing on the well-established metaphor of the disease of corruption infecting not only the individual but the entire body politic. The cause of the disease was royal favours, the acceptance of which turned an independent senator into a dependent courtier. The cure for this corruption, in turn, was the selfless refusal of 'bribes, gratuities and fees'.⁶⁸ In his efforts to subvert Country Whig ideology, Defoe adopted the same metaphor but applied some important modifications: it was the supposedly independent out-of-office (Country) statesman who became diseased with the desire for royal favour. The most obvious symptom of this disease was the 'Railing Spirit', for which the '*Sov'reign Balsam*' (23) was the only medicine. In *The True-Born Englishman* Defoe had turned the table on the radical Whig opposition – ambition and avarice were no longer Court but Country diseases and Neville's poison, royal favour, became Defoe's cure.

Significantly, the xenophobic character of the anti-army campaign was, in one sense, only a marginal issue to Defoe: 'Tis not at Foreigners that we repine, Wou'd Foreigners their Perquisites resign' (11-12). The ambition, avarice and envy of the

⁶⁷ Neville, *Plato Redivivus*, 146

⁶⁸ Ibid

Country opposition had made foreigners a convenient target for their discontent and resulted in unwarranted attacks on the cultural heritage and genealogy of the kingdom's alien subjects. In order to refute these unduly proud and arrogant anti-foreign slurs, Defoe asked his muse, 'Satyr', to take the reader on a journey back to the origins of the English nation:

To *Englishmen* their own beginnings show,
And ask them why they slight their Neighbours so.
Go Back to Elder Times, and Ages past,
And Nations into long Oblivion cast
To Old *Britannia's* Youthful Days retire,
And there for *True-Born Englishmen* enquire. (43-48)

The fact that Defoe referred his readers to history to find a corrective for Country Whig sentiments assumes particular importance here. Almost the entire anti-army campaign had rested on the neo-Harringtonian model of the 'Gothic balance'.⁶⁹ The radical Whigs had found their ideal example of government in the same distant past that Defoe was now proposing to explore in an attempt to refute their reading of history. By going 'back to Causes where our Follies dwell' (53), Defoe, it appears, was deliberately engaging with Country Whig historiography in order to explode the myth not only of genealogical purity but of an ideal English ancient constitution. However, before a detailed analysis of Defoe's rhetorical strategy in *The True-Born Englishman* may be undertaken, it is necessary to briefly return to the radical Whigs' neo-Harringtonian interpretation of English history.

In the context of the Standing Army controversy, arguably the most important radical Whig interpretation of English and European history was Andrew Fletcher's *Discourse Concerning Militias*, published in 1697. In the following year an extended version of the pamphlet appeared under the title *Discourse of Government*, which contained additional sections on the history of Fletcher's native Scotland. The tracts represented the most expansive example of country Whig historiography and more importantly, they developed and expanded neo-Harringtonian historiography further than anyone had yet carried it.⁷⁰ Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that Defoe felt

⁶⁹ See Chapter I, 39, 44

⁷⁰ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 428

that Fletcher's pamphlets warranted special attention. Both Defoe's *An Argument* and *A Brief Reply* identified *A Discourse Concerning Militias* as one of the main publications to be refuted.⁷¹ Indeed, in *An Argument*, which was published within weeks of the *Discourse*, Defoe extensively quoted from and paraphrased Fletcher's pamphlet.⁷² Tellingly, the sections of the *Discourse* on which Defoe focused, including the lengthy quotation below, dealt with the origins of Gothic government. In *An Argument* the purpose of answering Fletcher's notions in such a detailed manner had been to disprove the opposition's contention that the English constitution was essentially Gothic in nature. By doing this, Defoe had, in fact, offered a picture of the origins of modern government which went against customary perception, since, by 1700, Fletcher's reading of history had become the 'schoolbook interpretation of the end of the Middle Ages'.⁷³ From the start, then, Defoe's alternative version of English history was unlikely to find many supporters, at least on its first publication. Yet, the failure of the pro-army campaign to secure a more favourable outcome for William does not seem to have deterred Defoe from returning to this topic. In *The True-Born Englishman*, as we shall see, he once again picked up this thread and produced a more substantial attack on radical Whig historiography.

While the other anti-army writers only fleetingly referred to the origins of the English constitution and rarely went beyond stating that the nation's government rested on an ancient or Gothic balance, Fletcher offered a detailed historical analysis, which began around the year A.D. 400, when the so-called Gothic government replaced the Roman empire throughout western Europe:

When the Goths, Vandals, and other warlike Nations, had at different Times, and under different Leaders, overrun the Western Parts of the Roman Empire, they introduced the following Form of Government into all the Nations they subdued. The General of the Army became King of the Conquered Country; and the Conquest being absolute, he divided the Lands amongst the great Officers of his Army, afterwards called Barons; who again parcelled out their several Territories in smaller Portions to

⁷¹ Defoe, *An Argument*, 64; idem, *A Brief Reply*, 92

⁷² Schwoerer, 'Chronology', 386-87

⁷³ Pocock, 'English Eighteenth Century Ideology', 139

*the inferiour Souldiers that had followed them in the Wars, and who then became Vassals, enjoying those Lands for Military Service.*⁷⁴

It was the Gothic invasions and, more particularly, the division of the conquered lands between the invaders, which had introduced the much celebrated Gothic balance to England and the rest of Europe. The resulting Gothic constitution effortlessly maintained a perfect equilibrium between the newly created governmental estates of King, Lords, and Commons, because the Commons, as a militia, led by the nobility 'placed the Sword into the hands of the Subject'. This ancient balance was so stable that no further 'Limitations' needed to be placed on this type of monarchy, because the inter-dependence of the three estates 'effectually secured the freedom of those Governments.'⁷⁵

Importantly, despite the supposed equilibrium between the governmental estates, it was the nobility whom Fletcher and his fellow radical Whigs regarded as the true defenders of freedom: '*Liberty in the Monarchical Governments of Europe, subsisted so long as the Militia of the Barons was on foot*'.⁷⁶ This was only possible because the 'Ancient Nobility and Gentry' were 'honest and brave Men, who would rather have died than have been the Authors of ... Mischief'.⁷⁷ Moreover, the Barons' moral superiority also made the nobility a natural intermediary between the king and the commoners, maintaining the Gothic balance by, in essence, policing the behaviour of the other two estates. History, Fletcher asserted, demonstrated that '*for the defence of themselves against a greater Power*', both the king and the vassalage had willingly '*plac'd their chief Trust*' in the nobility and the militia it controlled.⁷⁸ Country Whig historiography, as Pocock has commented, invariably regarded the Barons to be the defenders of the 'principles of ancient balance, *virtù* and liberty, even as they defended their feudal privileges.'⁷⁹

However, the arrival of luxury goods in the fifteenth century, said Fletcher, '*brought a total Alteration in the way of living, upon which all Government*

⁷⁴ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 6-7

⁷⁵ Ibid, 8

⁷⁶ Ibid, 45; also see Chapter I, 53

⁷⁷ Moyle, *Second Part of An Argument*, 8

⁷⁸ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 22

⁷⁹ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 429

depends'.⁸⁰ A '*perpetual Change of the Fashions in Clothes, Equipage and Furniture*' meant that '*all Countries concurred to sink Europe into an Abyss of Pleasure*'.⁸¹ As a result of the new '*expensive way of living*', the Barons, whom had to bear the greatest share of the increased cost, were forced to demand of their vassals the payment of rents instead of military service. This, in turn, had significant political implications: the nobility-led militias were replaced by mercenary standing armies controlled by the king. In other words, the Barons lost their political power – Fletcher stated that '*the Power of the Sword was transferred from the Subject to the King*' – and the Gothic balance, which had hitherto preserved national liberty, was destroyed.⁸²

What is particularly note-worthy about Fletcher's analysis of European history is the metaphor he employed to describe the demise of the Gothic form of government. Like Neville, Fletcher drew on the metaphor of disease to add polemical weight to his historical analysis.⁸³ The rise of luxury is compared to an '*Infection*' which, starting in Italy, '*spread it self by degrees into the Neighbouring Nations*'. The most visible symptom of this infection was the respective nations' addictions to their natural vices: '*Mankind from a natural propension to Pleasure*', Fletcher explained, '*is always ready to chuse out every thing what may most gratify that vicious Appetite*'. It was this insatiable appetite, as we have already heard, which sank '*Europe into an Abyss of Pleasure*'.⁸⁴ Interestingly, joining a mercenary army, which itself had been a direct result of the disease of luxury, affected the individual in much the same way as the original 'infection' had transformed the entire nation: '*if before they [the officers or soldiers] were modest or sober, [they] immediately turn themselves to all manner of Debauchery and Wickedness*'. The barbaric behaviour of the soldiers, Fletcher suggested, might then spread to the rest of the population: '*may it not be feared, that such bad Manners may prove contagious? And if such Manners do not fit Men to*

⁸⁰ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 12

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid, 15

⁸³ See Chapter I, 41

⁸⁴ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 11-12

enslave a Nation, Devils only must do it.'⁸⁵ In *The True-Born Englishman*, Defoe, as will become apparent, appropriated the same metaphors for his own purposes.

As we have seen, Defoe's introduction contained a number of clear markers which indicated that the target of his satire was the Country Whig rhetoric that had characterised the opposition's campaign against William's army. This early section of the poem, however, rarely moves beyond a general denunciation of what Defoe considered the typical hypocrisy of office-seeking politicians. It is not until the poet turns his attention to 'Elder Times, and Ages past' that this particular element of his rhetorical strategy of the text becomes apparent. The introduction's concluding lines, which diametrically opposed the 'Follies' of Country Whig historiography and Defoe's own account of Britain's 'dark Original from Hell' (54), constitute the point of departure for a systematic inversion and dismantling of the notion of the halcyon days of England's Gothic past.

Fletcher's contention that standing army soldiers were the closest earthly thing to devils appears to have provided Defoe's inspiration for the format of Part I of *The True-Born Englishman*. Defoe did not, of course, believe that standing armies posed a threat to the nation, either in a military or a moral sense. He had, in fact, commended the army's excellent discipline during the recent war on a number of occasions.⁸⁶ Yet, if mercenary forces could and would not enslave the nation, then, as Fletcher had suggested, the devils must. Thus, Defoe's version of the history of ancient Europe sees Fletcher's invading Goths replaced by an all-conquering Satan, who is supported by a number of 'Vicegerents and Commanders' (72). Echoing Fletcher's disease metaphor, Satan and his crew infect the mind with 'Infernal Dictates' to make 'a perfect Conquest of Mankind' (61, 81). Interestingly, Defoe's Satan exploits what Fletcher had referred to as man's '*natural propension to Pleasure*': aware of the 'Genius and the Inclination' of the various countries, he cleverly 'matches proper Sins for ev'ry Nation' (66). Taking an obvious swipe at Fletcher and his fellow Country Whigs, Defoe emphasised that Satan needed 'no Standing-Army Government' (68) to rule tyrannically.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 34

⁸⁶ See Chapter I, 52-53

Once Defoe had established the linguistic and symbolic framework of his satire, he proceeded to offer a more detailed picture of Satan's conquest of Europe. From the outset of Part I the reader gains a sense that the poem has distinctly iconoclastic qualities, although Defoe's target does not immediately become apparent. Eight lines into this section of the poem Defoe states that Satan reigned with 'a general Aristocracy' (63) but the implications of this information do not become clear for another twenty or so lines: the 'proper Sins' which conquered the nations of Europe were, in fact, members of Satan's nobility. The reader, it becomes clear, is about to witness the destruction of one of the most celebrated icons of Country Whig philosophy, namely that of the 'honest and brave' Barons. Defoe's equivalent of Fletcher's mythical nobility is a personification of the Country Whig notion of luxury: 'Pride, the First Peer' (82) rules the largest province of Europe, Spain, with Mexican gold and Peruvian silver, or, to use Fletcher's phrase, with '*the Luxury of Asia and America*'.⁸⁷ Thus, Defoe's version of the ancient nobility swiftly and efficiently subdues all of Europe and beyond, as the devil-peer Lust reigns over Italy, Drunkenness over Germany, 'Ungovern'd Passion' (117) over France and so on. There was no surprise with regard to which of Defoe's hellish Barons had conquered England: *Ingratitude*, a Devil of *Black Renown*, / Possess'd her very early for his own' (159-60). From the start of the controversy, one of Defoe's main complaints had been the blatant lack of gratitude evident in the Country opposition's 'Scurrilous Reflections' on William:⁸⁸ 'To me it seems one of the most impudent Actions that ever was suffered in this Age,' Defoe protested bitterly, 'that a Private Person shou'd thus attack the King, after all that he has done for the Preservation of our Liberties and the Establishing of our Peace'.⁸⁹ Satan had indeed found the appropriate devil for England's 'natural propension'.

Defoe's account of ancient European history was not, of course, merely a humorous parody of the mythical Gothic invasion and the radical Whigs' strong tendency to idealise ages past but contained an important political message: Gothic government did not, as Fletcher and the Country Whigs had suggested, bring freedom

⁸⁷ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 12

⁸⁸ Defoe, *A Brief Reply*, 84

⁸⁹ Defoe, *Some Reflections*, 58

and virtue to the nations of Europe. Rather, the period was characterised by absolute forms of government, Defoe's Satan 'rules with Arbitrary Sway' (124), and a conspicuous absence of an exalted, morally superior nobility. After all, it was the self-centred Barons, as Defoe had commented in one of his pro-army pamphlets, who 'took care to maintain their own Tyranny' over the people.⁹⁰ Indeed, it was in this context that an early couplet of *The True-Born Englishman* developed its full polemical force. The satanic cohort, Defoe had told his Country Whig readers, 'outdoes your *Caesars*, or your *Alexanders*' (73). The anti-army opposition's main contention had, of course, been that any monarch with a standing army in his hands would inevitably become a tyrant, like the dictatorial Caesar or the all-conquering Alexander. Defoe, the quotation shows, continued to disagree: the real threat, he seemed to be suggesting, lay with the corrupt nobility.

Interestingly, critics have highlighted the Miltonic overtones evident in Defoe's version of the Gothic invasion. Backscheider, in particular, has asserted that the 'influence of Milton is not hard to see in Defoe's poem', but she does not attempt to explain why Defoe might, to use the eighteenth-century term, have dressed his argument in this manner.⁹¹ Again, the Standing Army Controversy may hold the answer to this question. The fact that Milton was one of the seventeenth-century poets Defoe admired and naturally attempted to imitate in his efforts to establish himself as a poet is, of course, a plausible enough explanation for the similarities between *Paradise Lost*'s 'incestuous triumvirate' of 'Satan, Sin, and Death' and *The True-Born Englishman*'s equivalent of 'England, Ingratitude, and the first children'.⁹² Indeed, as Backscheider points out, the use of devils to attack one's adversaries had been a popular polemical tool in seventeenth-century political writing.⁹³ This, however, neglects that the fact that Milton's political prose writings, which had variously defended the commonwealth established after Charles I's execution, had made him one of the icons of Restoration republicanism.⁹⁴ Milton was alleged to have

⁹⁰ Defoe, *An Argument*, 73

⁹¹ Backscheider, 75

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid, 54

⁹⁴ Robbins, *Two English Republican Tracts*, 40-41

been one of the founding members of the republican 'Calves-Head' club, which, in the 1690s, was attended by the anti-army pamphleteers Johnson and Toland, as well as the author of *The Foreigners*, John Tutchin.⁹⁵ The influence of Milton on these radical Whigs was clearly discernable. Toland, in particular, had plagiarised Milton's political writings of the Interregnum in his anti-army publications and, as part of the Country campaign, he had published a three volume edition entitled *Milton's Historical and Political Works* in 1697, as well as a biography of the poet in the following year.⁹⁶ To frame an inversion of radical Whig historiography in the manner of one of their most prominent voices would have meant adding insult to injury - a ploy which does not seem beyond Defoe.

Once the conquest of England by the devil-peer Ingratituted is complete, Defoe, in an effort to address contemporary xenophobic sentiments, redirects his focus away from the mythical origins of European governments to an investigation of English genealogy. Not only do the Miltonic echoes subside from this point onwards but, by shifting the time-frame to the comparatively more recent historical event of the 'Invading Norman' (195), Defoe began to engage more directly with Tutchin's *The Foreigners*, without ever losing sight of Fletcher's idealised picture of the ancient Barons. Tutchin, as has already been noted, had done little more than produce an, admittedly highly polemical, versification of anti-army arguments and attitudes. Beside propagating xenophobic and republican sentiments, Tutchin, once again reflecting radical Whig ideology, decided to end his poem with 'an exhortation to the English nobility to resume their ancient honours'.⁹⁷ He urged the modern nobility: 'Ancient Courage reassume, And to assert your Honours once presume'.⁹⁸ Samuel Johnson, one of Tutchin's co-attendees of the Calves-Head Club, had envisaged that England's ancient honour would be reclaimed by the 'Barons with Sword in hand'. Tutchin similarly challenged the nobility to use much overdue aggression against the

⁹⁵ Ellis, *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 228; Worden, 'Introduction', 19

⁹⁶ Worden, 'Introduction', 20, 26-27, 71-72

⁹⁷ Ellis, *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 225

⁹⁸ Tutchin, *Foreigners*, 246

foreign usurpers: 'From off their Heads your ravish'd Laurels tear, / And let them know what *Jewish* Nobels are.'⁹⁹

At the core of Tutchin's anger against foreigners, especially William's Dutch courtiers who had been rewarded for their services with peerages, land grants, or governmental positions, was the idea that their 'mean Descent' undermined the natural superiority of the English nobility. Like Fletcher before him, Tutchin resorted to the metaphor of disease to illustrate his point:

A Boorish, rude, and inhumane Race;
From Nature's Excrement their Life is drawn,
Are born in Bogs, and nourish'd up from Spawn...
These are the Vermin do our State molest;
Eclipse our Glory, and disturb our Rest.¹⁰⁰

However, while Tutchin's poem was almost exclusively concerned with the greatness of the 'Jewish' nobility, Fletcher had in fact extended the notion of English superiority to the entire nation:

*England... has a Commonalty, not only surpassing all those of that degree which the World can now boast of, but also those of all former Ages, in Courage, Honesty, good Sense, Industry, and Generosity of Temper; in whose very Looks there are such visible Marks of a free and liberal Education; which Advantages cannot be imputed to the Climate, or to any other Cause, but the Freedom of the Government under which they live*¹⁰¹

In *The True-Born Englishman* Defoe answered both Fletcher and Tutchin. English genealogy, he contended, demonstrated anything but purity: 'A *Turkish* Horse can show more History, to Prove his Well-Descended Family' (227-228). Virtually every invader and visitor had left his mark on the history of the English family: '*Norwegian* Pirates' (239), '*Buccaneering Danes*' (241), '*French* Cooks, *Scotch* Pedlars, and *Italian* Whores' (312), to name but a few, had all contributed to the creation of 'the most Scoundrel Race that ever liv'd' (236). In an attempt to further undermine notions of English moral superiority, while at the same time emphasising the greater sexual potency of foreign invaders and immigrants, Defoe pointed out that England's 'Rank

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 236

¹⁰¹ Fletcher, *Discourse of Government*, 64-65

Daughters, to their Parents just, / Receiv'd all Nations with Promiscuous Lust' (344-345).¹⁰²

Pointing his finger at Country Whig historiography, Defoe acknowledged that the early invaders 'canton'd out the Country' (207) to the leading officers and, making 'evr'y Soldier... a Denizen' (208), established a militia. Then, inverting the glorified image of the ancient Barons, Defoe declared the English nobility could not boast a pure lineage but did, in fact, arise from the common 'Crowd of Rambling Thieves and Drones' (237) he had already described. The idea that every English Baron derived from 'Beggars and Bastards' is a constant chorus in the second half of Part I. At every turn, Defoe claimed that the peerage were merely 'Rascals...enrich'd'(208) and that the 'True-born *English* Fry...Illustrates our Nobility' (293-294). The final thought of Part I represented the exact opposite of the Country Whigs' appeal to history, which was designed to demonstrate the 'ancient' nature of the English constitution and national character: '*England*, Modern to the last degree, Borrows or makes her own Nobility' (404-405). Misguided claims to 'Antiquity and Honour' (408), the reader had been shown in an impressive dismantling of radical Whig historiography, had no place in contemporary politics. Citing Juvenal in the final line of *The True-Born Englishman*, Defoe insisted that '*'Tis Personal Virtue only makes us great*'.¹⁰³ In this final twist of the knife, Defoe had transferred one of the key concepts of Country Whig ideology, civic virtue, into his ownership.

Having addressed radical Whig historiography in the first part of the poem, Part II of Defoe's verse satire focused on the republican tendencies evident in many of the anti-army publications and, indeed, in Tutchin's *The Foreigners*. Typically, Tutchin had described the execution of Charles I as a 'Glorious Feat' and claimed that 'If Kings are made the People to enthral, / We had much better have no King at all'.¹⁰⁴ That it was, in fact, the radical Whigs Defoe was targeting may be gleaned from the early lines of this section, which contained a caricature of the 'Good Drunken

¹⁰² For a detailed discussion of Defoe's gendered understanding of English national identity see Adams, 'Daniel Defoe and the Blooding of Britain', 9

¹⁰³ Defoe uses the same notion in Part I, line 386.

¹⁰⁴ Tutchin, *Foreigners*, 230, 242

Company' (455) the English were able to offer. 'Empty of all good Husbandry and Sense' (459), the entire nation was 'seldom...good-natur'd, *but in Drink*' (464). This behaviour, Defoe proceeded to launch his assault on the radical Whigs, was not restricted to the poor:

The Sages join in this great Sacrifice.
The learned Men who study *Aristotle*,
Correct him with an Explanation Bottle;
Praise *Epicurus* rather than *Lysander*,
And *Aristippus* more than *Alexander* (480-484)

It was, of course, during 'great feasts' and hours of copious drinking in the Calves-Head tavern that the Country Whigs 'explained' and refined their ideological viewpoints.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the discussion of classical Greek and Roman examples, as the anti-army campaign had demonstrated, had been an integral part of this process. Given that the anti-army campaign rested on this "tavern" philosophy, it was wholly appropriate that in Defoe's account of these conversations, the speakers value the Greek philosophers Epicurus and Aristippus, who 'taught that pleasure was the highest good', above the two military men, Lysander and Alexander.¹⁰⁶ The fact that it was during alcohol-soaked debates that these 'Statesmen their weighty Politics refine' (499) had obvious consequences for the coherence and viability of their ideas: 'Th' Enlight'ning Fumes of Wine would certainly', Defoe concluded, 'Assist them much *When they begin to fly*' (511-512).

After inviting the reader to read 'Country Whig' for 'Englishman', the poem returns to the theme of ingratitude, which functions as a bridging device between the licentiousness of the Country Whigs' drunken behaviour and that of their republican politics. The 'unconstant Temper' (561) of the '*English Drunkards*' (519) had made them 'Ill-natur'd and Uncivil' (539). 'Resolv'd to be ungrateful and unkind' (543), Defoe continued, they regularly failed to show due gratitude to those who had assisted them. In fact, the reverse was true: they '*never love, where they accept Relief*' (549) and worse, 'they'll abuse their Benefactors too' (553). What is particularly noticeable

¹⁰⁵ See Ellis, *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 228, for information on the politically inspired social gatherings held at the Calves-Head Tavern.

¹⁰⁶ *Satire* Vol.1, 463n

here is the sense that the Country Whigs' ingratitude was unnatural. Instances of charity become acts of aggression in *The True-Born Englishman*, since Englishmen 'hate to see themselves oblig'd too much' (555). The natural ties generated by another's kind actions appeared like shackles to an Englishman and, consequently, he regarded 'Obligation' to be the 'highest Grief' (548). Unsurprisingly, 'Friendship, th' abstract Union of the Mind' (572) was least understood in England.

As the poem progresses through its lines, Defoe's attack on Country Whig ideology becomes more focused. His next stops are the anti-monarchical, or republican, sentiments of the radical Whigs. English inability to show gratitude to a benefactor is transposed onto the Country Whigs' failure to honour their obligations to a government they themselves had helped to establish. After initially celebrating William for rescuing the nation from popish slavery, the mood amongst the 'Shamwhigs' changed drastically.¹⁰⁷

...glutted with their own Felicities,
They soon their New Deliverer despise;
Say all their Prayers back, their Joy disown,
Unsing their Thanks, and pull their Trophies down (697-700).

The root cause for this "political" ingratitude was a basic flaw in the character of the English, who were still being represented by the radical Whigs:

Obedience is a Stranger in the Land:
Hardly subjected to the Magistrate;
For Englishmen do all Subjection hate. (619-621)

Some fifty lines later this notion is developed further:

Their Governors they count such dangerous things,
That 'tis their custom to affront their Kings:
So jealous of the Power their King possess'd,
They suffer neither Power nor Kings to rest. (666-696)

Defoe's strategy for undermining Country Whig ideology becomes increasingly more apparent here. By situating the Country Whigs' preferred format of anti-monarchical

¹⁰⁷ Defoe used the term specifically for Tutchin (ll.624). However, given that Defoe repeated the accusations he had levelled against the radical Whigs as a whole in his section on Tutchin, the label 'Shamwhig' appears equally applicable to and appropriate for Tutchin's associates.

government in the immediate proximity of a lawless society, Defoe equates republicanism with the anarchical first state of nature. This association reappeared in several lines of Part II:

Their Liberty and Property's so dear,
They scorn their Laws or Governors to fear:
So bugbear'd with the Name of Slavery,
They can't submit to their own Liberty. (658-661)

It is important to remember that Defoe considered 'Government prescrib'd by Laws, Compacts and Agreements' to be a natural necessity, since it protected the 'Publick Safety'.¹⁰⁸ Importantly, it was not God who 'instructed man to adopt patriarchal kingship, or indeed any specific form of government', but, through the voice of reason, '*Nature directed Rules of Politie*'.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the idea that the '*Mob are Statesmen*' (665) not only contradicted the dictates of nature but, since it ignore the divinely instilled voice of reason, it was an act of disobedience towards God. In *The True-Born Englishman*, Defoe summed up this idea in a single line, which, incidentally, he reproduced from the preface to *A Brief Reply to the History of Standing Armies in England*: '*And did King Jesus reign, they'd murmur too*' (672). Unnatural and ungodly, republican governments made the people 'Apt to revolt, and willing to rebel' (677) and were therefore no viable alternative to monarchy.

Defoe then highlighted a curious paradox in the radical Whigs' anti-army propaganda. The Country opposition, as we have seen, had argued that the nation's laws could never control a king with a standing army. Not even William, who had re-established the rule of law and who was, after all, the king of their own choice, ought to be trusted. Perversely, the anti-army writers were now trying to keep the very 'Magistrate in Awe' (655) who had protected the nation's liberties. In this context, Defoe once again turned the tables on the radical Whigs by reminding them that '*Restraint from Ill is Freedom to the Wise*' (662). This was, of course, exactly the idea advanced by the anti-army writers when they claimed that even a good king like William should not be led into temptation by allowing him to maintain standing

¹⁰⁸ Defoe argued this most extensively in Book II of *Jure Divino* (1706), *Satire*, Vol.2, 104n. Also see Furbank's introductory comments on this book (Ibid, 6).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 6, 108 (Book II, 1. 198)

forces.¹¹⁰ Yet, it was not the king but Englishmen who '*all Restraint despise*' (663). While William had heeded every single act for disbandment parliament had passed, the Country Whigs had never stopped to pursue the king with their 'constant Clamours' (671).

Indeed, these lines represented the core of Defoe's complaints against the anti-army campaign. The present example of the country Whigs' tendency to 'affront their Kings' (667) was nothing short of treasonable behaviour. It was the failure to obey a lawful king which Defoe viewed as the downfall of the English nation, whose inhabitants '*never are contented when they're well*' (678). In order to circumscribe the power of kings, Defoe had included a lengthy section which reasserted the importance of the '*Mutual Contract*' (802) between king and subjects. Lawless, arbitrary power, Defoe exclaimed, 'makes the *Tyrant*, and unmakes the *King*' (778). The 'Good of subjects is the End of Kings' (774) and, if a monarch subverted the law and invaded the subjects' rights, then the '*punishing of Kings is no ...Crime*' (769). Moreover, the 'End of Kings', if "end" is understood in the sense of "aim", Defoe argued is 'To guide in War, and protect in Peace' (775).

William had done exactly that: he had led the nation in the war with France and secured a favourable outcome with the Treaty of Ryswick. Once the peace had been concluded, the king had wanted to maintain a standing force to protect the country from the very real threat of a French invasion. Why, then, had the anti-army writers attacked the king so viciously? Had the 'good of subjects' which William had been pursuing actually been his literal 'end'? The answer was that, while the country Whigs subscribed to a contract theory based on the right of resistance and self-defence, they had failed to extend this right to the entire nation. Their mistake was one of scale. God had equipped humans with a brain and the faculty of reason, which taught the natural body that it had to defend itself from harm. Defoe naturally readily agreed: 'No man was ever yet so void of Sense, / As to debate the Right of Self-Defence' (828-829). Significantly, however, Defoe, unlike the anti-army writers, extended this right to the body politic: 'Nor can this Right be less when National; / Reason which governs one, should govern all' (834-835). Thus, in his capacity as

¹¹⁰ See Chapter I, 45

head of state, the king had the right, and indeed the duty, to protect the body politic. Yet, what tools did a king have to stake his claim to this basic right other than a standing army? How could the king defend himself against what Defoe had called the tyranny of 'Three Hundred'? The anti-army writers had in fact attempted to deny William one of the fundamental rights of all those in society and, just as a monarch became a tyrant when he subverted the law, so subjects who denied a lawful king the right of self-defence became traitorous rebels:

By Force to circumscribe our Lawful Prince,
Is wilful Treason in the largest sense:
And they who once rebel, most certainly
Their God, and King, and former Oaths defy. (784-787)

At this point in the poem the inversion of the anti-army arguments is complete. The anti-army writers had declared a king with a standing army unconstitutional. Article VI of the Bill of Rights, however, had established that a standing army in time of peace with parliamentary consent was legal.¹¹¹ This was all Defoe and the other pro-army writers had demanded. At no point during the controversy had William attempted to over-rule or dissolve parliament, thus breaking the oath he had made to the English nation. It was not the king's attempt to retain an army sanctioned and paid for by parliament which was unconstitutional, but the Country Whigs' attempt to harass a monarch who was acting in an entirely legal fashion. It was, Defoe pointed out, the anti-army writers who were defying their original oath of allegiance and who, instead of the king, should be treated as a danger to the safety of the nation.

If, as this chapter has argued, *The True-Born Englishman* is first and foremost an attack on Country Whig historiography and the republican sentiments of the anti-army campaign, then the purpose of the inclusion of the satirical portrait of Sir Charles Duncombe in Part II of the poem needs to be explained. The section circulated in manuscript in 1699 and Ellis has suggested that it was so important to Defoe that he 'built *The True-Born Englishman* around it'.¹¹² The centrality of the section, Ellis explains, only becomes obvious in the context of the main purpose of Defoe's verse satire, which was 'nothing less than a reformation of the English

¹¹¹ See Schwoerer, *Antiarmy Ideology*, 151

¹¹² Ellis, *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.6, 262

character, the cultivation of a new way of feeling and behaving.' To this end, Duncombe, Ellis suggests, represented the perfect case-study: he 'provides an example of ingratitude that is indispensable to Defoe's strategy.'¹¹³

Although Ellis' reading of the section as an example of ingratitude is certainly valid, it only represents a partial account of the purpose of using Duncombe as a negative example, as shall become obvious. Defoe himself offered the reader a hint with regard to the function of the Duncombe portrait. At the end of his inversion of the myth of the ancient nobility, Defoe included the following three lines:

Your Houblons, Papillons, and Lethuliers,
Pass now for True-Born *English* Knights and Squires,
And make good Senate-Members, or Lord-Mayors. (412-414)

Here, besides reiterating the fact that almost all Englishmen had foreign ancestors, Defoe was clearly establishing a link between the nation's present knights and squires and the Country opposition's mythical Barons. These modern Barons, despite their mean ancestry, now held public office. Whether or not this 'nobility' made good Members of Parliament or Lord-Mayors the reader could decide for himself – Duncombe was an example of a modern Baron.

Duncombe, Defoe suggested, was a '*True-Born Englishman In all the Latitude / that Empty Word By Modern Acceptation's understood*' (1049-1051). Indeed, the man who had risen from a lowly background to become an immensely rich goldsmith and banker, Member of Parliament, Knight of the Realm, and eventually, High-Sheriff of London in 1699, was a perfect illustration of the nobility which the Country Whigs had promoted as the saviours of the nation. Defoe's picture of Duncombe strongly echoed that of the ancient Barons: An '*Exalted Beggar*' (1069) who was 'first a *Knave*, and then a *Knight*', Duncombe's ruthless ambition led him to steal 'from Kings' (1057) and pursue the 'Old Game' (1145), or exploit his official position for private ends. The sense that Duncombe lacked all virtue, was thoroughly corrupt and built up his fortune at the expense of others is inescapable in Defoe's caricature. The fact that Duncombe also functions as an example of English ingratitude only reinforces this image but considered in its context, this remains merely one

¹¹³ Ibid

unsavoury of many aspects of the character of this 'Modern Magistrate' (1046). The real value of including this section in *The True-Born Englishman* lay in its function as a further inversion of the Country Whigs' idea of a virtuous nobility.

It has become apparent, then, that *The True-Born Englishman* represented Defoe's final and eclectic attack on the Country Whig ideology which had informed the anti-army campaign of the late 1690s. In his verse satire, Defoe consistently engaged with some of the major texts published by the radical Whig opposition, most notably Fletcher's *Discourse Concerning Militias*, satirically inverting the imagery, symbolism and terminology employed in these tracts. The end-product was a text which represented the most thorough dismantling of the radical Whig myth of the superiority of the ancient nobility.

Chapter III

**‘The Scepter of our Minds’: Religious Dissent and
*Jure Divino.***

If Defoe's attention was largely taken up by arguments with fellow Whigs in the 1690s and the early days of the new century, the accession of Anne Stuart to the throne of England in 1702 and the correlated revival of High-Church and Tory interests forced him into a sharp re-adjustment of his focus from the radical left to the extreme right of the political spectrum. In other words, the public sphere began to be dominated by the voices of the conservative Tories rather than those of the anti-clerical commonwealth Whigs. Growing in confidence, High Church Tories not only began to restate in a highly vocal fashion conservative political theories, especially the doctrines of divine right and non-resistance, but also became preoccupied with the issue of religious dissent, which was allegedly putting the 'Church in Danger'. In this context, special attention was given to the High Church bugbear of the Nonconformist practice of Occasional Conformity, which, in fact, became one of the 'most bitterly contested of all the battlegrounds of the political parties' in the early eighteenth-century.¹ The so-called Occasional Conformity controversy which exploded around the issue and the three Tory attempts between 1702-1704 to outlaw the practice 'at once enunciated and crystallized the ideological differences' between Tories and Whigs on the issue.²

As a Presbyterian Dissenter himself, Defoe naturally took an interest in the controversy surrounding Occasional Conformity and the legality of religious dissent and, in fact, he became one of the main and best known contributors to the debate.³ Even in the context of Furbank and Owens' revised bibliography, Defoe's contribution was still formidable: during the three years of the parliamentary struggle over Occasional Conformity, he published at least eighteen pamphlets which engaged directly with the controversy.⁴ If one also takes into consideration those tracts which

¹ Holmes, 99

² John Flaningam, 'The Occasional Conformity Controversy: Ideology and Party Politics, 1697-1711,' *Journal of British Studies* 17 (1977), 38

³ Flaningam even regards Defoe as having provided the 'spark (though hardly the cause) that eventually ignited the controversy' with one of his early pamphlets. ['The Occasional Conformity Controversy', 44]. However, Holmes' account of the beginning of the controversy appears more plausible. See below, 114ff

⁴ *Critical Bibliography*, 35-67. The first pamphlet of this period was *A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty* (circa June 1702), the last *Party-Tyranny: or, an Occasional Bill in Miniature* (circa December 1705). The best known of Defoe's

only fleetingly referred to the controversy and the pamphlets which largely focused on High-Church political theory, this figure quickly rises to well over twenty pamphlets.⁵ The relationship between civil and religious matters constituted, as one may glean from the above figures, one of the most important issue for Defoe during the first half of the reign of Queen Anne.

It is important to remember that the debate surrounding religious dissent did not cease with the Lords' rejection of the third Occasional bill in 1704. Rather, the fundamental issues the controversy had raised – the legality of Nonconformity and the exact nature of the English monarchy - remained in the public domain far beyond the early years of the eighteenth century. Indeed, a year after the trial of the leading High-Church cleric, Henry Sacheverell, a new Occasional Conformity bill was proposed and eventually passed into law by both Houses in 1711.⁶ Despite the fact that from 1706 Defoe's time was largely taken up by his government-sponsored campaign in favour of a union of the English and Scottish monarchies, he too returned to the issues raised by the Occasional Conformity controversy, most notably in *Jure Divino*. In fact, Defoe unambiguously linked his poem with the High Church campaign by declaring that it would have 'never been Publish'd' had the nation not fallen prey to the political principles of the Tories once again.⁷

Scholars have taken Defoe's *raison d'être* for *Jure Divino* as a point of departure for their evaluations of the poem and, as a result, critical accounts have largely been preoccupied with the political ideology underpinning the poem and, inevitably, focus on the seventeenth-century influences on its ideological content.⁸

'Dissent' pamphlets was, of course, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), which, beside a good deal of notoriety, earned Defoe a spell in Newgate prison and drew attacks from all sides, including the Dissenters.

⁵ Two pamphlets are of a particular interest here: *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England* (1702) and *Some Remarks on the First Chapter in Dr. Davenant's Essays* (1703).

⁶ Holmes, 99, 113

⁷ Daniel Defoe, *Jure Divino* (1706), *Satire* Vol.2, 35. Future page-, and where appropriate line-, references to *Jure Divino* are to this edition and included in parentheses in the text.

⁸ See, for example, Paula R. Backscheider, 'The Verse Essay, John Locke, and Defoe's *Jure Divino*,' *Journal of English Literary History* 55:1 (1988), 119-120; Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, esp. Chs. 4 & 5; Michael Austin, 'Saul and the Social Contract:

Curiously, despite the fact that Defoe discussed the 'Toleration of Orthodox Churches' and 'Church-Tyranny' at length in the Preface of *Jure Divino*, and in the process clearly highlighted the Occasional Conformity Controversy as an important context for his poem, this facet of the work has hitherto been ignored.⁹

An exception to the above-mentioned practice of viewing *Jure Divino* exclusively in a seventeenth-century context is an article by D.N. DeLuna, which anchors the poem in its immediate literary context. DeLuna successfully shows that *Jure Divino* was, in fact, 'a covert response to Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1702-4)' and as such it constituted a 'Whig missive aiming to counter the propaganda of the new High Church Tory initiative'.¹⁰ Defoe attacks Clarendon's 'expression of a politically conservative ideology' by subverting 'its aesthetic and intellectual authority' and representing the Tories as 'disruptive forces who continually threaten the nation's happily restored constitutional government'. Thus, Defoe was attacking classic Tory doctrines on a general level by satirising a specific, 'politically conservative literary monument'. '[S]o crucial is this dimension of the poem', DeLuna asserts, 'that missing it means misunderstanding the nature of Defoe's literary undertaking'.¹¹

The present chapter takes DeLuna's approach one step further by arguing that the entire Occasional Conformity controversy, rather than merely Clarendon's *History*, is central for our understanding of Defoe's rhetorical strategy in *Jure Divino*. The language and themes used by Defoe serve as a constant reminder of where the origins of the verse satire lay. In particular, the emphasis Defoe placed on the theme of 'reason' - the poem was after all dedicated to 'Lady Reason' (33) - and the link he established between reason and 'liberty of conscience' directly engaged with High-Church rhetoric against Nonconformity. *Jure Divino*'s preoccupation with the sanctity

Constructions of 1 Samuel 8-11 in Cowley's *Davideis* and Defoe's *Jure Divino*,
Papers on Language and Literature 32:4 (1996), 430. The most extensive study of
this kind is Maximillian E. Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man* (Oxford, 1963).

⁹ See *Jure Divino*, 53-62

¹⁰ D.N. DeLuna, 'Jure Divino: Defoe's "whole Volume in Folio, by Way of Answer to, and Confutation of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion",
Philological Quarterly 75:1 (1996), 43-7

¹¹ *Ibid*, 46, 51, 55

of the freedom of the mind of *every* individual related the larger questions posed by Filmer's absolutist theory to the very specific social, religious and political issue of Dissent. In the process, Defoe transcended the expediencies of eighteenth-century party politics and offered his readers a comprehensive theory for the justification of the legality of religious Nonconformity.

In an important sense, the Glorious Revolution caused more problems for the Church of England than it resolved. The events of 1689 might have saved the established Church, and indeed the entire nation, from the popery of James II but, crucially, the invasion of William of Orange did not bring with it a reversal of the damage the Stuart king had inflicted on the Church. In fact, contrary to its intended purpose, the invitation given to William by the 'Immortal Seven' Anglican Archbishops asking him to intervene in English affairs represented a significant step towards the end of the Church's traditional role in English social and political matters. In this context, it is important to remember the great extent to which the Restoration Church had influenced almost every aspect of English life. Legal and moral issues were inevitably referred for judgement to the Anglican clergy or the Church courts: whether it was the appointment of local officials or censoring the most intimate aspects of the lives of the parishioners, it had been 'impossible to ignore the influence of the Church or avoid its authority'.¹²

Neither had the Church of England been any less important in the political sphere. The Church was, in fact, widely held to be the 'bearer of the nation's traditions', and Churchmen and politicians, in particular the early Tories who soon became known as the 'Church party', agreed that she supplied the 'religious foundation for England's "fair and beautiful constitution"' and "'the finest government under heaven"'.¹³ With the monarch at its head, its bishops in the House of Lords and the law expressly privileging communing Anglicans, the Church was not merely 'the religious arm of the State', but rather offered a 'framework of loyalty and allegiance'.¹⁴ It was the Anglican Church only, Tories of all colours believed, which

¹² G.V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730* (Oxford, 1975), 3-10

¹³ D. Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland from the Glorious Revolution to the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge, 1996), 12-13

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 15

accurately interpreted the scriptures and the patristic writings. In an age of biblical literalism this meant that the Church was the ultimate authority with regard to the theory and practice of governing. Under the precept that membership ought to encompass the entire nation, the Church and its teachings offered a national way of life which provided a barrier against disorder and licentiousness and maintained the social hierarchy; it was the 'symbol and guarantor of a unitary state'.¹⁵ And, by extension, few Anglican Tories doubted that the fate of Church and state were inextricably linked.

Just as the Tories considered the Church of England to be an important pillar of the social and political establishment, so Churchmen were, by implication, overwhelmingly Tory in their political views. In their self-imposed function of religious arm of the state, the vast majority of Church divines 'accepted without hesitation their roles as servants of an absolute monarch and as advocates of an authoritarian view of society'.¹⁶ The Anglican Church, in fact, became the 'principal institution defending the political doctrines so dear to the Tories' – the divine right of kings, non-resistance and passive obedience. In the eyes of Churchmen, a belief in these doctrines represented 'an affirmation of allegiance and Anglican religious identity'.¹⁷ Importantly, the Tory ideology of order was applied to every strata of English society: with the obedience to absolute kings, Churchmen believed, 'went reverence and submission to parsons and squires, to fathers and employers'.¹⁸ In return for the clergy's willingness to preach the duty of obedience, the Crown safeguarded the privileged position of the Church. At the Restoration, the Cavalier Parliament had re-established the Church of England as the most important institution in the land by introducing the so-called Clarendon Code, which incorporated a range of anti-nonconformist legislation.¹⁹ The Corporation Act (1661), for example, obliged

¹⁵ J. Walsh & S. Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the "long" eighteenth century,' in J. Walsh, C. Haydon & S. Taylor (eds) *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833* (Cambridge, 1993), 46. Also Hempton, *Religion and Political Culture*, 13.

¹⁶ Dickinson, 19

¹⁷ J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, social structure and political practice during the ancien regime* (Cambridge, 1985), 124

¹⁸ Dickinson, 21, 53

¹⁹ Harris, 40-41; also Dickinson, 19-21

persons holding municipal office to qualify by taking Anglican communion, while the Conventicle Act (1664) penalised all religious meetings outside the Church. The position of the Church was further cemented in 1673 with the Test Act, which extended the Corporation Act by requiring all office holders to receive communion according to Anglican rites at least once a year.²⁰

However, in 1687 James' Declaration of Indulgence turned on its head the powerful position enjoyed by the Church. Designed to advance the fortunes of English Catholicism, the Declaration had decreed a suspension of all penal laws for the non-attendance of Anglican church services or, indeed, dissenting from the Church altogether. In addition, the king overturned the sacramental tests which had allowed only communing Anglicans to hold municipal office and began to 'purge corporations and commissions of peace, replacing Tory Anglicans with Catholics, Dissenters and former Whigs'.²¹ James had thus deprived the Church of the power and control which it had been accustomed to exert over the nation. Somewhat ironically, he hoped that the Anglican doctrine of passive obedience would induce Churchmen to support the very measures which were designed to have an 'immediate and catastrophic' effect on their social, religious and political status.²² James' hopes, however, were disappointed and he faced a concerted, largely High Church inspired, Anglican campaign of civil disobedience in response to his vehement attacks on the privileged position of the Church.²³ In the end, the Church's act of resistance was rewarded by James' enforced removal from the kingdom. The Glorious Revolution had, it seemed, paved the way for a reassertion of Anglican supremacy.

From a political point of view the Anglican Tories could indeed view with satisfaction the outcome of the Revolution settlement. The Declaration of Rights met virtually all of the demands which the Seven Bishops had made of James. This central document of the Revolution declared as illegal the royal use of the suspending power and dispensing power, it upheld the right of subjects to petition the Crown, and it abolished the Commission for Ecclesiastical Causes, which had invested seven pro-

²⁰ Harris, 39, 41, 56-57

²¹ Ibid, 126; Rose, 2

²² Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 9

²³ Harris, 128

Catholic commissioners with sweeping disciplinary powers.²⁴ Similarly, the settlement in the Church represented, on paper at least, a victory for the Anglicans: a generous bill for the comprehension of Protestant Dissenters and a proposal for the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts were overwhelmingly defeated in the House of Lords and only the Toleration Bill went on to become law. A legal toleration had been the lure used by the Tories to win Nonconformist support against James' anti-Anglican measures and the Act of 1689 was the Dissenters' rather modest reward.²⁵ Just how grudgingly concessions were made is shown by the strictly limited nature of the new legislation: the Dissenters were not actually granted a state of toleration by the Toleration Act and penal statutes were only suspended rather than repealed. Moreover, the Act maintained the validity of the Test and Corporation Acts, thus still restricting full participation in civil life to communing Anglicans, and reiterated the old laws about church attendance for those who did not resort to a meeting-house.²⁶

In reality, however, the Revolution settlement emerged to be little more than a paper victory for the Church. Despite its limitations, the Toleration Act did grant the Dissenters the protection of the law and, as a consequence, Nonconformity saw a remarkable period of growth during the 1690s. In the first year alone of the Act's operation almost 1,200 temporary and permanent meeting-houses were licensed, while the Dissenting academies underwent an equally 'extraordinary expansion'.²⁷ Churchgoing, in contrast, began to decrease steadily after the Revolution. Indeed, many members of the Church mistakenly, or perhaps deliberately, interpreted the Toleration Act as having made church attendance voluntary and instead resorted to

²⁴ Ibid, 137; *Oxford Companion to British History*, 320-21

²⁵ Holmes, 62

²⁶ Geoffrey Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679-1742* (London & Ronceverte, 1986), 191-92; Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 11; Walsh, & Taylor, 'Introduction', 16

²⁷ Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 13; Holmes has urged caution with regard to the number of new dissenting academies which were set up after the Revolution. He suggests that only ten academies were established in the twenty-year period after 1689 but that these institutions were highly successful and, significantly, operated more publicly than before (*Politics, Religion and Society*, 194). Also see Hayton, *Commons*, 464

the local alehouse.²⁸ An even greater concern for the Anglicans, however, was the Dissenters' practice of Occasional Conformity. In an effort to qualify themselves for municipal and national office, an increasing number of Dissenters began to take annual communion in an Anglican Church, thus satisfying the requirements of the Test Act. Occasional Conformity was not a new phenomenon, having in fact been practised since the Restoration, but the Nonconformists' evasion of the law in combination with the rise to power of the largely anti-clerical and pro-Dissent Whigs in the mid-1690s meant that it 'took on a thoroughly sinister appearance' in the eyes of Anglican Tories.²⁹

Conforming occasionally had indeed enabled the Dissenters to get a grip on many corporations and increased their political power significantly. As local councillors, the Nonconformists were able to strongly influence parliamentary elections in the interest of their Whig allies and perpetuate their hold on office by co-optation. The confidence with which dissenting office holders displayed their occasional taking of the Anglican communion added insult to High Church injury. In a famous incident of 1697, the Presbyterian Lord Mayor of London, Sir Humphrey Edwin, demonstrated his flagrant contempt for the law by taking communion at St Paul's, only to then attend a Dissenting service in full mayoral regalia the same afternoon.³⁰ By the end of the 1690s, the Dissenters had become a 'political bloc of considerable political weight' which seemed to be endangering the Church by legally, openly and at times arrogantly usurping both its theological and political authority.³¹

Indicative of the eclipse of the more extreme Anglican voices was the Church's failure to make Occasional Conformity a political issue during the 1690s. Even the scandalous actions of the Lord Mayor, while predictably generating an outcry among Anglican Tories, did not lead to a concerted campaign against religious Nonconformity. Tellingly, it was the Presbyterian Dissenter Defoe who wrote the 'first major polemic of the post-Revolution period on Occasional Conformity'.³² As a

²⁸ Walsh, & Taylor, 'Introduction', 17

²⁹ Rose, 177

³⁰ Holmes, 100; also Flaningam, 'The Occasional Conformity Controversy', 40

³¹ Flaningam, 'Occasional Conformity Controversy', 39

³² Ibid, 43

sincere Dissenter, Defoe actually shared the outrage felt by the Churchmen, albeit for different reasons. In *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters, in Case of Preferment*, a pamphlet published in response to Edwin's highly public occasional conformity, Defoe fulminated against the practice, describing it as 'the vilest Act of Perfidy in the World'.³³ Conforming occasionally meant betraying both God and one's co-religionists. 'To say a man can be of two Religions, is a Contradiction, unless there be two Gods to worship, or he has two Souls to save.' Believing in God and serving God, Defoe asserted with some vigour, were 'one and the same thing perfectly indivisible and inseparable; there is no Neuter Gender, no Ambiguous Article, *God or Baal*; Mediums are impossible.' Professing to two different ways of worship made a mockery of the very notion of liberty of conscience, which was designed to allow every individual to find their own way to heaven according to the 'best of their Judgements'. Yet, 'no Ship would arrive at any Port, that sailed two ways together, *if that were possible*'.³⁴ Occasional Conformity, Defoe declared famously, was '*playing Bo-peep* with God Almighty' and, of course, with the law. One was either a Dissenter or a member of the Church of England, but not both:

If I ...Dissent, and yet at the same time Conform; by Conforming I deny my Dissent being lawful, or by Dissenting I damn Conforming as sinful. Nothing can be lawful and unlawful at the same time; if it be not lawful for me to Dissent, I ought to Conform; but if it be unlawful for me to Conform, I must Dissent; several Opinions may be at the same time consist in a Country, in a City, in a Family, but not in one entire Person, *that is impossible*.³⁵

While there was much in Defoe's pamphlet with which the Anglican Tories were able to agree, the two sides naturally approached the problem of Occasional Conformity from two diametrically opposed angles. In contrast to the Anglicans, who considered the practice to be a theological and political threat to their Church, Defoe, during the 1690s, viewed Occasional Conformity as a purely religious issue: How, he asked

³³ Daniel Defoe, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters, in Case of Preferment* (1697), *Political & Economic Writings* Vol.3, 51. A second edition of the pamphlet with a different preface was published in 1701.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 45

³⁵ *Ibid*, 46, 48

rhetorically, could anyone view the practice as a ‘Civil Act in one place, and a Religious Act in another?’ Sacraments, Defoe asserted, are ‘Religious Acts, and can be no other.’³⁶ Taking communion in an Anglican Church in order to qualify for office was a prostitution of the Dissenters’ religion and therefore ultimately destructive of it. A consideration of the political implications of Occasional Conformity had not yet found a place in Defoe’s earliest publication on the topic.

The middle years of William’s reign proved ‘deeply unhappy’ for the parochial clergy, who had been forced to witness passively the gradual erosion of the status of the Church of England after the Revolution.³⁷ Dismayed at the changes which had come upon their Church and the threat it was facing from the fast-growing Dissenting community, Anglicans faced the choice of either representing a ‘basically voluntary body’ in English society or of actively working towards a return to their former status of religious arm of the state.³⁸ The political climate of the 1690s, during which the nation was mostly governed by the anti-clerical Whigs and headed by a king who, in a sense, was an occasional conformist himself, had denied Churchmen the chance to make this choice.³⁹ The accession of the devoutly Anglican Queen Anne in 1702, however, offered the Church of England the opportunity to actively reassess its position and, unsurprisingly, a large body of its members wished for a return to the past. Importantly, in the eyes of Anglican enthusiasts the ‘abominable hypocrisy’ of Occasional Conformity had come to represent the epitome of all of their grievances and it promptly reached the top of the political agenda. For most of Anne’s reign, the issue of Occasional Conformity was like ‘a keg of dynamite planted in the middle of the party arena’.⁴⁰ The relatively quiet life which England’s Protestant Dissenters had enjoyed since the Glorious Revolution had come to an end.

It was, in fact, the new queen who, apparently unintentionally, lighted the fuse of this keg of Anglican discontent. An ambiguous statement delivered during her

³⁶ Ibid, 48

³⁷ Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 12

³⁸ Ibid, 22

³⁹ See Flaningam, ‘Occasional Conformity Controversy’, 43n, for a brief account of the High Church view of William III, who considered the king’s strongly Calvinist beliefs to be inconsistent with the liturgy of the Church.

⁴⁰ Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society*, 190, 197

speech dissolving parliament in May 1702 provided the catalyst for a full-scale High-Church assault on Nonconformity. The queen might have announced her resolution to ‘preserve and maintain the Act of Toleration’, but to a Church of England party already intoxicated by the very fact that a Church of England queen now ruled the country, this appeared a negligible detail.⁴¹ In contrast, Anne’s assertion that ‘my own principles must always keep me entirely firm to the Interests and Religion of the Church of *England*, and will incline me to Countenance those who have the truest Zeal to support it’ appealed to the basic emotions of even the more moderate churchmen and instantly boosted their confidence.⁴² The majority of the Anglican clergy chose to interpret the queen’s words as a prompt to attack those who had done their best to damage their Church, the Nonconformists in general and the Occasional Conformists in particular. What the ensuing controversy surrounding Occasional Conformity showed first and foremost was the continued validity of the High Anglican notion that ‘politics were religion, and religion political’.⁴³

The traditional Anglican notion of the symbiotic relationship between Church and state saw an instant restatement in a sermon preached at Oxford University by the High Church divine Dr. Henry Sacheverell. The Doctor’s sermon was made widely available in print in 1702 under the self-explanatory title of *The Political Union. A Discourse Shewing the Dependance of Government on Religion in General: And of the English Monarchy on the Church of England in Particular*. The pamphlet is generally taken to represent the start of the High Church’s press campaign against the Dissenters. Sacheverell’s position was, indeed, vintage High Anglicanism:

The *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* State are the Two Parts and Divisions, that Both United make up One entire compounded Constitution, and Body Politick, sharing the same Fate and Circumstances, Twisted and interwoven into the very Being and Principles of each Other... the surest and most infallible Means to Strengthen, Support, and Establish Civil Power, is by Maintaining and Defending the True Worship of GOD, and the Exercise of His Genuine and Unmixt Religion, and the most ready,

⁴¹ Abel Boyer, *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, digested into Annals. Year the First*, Vol.1 (London, 1703), 42; Holmes, 99

⁴² Boyer, *Annals*, 42

⁴³ Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 86

effectual, and never-failing Way to Destroy it, is by Ruining and Destroying That.⁴⁴

Sacheverell's assertion that the security of the Church lay not only in safeguarding her liturgy from Puritan encroachments, but also in upholding her conservative political principles may be taken as representative of the entire High Church movement. As a result of High Anglicans and Tories closing ranks in their opposition to religious Nonconformity, the concept of the divine indefeasible hereditary right of kings, seemingly defeated at the Revolution, emerged once again.⁴⁵

The events of 1689 had, of course, administered a heavy blow to Tory political theory. In fact, the repercussions of James' deposition were so strong that they had split the Anglican Tories into two ideologically related but nevertheless distinct camps. On the one hand, the Tory party retained an at times embarrassing and highly vocal Jacobite wing, perhaps best represented by the Irish non-juror Charles Leslie, which continued to advocate absolute and divinely ordained monarchy and indefeasible hereditary right. In doing so, these High-Church Tories followed closely the standard expression of patriarchal theories, Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680). In one anonymous work of 1705, Filmer's idea that Adam and his regal successors were divinely ordained, absolute rulers was as alive as it had been a quarter of a century before:

God made other Creatures Male and Female at once; but to constitute the right of Government entirely in *the Man*, He was form'd single. God in his Wisdom did not think it fit to make two Independents, and liked best of all *Governments* of Mankind, the *Sovereignty of one*, and that with that extent, that both Wife and Posterity should submit and subject themselves to him...⁴⁶

'*Adam*, was, must be, and could not but be,' the author concluded, 'a Monarch... who is a King both by Birth and Fact'. Since a patriarchal ruler of Adam's kind is divinely ordained, 'all Power among Men... is Subordinate to, and delegated by him' and 'Obedience is everywhere due' to him. This absolute power would not die with the

⁴⁴ Henry Sacheverell, *The Political Union* (Oxford, 1702), 9, 10

⁴⁵ Gerald Straka, 'The Final Phase of Divine Right Theory in England, 1688-1702,' *English Historical Review* 77 (1962), 638-658; Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 63

⁴⁶ *An Essay upon Government. Wherein the Republican Schemes Reviv'd by Mr Locke, Dr. Blackal, &c are Fairly Consider'd and Refuted* (1705), 7

ruler but was passed on to an heir: ‘...the right of Inheritance, or Hereditary Monarchy was Establish’d by God himself, what ever exceptions God, for reasons of his own, might sometimes please to make to his own Rules’.⁴⁷

In contrast to the High Tories, the moderate Tories and Low Churchmen recognised a need for a modification of Filmer’s patriarchalism. In their efforts to accommodate the Glorious Revolution, these Tories abandoned their former principles in favour of a system which did not exclusively focus on the monarch, while trying ‘to salvage as much as possible from the ideology which they had built up since the Restoration’.⁴⁸ Firstly, this was achieved by discarding the notion of the divine right of hereditary succession, which William III’s accession had made almost impossible to maintain. Instead, Low Churchmen and moderate Tories emphasised the idea of divinely instituted monarchy. By claiming that the ‘providence of God watched over pious princes to preserve them from violence, while those who degraded their office by becoming tyrants were not allowed to end their days in peace’, the act of resistance which the Revolution undeniably represented could be reconciled with the idea of divinely sanctioned monarchy.⁴⁹ ‘Regardless of the human legal right of one king over another, the great court of heaven had overruling jurisdiction in its providential acts against which man was powerless’. God’s judgment ‘could not err, neither could it be resisted’.⁵⁰

Secondly, moderate Tory ideology replaced the king as the sole magistrate with the governmental triad of King, Lords and Commons, which was, in fact, the very concept which had underpinned the Revolution Settlement.⁵¹ Importantly, however, in contrast to the Whig understanding of the nature of the coordination principle, this new sovereign power was still considered by the moderate Tories to be absolute and irresistible. Sir Humphry Mackworth, for example, wrote that

the *King, Lords and Commons*, united together, have an *Absolute Supreme Power*, to do whatever they shall think necessary or convenient for the Publick Good, *of which they are the only Judges*, there being no Legal

⁴⁷ Ibid, 10, 29, 55

⁴⁸ Dickinson, 29

⁴⁹ Straka, ‘Final Phase’, 648

⁵⁰ Ibid, 647

⁵¹ See Chapter I, 35

Power on Earth to Controul them; so the several and *particular Powers* lodged in them... must in their Nature be *Supreme and Absolute* against all but one another.⁵²

By changing their opinion about ‘the source and location but not about the nature of this sovereign authority’, the moderate Tories were able to ‘continue to preach the crucial doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience’. Like their High-Church brothers, the moderate Tories believed that ‘their estates and their privileges could only be secured by a political society in which there existed a single supreme authority from whose decisions there could be no appeal’.⁵³ The constitutional theory of both the moderate and the extreme Tories and Churchmen could, therefore, be traced back to Filmer’s theory of absolute government. Moreover, the accession of a Stuart queen in Anne presented Anglican Tories with an ‘ideal excuse to defer a final crisis of conscience’ concerning the nature of the English monarchy.⁵⁴

In a society in which religion and politics were virtually indistinguishable, a link between the doctrines and theories of the two spheres was easily established. The perceived interdependency of Church and state meant that many Tories viewed the Dissenters as being not only outside the national religious community but also as separated from the political interests of the nation.⁵⁵ The Dissenters’ rejection of the Church as the ultimate authority in religious matters and their continued anti-episcopalism had maintained the connection in the Tory and High Church imagination between Nonconformity and political radicalism. Almost every piece of anti-Dissent polemic characterised Nonconformity as a source of rebellion, usually by appealing to the precedent of the Civil War. The execution of Charles I, the High Churchmen believed, had sprung from the Dissenters’ meeting-houses, which were nothing more than ‘Nusseries [sic] of Rebellion, and Promoters of Treasonable designs’.⁵⁶ Sacheverell, for example, insisted that

Presbytery and Republicanism go hand in hand, They are but the Same

⁵² Sir Humphrey Mackworth, *A Vindication of the Rights of the Commons of England* (1701), 3

⁵³ Straka, ‘Final Phase’, 14, 43

⁵⁴ Holmes, 90

⁵⁵ Flaningam, ‘The Occasional Conformity Controversy’, 46

⁵⁶ *The Establishment of the Church the Preservation of the State: Shewing the Reasonableness of a Bill against Occasional Conformity* (1702), 12

Disorderly, *Levelling Principle*, in the Two Different Branches of Our State...It may be Remember'd, that they were the *Same Hands* that were Guilty Both of *Regicide* and *Sacrilege*, that at once Divided the *King's* Head and Crown, and made Our *Churches* Stables, and *Dens of Beasts*, as well as *Thieves*.⁵⁷

Charles Leslie agreed with his High Church brother and promptly proceeded to depicted Non-conformity as an even greater threat than the Papists: '*Two Popish Reigns* shed not the *Hundred Part* of the *Blood*, nor Destroy'd *Liberty* and *Property* in any Proportion to what the *Dissenters* did in *Forty One*'. Almost every family in the kingdom, he asserted, had suffered under the Dissenters' '*Cursed Rebellion*' and the resulting scars '*Sixty Years* has not worn out'.⁵⁸

In addition, the example of the Civil Wars had demonstrated that the Dissenters were not as they claimed a '*Religious Sect*, whose Design only is a *Particular Way* of Worship' but a '*Political Faction*'.⁵⁹ And, as history showed, it was their political principles which made them such '*Dangerous Enemies* to the *Government*, as well as *Church*'⁶⁰: the Nonconformists' '*Avow'd Principle*' of resistance to the authorities and '*Doctrines of King-Killing* and *Deposing of Kings*' had cost Charles his life and England her monarchy.⁶¹ Because this spirit of rebellion could not be '*purg'd* out in one *Descent*', there was only one conceivable aim of such a '*Religious Piece* of *Political Hypocrisy*' as Occasional Conformity: further civil wars which would once again end in the destruction of England's religious and civil establishments.⁶² 'They have already *Began*', Leslie fanned anti-Dissent hysteria, '*to Preach* up the *Doctrine of Resistance*, at their *Afternoons*, or *Evening-Meetings*'.⁶³

At times, the explosion of High Church anger against Nonconformity lacked all restraint. Sacheverell demanded that the Church should put an immediate end to receiving the '*Sly and Insidious Viper* [of Dissent] into Her Bosom'. No longer should these '*Crafty, Faithless, and Insidious Persons*' be allowed to '*Creep* to Our Altars,

⁵⁷ Henry Sacheverell, *The Political Union* (Oxford, 1702), 50-51

⁵⁸ Charles Leslie, *The New Association* (1702), 15

⁵⁹ Sacheverell, *Political Union*, 55

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 49

⁶¹ Charles Leslie, *New Association. Part II* (1703), 5; *idem*, *The New Association*, 4th edition corrected (1705), 13; Sacheverell, *Political Union*, 56

⁶² Leslie, *New Association*, 4th edition, 29; Sacheverell, *Political Union*, 61

⁶³ Leslie, *New Association. Part II*, 5

and Partake of Our Sacrament'.⁶⁴ The solution which Sacheverell proposed was nothing short of a total extirpation of Nonconformity, if necessary by violent means. The Dissenting 'viper' needed to be driven out into the open, he asserted, so that the '*Boar out of the Wood might Waste it, and the Beasts of the Field Devour it*'. The sermon's famous hysterical crescendo was reminiscent of a declaration of war: every man who wished the Church's welfare, Sacheverell urged his hearers and readers, 'ought to Hang out the *Bloody Flag, and Banner of Defiance*' against Nonconformity.⁶⁵ Sacheverell's militancy was echoed by several other High Church polemicists. One author, in an act of pretended charity, suggested that the wayward Dissenters must be '*deliver'd unto Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit might be sav'd*'.⁶⁶ Similarly, High Church writer Mary Astell had no qualms about openly declaring that the Anglicans intended to '*strike at the root of the Dissenting Interest, to extirpate and destroy Dissention, and hinder its Succession in the Nation*' and that, in short, the '*Total Destruction of Dissenters as a Party...is our Design*'.⁶⁷

Naturally, the words of the High Church campaigners had a strongly disquieting effect on the minds of the dissenting community and a number of pamphlets appeared defending Occasional Conformity and, by implication, religious dissent. One of the most common concerns in these tracts was that any piece of legislation preventing Occasional Conformity would make '*innocent Men Criminals, with design to make 'em odious*'.⁶⁸ Few Dissenters disagreed with the point of view that conforming occasionally for office was a 'scandalous Practice, a Reproach to Religion, and offensive to all Good Christians' but importantly, there were exceptions to this rule. Breaking a law which prohibited religious dissent, one defender of Occasional Conformity argued, was 'a great Evil'. Yet, conforming constantly against one's better judgement was 'sinful' and therefore an even 'greater Evil'. The solution to this

⁶⁴ Sacheverell, *Political Union*, 52, 61

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 52-53, 59

⁶⁶ *The Establishment of the Church*, 13

⁶⁷ Mary Astell, *Moderation Truly Stated: Or, A Review of a late Pamphlet, Entitul'd, Moderation a Vertue* (1704), 3

⁶⁸ James Owen, *Moderation a Virtue: Or, the Occasional Conformist Justify'd from the Imputation of Hypocrisy* (1703), 6

problem was conforming occasionally to the established Church to abide by the laws, while maintaining one's status as a Dissenter at all other times to satisfy one's conscience.⁶⁹ An important qualification to this rule, however, was that there needed to be a general parity between the principles of the established Church and those of the Dissenter. Fortunately, this was the case with regard to the Church of England and England's Dissenting Churches, which could all be considered '*true Churches*'. The Anglicans and the Dissenters did, in fact, agree in 'all the *Essentials* of Christianity', while the 'Things wherein they *disagree*...[were] but *few* and *inconsiderable*'. Consequently, an Occasional Conformist was really '*not so formidable a Creature*'.⁷⁰

Other writers defended the practice in very similar terms: by taking the Anglican communion occasionally, a Dissenter declared that the Church of England was a 'Sound Part of the Catholick [i.e. primitive Christian] Church... He communicates with it, because he agrees with it in all the Essentials of Christianity, tho' he approves not of its impositions.' Thus, Occasional Conformity enabled a Dissenter to retain his religious identity, while it showed him to be an 'enemy of separation'.⁷¹ Ignoring the fact that occasional conformists were actually stretching the interpretation of the law to its limits, more legalistic approaches to the issue stressed that Occasional Conformists only did what they were legally required to do. Nonconformists did not take the Anglican communion to qualify for office, it was asserted, but conformed occasionally because, as office holders, the law forced them to do so. And the 'doing what the Law requires, is no Fault sure, to be punished with the Loss of his Office, nor is the doing that which the Law forbids not, in going to a Meeting afterwards.'⁷²

As his first pamphlet on the issue, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters*, indicated, Defoe's attitude towards Occasional Conformity could not have been further from the moderate stance of the majority of his fellow Dissenters and, despite the rapidly growing High Church animosity towards Nonconformity, he

⁶⁹ Ibid, 7-9

⁷⁰ Ibid, 11, 15-16

⁷¹ John Hooke, *Catholicism without Popery*, Part II (1704), 7-8

⁷² John Humphrey, *Letters to Parliament-Men* (1701), cited in Flaningam, 'The Occasional Conformity Controversy', 48-49

was prepared to continue his attack on his office holding co-religionists. Occasional Conformity, Defoe maintained dogmatically, was simply 'not to be defended' because it was 'contrary to the very Nature and Being of a Dissenter'.⁷³ If one could indeed reduce all the differences between the principles of the Church of England and the Dissenters to a trifle, then dissenting from the established Church was merely a 'needless and unchristian Separation'. In fact, '*Occasional Conformity* to a Church from which we have separated', Defoe agreed with his High Church opponents, 'does not appear to be lawful or justifiable in a *Dissenter*, nor are there any Precedents for it in the Scripture'. Moreover, 'the whole practice of it [is] a Scandal to the *Dissenters*, ruinous to their Interests; and tends to reduce them all or their Posterity at least to an absolute total Conformity, or at best a general Indifferency in Matters of Religion'.⁷⁴ Since the safety of Nonconformity lay in the 'Honesty and Integrity' of their consciences, the Dissenters should disavow all Occasional Conformists. The truly conscientious Dissenter had nothing to do with these apostate 'Knaves' and indeed, he wished, Defoe falsely claimed on behalf of all Nonconformists, that they 'would go out' from his community. Therefore, an Act against Occasional Conformity was actually beneficial to the Dissenters, since it was a 'Machine to blow them [the Occasional Conformists] all up'. True Nonconformists, Defoe concluded, were in fact 'glad' to have the practice 'condemn'd by Authority'.⁷⁵

It is remarkable how close Defoe's rhetoric against Occasional Conformity came to that of extreme High Churchmen like Sacheverell or Leslie, and his contribution to the debate during the first year or so of controversy was sure to win him few friends among his co-religionists. A year after the Doctor's sermon had ignited the Occasional Conformity controversy in the press, Defoe, it seems, considered the high-flying Anglicans to be little more than an annoying but still relatively minor threat to the Dissenters. In fact, he believed a greater threat to be

⁷³ Daniel Defoe, *The Sincerity of the Dissenters Vindicated, From the Scandal of Occasional Conformity* (1703), 5; idem, *The Opinion of a Known Dissenter on the Bill for Preventing Occasional Conformity* (1703), 2; also see *An Enquiry into Occasional Conformity. Shewing that the Dissenters Are no Way Concern'd in it* (1702), *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol.3, 86, 90

⁷⁴ Defoe, *Sincerity of the Dissenters Vindicated*, 26-27

⁷⁵ Defoe, *An Enquiry into Occasional Conformity*, 83, 88, 91

coming from within: having been granted a legal toleration, it was now only the Dissenters themselves who might destroy their privileges through unlawful behaviour such as Occasional Conformity. The confidence with which Defoe was prepared to fight not only on one but two fronts was, as we shall see below, clearly visible in his counter attack on High Church propaganda.

Defoe's approach to the Occasional Conformity Controversy was in many ways typical for his work as a polemicist. His strategy during the Standing Army Controversy had involved a pamphlet campaign which, in a highly factual and systematic manner, refuted virtually every radical Whig argument against William's forces. Importantly, however, Defoe had complemented his pro-army tracts with the verse satire *The True-Born Englishman*, which, as Chapter II demonstrates, challenged and subverted radical Whig historiography and anti-army rhetoric at its most fundamental level. Defoe's counter attack on High Church polemics, it will become apparent, followed a very similar pattern.

Defoe's stance on the political issues raised by the High Church polemicists, it is worthwhile to point out, had been clear even before the start of the controversy. As a Whig and Dissenter, he did indeed subscribe to the doctrine of resistance and the notion of a limited monarchy. In 'broadly Lockean fashion' Defoe maintained that all political power derived from the people, more specifically from the property owners, and that England's government was based on a retractable social contract between the monarch and his subjects.⁷⁶ This contract, which not only subjected the king to existing legislation but also required subjects to obey lawful governments, became void if the king dispensed with the law and ruled tyrannically. In this case, the people had a legal and natural right to resist and depose the monarch in order to establish a new government.

The concept of England's limited monarchy was a constant theme in Defoe writings. In his standing army pamphlets, for example, he emphasised that the king's actions were only legal if they obtained the sanction of parliament, while maintaining that arbitrary measures may be resisted.⁷⁷ In *The True-Born Englishman* Defoe stated

⁷⁶ Furbank, 'Introduction', *Satire* Vol.2, 22

⁷⁷ See Chapter I, 66-67

that 'When Kings the Sword of Justice first lay down, They are no Kings, though they possess the Crown'.⁷⁸ Contract theory was fully embraced in the poem:

But if the *Mutual Contract* was dissolv'd,
The Doubt's explain'd, the Difficulty solv'd:
That Kings, when they descend to Tyranny,
*Dissolve the Bond, and leave the Subject free.*⁷⁹

Dressing his constitutional rhetoric in verse allowed Defoe to reduce his argument to its bare minimum: the powerful end-rhymes in the above quotation effectively forced home the message that tyrannical government instantly relieved subjects from their social and political duty of allegiance. As a polemical tool, verse was, of course, highly effective, since it could express pithily elaborate concepts and offer handy commonplaces, while allowing the author to circumvent lengthy explanatory sections. On the other hand, the brevity of the lines prevented greater constitutional elaboration, which could potentially hamper the presentation of a more complete account of the author's political ideas. Perhaps for this reason, Defoe, a few months prior to the start of the parliamentary struggle over Occasional Conformity, published a succinctly argued pamphlet which rendered the message of *The True-Born Englishman* into prose. The idea of a retractable social contract and the people as the source of all political power was ever present in *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People of England, Examined and Asserted*:

All Powers Delegated [by the people] are to one Great End and Purpose, and no other, and that is the Publick Good. If either or all the Branches to whom this Power is Delegated invert the Design, the end of their Power, the Right they have to that Power ceases...⁸⁰

Once the campaign against Occasional Conformity and Nonconformity was in full flow Defoe used almost every opportunity to reiterate his political principles. Even publications which were not predominantly concerned with constitutional theory and the people's rights, still made overt references to the issues raised in *The True-Born Englishman* and *The Original Power*. For example, the poem *The Address*, published in 1704 as an attack on the Tory majority in the House of Commons, discussed the

⁷⁸ Defoe, *True-Born Englishman*, 291

⁷⁹ Ibid, 292

⁸⁰ Defoe, *Original Power*, 113

creation of laws as the people's protection from arbitrary measures as well as the people's right to elect and remove their representatives.⁸¹ *The Dyet of Poland* of 1705 attacked the 'th' Hereditary vile Disease' of absolute government, while *Advice to All Parties* (1705) paraphrased large sections of *The Original Power*.⁸² In the same year Defoe stated in the *Review* that

when Princes break the Compacts of Government, Tyrannize and Oppress their Subjects, God by the Hands of those Subjects has thought fit to disengage the Distressed Country from Cruelty and Encroachment of their Princes, and Depositing and Disarming them as Monsters, and Wild Beasts, has placed other Princes, whether of the Line, or no, to govern in their stead.⁸³

It is important to note that Defoe's constant reiteration of the Whig notions of contractual government and the right of resistance were not merely a rhetorical reflex to the re-emergence of the High Tory doctrines of divine right and non-resistance. Rather, Defoe's Whiggish ideas represented the foundation on which he was able to rest what was arguably the most successful element of his counter offensive against Anglican extremism - a refutation of the popular High Church claim that the Dissenters were mere rebels and regicides, who wanted to 'Under-Mine and Blow-Up the present Church and Government'.⁸⁴ The principal pamphlet in which Defoe tried to achieve this appeared in 1702 under the title of *A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty*. The combination of historical examples and political theory in this tract made for a highly forceful and convincing attack on High Church propaganda and the confidence with which Defoe turned from a denunciation of occasional conformity to launch an assault on High Church enthusiasm perhaps betrayed the faith he had in the strength of his own propaganda.

A New Test began by comparing the political ideologies of the Anglican Tories and the Whiggish Dissenters: 'the distinguishing Mark' of the Church of England, Defoe explained, was 'all her Members Principles of unshaken Loyalty to her

⁸¹ Daniel Defoe, *The Address* (1704), *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol. 2, 73-6, ll.141-5, 161-65, 236-45

⁸² Daniel Defoe, *The Dyet of Poland. A Satyr* (1705), *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol.7, F.H. Ellis ed (New Haven & London, 1975), 82, l.184; Daniel Defoe, *Advice to All Parties* (1705), *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol. 2, 94-6

⁸³ *The Review*, Vol.II, No.77 (30 August 1705), 307

⁸⁴ See the title page of Leslie's *The New Association*.

Prince'.⁸⁵ Recent High Church publications in particular had left the nation in no doubt that the 'Doctrines of Non-resistance of Princes, Passive Obedience, and the Divine Authority of the Kingly Power, is own'd and declar'd to be an Essential Part of the Profession and Practice' of the Established Church. Anglicans like Sacheverell had repeatedly boasted of their Church's 'unspotted Loyalty and Obedience' to the monarchy.⁸⁶ In contrast, the Dissenters and Whigs, Defoe asserted, believed that the 'Government of *England* is a limited Monarchy' and that government was 'originally contrived by the Consent...of the Parties Govern'd'; any invasion of the people's right to property and liberty was 'destructive of the Constitution, and dissolves the Compact of Government and Obedience'.⁸⁷ Yet, if one now applied the political theory of the two parties to their respective histories, Defoe continued triumphantly, it would soon become clear which one of the two was able to truthfully claim 'unspotted loyalty and obedience' to the crown. To begin with, it should be remembered that, in the early days of the reformation, it was in fact the members of the Church of England who were the 'Dissenters, the Schismatics and Phanatics' and who were treated by the Church of Rome as 'Enemies to the Government' and 'Contemners of Authority'. The Dissenters, on the other hand, throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, when the Church had become fully established, quietly bore the 'illegal Persecutions' to which both the monarch and the Church subjected them. Up to this point, it was the Dissenters and not the Church who had demonstrated 'Patience and Passive Obedience'. This, however, changed when Charles I invaded the people's civil rights and the Dissenters saw themselves forced into discarding their former loyalty in order to protect the rights and liberties of the entire nation. 'I am willing to grant', Defoe stated confidently, that the 'Dissenters...did imbrue their Hands in the Blood of the Lord's Anointed'. What one needed to remember, of course, was that Charles had ceased to be the Lord's Anointed as soon as he broke the law, at least in the eyes of the contractarian Whigs and Dissenters.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Daniel Defoe, *A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty: Or, Whiggish Loyalty and Church Loyalty Compar'd.* (1702), *Political and Economic Writings*, Vol.3, 59

⁸⁶ Ibid, 60

⁸⁷ Ibid, 61, 65

⁸⁸ Ibid, 63-64, 66

Memory seemed to serve High Church minds very well when it came to the Civil War but more recent history clearly caused the Anglican zealots some problems. What, Defoe asked polemically, became of High Church loyalty at the Glorious Revolution? As a result of the Sacramental Test, 'all the Managing Hands in the Kingdom were Disciples of the Church' and what did they do as soon as James II seemed to 'aim at crushing her Authority'? They began to 'winch and kick, fly to foreign Princes for Protection, and rise in Arms against her Prince'!⁸⁹ Neither did the fact that no blood was spilt at the Revolution change anything. 'I think the Difference only lyes here', Defoe asserted with discernable satisfaction,

The Whigs in 41. to 48. took up Arms against their King; and having conquer'd him, and taken him Prisoner, cut off his Head, *because they had him*: The Church of *England* took Arms against their King in 88. and did not cut off his Head, *because they had him not*. King *Charles* lost his Life, *because he did not run away*; and his Son, King *James*, sav'd his Life, *because he did run away*.⁹⁰

Importantly, because Charles' rule had become unlawful, his deposition, Defoe reiterated his own political beliefs, had been 'no Crime, the Church of *England* has been in the right of it'. Rather, the Church's 'Error was in Espousing, Crying up, and Pretending to a Blind Absolute Obedience to Princes'. The Churchmen had in fact only acted in accordance with what nature dictated: they had liberated themselves and the nation from illegal oppression. '*And so we are brought back to Whiggism and 41*', Defoe attacked High-Church sentiments one final time. Sacheverell and his friends would be well advised to show 'a little more Modesty' to the Dissenters in future, because 'as to Loyalty, Passive Obedience, Non-resistance, *etc.* there is really no great Difference between one side or other, ... all Parties have in their Turns been equally Loyal: I was going to say, equally Disloyal'.⁹¹

The point Defoe had made in *A New Test* with regard to the issue of Anglican loyalty was not easily refuted. The Anglican Church had indeed taken an active part in the Revolution, and consequently, the few responses which the pamphlet received often resorted to personal insults, '*the Author is very stupid*', or merely claimed that

⁸⁹ Ibid, 64, 66-67

⁹⁰ Ibid, 65

⁹¹ Ibid, 61

the Church was 'not answerable' for the private opinions of some of her doctors.⁹² Defoe was aware of the strength of his argument and two years later he boasted of the lack of convincing replies to *A New Test*.⁹³ Unsurprisingly, Defoe frequently returned to the question of Anglican loyalty in subsequent publications concerned with Nonconformity.⁹⁴

While *A New Test* may have been a success from a polemical point of view, it did little to change the minds of High Tories politicians: in November 1702, only a few weeks after the new Parliament opened, a Bill against Occasional Conformity was introduced in the Commons by the Church party.⁹⁵ The powerful Tory majority in the Commons made the passage of the Bill in that House a foregone conclusion and all depended now on the Lords, where the Whigs held a slender majority over the Tories. Defoe, it seems, felt that his exposure of the flaws of Tory ideology and their misleading claim to a perfect loyalty might not have been enough to prevent the passage of the Bill into law and he proceeded to compose a tract with which he aimed to demonstrate the real meaning of High Church rhetoric. The result was Defoe's perhaps best-known pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. That the tract was indeed intended to influence the peers' attitude towards the legislation proposed by the Tories is shown by its time of publication: *The Shortest Way* appeared in December 1702, during the week the Bill was given its first reading in the Lords.⁹⁶

The Shortest Way was not concerned with political ideology or theological questions per se. Rather, the tract closely engaged with the language employed by the High Church zealots. Defoe satirised the sentiments of Sacheverell and his followers by echoing their key phrases and arguments and by exposing them through the subtle

⁹² [James Drake?], *Some Necessary Considerations Relating to all future Elections of Members to Serve in Parliament, Humbly offer'd to all Electors, Whether they be True Sons of the Church of England, as by Law Established, Or Modest Protestant Dissenters*, 2nd edition (1702), Preface

⁹³ See *A New Test of the Church of England's Honesty* (1704), *Political and Economic Writings*, Vol.3, 189.

⁹⁴ Other pamphlets which highlighted the Church's part in the Revolution are *An Enquiry into Occasional Conformity* (1702), *Peace Without Union* (1703), *The Dissenters Answer to the High Church Challenge* (1704) and *The Dissenter Misrepresented, and Represented* [1704?].

⁹⁵ Holmes, 101

⁹⁶ Owens, 'Introduction', *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol.3, 15

use of hyperbole.⁹⁷ He, it seems, believed that by focusing on the rhetoric of the High Church zealots, he could expose sufficiently the true designs of the High Church campaign against the Dissenters. While Sacheverell talked of the 'bloody Flag of Defiance', Defoe openly advocated violence against the non-conformists:

Alas! *The Church of England!* What with Popery on one hand, and Schismatics on the other; how has she been Crucified between two Thieves. Now, *let us crucifie the thieves.* Let her foundations be Established upon the Destruction of her Enemies: the Doors of Mercy being always open to the returning Part of the deluded People: Let the obstinate be rul'd with the Rod of iron.⁹⁸

Defoe, however, had been too subtle in his mimicry of High Church polemics and, while his proposals for the solution of the 'Dissent problem' were extreme, they were not extreme enough to expose the tract as a parody of High Church sentiments. Disastrously, both the Dissenters and the High Church read the *Shortest Way* literally. Leslie, for example, remarked that he believed that the pamphlet contained a 'great deal of *Truth*' and that 'none of whom I could meet with, or hear of, did imagine it could be wrote by a *Whigg*'.⁹⁹ The Dissenters attacked the tract for its extremism, while the High-Church Tories initially found many agreeable sentiments in it. Once the High-Church Tories recognised the trick Defoe had played on them, however, their anger and indignation was unrestrainable. The government, led by the High Tory Lord Nottingham, wanted to make an example of Defoe. Ignoring the ironic character of *The Shortest Way*, the High-Church majority in the Commons asserted that Defoe had been 'scheming to deny Dissenters religious toleration', that he had 'promoted sedition', and that he 'had failed to treat Parliament with respect and had infringed upon its privileges'.¹⁰⁰ The actual indictment, however, was to be different and concentrated on the charge that *The Shortest Way* was a direct affront to Queen Anne,

⁹⁷ Backscheider, 96; for a detailed discussion of the pamphlet see 94-105. Also see Novak, 173-8, 184-7; idem, 'Defoe's "Shortest Way with the Dissenters": Hoax, Parody, Paradox, Fiction, Irony, and Satire,' *Modern Language Quarterly* 27 (1966), 402-417; J.A. Downie, 'Defoe's *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*: Irony, Intention and Reader-Response,' *Prose Studies* 9 (1986), 120-139.

⁹⁸ Daniel Defoe, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), *Political and Economic Writings*, Vol.3, 109

⁹⁹ Leslie *New Association. Part II*, 6

¹⁰⁰ Backscheider, 103

who had promised to guarantee the toleration of Dissent. After a number of spells between May and November 1703 in Newgate prison, Defoe was eventually sentenced to stand in the pillory on three separate occasions for publishing a seditious libel.¹⁰¹ His effort to expose High Church propaganda by focusing on and satirically undermining its rhetorical aspects had been nothing short of a complete failure.¹⁰²

The punishment which the government had meted out to Defoe for *The Shortest Way* had a discernible effect on his campaign against the Anglican zealots. Significantly, Defoe had now personally experienced the kind of treatment which the High Churchmen had demanded for the Dissenters. Over a decade later he remembered the episode with a clear sense of bitterness, claiming that he ‘fell a Sacrifice for writing against the Rage and Madness of that High Party’. Sadly, the whole affair, he continued, left him ‘friendless and distress’d’ and his ‘Family ruin’d’.¹⁰³ After 1703, Defoe did not publish any further tracts which were predominantly concerned with attacking his fellow Dissenters for their occasional conformity. He discarded much of his earlier dogmatism and instead rejected the debate over occasional conformity as ‘nothing to the purpose, whether this Practice is to be vindicated or not’, only briefly hinting at his disapproval of it.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Defoe even began to defend the occasional conformists, admittedly in the most tentative terms, by pointing out that vindications of the practice had not yet been successfully answered by the Anglicans. Taking the side of the occasional conformists, he declared that these ‘Unanswer’d Books’ still stood ‘as a Challenge’ to the High-Flyers.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Novak, 185-86

¹⁰² Defoe himself did not consider the pamphlet to have been a failure. In fact, he claimed that *The Shortest Way* had had ‘all the effect he wish’d for’ and that it actually forced the High Tories to declare themselves against the Occasional Bill (Owens, ‘Introduction’, *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol.3, 18-19). This claim, however, may have largely been a face-saving exercise. Defoe probably exaggerated the political effect of the tract, and his imprisonment and subsequent bankruptcy, as well as the rift with his fellow Dissenters which *The Shortest Way* generated, surely cannot have been his intention. See J.A. Downie, ‘Defoe’s *Shortest Way*’, 136-7.

¹⁰³ Daniel Defoe, *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* (1715), in J.T. Boulton ed. *Selected Writings of Daniel Defoe* (Cambridge, 1975), 171

¹⁰⁴ Daniel Defoe, *The Dissenter Misrepresented and Represented* (1704), *Political & Economic Writings* Vol.3, 210; also see *Peace without Union*, 11

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 211-12

The period of imprisonment in Newgate and the public humiliation of the pillory appear to have clarified for Defoe which of the two, Occasional Conformists or High Churchmen, posed a greater threat to the welfare of Nonconformity. Subsequently, he dedicated his writings to answering one question: ‘to what End do the Gentlemen of the Church of *England* Clamour at our *Occasional Conformity*?’¹⁰⁶ It was now becoming increasingly more apparent, Defoe asserted indignantly, that ‘*the Shortest Way* is at the Bottom, and Mr. *De Foe* has done them no Wrong’.¹⁰⁷ The Test Act, which the High Churchmen had celebrated as the bulwark of the Church’s safety, had not, in fact, been designed to protect the Church from Popery but was a political measure to keep the Whigs and Dissenters ‘out of the State’.¹⁰⁸ The Dissenters, however, had managed to defeat the ‘Trick of this State Ceremony’ by conforming occasionally to the communion of the Church and it was for the political rather than theological implications of Occasional Conformity that Sacheverell and his followers had attacked the Dissenters so violently.¹⁰⁹ Defoe, then, had performed a volte-face concerning the occasional conformity: the strong line of conscience he had taken in his early commentary on the practice was replaced by a concern over the political implications of the High-Church campaign.

The High-Flyers, it seemed, were attempting to establish an absolutist regime. Out of gratitude to the Dissenters for their support during the Glorious Revolution the Anglican Church had agreed to acknowledge the right of liberty of conscience and entered into a ‘League with the Dissenters’. The Act of Toleration, Defoe claimed in true Whig fashion, was a ‘Contract between Them [the Dissenters] and the Church of *England*’; it was a ‘Formal Treaty’ which ‘ought to be kept Sacred’.¹¹⁰ Yet, the Occasional Bill was ‘directly contrary both to the Act of Toleration, and of itself Destructive of Liberty of Conscience’, because it obliged the Dissenters to a ‘Total

¹⁰⁶ Defoe, *Church of England’s Honesty*, 202. Note the way in which Defoe clearly sides with the Occasional Conformists.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 201

¹⁰⁸ Defoe, *Church of England’s Honesty*, 202; also idem, *Peace without Union*, 10, 12 and *A Serious Inquiry*, 5

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 197

Conformity, or else to suffer such and such Penalties'.¹¹¹ The effect of an act against Occasional Conformity smacked of civil tyranny: returning to the ironical mode of *The Shortest Way*, Defoe asserted that the High Churchmen were for depriving the Dissenters of 'their Right of Voting for Parliament Men as Freeholders; to which I wou'd add, Let them go on, and take away their Freeholds too, a thing every jot as just, and then the Business wou'd be over.'¹¹² By denying Nonconformists their 'Birth-right, as *Englishmen*', of engaging fully in the civil sphere, the Occasional Bill might bring the domestic peace which the nation desired, but surely, Defoe concluded, this was a '*French Peace*'.¹¹³

Defoe's reaction to the defeat he had suffered at the hands of the High Church Tories did not remain restricted to a series of pamphlets, however. At the end of 1700, soon after the failure of the Court campaign to save William's standing army, Defoe decided to make a last stand on the matter by publishing the verse satire *The True-Born Englishman*, which represented his final, eclectic attack on Country Whig ideology. Within weeks of his imprisonment for publishing *The Shortest Way*, Defoe decided to respond in the same manner again and began work on a new, even more ambitious verse satire, which, first announced in 1704, eventually appeared in 1706 under the title of *Jure Divino*.¹¹⁴ Defoe immediately identified the High Church revival of the past four years as the context in which his satire had to be read: *Jure Divino* would have never come into existence, he claimed, 'had not the World seem'd to be going mad a second Time with the Error of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*' (35). In his effort to defeat once and for all the political doctrines of those who had sent him to Newgate, Defoe produced the '*locus classicus* for his political thought'.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Defoe, *Peace without Union*, 7; idem *A Serious Inquiry*, 7

¹¹² Defoe, *The Dissenter Misrepresented*, 213

¹¹³ Defoe, *Peace without Union*, 7-8

¹¹⁴ In the preface to *Jure Divino* Defoe admitted that the 'greatest part of it was compos'd in Prison' (63). For a publication history of the poem see Furbank, 'Introduction', *Satire*, Vol.2, 27-28.

¹¹⁵ Manuel Schonhorn, 'Defoe: The Literature of Politics and the Politics of Some Fictions,' in M.E. Novak (ed), *English Literature in the Age of Disguise* (Berkeley & London, 1977), 15

Jure Divino's twelve books did indeed offer Defoe enough space to explicate his political theory in great detail. The composition of a philosophical verse essay of this length was an ambitious undertaking and Defoe appears to have wanted to emulate the success of *The True-Born Englishman* in order to firmly establish his reputation as a poet. Poets typically reserved this form of heroic poetry for their most serious works and, as Backscheider has highlighted, by the time Defoe began his verse satire, the aspiring poet was expected to fulfil a number of formal expectations:

The form had become the standard one for the presentation of a system designed to increase order, wisdom, and human happiness. Its architectural structure depended upon an examination of a subject and its principles; its movement flowed from statements about the nature of man and existence through cumulative examples, images, and exposition to a celebration of an organizing conclusion.¹¹⁶

In an effort to present his own system, Defoe offered his readers a complete account of the origins of government in *Jure Divino*, with a special focus on the rise of tyranny and the associated doctrines of divine right and non-resistance. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the reader learns in Book II that Filmer's theory of patriarchal government could not be dismissed entirely, since in the early stages of humankind, Adamic fathers ruled their families as a monarch ruled a nation (102-3, ll.42-73). Moreover, Defoe explained, in a scarcely populated world this form of government was perfectly viable, since little or no contact with other families denied humans the opportunity to live out their natural inclination to tyranny, that is, to subdue others and enrich themselves at their cost. However, patriarchal power, Defoe wanted his readers to remember, was strictly limited: 'In the Paternal Right no Man could reign,/ Farther than his own Houshold did contain' (103, ll.52-3).

Defoe's next step was to firmly consign patriarchal forms of government to the time when 'Nature in her Infant-Cradle lay' (103, l.67). As soon as the land became more densely populated, he explained, man's tyrannical nature came to the fore and the family unit was no longer able to adequately protect the individual's liberty and property from the encroachments of others (105, ll.98-109). At the moment when

¹¹⁶ Backscheider, 'The Verse Essay', 100

‘Families united by consent’ (103, l.56) in order to protect their interests patriarchal government became obsolete:

Necessity Confederate Heads Directs,
And Power United, Power Expos’d Protects;
The Nature of the Thing directs *the Mode*,
And Government was born in *Publick Good*:
Safety with Right and Property combines,
And thus *Necessity* with Nature *joins*. (104, ll.78-83)

According to Defoe, then, the birth of political societies was a direct result of the emergence of contractual government, while, at the same time, it caused the demise of ‘incomplete’ patriarchal power (105, l.98). In this context it is important to note that Defoe’s idea of political power displayed distinctly Harringtonian elements in that he firmly attached the right to rule to the possession of property.¹¹⁷ Only the proprietors of the land, the freeholders, were invested with the power which allowed them to create governments and laws for the protection of all (173, ll.47-61; 174n). In the process of creating a political society, the freeholders divested most of their right to rule to their elected governors and volunteered to be restricted by the law. The power enjoyed by governments thus derived directly from the propertied people.

Defoe included an important qualification in his version of the origins of contractual government. The freeholders, he asserted, did not divest themselves of all their natural rights but retained a reservoir of political power which allowed them to resist and remove their chosen governor if he did not rule according to the law. A ruler who became tyrannical could not expect the original contract with his people to continue:

When Kings the Pact of Government destroy,
There’s no more Bonds to hold Obedience by,
Order and Laws, of Course, must cease to be,
And Mankind’s level’d down to One Degree (204, ll.195-198)

If a governor became absolute and arbitrary, government as well as political society as an institution practically ceased to exist and the freeholders found themselves returned to what was in essence the state of nature. Under these circumstances, disobeying the

¹¹⁷ Novak, 282; idem, *Defoe and the Nature of Man*, 15; also see Chapter I, 37

monarch did not constitute an act of rebellion. Rather, resistance was a justified act of liberation: he who 'resists Tyrannick Power, / Does *not the Laws resist*, but the Laws restore' (203, l.137; 205, ll.206-7).

As we have seen, much of the political thought of *Jure Divino* had already appeared in those of Defoe's pamphlets which had engaged with the High Church campaign against religious dissent. Defoe's verse satire was, in this sense, an extended reassertion and continuation of his pro-Dissent polemics and it is therefore no surprise to find that he also returned to the challenge with which he most liked to confront the Anglican zealots. How, he asked once again, could the High Churchmen reconcile their doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience with their role in the late Revolution:

Was King *James* treated like a Man that could *that could do no Wrong*, and was not Accountable? Let those who blame some People for the inconsistency of their Principles, reconcile if they can the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience, Non-Resistance, and the Kings not being Accountable, to the Practice of the High-Church of *England* in the Primitive Part of the Late Revolution. (37)

It was impossible, Defoe continued, 'to reconcile the Principle of Passive Obedience with the whole Proceeding of the Late Revolution'. However, while Defoe's initial aim, as Furbank has pointed out, appears to have been to demonstrate the 'remarkably small' difference between the roles which the Dissenters and the Church had played in the respective revolutions, *Jure Divino* took the comparison a significant step further and, indeed, brought to a conclusion Defoe's counter attack against High Church polemic which had branded the Dissenters as rebels and regicides.¹¹⁸

In *A New Test* Defoe had already stated that, in contrast to the Church, the Whigs, because they openly professed the right of resistance to be one of their principles, had been the 'honester of the two'.¹¹⁹ *Jure Divino* extended this evaluation of the moral dimension of the two revolutions to a consideration of the respective fates of Charles and James or, as Defoe put it, to an assessment of 'which of the two Kings had the worst Treatment' (46). Predictably, it was James who was seen to have suffered 'the most, and with more cutting Aggravations'. Unlike Charles, who always

¹¹⁸ Furbank, 'Introduction', *Satire*, Vol.2, 19

¹¹⁹ Defoe, *A New Test*, 65

retained a loyal following and whose life found a swift end in a ‘*Wet Martyrdome*’, James was ‘abandon’d of those very Men [the Anglican bishops] that had led him by the hand into the Snare’ of Tyranny and now had to bear the continuing indignity of a ‘*Dry Martyrdome*’ in France.¹²⁰ Even the terrors of a death on the scaffold could not ‘amount to a Ballance of the Exile, the Insults, the unsufferable Treachery of Friends, and this added to the length of Time’ which James had been forced to suffer. Therefore, the ‘Guilt of the last [Revolutionaries] rather exceeds that of the first’ (46-50).

With innumerable references to the Civil War, Sacheverell and Leslie had sought to tar Dissent as a whole with the brush of disobedience and rebelliousness. In a country in which ‘conservatism was still the natural political philosophy’ the regicide of Charles represented strong polemical currency.¹²¹ Naturally, the High Church writers willingly kept alive the accusation that Occasional Conformity ‘plainly repeated’ the Nonconformists’ ‘Methods and restless Industry in Ruining King and Kingdom in 41’.¹²² Thus, it was absolutely necessary for any refutation of High Church propaganda to show that it was not the Dissenters but the High Flying Anglicans who were being hypocritical. Defoe achieved this by answering the High Churchmen on their own terms: like Sacheverell and Leslie he appealed to historical precedent by highlighting the active role the Church of England had played in the Glorious Revolution. Significantly, he extended this approach by developing his very own taxonomy. The ‘ruthless witticism’ of the labelling the respective fates of Charles and James as ‘wet and dry martyrdoms’, claims Furbank, not only greatly annoyed the Anglican zealots, it also transferred the rhetorical control of the debate into Defoe’s ownership.¹²³ Leslie’s indignant outcry ‘Can this be *Endur’d!*’ and his somewhat hysterical rejection of Defoe’s phraseology was only one example of how successful this particular element of Defoe’s pro-Dissent polemics continued to be.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Defoe’s first use of the terms ‘*Dry and Wet Martyrdome*’ occurred in the *Review* for 18 December 1705.

¹²¹ Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 61

¹²² Mary Astell, *A Fair Way with the Dissenters and their Patrons* (1704), 23

¹²³ Furbank, ‘Introduction’, *Satire*, Vol.2, 19

¹²⁴ Leslie addressed Defoe’s phraseology in the *Rehearsal* for 5 January 1706. See Furbank, ‘Introduction’, *Satire*, Vol.2, 19n, for an extract from this issue.

Jure Divino, then, returned to the two main themes of High Church propaganda, High Tory political theories and the Dissenter's rebellious, Whiggish nature, and provided an extended and refined version of the answers Defoe had already offered in his pamphlets. While some of Defoe's remarks were clearly linked to the debate surrounding Occasional Conformity, his discussion of political theory in *Jure Divino* certainly rose to a 'higher level of generality' than, for example, that of *The Original Power* or *The True-Born Englishman*.¹²⁵ There was, however, a further aspect of Defoe's verse satire which did engage closely with the High Church campaign against Nonconformity and which has hitherto largely escaped scholarly attention. The Toleration Act, Defoe had argued repeatedly, was a recognition of the Dissenters' right to a liberty of conscience and should stand inviolably. Yet, his initial vehement denunciation of Occasional Conformity for undermining the sincerity of Nonconformist consciences had inevitably played directly into the hands of the High Flying polemicists, who quickly came to focus on this issue.¹²⁶ 'See how easily these Men can satisfie their *Consciencess!*', Leslie picked up the theme of individual religious beliefs and agreed with Defoe that 'Loose *Practices* beget loose *Principles*'.¹²⁷ The Dissenters, the High Church writer Mary Astell asserted typically, had started the debate concerning the tenderness of their consciences merely to provide a smokescreen for their 'Secular Motive' of gaining public office. Their pleading for liberty of conscience was sheer hypocrisy:

...if the Dissenter can Conform sometimes, either he thinks Conformity is not absolutely Unlawful, and then what can justifie his Separation... Or if he judges Conformity to be absolutely Unlawful then his Conscience can allow him *sometimes*, in that which he owns to be Unlawful; and what must every honest Man think of such a Conscience?¹²⁸

What one had to think of such a conscience was, of course, that it barely existed. 'They bring their bodies to us,' another High Church propagandist commented, 'but leave their Consciencess behind them'. If the Dissenters did indeed possess a

¹²⁵ Ibid, 18

¹²⁶ Also see Flaningam, 'Occasional Conformity Controversy', 44

¹²⁷ Leslie, *New Association. Part II*, 12

¹²⁸ Astell, *Moderation Truly Stated*, 34

conscience, it was 'only an Occasional Conscience, which is a Conscience good for nothing'.¹²⁹

The question of what needed to be done with regard to the Dissenters' questionable consciences represented one of the main themes of High Church rhetoric. Sacheverell, for example, dedicated a substantial part of his *Political Union* to this issue. 'All the Force of Government', he explained, was 'deriv'd from, and depending upon the Passions of *Shame* and *Fear*, and as the *First* is Rul'd by Conscience, the *Latter* is Guided by the Laws of it'.¹³⁰ The law and an oath of allegiance were not, however, a sufficient measure to keep the individual on the path of righteousness, since they were unable to instil the fear of divine judgement in men's souls. Conscience, in contrast, was

the Grand Wheel upon which all Human Actions Turn and Move, and take That away and the most Profligate and Vitious [sic] Dictates of Corrupted Nature shall take place... Strip Mankind of that Troublesome Thing call'd *Conscience*, which is always ready to cast a Check and Damp upon Their Evil Actions, with the Affrighting Representations of Hell and a Future Judgment, and We shall quickly find what an Ungovernable, Headstrong, Brutal Force, Human Nature and Passion carries in it.¹³¹

'Unbridl'd by his Reason', Sacheverell continued, man was '*Worse even then the Beasts that perish*'. More worryingly, however, once the individual decided to 'Forfeit Their Conscience, Their Allegiance [to the government] is seldom found to keep its Ground.' Consequently, because they had so openly prostituted their consciences, the Dissenters were not to be trusted. And since there were 'no Laws or *Statutes* against *Thoughts*, but Those alone which GOD has enacted' there was only one 'Physick to Curb, Correct, and Purge out the foul Distempers and Disorderly Passions of the Mind' of a Dissenter – the Anglican faith.¹³² In essence, then, Sacheverell was advocating the end of religious toleration in order to create a nation whose thoughts were controlled entirely by the Church of England. More moderate measures, which merely controlled individual behaviour or the expression of ideas, no

¹²⁹ Thomas Wagstaff, *The Case of Moderation and Occasional Communion Represented by way of Caution to the True Sons of the Church of England* (1705), 30

¹³⁰ Sacheverell, *Political Union*, 18

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 20

¹³² *Ibid*, 18, 20-23

longer appeared satisfactory: the Doctor's vision for the nation was the absolute dominion of Anglicanism over the consciences of every individual.

Sacheverell's co-religionists readily agreed with this proposal. Startling as it ought to have appeared, even moderate Anglicans expressed the need for widespread mind-control:

The generality of men must not by any means be left wholly to the workings of their own minds, to the use of their natural faculties, and to the bare convictions of their own reason; but they must be particularly taught and instructed in their duty, must have the motives of it frequently and strongly pressed and inculcated upon them with great authority...¹³³

Leslie reiterated this point in more colourful terms by claiming that an act preventing Occasional Conformity would keep the Dissenters from '*Mischief*' and was like taking a '*Sword* from a *Mad-Man*, or a *Knife* from a *Child* who *Cuts* his *Fingers*'.¹³⁴ Both of Leslie's examples imply a lack of reason and this unreasonable creature, the madman or child, needed to be controlled for their own protection as well as that of others. Some High Church polemicists took this approach to extremes. The author of *The Establishment of the Church the Preservation of the State*, for example, contended that Nonconformity was an 'Infection' of the mind which needed to be cured at all cost. The Act of Toleration was an unchristian 'Indulgence' of the Dissenters' 'Disease, and a promoting of their Malady'. Discouraging, with violent methods and, if necessary, capital punishment, the 'dreadful Sin of schism, which is undeniably prov'd upon them, and allow'd to be Damnable' was in fact a charitable act because it helped the Dissenters 'towards their immortal Happiness and Salvation'.¹³⁵ The licentiousness of conscience which the Toleration Act had established, the author insisted, must be curbed for the protection of religion and state:

Were every Man allow'd the Liberty of Living according to his own Opinion, this would certainly produce [a] great variety of Perswasions in Religion ...and effectually take away all Provision against Monsters in Morality and Belief, and give way for Idolatry and Infidelity to set up their Standards¹³⁶

¹³³ Samuel Clarke, 'A Discourse concerning the Unalterable Obligations of Natural Religion' (1706), cited in Dickinson, 53

¹³⁴ Leslie, *New Association*, 13

¹³⁵ *Establishment of the Church the Preservation of the State*, 3-4, 13

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 18

Moreover, the liberty of conscience which the Dissenters pleaded for so vigorously cut the ‘Sinews of all Authority’ and was therefore nothing more than a thinly veiled act of resistance to the government. ‘Shall this Pretence of Conscience in Inferiors’, the author wondered, ‘disannul that invincible obligation upon Governours, to support the Church, secure the State, and reclaim such as are miserably misled?’ The conclusion of the pamphlet promoted the notion that the government, in order to suppress Dissenting minds, should apply all available methods: ‘Charity and Reason loudly call for a constant use of all such means as may be proper to bridle [the Dissenters’] Folly’.¹³⁷

That this aspect of High Church polemics had not escaped Defoe is shown by his comments in his pamphlets. Not only did the High Church zealots endeavour to reduce to a minimum the Dissenters’ ‘Liberties as *English men*’, he remarked in one place, they also wanted to shackle ‘their Consciences as Christians’: ‘the Pains are Extraordinary’, Defoe noted, ‘which are taken to possess People’s Minds’.¹³⁸ One of Defoe’s earliest responses to what he had termed ‘Ecclesiastick Tyranny’ in *The True-Born Englishman* was in fact an ironic statement in *The Shortest Way*:¹³⁹ ‘How many Millions of future Souls we save from Infection and Delusion, if the present Race of poison’d Spirits were purg’d from the Face of the Land’.¹⁴⁰ However, Defoe’s attempt to expose the true meaning of High Church rhetoric had ended in a high-profile public defeat and his defence of religious toleration had barely moved beyond such general statements as ‘*the Laws of Man have no Sovereignty over the Conscience*’.¹⁴¹ Significantly, while he had produced various justifications of the right of resistance to tyrannical governments, Defoe had not justified the Dissenters’ right to toleration in a dedicated treatise, as, for example, John Locke had done with his *Letter concerning Toleration. Jure Divino*, as we shall see, was the publication which closed this gap in Defoe’s campaign in defence of Nonconformity. The poem represented Defoe’s most extensive counter attack on High Church rhetoric, in particular its preoccupation with

¹³⁷ Ibid, 18-19

¹³⁸ Defoe, *Peace without Union*, 7, 11

¹³⁹ Defoe, *True-Born Englishman*, 105, 1.758

¹⁴⁰ Defoe, *The Shortest Way*, 105

¹⁴¹ Defoe, *A Serious Inquiry*, 7

the suppression of dissenting consciences. Indeed, it will become apparent that *Jure Divino* was the *locus classicus* not only of Defoe's political ideas but also of his justification for the legality of religious dissent.

An interesting point of departure for a consideration of the role of *Jure Divino* in Defoe's Occasional Conformity campaign is the widely quoted *raison d'être* he presented for his verse satire: 'This Satyr had never been Publish'd', Defoe told his readers, 'had not the World seem'd to be going mad a second Time with the Error of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*' (35). This statement, scholars have variously pointed out, established an immediate and unambiguous link between Defoe's poem and the recent resurgence of High Church political theories. However, an important and usually neglected aspect of this statement is that it actually represented an expression of one of the dominant rhetorical strategies in *Jure Divino*: the association of the loss of reason, or madness, with High Tory ideology. This notion and the associated idea of an uncorrupted mind provided the thematic framework for the verse satire.

Defoe's opening lines, in fact, instantly established the issue of liberty of conscience as a key theme of the publication. *Jure Divino*'s dedication represented a panegyric on Defoe's imaginary patron, the 'Most Illustrious Lady Reason: First Monarch of the World'. Queen by divine right, Defoe explained, Reason ruled the world in an absolutist fashion: her government, though not tyrannical, was a 'wholly Despotick' and 'Uncontroul'd Sovereignty'(33). After praising Reason's '*Royal Justice*', Defoe, mimicking High Church rhetoric, demonstratively pledged the '*Profoundest Submission and Obedience*' to his royal mistress and expressed the hope that Reason might vindicate his work against the '*unjust Censures*' of his opponents (34). The dedication served Defoe's purpose in a number of ways. It offered a brief summary of the two main topics of the Occasional Conformity Controversy: Defoe's personified Lady Reason highlighted the notion of liberty of conscience, while the absolute nature of Reason's rule drew the reader's attention to the matter of political theory. Moreover, by combining these two issues in this way, Defoe appeared to be acknowledging the traditional Anglican notion of a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics. Importantly, however, acknowledging this integral aspect of

High Church rhetoric did not of course mean that Defoe agreed with it. The opposite, the dedication showed, was in fact the case: matters of conscience could and should guide man's actions and judgements - this was after all what Defoe was requesting Reason to do - but the reverse was highly undesirable. If Reason was denied her 'Undoubted Divine Right to a Superiority over all the Actions of Men', the result were 'Corrupted Men' like the High Church zealots (34). Thus, Defoe's dedication performed three functions at once: it immediately highlighted the subject matter of the *Jure Divino* and linked its rhetoric to that of the occasional conformity controversy; it mocked the patriarchal theories of the High-Churchmen (Defoe's first monarch was not Adam but Reason) and associated Tory ideology with a corruption of the mind; finally, it offered an initial statement of Defoe's own position on the question of liberty of conscience.

In the lengthy Preface Defoe then proceeded to offer his most extensive discussion in prose of religious toleration. He began his defence of liberty of conscience by offering an explanation for the question of why the High Churchmen might be taking such extraordinary pains to 'possess People's Minds':¹⁴²

'tis evident nothing can serve so naturally to the Hellish Purpose of subduing the Civil Rights of a Nation, as first to captivate their Minds, and infuse Notions of something Sacred, either in the Person or Authority of the Wretch they were to be oppress'd by: Thus the way is made smooth for all the horrid Excursions of the most vicious and encroaching Tyrants in the World (51)

To Defoe, there was a clear link between the High Tory doctrines of divine right and non-resistance and the 'evil Spirit' of the recent Occasional Conformity bills. The persecution of Dissent for which the bills had been designed was 'born of [the] *Civil Tyranny*' of High Tory political ideology, which had now degenerated into the worst plague of all, 'Church-Tyranny'. Persecuting 'the private Opinions of Men' was not only entirely unchristian, Defoe asserted, but it was also unlawful, since 'Toleration is now a Publick Right by Law, as it was before a Right of Conscience' (53, 55). Moreover, the Church should expect no gratitude from the Dissenters for the Act. At the Revolution the Dissenters had shown that their religion was 'Sound in Doctrine'

¹⁴² Defoe, *Peace without Union*, 11

and that they were prepared to defend the constitution and the Church against the common enemy of Popery. It was because of the Dissenters' willing cooperation that the Church had agreed to the 'Treaty of Union' which was the Toleration Act. Therefore, this Act was the Dissenters' 'free Possession without Homage or Acknowledgement' (55, 58, 60).

Given that the Preface was addressed to those who agreed with Defoe (and who therefore already fully understood) that religious toleration was a 'Native Liberty' to which all Protestants were entitled, it is perhaps not surprising to find that he made no attempt to provide an explanation for his assertion in this section of *Jure Divino* (44, 60). The theoretical justification was reserved for the satirical part of his publication, in other words, the verse part of the book. Defoe began his defence of Nonconformity by offering his readers a universal character of humanity in the 'Introduction'. Every human being, the reader learned, was composed of two opposing forces: reason and the passions. Because humans had a natural propensity to be '*Tyrants* if they cou'd' (71, l.1), reason regularly lost its struggle with the passions and, as a result, the individual became deluded by ambition and eventually ruled by vice:

Th' enlighten'd Soul, Immortal and Divine,
No more in glorious Faculties can Shine;
Eclips'd by vicious Principles and Sin,
Is Dirt without, and Darkness all within; (72, ll.44-47)

The result of vice's absolute power over the individual's 'abject Soul' was a creature entirely void of reason: 'A constant Bondage bows his Couchant Neck, *His will corrupted, and his Judgement weak*' (73, ll.70-1, 78). Unable to make rational judgements, humankind mistakenly let the 'Infernal govern the Sublime' and, instead of ruling as tyrants, they became 'general slave[s]' (72, ll.61, 64), who willingly bore their 'Chains' and indeed 'hanker[ed] for Slavery' (75, l.140). Therefore, the origins of all tyrannies could be traced back to one event: the death of reason in the individual. By explaining all moral evil in these terms, Defoe had not only constructed a 'quintessentially Whiggish world-view', he had also laid the

foundations for his attack on the High Church preoccupation with Dissenting minds.¹⁴³

The early books of *Jure Divino* continued the theme in a less abstract fashion by considering reason's role in the formation of early governments. The fundamental assertion Defoe made here was that, just as God had created humans with an untainted mind in a state of perfect freedom, so he had 'prescrib'd no Rules of Government to Man' (78n):

...as to Government, he left him Free,
Nature directed: Rules of Politie
Needless to Dictate, to his Reason known,
'Twas in himself, the *Hint was all his own* (108, ll.197-200)

God had equipped man with reason in the knowledge that it would offer him infallible guidance with regard to appropriate forms of government. Humankind's corrupt nature, however, had resulted in the frequent abuse of this 'Mighty Gift' (117, l.486):

Fools that, abandon'd by the Light of Sense,
Despise the Substance, worship the Pretence;
Contemn their native Right to Liberty,
And bow to Bondage, when they may go free. (81, ll.92-95)

Given that all humans naturally possessed tyrannical tendencies, there was, once reason had been subdued by vice, only one form of government that seemed appropriate to corrupt minds - absolute, tyrannical monarchies. Unable to recognise the 'mighty formal Cheat' which had been placed on the nation, deluded subjects worshipped the 'incarnate Devil', their tyrant king, for a saint (81, ll.110-111; 83, ll.149, 152). More significantly, however, the tyrant began to 'Preach the Religion of Obedience due, To such as no Religion ever knew' (111, ll. 314-15). It was in fact religion, Defoe contended, which made the tyrant's 'Crime compleat' (118, l.528). If an absolute monarch wanted to maintain his arbitrary rule, he needed to perpetuate the corruption of his subjects' minds and the ideal device to achieve this was the imposition on his subjects of a religion which equipped him with the '*Mask of Sacred*' (118, l.541). Once humankind was 'drawn in by [the] Pious Fraud of Words', they obediently '*quit their Senses, and their Swords*' (142, ll.471-72). Custom, the 'Bastard

¹⁴³ Furbank, 'Introduction', *Satire*, Vol.2, 5

of Antiquity', subsequently furnished the doctrine of divine right with the authority of precedent and the delusion of the people became self-perpetuating (147, l.29).

The notion that human beings 'no Religion ever knew', or, in other words, that mankind had not originally been equipped with a particular religious faith, represented a core concept in Defoe's theory of liberty of conscience. Just as God had refrained from imposing a particular form of government on humankind, so he had left man free with regard to 'rules of Worship' (108, l.193). What every human had been 'infus'd [with] by Providence', however, were the 'immortal Laws of Moral Right', which functioned as 'Guides of Conduct' (107, ll.189-90; 108, l.). Once again, it was the use of reason which allowed every individual to recognise and establish a divinely sanctioned form of religious worship: '*Reason, abstracted from the Mists of Sense, / Will read the Darkest Lines of Providence*' (132, ll.155-56). In a prose footnote, Defoe further elaborated on the importance of reason for the establishment of religions and forms of worship:

Reason would either Comprehend and Discuss all the Systems of Religion, or make it appear to be rational that others should be believed; for, to make it reasonable that Faith should supply, is the best Foundation *from without*, to build Religion upon; and this makes it plain, that Religion is from a Divine Original, that a Man cannot renounce it, but in Opposition to his Reason. (132n)

Defoe's account of the relationship between reason and religion was of course vintage Puritan thought. The Dissenting sects had split from the Church of England in the belief that she had not taken far enough the reformation of both her liturgy and hierarchy. Many Dissenters felt that the level of mediation offered by the Church was still too high and consequently emphasised the autonomy of individual consciences and, by extension, accepted that every individual enjoyed a personal relationship with God.¹⁴⁴ As we shall see, this intense spiritual individualism had important implications for Defoe's understanding of the applicability of civil laws to matters of religion.

It has been shown that Defoe's concept of political power, and the right to make laws contained in this concept, rested firmly on the importance he assigned to

¹⁴⁴ See entry for 'Puritans' in *The Oxford Companion to British History*, J. Cannon ed. (Oxford, 1997), 780-81

property. Defoe, as we have seen, argued that it was the possession of property which bestowed on the individual a political voice and the right to determine the legal settlement of his domain.¹⁴⁵ These Freeholders had, by virtue of their property, the ‘Right to direct who shall, or shall not, live upon [their] Estate, and upon what Conditions’ (174n). Other unpropertied inhabitants of his estate, Defoe explained elsewhere, merely had the status of ‘Sojourners, like Lodgers in a House’ and, as a result, had to be content with ‘such Laws as the Freeholders impose upon them, or else they must remove’.¹⁴⁶

In *Jure Divino* Defoe took this theory to the extreme by suggesting that if just one man was ‘*Landlord of the Isle, He must be King*’. As the sole owner of the nation, this landlord-monarch enjoyed an absolute and arbitrary rule: ‘No Laws cou’d ever be on him impos’d’ by his disenfranchised subjects because ‘His Claim of Right, the peoples Claim *fore-clos’d*’ (174, ll.72-73, 76-77). The tenants of this freeholder were obliged to perform an absolute, passive submission, even to the extent of nakedly baring their ‘*passive Throats*’ if the Landlord-monarch demanded so: ‘And if in Lusts and Blood he baths the Land, / We’ll cry to Heaven, but not *that Lust or Blood* withstand’ (178, ll.214-5, 221). Defoe’s single freeholder, then, would have had the right to treat his tenants as slaves. In this hypothetical scenario there was no sense of contract between the ruler and the ruled; the political power which this landlord-monarch enjoyed allowed him to lawfully control every aspect of his subjects’ lives. Defoe’s example of the single, absolute landlord sits somewhat uncomfortably in the midst of *Jure Divino*’s Whiggish contract and resistance theories. Especially the relevant sections in Book V seem out of place in a treatise which was designed to defeat the High Tory doctrines of divine right and passive obedience. Defoe, however, was merely bringing his theory of property to a logical conclusion. That he did not, in fact, consider this scenario to have any political currency is shown by a number of qualifications of this theory which occur in the book in question and throughout the rest of the verse satire.

¹⁴⁵ See above, 134

¹⁴⁶ Defoe, *Original Power*, 121

Firstly, Defoe undermined any sense of the validity of the notion of absolute monarchy by immediately pointing out that there was no such landlord-king in the modern world. This '*primitive Freeholder*' may have existed in the 'early Ages' but the absolute power he enjoyed died with him and his immediate successors (180, ll.254-69). Secondly, the relationship between the landlord-king and his subjects was not actually entirely void of binding stipulations. When a tenant wanted to lease a freeholder's land, he was obliged to either accept the conditions offered by his new landlord or 'from his improprie Lands withdraw' (179, l.237). Importantly, however, these conditions constituted a quasi-contract: 'Suppose the Landlord imposes other Conditions than the Tenant agreed to, and so injuriously treats him', Defoe declared, 'he may legally contend with his Landlord for the Performance of those Conditions, and compel him to perform [them]' (179n). Thus, the freeholder's power was not as absolute as Defoe's example initially implied.

The third of Defoe's qualification of his property theory was also the most significant limitation he imposed on the landlord-king and one which engaged directly with High Church desires of controlling and suppressing Dissenting minds. God, Defoe argued, had bestowed on humankind no particular form of government or religion. Instead, he had equipped every individual with the divine gift of reason, which instilled in him the ability to recognise appropriate governmental structures and ways of religious worship. Reason, Defoe asserted throughout *Jure Divino*, 'wou'd tell them *what they ought to do*' (130, l.104). In addition, reason taught every human the basic law of survival, that is to say to rigidly 'adhere to *Self-defence*': '*Self-Preservation* is the only Law, / That does *Involuntary Duty* Draw; / It serves for Reason and Authority' (134-5, ll.242-245). Indeed, this God-given instinct was so strong, Defoe echoed Hobbes, that '*Self-Love*'s the Ground of all the things we do' (152, l.173).

In the civil sphere, reason and self-love dictated that governments existed for the good of the people and the protection of the individual's liberty and property. This, Defoe suggested, was best (although not necessarily) achieved through a contract between the governor and the governed, which obliged the magistrate to rule according to the law. Only when the people abandoned their 'Sovereign Guide' (130,

l.106), reason, could a tyrannical and absolute government be established. With regard to rules of religious worship the matter was somewhat less straightforward, however. Reason was, of course, still the guiding light in matters of religion but, since 'Heaven has thought fit by Silence to direct' (116, l.471), and because there was no equivalent external agent such as property which invested one or several people with the power and right of judgement, there was no authority which could infallibly determine the form of worship which would ultimately lead to salvation.¹⁴⁷

Therefore, in the context of religion, the principle of self-preservation, Defoe explained, demanded that one should not rely on the questionable judgment of another. Every individual needed to hold personally, to quote one of *Jure Divino's* memorable phrases, the '*Scepter of his Mind*' (73, l.68), thus turning forms of religious worship into a matter entirely confined to the individual's reason. Indeed, there was, he insisted, 'no other Principle [than self-love], either Religious or Civil, that our Love of God is bounded by' (152n). Thus, it was the duty of every man and woman to ensure that their civil actions did not interfere negatively with their conscience, because vowing to abide by something '*with which we can't comply, Must be premeditated Perjury*' (163, ll.464-65). Abusing this God-given liberty of conscience, Defoe reminded his readers, would have serious consequences: 'he that disobeys the Heavenly Voice, Is Damn'd of Course, and goes to Hell by Choice. (170, ll.606-7).

The ambiguity surrounding what actually constituted divinely sanctioned religious worship had important implications for the scope of civil law. If religion and its forms of worship were naturally consigned to the private judgements of the individual, the law necessarily had to grant a general liberty of conscience. Enforcing religious laws on free minds was essentially an attempt by man to silence God's voice:

...if the Laws of Heaven are brought in play,
And Reason dictates where we should obey;
A limited Obedience then comes on,
And owns a greater Head than his that wears the Crown

¹⁴⁷ Defoe strongly rejected the notion that popes and monarchs were 'furnish'd with Infallibility' (205, ll.226-7).

(164, ll.492-995)

Defoe, then, clearly felt that religion did not fall within the realm of civil powers. To him, the freedom of the individual mind was an inalienable natural law. Even the 'absolute Will' of his landlord-monarch, the reader learns, might 'be disobey'd' if it encroached on reason, the divine guiding light of our consciences (170n). It was unlawful for the magistrate to interfere with matters of conscience and to restrict the individual 'where nature left them free, / And Fright Men with the Mock of Perjury' (154, ll.248-49). Therefore, if the civil peace was to be maintained, Defoe appeared to be warning High Tory politicians, it was in the interest of the government to restrict its powers to the secular sphere:

No Man can act, when *he desists to Hope*;
'Tis Hope of Heaven, for which we Heaven obey,
For Fear's a Bondage, not a Loyalty;
No Man *regards the Law* that once despairs,
The Madman his expected End prepares;
That Government which makes Men *hope in vain*,
May for a Season forc'd Submissions gain,
But ne're can long their Loyalty maintain. (152-3, ll.184-191)

It was at this point that Defoe's attack on High Church rhetoric came full circle. The social contract, *Jure Divino* contended, allowed subjects to resist their sovereign if he did not abide by the civil laws. Civil law, however, did not encompass matters of religion, which came under what one might call 'divine jurisdiction', of which the central tenet was liberty of conscience. If a monarch attempted to limit the freedom of his subjects' consciences, he was in breach of a law more fundamental than that established by contractual government: God's natural law. Religious tyranny, as the Glorious Revolution had demonstrated, would result in the same outcome as civil absolutism: 'The truest Subject will to Truth Appeal, And if that Truth's opprest, in *Truth Rebel*' (156, ll.302-3). Furthermore, the right of all law-abiding subjects to a liberty of conscience had been openly acknowledged at the Revolution in the form of Toleration Act and this right had been reiterated in the Queen's speech (55, 228n).

Yet, the recent High Church campaign against Occasional Conformity had represented a blatant attempt to '*Hood-wink Sense*, and make the Judgment *blind*'

(228, l.357). The efforts of ‘Clergy-Heroes’ like Sacheverell and Leslie to severely limit liberty of conscience and suppress Nonconforming minds had one purpose only, the establishment of a new tyranny (229, l.396; 341n):

They that *the Soul and Body* separate,
Murther the Man, and so conclude his Fate;
They that the *King and People* wou’d divide,
Murther the State, and Constitution’s void (326, ll.257-60)

The desire of some extreme Anglicans to separate the Dissenters’ minds from their bodies was thus also an attack on the very foundations of the nation. Indeed, the entire High Church campaign, Defoe pointed out, was riddled with contradictions. The Anglican zealots might have masked their language with ‘false Zeal’ and ‘double Speech’ in order to ‘delude’ Queen Anne, but their repeated assertions that the Dissenters ‘must not by any means be left wholly to the workings of their own minds, to the use of their natural faculties, and to the bare convictions of their own reason’ nevertheless betrayed the true meaning of their words:¹⁴⁸ persecution, ‘jarring Unions’ and ‘bloody Peace’ (340, ll.573-79). In this sense, Defoe mused, one might actually view the Occasional Conformity controversy as representing ‘in Miniature, What all the World’s Disasters do procure’ (229, ll.412-13), the establishment of tyrannical governments through a corruption of the subjects’ reason. Where *The Shortest Way*’s satirical exaggeration of High Church language had ended in what may be described as a rhetorical failure, *Jure Divino*, by engaging with, and analysing in detail, one of the dominant themes of Anglican anti-Dissent propaganda, made a strong case for the fundamental right to liberty of conscience of all Protestant subjects.

While *Jure Divino* triumphantly celebrated the defeat of the fourth, and for the time being, last, Occasional Conformity bill in 1704, High Church polemicists continued to demand tirelessly the extirpation of religious nonconformity.¹⁴⁹ While Sacheverell took his anti-Dissent campaign to pulpits up and down the land, Leslie expounded his High Tory views in his newspaper, *The Rehearsal*. During subsequent years, the themes of High Church propaganda, as Holmes has pointed out, remained

¹⁴⁸ Clarke, ‘Discourse’, 53

¹⁴⁹ See especially Book XI, 340-44.

largely unchanged.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, the repetitive nature of High Church rhetoric had a certain numbing effect on the nation and, despite their extremism, the ravings of High-Church preachers became such a regular feature of the politico-religious spectrum that they no longer caused much of a stir in high politics.

Defoe's confident assertion that High Church plans for an abolition of religious toleration had been an 'abortive Project' and been 'dash'd by Wisdom' (341, ll.620, 629) once and for all did, however, turn out to be premature. On the 5 November 1709, Guy Fawkes' day and the anniversary of William of Orange's landing at Torbay, Sacheverell once again decided to hang out 'the bloody flag and banner of defiance' against the Dissenters and the new Whig government in a sermon preached at St. Paul's cathedral. The printed version of the sermon appeared under the title *The Perils of False Brethren* and in it, Sacheverell, in his usual fiery manner, attacked the Dissenters for being 'Profess'd and Inveterate Enemies' to Church and state and launched a personal attack on Godolphin, the Whig secretary of state.¹⁵¹

Sacheverell's sermon quickly gained immense popularity throughout England, selling almost 100,000 copies and thus guaranteeing a readership of at least 250,000 people.¹⁵² The Whig government felt that it could not be seen to remain inactive in the face of such a vicious attack on their political principles as well as their Nonconforming allies and decided to bring impeachment proceedings for 'high crime and misdemeanour' against the Doctor. The trial, which the Whig government had hoped would allow them to defend the Revolution settlement and restate their political doctrines in a high profile context, became a legal disaster for the Whigs, as they failed to prove the allegations they had made against Sacheverell.¹⁵³ Rather than silence the High Church Tories, the entire affair, accompanied by wide-spread popular rioting in support of the Doctor, raised anxieties about the state of the Church to a 'higher pitch than ever'.¹⁵⁴ The outcome of the trial constituted a painful defeat

¹⁵⁰ Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (London, 1973), 51

¹⁵¹ Henry Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren, both in Church and State* (London, 1709), 6-7

¹⁵² Holmes, *Trial*, 75

¹⁵³ Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 138

¹⁵⁴ Holmes, 104

for the Whig government. While the Lords did in fact judge Sacheverell to be guilty by a vote of 69-52, the punishment which the Doctor received - he was forbidden to preach for three years and his sermon was burned by the common hangman - was so light that his supporters celebrated the verdict as a victory. The Whigs agreed. Robert Walpole, one of the Whig managers, typically stated that the 'punishment was reduced very low this day...they had as good as acquitted him'.¹⁵⁵ In the end, instead of strengthening the Whig interest, Sacheverell's trial, as one historian has noted, 'demonstrated the immense advantage the Tories enjoyed in regard to the religious sentiments of the political nation'.¹⁵⁶ Worse for Dissenters, however, the High Church backlash which followed the Sacheverell affair not only resulted in the downfall of the Whig ministry, it also eventually enabled the Tories to pass into law a new Occasional Conformity Bill (1711), as well as the Schism Bill (1714), which was designed to destroy the Dissenters' much valued educational system.¹⁵⁷

What has become obvious, then, is that *Jure Divino's* themes and rhetoric can be linked directly and immediately to the contents of recent High Church pamphlets against religious dissent. Rather than restricting its commentary on the Occasional Conformity controversy to only a general level, as the editor of the most recent edition of the poem has contended, the rhetoric of Defoe's verse satire rested on one of the main themes of Anglican extremist argument, the importance of reason. This strategy, as the chapter has shown, allowed Defoe simultaneously to refute the Tory doctrines of divine right and passive obedience and to establish his own theory accounting for the Dissenters' right to religious toleration. The Occasional Conformity controversy is thus at least as important for our understanding of the nature of Defoe's literary undertaking in *Jure Divino* as Clarendon's *History*.

¹⁵⁵ Walpole to Cardonnel, 21 March 1710, cited in J.H.Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole*, Volume 1 (London, 1956), 150

¹⁵⁶ J.H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725* (Harmondsworth, 1967), 158-59

¹⁵⁷ Harris, 154; Holmes, 104

Chapter IV

**‘That his Conduct might be rectified’: Jacobitism,
Social Unrest and *The Family Instructor*.**

It is not too much to say that Defoe, after 1706, ceased to be a poet. Beside *Jure Divino*, he published a further three verse tracts towards the end of that year, but the verse satire was essentially Defoe's last extensive poetic undertaking.¹ The main reason for this is perhaps that *Jure Divino* did not fulfil Defoe's expectations from an artistic and economic point of view. The first edition of poem was marred by numerous misspellings and by mis-pagination. Worse perhaps, the unusually high level of repetition, as Backscheider has pointed out, actually threatened to undermine the hoped-for accumulative effect of Defoe's political message in some place.² Moreover, the failure of some subscribers to pay the first instalment had delayed the publication of *Jure Divino* and a cheaper pirated edition appeared a day before its publication date - no profit was to come from his most important work in verse. Lastly, as a result of his imprisonment and public humiliation in the pillory, Defoe's subscribers refused to have their names printed on the page usually reserved for this purpose. The project of *Jure Divino* had thus ended in painful disappointment and it is likely that this played a significant role in Defoe's move away from verse.³

In addition, Defoe became increasingly preoccupied with producing propaganda for his employers, Harley and Godolphin. In 1706, Harley sent his writer to Edinburgh where he was to promote the proposed union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland, a lengthy campaign which eventually culminated in *The History of the Union of Great Britain* (1710).⁴ Once the Act of Union was passed in May 1707, Defoe's pamphlet output steadily decreased until it 'dropped to nearly nothing' during 1708 and 1709. Similarly, his *Review* 'meandered among a number of familiar topics'.⁵ Between December 1709 and the spring of 1710, Defoe, now employed by Godolphin, used his newspaper to support the Whig ministry through the turbulent days of the Sacheverell crisis, which eventually earned him the title of 'Champion for

¹ The poems in question are *The Vision, A Reply to the Scots Answer, to the British Vision and Caledonia*.

² Backscheider, 189

³ Ibid, 189-193

⁴ For Defoe's campaign in favour of union see Downie, *Harley*, 76-77; Backscheider, 203-26; Novak, Chapter 13; Volume 4 of *Political and Economic Writings*.

⁵ Backscheider, 262

the Cause and Party'.⁶ After the fall of the Whig government, Defoe once more sought and found employment with Harley, leader of the incoming Tory ministry. Initially, Defoe's task was to calm Whig anxieties over the credit crisis and defend Harley's moderate stance from the attacks of the High Tory pressure group, the October Club. However, an arguably more important project was to follow in the propaganda campaign in support of Harley's peace policy between 1711-13.⁷ Beside the task of loyally defending the government's plans and actions, Defoe functioned as the 'ministerial whipping-boy' who shielded his fellow propagandist Jonathan Swift from the attacks of party hacks.⁸ By the time Harley resigned from his post and retired from high politics in July 1714, Defoe had been widely discredited both as a polemicist and as a private man.

The self-styled 'True-Born Englishman', whose poem of the same name had bestowed near-celebrity status on him in 1701, was now regularly confronted with the accusation of being little more than a Janus-faced hack. The readily apparent changes in the political stance of the *Review* had publicly documented Defoe's alternation between Tory and Whig employers and earned him the label of political turncoat. '*De Foe* is very vacillant and often changes sides', one of Defoe's contemporaries asserted typically, while another contended that he was an '*Animal* who shifts his Shape oftner than *Proteus*, and goes backwards and forwards like a Hunted *Hare*; a thorough-pac'd, true-bred *Hypocrite*, an *High-Church-Man* one Day, and a *Rank Whig* the next'.⁹ Not content with deriding his political and journalistic credentials, Defoe's fellow journalists went as far as citing 'such base actions as horse theft and

⁶ 'We have got at last, when no Body thought it' in *Whig and Tory: or Wit on both Sides. Being a Collection of Poems by the Ablest Pens of the High and Low Parties, upon the Most Remarkable Occasions, from the Change of Ministry, to this Time* Vol.III (1712), 38; also see Downie, *Harley*, 124.

⁷ For accounts of Defoe's part in the peace campaign see Downie, *Harley*, Chapter 6, and Lawrence Postan III, 'Defoe and the Peace Campaign, 1710-1713: A Reconsideration,' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 27 (1963-64), 1-20

⁸ Downie, *Harley*, 148

⁹ [James Webster] *The Author of the Lawful Prejudices Defended* (1707), cited in Pat Rogers ed., *Defoe. The Critical Heritage* (London & Boston, 1972), 11; *Judas Discovr'd, and Catch'd at last: Or, Daniel de Foe in Lobs Pound* (1713), cited in *Political & Economic Writings*, Vol.1, 1

cuckolding a friend' as evidence for his depraved character.¹⁰ Prints depicting Defoe's 'Deformed head in the Pillory' were still being published almost a decade after the event, drawing attention to his 'dirt besmeare'd' appearance, his 'ugly frightful' face and his 'black' conscience, while inviting the reader to 'take a Throw' at him.¹¹ One of Defoe's fellow journalists, John Tutchin, had died after a severe beating in 1707, so the author of the above lines may well have had in mind an attack which went beyond the purely verbal.¹² After all, few would mourn the loss of a '*fawning, canting double hearted Knave*' who was 'One hour a *Whig* and the next hour a *Tory*'.¹³

With his reputation at an absolute low point, Defoe, after his immersion in the affairs of high politics for over two decades and having composed hundreds of pamphlets designed to shape public opinion, produced his longest piece of writing yet, *The Family Instructor* (1715). That fact that this text was ostensibly designed to aid the re-introduction of regular family worship is perhaps not surprising, since Defoe had previously expressed a concern over moral standards and social conduct in publications such as *The Poor Man's Plea* (1698) and *Reformation of Manners* (1702). What may be considered unusual though is the timing of the book's publication and its format. Why, one has to wonder, did Defoe spend a considerable amount of time and effort on a text of over 400 pages which seemed to be concerned exclusively with domestic religious issues, when his professional and personal life was in considerable turmoil and he was experiencing 'deep and dreadful Afflictions'?¹⁴

Defoe scholars have proposed a number of explanations for the impulse behind *The Family Instructor*. Bakscheider, for example, has suggested that the testing times Defoe was experiencing 'helped awaken his spirituality' and that the book was evidence of his own 'living faith'. Moreover, Bakscheider advances the notion that, because Defoe's children 'were at critical ages', *The Family Instructor* was 'probably

¹⁰ Bakscheider, 349

¹¹ A reproduction of a print which appeared in the *Whig's Medley* in 1711 may be found in J. Sutherland, *Defoe* (New York & London, 1971), 81.

¹² Downie, *Harley*, 103; also see Holmes, 32-3, for the occupational hazards of eighteenth-century journalism.

¹³ *The Weekly Journal; or, British Gazetteer* (8 November 1718)

¹⁴ G.H. Healey (ed), *The Letters of Daniel Defoe* (Oxford, 1955), 449

partly written as a guide' for them and that some parts 'may record some of his own experiences' with his children, such as the section on parental attempts to discipline older teenagers.¹⁵ In a similar vein but taking a somewhat wider view, Novak sees the origins of Defoe's conduct book in the spiritual depravity of the age: 'Until the end of his life, Defoe thought that contemporary Britain with its heretics, deists, and atheists formed a kind of wilderness through which the true Christian was forced to wander...*The Family Instructor* [was] calculated to war against such dangers'.¹⁶ John Richetti offers a yet more wide-ranging approach by stating that the book was Defoe's response to 'what he saw as pressing social and moral issues'. Without specifying what exactly these issues were, Richetti asserts that the purpose of *The Family Instructor* was to 'highlight resolute patriarchal authority' and provide a 'model family group under reawakened paternal authority'.¹⁷

The most common and widely accepted view of Defoe's conduct book is, however, that its origins lie in the passage of the Schism Act of 1714. This view has been propounded most forcefully by I.N. Rothman who has variously asserted that *The Family Instructor* was a 'major document in continued opposition to the Schism Act' and, indeed, that it was Defoe's 'ultimate act of opposition' to the High-Church piece of legislation.¹⁸ On close inspection, however, Rothman's hypothesis does not prove convincing. Defoe, as this chapter will show, was no longer concerned with the Schism Act at the time of the book's composition and had, in fact, come to regard the act as a toothless piece of legislation. What had begun to preoccupy Defoe, however, was the re-emergence of Jacobitism, which had become a 'continual destabilising force in British politics under the later Stuarts'.¹⁹ A detailed analysis of the political

¹⁵ Backscheider, 360-62

¹⁶ Novak, 484

¹⁷ John Richetti, 'The Family, Sex, and Marriage in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*', *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 15:2 (1982), 20-21

¹⁸ Rothman, 'Response', 212; idem, 'Defoe's *Family Instructor* in Glasgow: Dissent and the Schism Act', *Notes and Queries* 31 (September, 1984), 386; it might be noted that the link between Defoe's conduct book and the Schism Act was first made by B.G. Ivanyi. See Ivanyi's brief essay 'Defoe's Prelude to the *Family Instructor*', *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April 1966, 312. Scholars who have endorsed Ivanyi and Rothman's view more recently include Novak, 483, and Backscheider, 361.

¹⁹ Harris, 208

rhetoric of *The Family Instructor* demonstrates that Defoe's conduct book was his response to the widespread Jacobite-inspired popular unrest which characterised the period 1714-16. As such, *The Family Instructor* represented an important political act. In order to provide a sufficient context for this type of analysis, the chapter will begin with a prolonged general discussion of the extent and impact of Jacobite sympathies in Britain, before considering Defoe's reaction in his pamphlets to this subversive movement.

The first high tide of Jacobitism occurred during the early years of the reign of William III but, whilst it saw a flurry of plotting and conspiracy, the movement's lack of an organisational framework and firm social base meant that it remained largely unsuccessful.²⁰ After the accession of Queen Anne, Jacobitism suffered a temporal eclipse, largely due to the wide-spread belief amongst High Churchmen that their hopes could now be realised without a restoration of the Pretender, James Frances Edward. However, with High Church desires left unfulfilled, the Tory triumph in the Sacheverell trial triggered a second significant wave of Jacobite activity in England and Wales between 1710-15.²¹ The unpopularity of the Whigs and a general turn towards Toryism resulted in the party's overwhelming election victory of 1710, bringing with it a correlated rise in Jacobite MPs. Moreover, with James II's reign having become little more than a distant memory, the unpopular prospect of another foreign king - the Act of Settlement had determined that the Elector of Hanover, Georg Ludwig, was to succeed Anne - generated a sense of nostalgia around the deposed king's exiled son amongst large sections of the British population. Thus, during the last years of Anne's reign the Jacobites not only enjoyed a greater presence

²⁰ Rose, 48-54; Harris, 218

²¹ There is some disagreement amongst historians concerning the dating of the second period of increased Jacobite activity. G.V. Bennett suggests the period 1710-15 ['English Jacobitism, 1710-1715: Myth and Reality', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 32 (1982)], which I have adopted; P.K. Monod proposes 1714-23 [*Jacobitism and the English people, 1688-1788* (Cambridge, 1989), 11]; Hayton refers to the years 1711-14 [*Commons* Vol.1, 478]. Importantly for this study, the year of the composition of volume one of *The Family Instructor*, 1714, is included in all three suggestions.

at the centre of politics, they also found a cultural climate which allowed them to express their political convictions more openly than perhaps ever before.²²

The question of what actually made someone a 'Jacobite' is, of course, itself problematic, since the level and nature of support for James varied drastically: some Jacobite sympathisers 'refused to take oaths, some even became involved in plots to restore James II and his son; others did nothing but drink toasts or purchase engraved glass with subversive emblems, or did nothing at all.'²³ Indeed, by the end of Anne's reign, those Jacobites who 'looked with more than sentimental interest across the Channel' and who firmly subscribed to divine-right monarchy and Stuart legitimism had become a minority within the Jacobite movement.²⁴ In contrast, the majority of those who displayed at least some sympathy for the 'king over the water' rested their Jacobitism on political expedience, appropriating the movement to express their growing disillusionment with developments after 1688.²⁵ Thus, popular Jacobitism during the final years of Anne's reign largely represented an ideology of opposition instead of an expression of sincerely felt loyalty for the exiled Stuarts.

Yet, while individuals might have had widely differing reasons for expressing their support for James, the Jacobite movement in its entirety began to be perceived as a real threat to the English succession as established by law. For a substantial period of time during the final years of Anne's reign, both James' supporters and their Hanoverian opponents felt that the prospect of a future king James III was becoming increasingly more real. A number of political developments appeared to offer conclusive evidence for this view. The winter of 1711-12 had seen an open breach between the Tory ministry and the Elector of Hanover over the peace negotiations with France.²⁶ Subsequently, a growing number of discontented, pro-Hanoverian Tory MPs deserted the government, thus weakening its ability to control parliament. To compensate for the losses, the leader of the ministry, Harley (now Earl of Oxford),

²² Harris, 219

²³ Hayton, *Commons* Vol.1, 476

²⁴ Hatton, 130, 172

²⁵ Harris, 210, 228-9; also D. Szechi, *The Jacobites. Britain and Europe 1688-1788* (Manchester & New York, 1994), 24-25, 75

²⁶ Holmes, 93-4

began to negotiate with the Jacobite court in France with the aim of securing the support of the 50 or so British parliamentary Jacobites, who had begun to act as an independent unit in the Commons. It was not until early 1714 that James turned to other men for support, after realising that Harley's repeated promises of advancing a plan for his official acknowledgment as Anne's lawful successor had never been sincere.²⁷

Moreover, the government's repeated contact with the Jacobite court and its clandestine peace negotiations with France, in particular Henry St John's close association with the French Foreign Minister Torcy, raised fears among the Whigs and the Hanoverian Tories that, despite its assurances to the contrary, the ministry would disregard the Act of Settlement and offer the British throne to James on the Queen's death. In their eyes, the breach between the government and the House of Hanover had clearly shown Harley and his ministry to be drifting towards a Jacobite solution to the succession. Outside parliament, all sections of society, Defoe noted, became preoccupied with the possibility of a future king James III.²⁸ By the spring of 1714 it was widely believed that the government had indeed produced a detailed plan for a Jacobite coup on Anne's death, which was supported even by the queen herself.²⁹ One Whig ballad of this period, entitled 'A Peace, which our *Hanover's* Title destroys', gave expression to this perception by urging, '*Hast over, Hanover, fast as you can over; / Put in your Claim, before 'tis too late*'.³⁰ With the queen's health deteriorating rapidly in 1713, 'something like panic' spread through the nation and even the best-informed observers were 'convinced that civil war was inevitable'.³¹ The succession, as one pro-Hanoverian commentator noted, was 'the circumstance that sits heaviest upon the hearts of all thinking and serious men'.³²

²⁷ D. Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics* (Edinburgh, 1984), 182-91

²⁸ Daniel Defoe, *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover* (1713), xx

²⁹ Holmes, 93-94; Bennett, 'English Jacobitism', 138

³⁰ Cited in Andrew Starkie, 'William Law and Cambridge Jacobitism, 1713-16,' *Historical Research* 75:190 (November 2002), 456

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Edmund Gibson to Bishop Nicolson, 10 June 1712, cited in Holmes, 55

Jacobite writers naturally seized on the wave of popular support for James, exuding ‘an air of confidence and impending triumph’ in their publications.³³ Formal Jacobite tracts, such as George Harbin’s well-known *The Hereditary Right to the Crown of England* (1713), continued the revival of the High Church theories of divine right and passive obedience which Sacheverell’s trial had initiated.³⁴ In this context, the notion that hereditary right was the only legal claim to the country’s throne necessarily became a focal point for pro-Stuart propagandists. Declaring the Act of Settlement void, Harbin asserted that ‘the Kings of *England* have Regal Authority, before a Parliament is called: Their Authority therefore is not the Product or Effect of Parliament’.³⁵ The Revolution settlement, he continued, therefore had no implications for the succession, because ‘the Deposition of a lawful King... is Unlawful and Null’. Harbin’s conclusion confidently outlined the seemingly inevitable:

All that I shall here observe is, that whatever Power Kings, with their Parliaments, may have *de Jure*... it is however true *in Fact*, that no Act of *Limitation* could ever yet effectually exclude the next Heir by *Proximity* of Blood; but sooner or later, Providence has hitherto so ordered it, that those who were first in Line of Descent, have at length gain’d the Crown, notwithstanding all Parliamentary Provisions to the Contrary.³⁶

Defoe’s old enemy, Charles Leslie, echoed these sentiments almost verbatim. In *The Old English Constitution* he wrote that ‘the Succession of the Crown of *England* by the Laws of God and Nature is inseparably annexed to proximity of Blood;... all Statute-Laws [i.e. the Act of Settlement] contrariant to the Laws of God and Nature are *Ipsa facto* null and void’.³⁷ Just as Harbin had done, Leslie was predicting that the return of a Stuart king was inevitable:

It is the very Footstep of a Law founded in Nature, that a King displac’d is never in a State of Rest, till it be reduced to its Native Centre. For tho’ human Laws may be worn out by Desuetude or tacit Consent, yet the Institutions of Nature will never be abolish’d by the longest Tracts of

³³ Bennett, ‘English Jacobitism’, 138; idem, *Tory Crisis*, 174

³⁴ Holmes, xxxii

³⁵ George Harbin, *The Hereditary Right to the Crown of England* (1713), 5

³⁶ Ibid, 6, 185

³⁷ Charles Leslie, *The Old English Constitution, In Relation to the Hereditary Succession of the Crown Antecedent to the Revolution in 1688* (1714), 3

time, but will retain their natural Inclination of returning; and of this kind is the Law of Succession to the Crown by the right Heir.³⁸

The Jacobite movement was thus an unstoppable force of nature, which would give back to James that which was rightfully his. The Revolution and its legal settlement, Stuart legitimists believed, had been ‘a gigantic fraud perpetrated on a supine nation’, but the republican conspiracy of the Whigs was soon to be exploded to herald a new Stuart age.³⁹

The Jacobite pamphleteers were of course asserting nothing new; the legitimacy of the events of 1688-89, and by implication William III’s right to the English throne, had been questioned in innumerable High Tory and Jacobite pamphlets during the past two decades, and the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience had already seen one revival at the turn of the century.⁴⁰ Whig writers, including Defoe, had countered these publications with their own political treatises, both in the form of prose pamphlets and satirical verse. There was, however, one significant difference which made the resurgence of Jacobite sympathies at the end of Anne’s reign a far more potent force, namely its popular element briefly referred to above. After the queen’s fragile health had taken another turn for the worse, even the ordinary people of England realised that soon the country would be faced with ‘its great decision’.⁴¹

Significantly, the prospect of welcoming George I, Elector of Hanover, to the English throne was not a popular one. The accession of the House of Hanover was to end the reign of the Stuart dynasty, which had ruled over 300 years in some parts of the United Kingdom and which still held a sentimental appeal to many people. The fact that there were no fewer than 58 other excluded (Catholic) candidates with a more immediate claim to the throne did little to improve the Elector’s popularity. In addition, George’s physical appearance failed to endear him to his English subjects: he was relatively short, possessed a long and pointed nose, and often wore a wooden

³⁸ Ibid, 6

³⁹ Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 159. Kenyon makes this statement with reference to Charles Hornsby’s *A Caveat against the Whigs in a Short Historical View of Their Transactions*, Vols.1-4, (1710-14). Hornsby’s sentiments may be seen as representative of the Jacobite attitude toward the events of the last two decades.

⁴⁰ Clark, *English Society*, 123-24; also see Chapter III

⁴¹ Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, 173

expression on his face during public engagements.⁴² On these occasions, moreover, his manner could be 'formal, stiff and cold, sometimes positively ice'.⁴³ The king's perceived distance from his English subjects and his inability to speak English led some contemporary commentators, most famously Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to question the new king's intellectual capacities and describe him as a 'blockhead'.⁴⁴ Finally, George's public image was shaped further by a 'sinister' aspect of his personal life: whilst not scrupling to keep mistresses himself, he had divorced his wife for an alleged act of infidelity and subsequently kept her permanently confined.⁴⁵

Popular hostility towards the House of Hanover represented a potential area of significant growth for the Jacobite movement and from 1714, Jacobite agitators made a concerted effort to exploit latent anti-Hanoverian sentiments amongst the lower classes through 'itinerant "singing men", who performed seditious ballads and poems' in alehouses and taverns.⁴⁶ Similarly to Leslie's and Harbin's recent publications, they simply revisited and extended old ground. The first wave of Jacobitism in the early 1690s had produced numerous ballads and songs or revived older verse, such as the notorious Civil War song, 'The King shall enjoy his own again', which were dispersed by James II's supporters to a popular audience in order to animate 'discontented persons...to rise in the holydayes'.⁴⁷ In the political and cultural climate of the final years of Anne's reign the public expression of Jacobite sympathies had once again become acceptable, and this traditional, essentially oral form of asserting one's allegiance seemed the ideal vehicle to bring Jacobitism to the people.

Significantly, popular forms of verse had one important advantage over polished propaganda tracts: their lack of theoretical content meant that their message was often simple and therefore easily internalised. For example, the recurring Jacobite theme of

⁴² Hatton, 170-171

⁴³ W.A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England 1714-1760* (London, 1977), 172

⁴⁴ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'Account of the Court of George I', A. Browning (ed) *English Historical Documents* (London, 1953), 100; in his foreword to the new edition, Jeremy Black highlights that Hatton was mistaken in claiming that George was able to speak English. See Hatton, 2

⁴⁵ Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 172

⁴⁶ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 48; the following account of Jacobite verse is based on Monod, 45-69.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 47, 172

the rightful monarch (an allusion to the three most recent Stuart monarchs, Charles I, James II and now James III) entirely at the mercy of a powerful Satanic faction (the Civil War parliamentarians and their successors, the Whigs) not only absolved the people as a whole from complicity in the sin of rebellion but, by identifying a distinct group of malicious conspirators, offered a highly emotive target for popular discontent which needed little further justification. The symbolic leaders of the Whig faction were of course the men who had usurped the place of God's anointed, William III and George I. Predictably, both men were regularly depicted as devils in Jacobite cosmology: while William represented a sinister, Satanic parricide who showed signs of a sexual aberration, George was 'more of a mischievous, saturnalian imp', a cuckolded fool and 'second-rate substitute for a king'.⁴⁸ In contrast, James was regularly associated with the figure of the 'lost lover' in a story of unrequited love or, more significantly, regarded as a Christ-like figure, who, like his biblical counterpart, had been betrayed and disowned, but would rise again to reclaim his divinely ordained status. Therefore, some Jacobite poets claimed, a Stuart restoration was in fact the 'religious duty' of the nation. By 1714, popular Jacobite verse had moulded James into the 'fairy tale monarch' which George would never become. In a telling reflection of contemporary anti-Hanoverianism, disaffected Londoners had embraced Jacobite verse and its political extremism so eagerly by 1716 that ballad-hawking reached epidemic proportions, prompting an official response from the Lord Mayor.⁴⁹

Popular disaffection did not merely express itself in Jacobite pamphlets, ballads and songs, however, as the country experienced a series of serious public disturbances between 1714-16. The first significant anti-Hanoverian unrest occurred on 20 October 1714, the day of George's coronation. In over twenty towns in the south, west and, to a lesser extent, north of England, loyalist celebrations were disrupted by discontented mobs.⁵⁰ On the surface, the disturbances were High Church rather than Jacobite in

⁴⁸ Ibid, 55,57,59

⁴⁹ Ibid, 47-8, 53, 63-5; Nicholas Rogers, 'Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London', *Past and Present* 79 (1978), 70

⁵⁰ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 173-79; Monod's assertion that the coronation riots were restricted to southern and western regions of England has recently been shown to be incorrect. There were at least three outbursts of popular protest in the north (Liverpool, York and Durham) in 1714, all of which came in response to the

nature: slogans typically celebrated the High Church icon Henry Sacheverell, expressed strongly xenophobic and anti-Whig sentiments and insulted the new king. As the traditional allies of the regicidal Whigs, the Dissenters naturally attracted the rioters' attention and, in addition to verbal abuse, some meeting houses were damaged. While overt proclamations of Stuart loyalty were relatively rare, there can be little doubt, as Monod has pointed out, that the protestors were fully aware that their actions boosted the hopes of James and his supporters.⁵¹ Remarkably, London, which had become a 'stronghold of militant Toryism' since the Sacheverell trial, remained 'strikingly immune from large-scale demonstrations', largely due to organised militia patrols and the public recognition of Hanover by leading Tory politicians, such as Harley and St. John.⁵²

In 1715, public disturbances became more severe and more openly Jacobite. The General Election during January and February resulted in a Whig triumph, which had only been possible because of the fragmentation of the Tory party and George's purge of Tory office holders following the death of Anne.⁵³ The previous two elections of 1710 and 1713 had in fact produced convincing Tory majorities, indicating the overwhelming strength of public support enjoyed by the party.⁵⁴ Significantly, however, the Whig victory at the polls had 'not filtered down the social scale' and Tory supporters who had already been angered by the king's actions were further aggrieved by the ministry's plan to impeach Anne's Tory ministers.⁵⁵ Some prominent Tory leaders became so desperate that they approached James with an offer of support for a rising in the west of England.⁵⁶

From the spring of 1715 every public anniversary precipitated flamboyantly anti-ministerial demonstrations. On 8 March, the anniversary of William III's death

accession and coronation of George I. See J.D. Oates, 'Jacobitism and Popular Disturbances in Northern England, 1714-1719', *Northern History* 41:1 (2004), 114.

⁵¹ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 174

⁵² Rogers, 'Popular Protest', 70-1, 83

⁵³ W.A. Speck, 'The General Election of 1715,' *English Historical Review* 90 (1975), 507-22; also see Holmes' essay 'Harley, St John and the Death of the Tory Party' in *Politics, Religion and Society*, 139-60.

⁵⁴ Harris, 199

⁵⁵ Rogers, 'Popular Protest', 73

⁵⁶ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 179-80

and Anne's accession, a public demonstration to commemorate the late Stuart queen was accompanied by bell-ringing and flag-waving. On 23 April supporters of the late ministry lit bonfires and noisily celebrated the anniversary of Anne's coronation, consuming wine, intimidating residents and parading through the streets of London shouting High Church slogans. Some of the banners displayed on this occasion hinted at the rumour that Anne had agreed to a restoration of James. Six days later the birthday of the Duke of Ormond offered the next opportunity for public demonstrations. The Tories' beloved general had become a symbol of the party's peace policy and was revered for his probity; he had also been one of George's first dismissals. Bonfires were lit to shouts of 'High Church and Ormonde'.⁵⁷ It might be remarked that Ormonde's popularity has been shown to have been short-lived and that his political influence was less than previously assumed.⁵⁸

While the early demonstrations of 1715 were relatively well-controlled and still mainly attacked the new government rather than the new king, the nation-wide riots of 28-29 May were characterised by an increasing violence and an openly Jacobite stance. Incidents of fighting occurred between pro-Hanoverians who were celebrating George's birthday on the twenty-ninth and Jacobite rioters who cried 'No Hanoverian, No Presbyterian government' and demanded a second restoration.⁵⁹ The celebrations of the following day, Restoration day, reinforced the connection between the riots and popular Jacobitism. As on the previous day, James III was proclaimed, effigies of the symbol of Puritanism, Oliver Cromwell, and prints of William III were burnt, the windows of those who refused to illuminate them in support of a Stuart restoration were broken, and nonconformist meeting-houses systematically gutted and set alight. Similar demonstrations of popular disaffection and Stuart loyalty occurred on 10 June, James' birthday.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid, 180; George Rudé, *Hanoverian London 1714-1808* (London, 1971), 207

⁵⁸ D. Hayton, 'Dependence, clientage and affinity: the political following of the second Duke of Ormonde,' in T. Barnard and J. Fenlon (eds), *The Dukes of Ormonde 1610-1745* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2001), 211-242

⁵⁹ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 181

⁶⁰ Rogers, 'Popular Protest', 72-73; Monod, *Jacobitism*, 181-83; Oates, 'Jacobitism', 199-20

By July 1715 the Whig government had become so alarmed by the Jacobite-inspired disturbances that it hastily passed the draconian Riot Act, which stated that, 'if twelve or more persons, tumultuously assembled, refused to disperse within one hour of a magistrate reading a proclamation, they would be guilty of felony and could face the death penalty'.⁶¹ Yet, the Whigs' efforts to curb popular unrest only served to further inflame the situation and the riots continued.⁶² In addition, Scottish discontent with the Union and English policy was steadily growing and many embittered Scots turned to Jacobitism. Their wish to reverse the Union eventually culminated in a major challenge to the Hanoverian monarchy, the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. For a brief time at least, there was a very real prospect that Scotland would 'quickly and completely become a Jacobite stronghold and the nation's independence re-established'.⁶³

That the resurgence of Jacobitism would draw a response from Defoe is hardly surprising, given that, as one scholar has shown, an 'unrelenting opposition to Jacobitism' was a constant aspect of his life as a political writer.⁶⁴ Between February and April 1713, Defoe launched a sustained attack on the idea that Britain could benefit from a Stuart restoration in a series of three pamphlets, entitled *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover; And What If the Pretender should come?*; and *An Answer to a Question that No Body thinks of, viz. But what if the Queen should die?* The first two pamphlets may be viewed as Defoe's highly ironical response to the Jacobite habit of fashioning James into a fairy tale monarch. A 1714 tract by Charles Leslie provides a useful brief summary of the attributes generally assigned to the exiled Stuart by his British supporters. Beside his commendable physical characteristics, James, unlike George I, had a 'graceful mien' and an exact understanding of merciful, yet firm kingship. According to Leslie, he was 'always cheerful', 'thoughtful' and 'very affable', with a 'visible magnanimity of spirit', 'good sense', 'sweetness of temper' and 'no sort of bigotry about him'. In short,

⁶¹ Cannon (ed), *Oxford Companion to British History*, 808

⁶² Rudé, *Hanoverian London*, 207-8

⁶³ Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 253-55, 392-94

⁶⁴ David Macarec, *Daniel Defoe and the Jacobite Movement* (Salzburg, 1980), 1

James was nobody's fool but, at the same time, no British Protestant had to fear this benevolent man, whose 'principles are true to monarchy and safe for government'.⁶⁵

Defoe, predictably, disagreed. The notion that a future king James III would not follow in his father's footsteps and abolish the Protestant religion was laughable, especially in the light of his refusal to renounce his Catholicism and join the Anglican Church. In order to demonstrate just how absurd the Jacobites' idealised picture of James was, Defoe resorted to extreme irony and hyperbole. Perhaps 'a little *French Slavery*', he suggested, 'may teach us not to *Over (Under) Value* our Liberties':⁶⁶

[W]hat is the Protestant Religion to us? Had we not much better be Papists than Traytors? Had we not much better deny our God, our Baptism, our Religion and our Lives, than deny our lawful Prince, our next Male in a Right Line? If Popery comes, Passive Obedience is still our Friend; we are Protestants; we can Die, we can Burn, we can do any Thing but Rebel...⁶⁷

Yet, while the restoration of a Catholic monarchy was sure to be accompanied by some undesirable side-effects, James' firm government would more than compensate for any disadvantages by generating the much longed-for domestic peace. Defoe's list of the "benefits" of a Stuart monarchy was again characterised by a highly revealing irony: as an enslaved Catholic nation, Britain would no longer have to fight expensive wars to protect its liberties; indeed, 'the Slavery of Religion' would be taken off entirely; the Union with Scotland dissolved; MPs would save money as they no longer had to travel to Westminster; the national debt would be reduced as annuities and interest would no longer be paid, while the payment of taxes would be continued; a standing army would be established to prevent mobs; finally, the freedom of the press would be destroyed to preserve the domestic peace.⁶⁸ Moreover,

⁶⁵ Charles Leslie, *A letter from Mr. Lesly to a Member of Parliament in London* (1714) in A. Browning (ed), *English Historical Documents* Vol. VIII (1953), 910-11

⁶⁶ Daniel Defoe, *And What if the Pretender Should Come?* (1713), *Political and Economic Writings*, Vol.1, 196-97. Novak has pointed out that the parentheses Defoe inserted showed that 'he was uncertain whether his audience would understand his irony' (423).

⁶⁷ Daniel Defoe, *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover* (1713), *Political and Economic Writings*, Vol.1, 172

⁶⁸ Daniel Defoe, *And What if the Pretender Should Come?*, 193-205

since the protection of the people was close to the Pretender's heart, he will 'suffer none to Insult or Plunder the City *but himself*'.⁶⁹

Defoe's irony was, of course, an intentionally poor disguise for his actual message: James was not going to be the fairy tale king of Jacobite folklore but a ruthless tyrant, who was certain to revoke the liberties which the Glorious Revolution had secured for every Englishman. Defoe's exasperation with Jacobite idealisations of James eventually resulted in a complete breakdown of his ironical stance. The final pages of *Reasons against the Succession* represented a straightforward attack on British Jacobitism: if the nation could not remedy itself of this 'Disease of Stupidity', then perhaps James should be allowed to claim the British throne, so that Britain 'may see what Slavery means'.⁷⁰

Defoe's last of the three 1713 pamphlets on the topic of Jacobitism, *An Answer to a Question that No Body thinks of, viz. But what if the Queen should die?*, continued the more solemn tone of the final paragraphs of *Reasons against the Succession*. Indeed, this time Defoe's irony did not extend beyond the pamphlet's title, which, as one of his biographers has highlighted, was 'absolutely comic', since the issue of the succession was, in fact, on everyone's mind.⁷¹ Defoe began the pamphlet by rejecting the recent rumour that the queen's government were prepared to disregard the Act of Settlement and had instead laid plans to offer the throne to James on Anne's death. No-one, Defoe asserted defiantly, should believe that Harley's 'Ministry are in any Kind, or with any Prospect near, or remote, Acting for, or with a Design or View to bring in the Pretender'.⁷² Yet, in the face of resurgent Jacobitism, more needed to be done to safeguard Britain's Protestant succession. The nation, he highlighted the purpose of his pamphlet, needed to be made aware of 'all Sorts of dreadful Calamities they will fall into at Her Majesty's Death, if something be not done to Settle them before Her Death'.⁷³ To achieve this, Defoe worked his

⁶⁹ Ibid, 204

⁷⁰ Defoe, *Reasons against the Succession*, 175

⁷¹ Backscheider, 322

⁷² Daniel Defoe, *An Answer to a Question that No Body thinks of...* (1713), *Political and Economic Writings*, Vol.1, 211

⁷³ Ibid, 227

way through a list of points which roughly correspond to those associated with the Whigs' Revolution Principles.⁷⁴ In particular Britain's limited monarchy and religion were facing an 'imminent Danger' from the Jacobite threat.⁷⁵ Recent rumours regarding the succession as well as the Jacobite-inspired expressions of popular disaffection with the House of Hanover clearly represented a significant concern to Defoe.

Defoe's plan of highlighting the dangers of Jacobitism spectacularly backfired. A small group of Whig writers filed a complaint against Defoe soon after the publication of the last pamphlet.⁷⁶ These Whig writers were themselves under prosecution for seditious libel and hoped to embarrass a government-protected writer and his patrons by putting Defoe into the same position. Amid much publicity, Defoe was arrested and committed to Newgate prison towards the end of April. 'The indictment accused him of being a Jacobite intent upon casting doubt on Anne's title and "subverting" the Protestant succession'.⁷⁷ The prosecution had, of course, chosen to read various sections of the pamphlets literally and out of context, thus conjuring up the above allegations. The case was delayed several times and Defoe spent a number of months being harassed by the prosecution, but the pamphlets were eventually judged to be libellous. Defoe was once again committed to prison. However, in contrast to the punishment he had to suffer for *The Shortest Way* a decade earlier and once again after some intervention on Harley's part, he received a direct pardon from the queen in October 1713. Potentially, the case could have had fatal consequences. Had the prosecution been successful in proving their original accusation of treason, Defoe might well have 'come to be hang'd, drawn, and quarter'd', as one of the judges informed him at the trial.⁷⁸

Astonishingly, within a year of his pardon Defoe was once again in trouble for commenting on Jacobitism-related issues. He had been working as a writer and editor

⁷⁴ Ibid, 212-24

⁷⁵ Ibid, 227

⁷⁶ This section is based on Paula R. Backscheider's account of Defoe's prosecution for the succession pamphlets (323-28).

⁷⁷ Ibid, 325

⁷⁸ Novak, 429

on the Whig *Flying Post*, and in August 1714 a statement appeared in the newspaper which more or less openly accused one of the Lords Regent, the Earl of Anglesey, of being a Jacobite.⁷⁹ Offended by the accusation, Anglesey demanded the persecution of the person responsible and Defoe was in custody by 28 August. He was released on bail after less than two weeks but had to wait almost an entire year for the trial, which, in the main, constituted a retrial for the earlier three succession pamphlets.⁸⁰ From a legal point of view the case proved to be straightforward, since the manuscript had been in Defoe's hand. He was found guilty of publishing libellous materials and sentenced to receive a heavy fine, to be whipped from Newgate to Charing Cross, and to be imprisoned for two years. The sentence was postponed until the following term, enough time for Defoe to strike a new deal with the government and escape punishment. However, while he might have escaped death and imprisonment, the two cases involving accusations of Jacobitism made by and against Defoe did little to improve his already heavily damaged reputation.

Defoe's position as a much maligned, unemployed and unprotected polemicist at the end of Anne's reign was made even more precarious by the dramatic changes which were occurring in the political landscape following the accession of the Elector of Hanover, Georg Ludwig, on 1 August 1714. The Tories' failure to reject unanimously the claims to the British throne made by James II's son, James Francis Edward Stuart, and the deep commitment to the Hanoverian succession shown by the Whigs, had predetermined which party was to enjoy royal favour long before the new king arrived in England. Between the queen's death and the dissolution of parliament in January 1715, George ensured that 'whole departments of State were purged of Tories and staffed with loyal Whigs', while in 'the provinces Tory lords lieutenants and flagrantly Jacobite justices of the peace were removed and replaced with men whose loyalty to the Protestant Succession was above suspicion'.⁸¹ Mere dismissals, however, did not appease the anger of the king's new ministers; the buoyant Whigs wanted revenge. Encouraged by George, who, in his proclamation for a new parliament, 'clearly, if obliquely, stigmatized' the leaders and the Tory majority in the

⁷⁹ This account is based on Sutherland *Defoe*, 205-6, 213-14, and Novak, 457-59, 471

⁸⁰ Backscheider, 378-82

⁸¹ Speck, 'General Election', 507, 518

old Parliament as Jacobite traitors, impeachment proceedings were brought against Harley (now Earl of Oxford), the Duke of Ormonde and Henry St John (now Viscount Bolingbroke).⁸² Oxford was prepared to sit out the storm and was confined to the Tower for two years, while awaiting his trial for the charge of high treason. In contrast, Bolingbroke and Ormonde, anticipating arrest, fled into arms of the Pretender, thus reinforcing the Whigs' contention that the late ministry, and indeed all Tories, were covert Jacobites.

Defoe's association with Oxford was well known and any accusations of Jacobitism against his patron necessarily also reflected on him. In 1713 Oxford had been able to save Defoe from imprisonment after the Whigs had brought a spurious case of pro-Stuart propaganda against him. During the early months of George's reign, however, Defoe no longer enjoyed the privilege of ministerial protection and, as a result, began to concentrate almost exclusively on clearing Oxford's and, by implication, his own name of the accusations the Whigs had made against him. His pamphlets, *Advice to the People of Great Britain*, the three parts of *The Secret History of the White Staff* and *The Secret History of the Secret History*, all published between September 1714 and January 1715, were, in the main, designed to refute the accusations of Jacobitism levelled at Oxford. The former leader of the government, Defoe repeatedly insisted, was no Jacobite himself; he had merely used the Jacobites to gain political advantages. Oxford had 'views quite different' from those in favour of a Stuart restoration and from the start he had aimed to eventually overthrow them.⁸³ It was, in fact, the Whigs' refusal to collaborate with him which had forced him to seek the 'Assistance of *Jacobite* Instruments, in the necessary Opposition which he was oblig'd to make to the Party who set up against him'.⁸⁴ Yet, while he had utilised their political strength to his own advantage, Oxford 'dup'd and bubbled' the Jacobites. His tactics had been a matter of keeping one's enemies close to control them more effectively. Significantly, he had 'broke the Measures of the Pretender in *Scotland*' by ordering the Scottish nobles to attend Parliament, thus forcing them to declare their allegiance to Queen Anne. In addition, in the recent peace the Jacobites

⁸² Archibald S. Foord, *His Majesty's Opposition 1714-1830* (Oxford, 1964), 15

⁸³ Daniel Defoe, *Advice to the People of Great Britain* (1714), 9

⁸⁴ Daniel Defoe, *The Secret History of the White Staff, Part II* (1714), 9

‘found their Cause was wholly abandon’d’, as it had virtually cut off French support.⁸⁵ There was no doubt that Oxford had always been ‘immoveably attach’d to the Interest of the Protestant Succession, and inseparably engaged to that of the illustrious House of *Hanover*’.⁸⁶ Daniel Defoe, the chorus of his pamphlets went, had certainly not been working for a Jacobite.

However, fully aware of the ‘gangland quality of high-political life’ during these turbulent months and in anticipation of Whig vengeance, Defoe appears to have had little faith in his rhetoric concerning Oxford’s innocence and consequently, he repeatedly advocated leniency.⁸⁷ The new era, he insisted, should see a general amnesty for the members of the former government. For the sake of the ‘publick peace’, he argued, former offences against Hanoverian policy and loyalty, even if they had betrayed a sympathetic attitude towards the Pretender, should now be forgotten, as long as a sound allegiance to the new king was evident. King George, Defoe stated hopefully, will ‘treat us with all that Clemency, Lenity, Tenderness and Moderation that we can desire’ and not ‘confine himself to the narrow Measures of a Party’.⁸⁸ As for the Whigs, they should remember how Oxford had treated his political enemies in the past: ‘it was apparent, that Victory obtained, he [Oxford] had no farther Schemes of Opposition to pursue; that it was not in his Design to crush and ruin the Persons he struggled with’.⁸⁹

The *Secret History* series was followed by Defoe’s apology for his own life, *An Appeal to Honour and Justice, tho’ it be of his Worst Enemies*, which appeared in February 1715. This time Defoe directly washed his hands of the Jacobite connection of which the late government and he himself had been accused: ‘neither did *I* ever Sin against the Protestant Succession of *Hanover* in Thought, Word, or Deed; and if the Ministry did, *I* did not see it, or so much as suspect them of it’.⁹⁰ In contrast to public

⁸⁵ Ibid, 9, 23-33; Part III of the *Secret History* generally reiterated the points made in the two earlier parts.

⁸⁶ Daniel Defoe, *Secret History of the White Staff, Part I*, 2nd ed (1714) 36

⁸⁷ Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy – The Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge, 1982), 183

⁸⁸ Defoe, *Advice to the People of Great Britain*, 22,26

⁸⁹ Defoe, *Secret History, Part I*, 20

⁹⁰ Defoe, *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, 172, 175-77, 186

perception, Defoe insisted that he had remained steadfast to Whiggish ideals: 'I never once changed my Opinion, my Principles, or my Party; and let what will be said of changing Sides, this I maintain, That I never once deviated from the Revolution Principles, nor from the Doctrine of Liberty and Property, on which it was founded.'⁹¹ Defoe's effort to improve Oxford's and his own position under the new regime did, of course, prove to be wholly futile.

In the midst of these damage-limitation activities, Defoe produced and published anonymously a text which seems oddly out of place amongst the pamphlets discussed above, namely *The Family Instructor*. Defoe's first full-length didactic work was advertised in the press as early as late January 1715 and probably published close to this time.⁹² The most widely endorsed explanation as to why Defoe published a conduct book at this time is Rothman's claim that *The Family Instructor* was Defoe's reaction to the Schism Act of May 1714.⁹³ The act had been Bolingbroke's final attempt to wrest ministerial control out of Oxford's hands and widely supported by High Church Tories.⁹⁴ It was designed to administer a mortal blow to the Dissenters' educational facilities by preventing nonconformists educating their children outside their homes. According to the Bill, teachers, except in the universities and those who taught at home, had to apply for licenses, which would only be granted if they had taken the Anglican sacrament within the previous year. A licensed teacher who subsequently attended non-Anglican worship was to be disqualified indefinitely. Further punishments included a substantial fine and imprisonment 'without bail or mainprize for the space of three months'.⁹⁵ *The Family Instructor*, Rothman suggests, was Defoe's 'purposeful effort to attract readers opposed to the Schism Act and to admit to private homes a family instructor that could not be denied' by the authorities. Strong support for the idea that Defoe's book was a response to the Schism Act designed predominantly for Dissenters is, according to Rothman, provided by the

⁹¹ Ibid, 191

⁹² I.N. Rothman, 'Defoe Census of *The Family Instructor* and *The Political History of the Devil*', *Notes and Queries* 221 (1976), 487; *Critical Bibliography*, 152

⁹³ See above, 157

⁹⁴ Sheila Biddle, *Bolingbroke & Harley* (London, 1975), 277; Holmes, 423

⁹⁵ 'The Schism Act, 1714', *English Historical Documents*, Vol. VIII, 409-10; Hatton, 199

selection of Emanuel Matthews as publisher and the inclusion of a recommendatory letter by the Presbyterian minister, Reverend Mr. Samuel Wright.⁹⁶

However, there seem to be a number of weaknesses in Rothman's hypothesis that *The Family Instructor* was Defoe's response to the Schism Act written specifically for the Dissenters. Firstly, the choice of Emanuel Matthews does not appear to provide conclusive evidence for Defoe's target readership. Using Matthews as a publisher meant, as Rothman himself explains, collaborating with a man who was sympathetic towards religious nonconformity and regularly published tracts by Dissenters. Moreover, Matthews' publications prior to *The Family Instructor* betray an interest in texts concerned with moral and religious instruction and, at a time when Defoe urgently needed a source of income, it would not have been difficult for Defoe to persuade Matthews to sell his book.⁹⁷ Most importantly, however, Matthews had not published any of Defoe's works before and therefore represented an ideal choice for concealing his authorship of *The Family Instructor*, public knowledge of which could, in the context of his poor reputation and the pending Anglesey case, have seriously harmed the book's sales figures. Matthews therefore represented an ideal publisher for a much maligned writer who needed to generate an income fast. It seems highly likely, therefore, that Defoe's decision to approach him was influenced as much by commercial reasons as by religious or ideological ones.

In contrast, the inclusion of a recommendatory letter by Samuel Wright does indeed seem anything but an 'innocent move' in the context of Defoe's opposition to the Schism Act, at least at first sight.⁹⁸ The endorsement of the book by a leading Presbyterian divine did undoubtedly establish a connection with Puritan theology but perhaps the importance of this aspect of *The Family Instructor* has been overstated. On close inspection, it becomes apparent that Wright's letter constituted little more than a series of casual remarks on Defoe's text. In the first two sentences of his letter

⁹⁶ Rothman, 'Response', 201, 216

⁹⁷ Examples of Matthews' publications include B[enjamin] Grosvenor *The Preservative of Virtuous Youth* (1714); Henry Matthew *The Pleasentness of a Religious Life* (1714) and *Sober-mindedness Press'd Upon Young People* (1715); Robert Murray *Christ Every Christian's Pattern* (1715); S[amuel] Wright *A Sermon Preach'd Before the Societies for Reformation of Manners* (1715).

⁹⁸ Rothman, 'Response', 214

the Reverend Wright commends the book's general topic, the re-establishment of family religion, before lamenting the poor quality of the printing. There was of course nothing unusual about a minister's highlighting the promotion of family religion as a worthy aim for any kind of book, and Wright's recommendation could easily have introduced other conduct books of a similar nature. Tellingly, it is only the '*Substance of the Book*' which Wright felt able to praise, that is immediately qualified by the statement that the printer's poor workmanship will severely harm the reading experience and '*render the Reader very uneasy*'.⁹⁹ We shall return to the issue of the alleged poor quality of the first edition later.

These introductory thoughts are followed by brief summaries of the contents of the three parts of *The Family Instructor*. Wright's actual recommendation continued to be something of a double-edged sword. He praised Defoe's notes for achieving the clarity which he felt the dialogues sometimes lack. He emphasised that the '*Substance of each Narrative is REAL*' but regarded some of Defoe's expressions a '*little out of Character*'. Wright's concluding comments on the book expressed his hope rather than certainty that it might lead to an improvement in the religious behaviour of the reader. The learned divine's recommendation was, in essence, highly non-committal and hardly depicted Defoe's book as a potential future bestseller or important religious text: 'who knows but something *may* [my emphasis] occur to the Eyes of those that do but glance into it'. Wright's letter, then, was distinctly lukewarm in its praise and hardly the kind of marketing tool which would greatly improve the appeal of *The Family Instructor* to readers of any denomination.

It is perhaps also important to note that the letter did not in any way refer to the Schism Act or its effect and that it did not engage with any doctrinal issues or the question of Dissent. In fact, Defoe himself rejected the idea that the book was predominantly aimed at Dissenters or concerned with the theological differences of

⁹⁹ Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor* (1715), 'A Letter to the Publisher'. The edition of *The Family Instructor* referred to throughout this study is the 1989 facsimile reproduction of the second edition by Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints with an introduction by P.R. Backscheider. This edition also includes reproductions of passages from the first edition which were omitted in the second edition. Subsequent references to this edition of *The Family Instructor* are offered in parenthesis following the quotation. Unless otherwise noted, references are to the second edition.

those within and without the Church. The nature of *The Family Instructor*, Defoe stated categorically in the introductions to both the first and second editions, was strictly ecumenical:

There is no room to inquire here who this Tract is directed to, or who it is written by, whether by Church of *England* Man, or Dissenter; it is evident both need it, it may be useful to both, and it is written with Charity to, and for the Benefit of both... (First Edition, 3)

...in the pursuit of this Book care is taken to avoid Distinctions of Opinion,...and the Advice is impartially directed *to both* [Anglicans and Nonconformists] without the least Distinction. (First Edition, 3; Second Edition, 3)

Rothman does, of course, acknowledge Defoe's efforts to 'engage readers of all convictions' but he feels that the symbolic value of Matthews and Wright outweighs and overrides the clear message contained in Defoe's own words.¹⁰⁰ Yet, six or so months after the appearance of his book, Defoe decided to undertake some revisions, one of which resulted in the complete omission of Wright's letter. Interestingly, while the preface to the second edition of *The Family Instructor* acknowledged the commendatory letter, it did not mention Wright's name: '*it is hoped the Work has not dishonour'd the Reverend Person, who did it the Favour to give it the first Recommendation*' (Preface). Nor does this single reference to the letter represent an expression of strongly felt gratitude. Rather, Defoe apologised to the unnamed Reverend for the fact that the first edition was '*so ill Printed*', and that he had been associated with a work of such poor workmanship. Importantly, he also stated that beside the poor quality of print, the first edition was '*so uncorrect, that it stood more than ordinarily in Need of the Help of a good Introduction*' (Preface). Wright's letter, however, did not suffer from any imperfections, which suggests that Defoe considered the recommendation as inappropriate and as conveying an 'uncorrect' message. It is, of course, perfectly possible that Defoe had no hand in obtaining the letter and that the decision to include it was entirely Matthew's. At least, the omission of the letter from the second edition and the inclusion of Defoe's own preface appear to hint at this possibility. In any case, Wright's recommendation was clearly of no great importance to Defoe's supposed continued opposition to the Schism Act.

¹⁰⁰ Rothman, 'Response', 216

While citing Matthews and Wright as evidence to confirm the status of *The Family Instructor* as a major document of opposition to the Schism Act is, as we have seen, problematic, the greatest problem which Rothman's account fails to explain is perhaps offered by the political context of the book's composition and publication. A brief look at the period in question will highlight that the Schism Act is unlikely to have been the sole or main impulse behind Defoe's conduct book. The bulk of *The Family Instructor* is unlikely to have been composed before August 1714.¹⁰¹ Yet, by this time, there were clear signs that the act was not going to be enforced: the new king had made clear his preference for the Whigs, who, importantly, had vigorously opposed the Schism Act. Moreover, the fact that George himself had, as a Lutheran, not been instructed in the faith of the Anglican Church and as such was technically a Dissenter himself, ensured a certain degree of empathy with English Nonconformists.¹⁰² Certainly, at the time when the first advertisements for *The Family Instructor* appeared, it would have become obvious that the Schism Act was a law without teeth. Indeed, due to a lack of enforcement, the Act was eventually repealed in 1719.

Defoe, it should be noted, anticipated that the new law was not going to have its intended impact. In a letter he sent to Oxford on 21 May 1714, he expressed his discomfort about the proposed piece of legislation and predicted that some of the damage it might potentially be able to inflict on the Dissenting interest could be 'Irreparable'.¹⁰³ This, however, is immediately qualified by Defoe's defiant statement that, in any case, the Dissenters would flout the law and 'have schooles still'. Given that the government could have suppressed Dissenting academies under existing law,

¹⁰¹ In his article, Ivanyi proposes that due to its similarities to his other pamphlets of the period, the tract *The Schism Act Explain'd*, published on 31 July 1714, was also Defoe's work (Furbank and Owens, incidentally, do not comment on this attribution). According to Ivanyi, the pamphlet provides 'almost direct evidence' for Defoe's authorship in a passage which promises that the author will "'speak larger' on the subject of family instruction 'on another occasion'". This other occasion was to be *The Family Instructor* ('Defoe's Prelude', 312). If Ivanyi's suggestion is correct, then Defoe is unlikely to have begun, or at least have made significant progress, on his book at the time of publication of *The Schism Act Explain'd*.

¹⁰² Holmes, 307; Hatton, 173; Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 194-95

¹⁰³ Hcaley, *Letters*, 440

the new piece of legislation was futile, since nonconformist schools will be ‘No More Illegall Than before’. On the day of the Bill’s passage into law, 23 June, Defoe once again wrote to Oxford to express his dismay at the fact that a ‘Certain Set of Men, Appointed no doubt’, were trying to spread a sense of panic among the Dissenters by depicting the Bill to be more dangerous than it actually was. No Dissenter, Defoe hoped, would be ‘Influenced by Such speeches to anything Undutifull and Unquiet’.¹⁰⁴

By the time he began to write *The Family Instructor*, then, Defoe’s attitude towards the Act was hardly one of overwhelming pessimism.¹⁰⁵ To be sure, Defoe did regard the act as an insult to the Dissenters. In *A Brief Survey of the Legal Liberties of the Dissenters*, he attacked the High Church measure and reminded his readers that the Dissenters had earned a right to toleration for their part in the Revolution, stating that it was ‘*not a Courtsey, but a Capitulation, the Performance of an Agreement, not an Act of meer Tenderness and Charity*’ on the part of the Church of England.¹⁰⁶ Since the Church was ‘oblig’d to grant’ the Toleration, it was ‘equally oblig’d to continue it’ and the Dissenters had a ‘Right to demand the Preserving it’.¹⁰⁷ Schools and academies for Dissenters’ children were admittedly ‘not expressly Part of the *Toleration Bill*’ but this was hardly the point:

...the Liberty of Teaching and Instructing our Children, is such an Essential, in the *Meaning* of a *Tolleration*, that it need no more to be Express’d therein, than a Liberty of going out of our own Houses, or Riseing out of our Beds...¹⁰⁸

Since educating one’s children was an integral part of every Christian’s duty, the Schism Bill would consequently force the Dissenters to act illegally:

If the *Dissenters* are Abridg’d of what is their Indispensible Duty, they are Persecuted in the most Extreme Sence [sic] of Persecution; for the Consequence is, they must offend against this Law, because they are Bound to *obey God rather than Man*.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 442; also see Ivanyi for a discussion of these letters (‘Defoe’s Prelude’, 312).

¹⁰⁵ Novak makes a similar point (484).

¹⁰⁶ Daniel Defoe, *A Brief Survey of the Legal Liberties of the Dissenters* (1714), 3-4. See chapter II for Defoe’s justification of the Dissenters’ right to toleration.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 4

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 6-7

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 7

Thus, the act was in fact a reflection on the Church's hypocrisy rather than a justified, or indeed lawful, limitation placed on the Dissenters. Yet, regardless of what the High Anglicans would throw at the Dissenters, they would not, Defoe was certain, give up their schools. This, however, raises the question of why Defoe would spend a considerable amount of time on producing a book that was apparently designed to counter the impact of an act which he clearly believed was going to remain largely ineffective. If Dissenting schools were going to remain open, why would the Dissenters suddenly need a book which enabled them to conduct religious education in their own homes?

The most readily available answer to these questions is that Defoe, unemployed since August 1714, was simply looking for a reliable source of income. In this context, publishing a conduct book came as close to guaranteed earnings as Defoe could have come in the literary market. Many seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century readers indulged mostly in devotional reading.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the majority of the literate population traditionally began their life of literacy with religious reading before moving on to wider literary interests. Moreover, changes in life-style, in particular an increased urbanisation, represented a threat to familiar habits and ways of life. The tradition of story-telling by elders, an important vehicle for the transmission of ideas and values, had been negatively affected by the social changes and without the accumulated knowledge of previous generations 'the world seemed fuller every day of shades of gray'.¹¹¹ Didactic literature, especially the guide book, restored some of this lost orality in print and offered the reader reassuringly simple binary choices, usually based on a clearly defined, conservative sense of good and evil. It is not surprising, then, to find that didactic literature, such as moral treatises and theological discourses, continued to be by far the most frequently printed materials during the eighteenth century.¹¹² The most popular didactic tract, *The Whole Duty of Man*, for example, was first published in 1659 and reached a fifty-ninth

¹¹⁰ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London, 1987), 50; also see P.R. Backscheider, 'Defoe's Prodigal Sons and *The Family Instructor*,' *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 15:2 (1982), 3-4, for information on the popularity of the conduct book.

¹¹¹ J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels. The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth Century English Fiction* (New York & London, 1990), 229, 233, 237

¹¹² *Ibid*, 234

edition by 1734. The demand for guide or conduct books by and for Dissenters might even have increased further during the readings of the Schism Bill in parliament, but it is unlikely that this significantly affected the sales of Defoe's text: by the time *The Family Instructor* was published, Dissenters no longer had to fear the closure of their schools. While Defoe's book did not reach the same sales figures as *The Whole Duty of Man*, he had not misjudged the potential earning-power of *The Family Instructor*, as it reached a healthy eight editions within five years of its first publication.¹¹³

There is, of course, no reason why Defoe should not have wanted to combine his need for an income with an issue that had caught his attention and which he felt needed to be addressed in print. That issue, as should by now be clear, was not the Schism Act. Indeed, the last pamphlet which Defoe published on the subject appeared in July 1714.¹¹⁴ Thus, it appears highly unlikely that he intended to publish a 'major document in continued opposition to the Schism Act' more than six months after his most recent discussion of this law.¹¹⁵ However, what did, in fact, preoccupy Defoe at this time was, as we have seen, the issue of Jacobitism.¹¹⁶ As a result of a revival of the Jacobite interest, the nation had experienced a succession crisis in 1713 and Jacobite-inspired riots that regularly shook England from August 1714 until the early months of 1716. Significantly, these important events respectively immediately preceded and coincided with the composition of *The Family Instructor*. It therefore seems more plausible to suggest that the highly vocal calls for a Stuart restoration and the repeated incidents of social unrest inspired and shaped the contents of Defoe's conduct book. In order to demonstrate more effectively the way in which Defoe's

¹¹³ Rothman, 'Defoe Census', 487-88

¹¹⁴ See note 29 above. The last pamphlet which Furbank and Owens list on this topic is *The Weakest Go to the Wall, or the Dissenters Sacrific'd by all Parties*, which appeared in June 1714. See *Critical Bibliography*, 145-52, for a list of Defoe's publications during this period.

¹¹⁵ Rothman, 'Defoe's *The Family Instructor*', 212

¹¹⁶ In addition to the pamphlets considered in this chapter, Defoe discussed the issue of Jacobitism in the following publications: *A Sharp Rebuke from one of the People called Quakers* (1715), *A Seasonable Expostulation with, and Friendly Reproof unto James Butler* (1715), *A Hymn to the Mob* (1715), *An Account of the Great and Generous Actions of James Butler* (1715), *A View of the Scots Rebellion* (1715), *A Trumpet Blown in the North* (1715), *Some Thoughts of an Honest Tory in the Country* (1716), *An Essay upon Buying and Selling of Speeches* (1716).

book on family religion engaged with and responded to the Jacobite unrests, it will be useful to briefly explore how other religious texts dealt with the matter. The sermon assumes particular relevance here, since *The Family Instructor* had, if we can believe Defoe, become a point of reference in some church services: his book, he stated proudly in the preface to the second edition, had been variously recommended 'as well from the Pulpit as from the Press'.¹¹⁷

The sermon was, in fact, highly reflective of a significant development in party ideology. Firmly established in power under George, the court Whigs no longer required a political ideology which could be used to oppose those in authority. Instead, the governmental Whigs and their supporters developed a 'conservative political ideology which laid as much or even more emphasis on authority and obedience as it did on liberty and the rights of the subject'.¹¹⁸ The notion of government as a trust and the idea that government existed for the protection of the rights and the property of the subject were still prevalent in Whig ideology. The previously much coveted right of resistance, in contrast, could now be used by the Jacobites to justify any acts of rebellion and was therefore replaced by the rhetoric of obedience.¹¹⁹ The right of resistance was not entirely discarded but reserved for an absolute emergency in order to preserve the constitution from an arbitrary tyrant. The clear focus of the new Whig establishment was on a system of order and on the subject's duty of obedience to the magistrates. The Riot Act of 1715 was perhaps the most visible evidence for this change in Whig ideology.

One area in which this shift in ideology became particularly obvious was that of the political sermon. Gerd Mischler has shown that after 1714 'Whig clerics propagated the idea of passive obedience and denied the right of resistance in political sermons that were held before audiences that can be described as thoroughly Whig in their composition'.¹²⁰ Importantly, this practice, as Susannah Abbott has

¹¹⁷ Defoe, *Family Instructor*, preface

¹¹⁸ Dickinson, 125-26

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 130

¹²⁰ Gerd Mischler, 'English Political Sermons 1714-1742: A Case Study in the Theory of the "Divine Right of Governours" and the Ideology of Order,' *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 24 (2001), 35

demonstrated, was even employed by those Anglican clerics who were not closely associated with the ministry. By 1715,

there was a determined effort by the majority of clergymen to create a broad-based opposition to the rebellion which extended beyond the whigs. In their sermons the clergy carefully selected themes and constructed arguments to ensure that all English Protestants, from radical whigs to committed tories, could join the campaign against the Pretender.¹²¹

Predictably, one of the main rhetorical strategies to achieve this involved preaching the duty of Christian obedience to the king. However, because of George's general unpopularity, sermons rarely focused on the king himself but took a wider view in their discussions of obedience and efforts to generate pro-Hanoverian support. The events of 1688 offered the logical point of reference for any refutation of Stuart claims to the British throne but, if a general unity was to be achieved amongst Whigs and Tories, the Revolution represented too divisive a topic to be explored openly. As a result, the clergy mostly limited their sermons to general explorations of the distinction between lawful and unlawful resistance. Here, the focus was on the two notions that 'a nation's system of government determined the degree of obedience owed by subjects to their rulers' and that subjects had no right to resist a king who had ruled according to the law.¹²² In the case of Britain, the system of government was a limited monarchy, which allowed for resistance in extreme cases of arbitrary, unlawful actions of the monarch. Importantly, however, George had adhered to this system faithfully and, consequently, he had not 'in any way warranted the disobedience people had shown him by supporting the Pretender'.¹²³

The popularity of *The Family Instructor* with the clergy at this time was no coincidence, since Defoe, as will become apparent, employed a rhetorical strategy which was very similar to the one generally used in contemporary sermons. The sermon, it should be remembered, offered considerable flexibility to the preacher: by displacing issues of political theory into the realm of religion, the cleric was able to 'be more subversive, and at the same time more unchallengeable' than the author of a

¹²¹ Susannah Abbott, 'Clerical responses to the Jacobite rebellion,' *Historical Research* 76:193 (2003), 336

¹²² Ibid, 343

¹²³ Ibid, 344

political treatise ever could be.¹²⁴ The outcome of the Sacheverell trial had clearly demonstrated this. Dressing political ideas in religious rhetoric made it possible for Whig preachers to reject outright a doctrine which had formerly played a major role in their political philosophy without causing feelings of discomfort or offence.

The strategy of metaphorical disguise employed in the sermon was perhaps even more applicable to the guide book, as the playing-out of a certain political ideology in the context of personal conduct and individual spirituality and morality was yet harder to challenge than it was in a politico-religious sermon. This was, of course, an important aspect for Defoe, who was still awaiting his trial for the Anglesey case and, if he wanted to secure a favourable outcome, could not afford to risk any further accusations of Jacobite-related offences. Tellingly, the format of the text, as his explanation in the preface shows, warranted Defoe's special consideration:

The whole Work being design'd both to divert and instruct, the Author has endeavoured to adapt it as much as possible to both those Uses, from whence some have call'd it a Religious Play.

It would more have answer'd that Title, had the Author's first Design been pursued, which was to have made it a Drammatick Poem: But the Subject was too solemn, and the Text too copious, to suffer the Restraint on one Hand, or the Excursions on the other, which the Decoration of a Poem would have made necessary.

It is interesting that Defoe decided against presenting his ideas in the form of verse. Satirical poems such as *The True-Born Englishman* could potentially have an enormous polemical impact and, given that they rarely offered a political debate by presenting both sides of the argument, Defoe could have presented his thoughts in a clear and unambiguous manner if he had chosen this genre. The partisan nature of the verse satire, however, would also have severely undermined Defoe's stated goal to 'divert and instruct', as its aggressive and partisan stance was likely to cause offence in some of his readers. It was, of course, for this very reason that clerical responses to Jacobite activities largely avoided references to the Glorious Revolution.

Defoe admitted that the label 'play' came close to describing the nature of his book. The reason for this was that he felt that his book actually illustrated rather than merely explained to the reader the consequences of certain actions: *The Family*

¹²⁴ Mischler, 'English Political Sermons', 38

Instructor might be called a play, Defoe mused, because ‘some Parts of it are too much acted in many Families among us’ (Preface). This is, of course, where *The Family Instructor* anticipated many of the elements which have been identified as typical for the novel, such as the move towards greater ‘realism’ by focusing on ‘particular people in particular circumstances’ in the context of ‘ordinary life’ or the adaptation of a prose style which mimics actual spoken language.¹²⁵ Replacing the eclectic approach and formality of a political treatise or verse satire with the features of what was essentially a ‘case study’ allowed Defoe to present to the reader a recognisable set of political values which were protected from direct attacks by the text’s very informality. Significantly, the political values evident in Defoe’s conduct book closely reflected those propounded by those clerics who hoped to unite the nation in a campaign against Jacobitism.

While clerical responses to the Jacobite threat limited their discussions to general explorations of different governmental forms, Defoe, as the title of his book indicated, transposed his political rhetoric into the realm of domesticity in *The Family Instructor*. He presented his narrative in the form of eighteen dialogues which were divided into three larger parts, each of which dealt with a different set of familial relations. Thus, Part I concerned itself with the relationship between fathers and children, the second part with masters and servants, and Part III with husbands and wives; the third section continued the story of the family depicted in the first, while Part II offered a separate narrative. Defoe’s strategy of discussing political issues in the context of a family setting was, of course, not a new one. The notion that the family ‘matched an atomized view...of the universe, in which unitary elements were juxtaposed within a component whole’ had been widely utilised in political discourses.¹²⁶ Throughout the seventeenth century the idea of a correlation between the domestic and the public spheres, especially the ‘the conceptualisation of the marriage contract’, had provided ‘an excellent example of the role of analogy in

¹²⁵ Hunter, *Before Novels*, Chapters 9 & 10; Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, 9-18,27

¹²⁶ P.J. Corfield, ‘Class by name and number in eighteenth-century Britain,’ *Language, History and Class*, P.J. Corfield ed. (Oxford, 1991), 109-10

political discourse'.¹²⁷ In the propaganda campaigns of the Civil War years, for instance, both royalists and parliamentarians drew on the example of the relationship between husband and wife to support their respective arguments for the irrevocable authority of the monarch or the limited, contractual nature of the king's power.¹²⁸ Defoe had, in fact, acknowledged the analogy between family and state in his most extensive political statement, *Jure Divino*. An important part of his attack on the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience included, as Chapter III has shown, an exploration of the history of governments.¹²⁹ In the course of this exploration, Defoe admitted that the earliest and most basic form of government was the one evident within families. Here, fathers represented the equivalent of the monarch, while the other family members constituted his subjects. This analogy, Defoe pointed out in a footnote, was still applicable to a discussion of the social and political structures of early eighteenth-century England: 'Subjects are called Children, from Monarchy being Patriarchal in its Original.'¹³⁰

Establishing a close association of the domestic with the political sphere did not merely serve an illustrative purpose for political arguments, however. It was considered to have an important didactic function at the immediate, practical level, since individual reason and action was regarded as having the potential to 'change the course of sequential events'.¹³¹ In other words, the seemingly insignificant behaviour of an individual in the domestic sphere could influence events on the much bigger stage of national politics. This also meant that, by extension, the configuration of familial relations actually constituted an important political act which had repercussions for the shape and nature of larger social and political structures. The remark of the Puritan Divine Richard Baxter that 'most of the mischiefs that now infest or seize upon mankind throughout the earth, consist in, or are caused by the disorders and ill-governedness of families' illustrated perfectly the contemporary

¹²⁷ Mary Lyndon Shanley, 'Marriage Contract and Social Contract in Seventeenth Century English Political Thought', *Western Political Quarterly* 32 (1979), 80

¹²⁸ Ibid, 79-85

¹²⁹ See above, 133-34, 144

¹³⁰ Defoe, *Jure Divino*, 82n

¹³¹ C. Fisher, 'Public Order, Popular Disorder. Defoe and "The Clamours of the People"', *Halcyon* 17 (1995), 206

perception of the correlation between the private and the public spheres.¹³² The widespread conviction that the ‘health of human society’ depended on ‘individual determination to choose aright’ thus firmly attached a political dimension to the private conduct of every subject.¹³³

Defoe, Backscheider rightly asserts, shared the opinion that ‘private morality provided the foundation of public strength and that the family was an emblem of the nation’.¹³⁴ Britain was, however, witnessing a worrying number of acts of individual transgression in the Jacobite-inspired riots, which was a clear sign that the moral fibre of the nation was disintegrating. Defoe, as we have seen, had already shown considerable concern with regard to the recent rise of Jacobitism and in July 1715, he once again felt compelled to comment on this domestic threat in the pamphlet, *A Hymn to the Mob*. Predictably, his condemnation of the incidents of public unrest following George’s accession was categorical:

*It is impossible for any Man, who professes a Concern for his Country, to look upon the Conduct of the People at this Time without great Affliction; to see the Laws traml’d under Foot, Justice despis’d, Authority insulted, and Tumult prevail in Every Street...*¹³⁵

What is of particular interest here is Defoe’s emphasis on the transgressive conduct of the people who took part in the riots and the negative effect this had on the country as a whole. Too many individuals had made the wrong moral and political choices, which was ‘*ruinous to all the Purposes of Civil Society, Enemies to Safety, Order, Justice, and Policy among Men*’. The morals of the ‘Oldest Family on Earth’, as Defoe tellingly labelled the mob, had become corrupted and its resistance to a government ‘where *Liberty* the Scepter sways’ had turned the mob into an unnatural ‘Monster’, which, in turn, threatened the stability of the entire nation.¹³⁶ Significantly, however, a key feature of the relationship between the public and the private spheres was its dialectic nature; it was expected that ‘obedience which began in little things’

¹³² Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory* (1673), cited in Shanley ‘Marriage Contract and Social Contract’, 79

¹³³ Hunter, *Before Novels*, 231

¹³⁴ Backscheider, 361

¹³⁵ Daniel Defoe, *A Hymn to the Mob* (1715), *Satire*, Vol. 1, 416

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 415, 418, 427-28

led 'to obedience in big ones'.¹³⁷ Therefore, if the conduct of the individual could be influenced and controlled in a desirable fashion, then this would eventually put an end to the moral and political misconduct of the rioters. That this was the actual concern which underscored *The Family Instructor* becomes evident in Defoe's introduction, where he lamented that 'we live in an Age that does not want so much to know their Duty, *as to practise it*; not so much *to be taught to know*, as to be obedient to what *they already know*' (2). The nation had lost sight of its duty to obey a lawful government, and therefore had to be reminded of it. It is the desire to reform the morals of Britain's 'Oldest Family', then, which appears to have been the main impulse behind *The Family Instructor*.

The general concerns of Defoe's guide book of familial and social conduct, as well as the duty of obedience, become apparent as early as the first dialogue. It should be noted that Defoe's ostensible general aim of taking to task 'those Parents who neglect the Instruction of their Children' (5) is actually fully achieved in the opening conversation between the father and the youngest of his five children. By the end of this dialogue, the father realises that he has wholly and wrongly neglected his paternal duty of 'directing, teaching, and governing his Family' (36) and, as a result of the repeated reproofs of his youngest son, is quickly converted from a 'Negative Christian' (3) to a dutiful master of the family. Bearing in mind that *The Family Instructor* in its entirety was 'calculated to reprove and admonish' the father and lead him to '*effectually reform the dreadful Practise*' (4) of omitting family prayers, this goal is realised far too prematurely to represent an effective central topic for Defoe's book.

However, what the reader also encounters in the first dialogue is a theme which is developed throughout the rest of the book. The seemingly innocent enquiries of the young child which eventually lead to the establishment of regular family worship generate responses which are, importantly, not merely concerned with religious instruction and appropriate forms of prayer. Thus, when the boy wonders 'who made me?', the answer he receives from his father extends well beyond the origins of his

¹³⁷ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Abridged edition: London, 1990), 127

physical existence. The child is not only taught, in the briefest of fashions, that his parents are responsible for his physical being and that God equipped him with a soul (7), but he also learns to understand his place and function within the familial, social and political structures which surround him. Initially, the young child is exposed, apparently for the first time, to the notion of the natural hierarchy of 'animal-human-God' (7-8). The father then turns his son's attention toward to the structure of their domestic microcosm: as the male parent, the boy is told, the father enjoys a position of absolute power within the family hierarchy. Indeed, there is a sense that the father, within the domestic setting, enjoys a God-like status: '...to obey *God*, and to fear *God*, is to love *God*; for to fear him as your Father, and to serve him as your Father, is to fear and serve him as a Child, and that is to love him' (10). The parallel between biological and spiritual fatherhood in this equation seems clear enough. Defoe's lesson in patriarchy does not, however, end here. Significantly, the father, in his efforts to instruct the child with regard to his duties to God and his parents, emphasises to his son the Ten Commandments as the central point of reference (10-11).

The importance of Defoe's reference to the Commandments cannot be overstated. The Bible had been a widely used source in political and religious discourses of order and especially the Fifth Commandment to 'Honour thy Father and Mother' had been an effective injunction to exhort obedience to one's superiors.¹³⁸ The most popular conduct book of the period, *The Whole Duty of Man*, offered a powerful exposition of this commandment in a section entitled 'Of Children's Duty unto Parents'. Beside the duties of reverence and love, children owed their parents the duty of obedience:

This is not only contained in the fifth Commandment, but expressly enjoyed in other places of Scripture... We owe them an obedience in all things, unless where their Commands are contrary to the Commands of God, for in that case our Duty to God must be preferred;... Yet when it is necessary to refuse obedience, he should take care to do it in such a modest and respectful manner, that it may appear 'tis Conscience only, and not Stubbornness... in case of all lawful commands, that is, when the thing commanded is either good, or not evil, when it hath nothing in it

¹³⁸ Dickinson, 20-22

contrary to our Duty to God, there the Child is bound to obey, be the Command in a weightier or lighter matter.¹³⁹

Thus, as long as the request was lawful, it was the child's duty to fully subject itself to the orders of its parents. Even in the event of justified resistance, the child's actions had to demonstrate a visible general submissiveness, which served to maintain the natural hierarchy within the family.

An important qualification of the Fifth Commandment, and one of which Defoe's reader would have been aware, was its applicability to society as a whole. The duty of obedience to patriarchal authority meant that, within the general social order, fathers were exchangeable with employers, parsons and magistrates. The reference to 'father and mother' in the Fifth Commandment was to be extended to 'include all superiors, as well as a Civil Parent (the King and His magistrates, a Master, a Mistress, or an Husband) and an Ecclesiastical Parent (the Bishop and Ministers) as the natural Parent that begat and bore thee: to all these I owe Reverence and Obediance [sic], Service and Maintenance, Love and Honour'.¹⁴⁰ *The Whole Duty of Man* stressed this notion through a constant association of the duties of children to parents with those of subjects to magistrates. The duty of obedience owed by a subject to his 'Civil Parent' was phrased in almost identical terms to those used to describe filial obedience:

An Obedience we must pay, either Active or Passive; the Active in the case of all lawful Commands;...when he [the magistrate] enjoyns any thing contrary to what God hath commanded, we are not to pay him this Active Obedience...we are in that case *to obey God rather than Man*. But even this is a season for the passive obedience; we must patiently suffer what he inflicts on us for such refusal, and not, to secure our selves, rise up against him.¹⁴¹

Any reference to the Ten Commandments therefore carried with it an obvious political dimension which Defoe's readers were unlikely to have missed. The early reference to the Commandments in *The Family Instructor*, as well as Defoe's later endorsement of *The Whole Duty of Man* (78), immediately and clearly signalled to the reader that the book's main focus was perhaps not so much on the virtues of

¹³⁹ [Richard Allestree?], *The Whole Duty of Man* (1714), 278-80

¹⁴⁰ Humphrey Brailsford, *The Poor Man's Help* (1689), cited in Dickinson, 21-22

¹⁴¹ [Allestree?], *Whole Duty of Man*, 269-70

regular family worship, but rather on the importance of a well-functioning patriarchal order. From the very first dialogue, then, Defoe's book engaged with what he later calls the 'proper Methods for reducing...Children to an Obedience *to*, and a Sence [sic] of their Duty' (74).

Once the father has become a dutiful head of the family, the focus of Defoe's narrative shifted from the importance of family prayer and religious instruction to the responses of the various family members to the father's implementation of regular worship. Adhering to the guide book tradition of offering simple binary choices, Defoe divided the children of his fictional family into examples of commendable obedience and deplorable rebellion. In the three youngest children Defoe provided the reader with models of dutiful and submissive behaviour. For example, in response to his oldest sister's refusal to submit to her father's new regime, the second son, a seventeen year old university student, states:

if it were no more than that my Father desires it, and says, he resolves to have it so, you will hardly perswade your self not to submit to him; *you know* besides, that he is our Father, and we ought in Duty to obey him; for he has been the kindest, tenderest, obliging'st Father in the World TO US, and it would be very ungrateful to show your self rude to such a Father, as it would be wicked to disobey him. (85)

The younger children of Defoe's fictional family constantly propound the need to obey and submit to dutiful government in the above manner. The chorus of '*I was willing to do anything to oblige him, who had been so good a Father to me*' (82) rings through all of the younger siblings' exclamations. The behaviour of these children bears out precisely what many Whig clerics were preaching to their congregations, namely that obedience was 'neither hard nor unbearable'.¹⁴² The dutiful children take pleasure in their submission to their father's government, asserting that they are 'glad to do any thing to answer his End' (84). In the concluding dialogue between the father and one of the younger children, the extent of the child's obedience eventually becomes total. The submissiveness of the second son is so extreme that there is not even a hint of any thoughts of resistance in his words: 'I am entirely resolv'd to be guided by your Instructions, to follow your Rules, obey your Dictates, and submit

¹⁴² Mischler, 'English Political Sermons', 40

wholly to your Direction, let the Difficulty be what it will to me' (120-21). Similarly, the second sister has fully internalised the biblical command '*Children obey your Parents in all things*' (94), declaring that she would be 'Any thing rather than a Rebel to God and my Parents' (95).

The negative binary opposite to the commendable behaviour of the younger children is provided by the conduct of the oldest son and daughter. Both children categorically refuse to obey any of their parents' instructions, insisting that they will 'never submit' and that it is 'in vain to threaten' them with punishment (81, 86). They ridicule their obedient second sister for being a 'pretty complying, easie Fool' (91). They repeatedly reject their father's 'positive Testimonies of his Patriarchal Authority' (147) and declare themselves unable to accept the new regime which their father has established (147, 151-2). Eventually, the oldest son's disobedience represents a complete inversion of his younger sibling's submissiveness: 'You may be as resolute as you will', he defies his father, 'you will never bring me to your Beck' (144). It is worthwhile to highlight here that Defoe, by depicting the two oldest children's refusal to submit to a 'Family-Government entirely new', was being highly topical: the incidents of social unrest at the time of publication of *The Family Instructor* had their roots in a widespread popular disaffection with the king and his new government.

The political rhetoric of *The Family Instructor* was not predominantly contained in the dichotomy of obedient and rebellious behaviour, however. The element of Defoe's book which reflected directly on the contemporary political situation, and which was therefore of an arguably greater significance, was the justifications which the reader was offered as the motivations for the two different modes of conduct. The younger, obedient children obey their father for two reasons: firstly, they experience feelings of natural obligation to a parent whom they consider to be loving and benevolent. In other words, they simply perceive any acts which 'abuse the Tenderness' (95) of both of their parents as ungrateful. Consequently, as one of the younger children declares, they are willing to change their lives '*not only* out of Obedience' but 'out of meer Inclination and Choice' (105). Secondly, and more importantly, they recognise their father's newly reformed government of the family as

just and lawful. During a debate with her obstinate older sister, the second sister explains why she is prepared to submit to her parents' orders:

I am not ashamed to own *that I obey my Mother*, and am willing to do so in every thing; *especially* every thing that is right, *more especially* in every thing that is for my own Good, and *most of all*, where my Duty to God joins with it...the Scripture says expressly, *Children obey your Parents in all things*, much more where the Command of God, and the Command of our Parents *concur together*, as it does in this Case. (94)

It should perhaps be emphasised that by this point in the narrative, the mother has become the father's deputy and any submission to her automatically meant submitting to paternal authority. The sentiments of the second sister are later echoed by the middle son in a conversation with his father. His pledge of submission to the patriarchal regime is, in fact, representative of the attitude of the entire cohort of younger children: 'I am not only inclin'd to obey it [the father's command], *for its being your Command*, Sir; but my own Inclination concurs to set about any thing that will rectifie my Life, and teach me to govern my self according to my Duty' (119).

It is perhaps also worthwhile to note that all of the younger children demonstrated passive obedience prior to their father's introduction of a new family regime. Both the second daughter and the second son repeatedly assert that they 'often thought we were not in the *Way to do our selves good*, and that the Life we led, *was not* as it should be' (105). Yet, despite this realisation, they quietly submitted to their parents' former, irreligious government. Bearing in mind that even a conservative seventeenth-century guide book like *The Whole Duty of Man* openly acknowledged that there were instances when filial disobedience might be justified, the absence in *The Family Instructor* of an unambiguous endorsement of the right of resistance may be taken to be indicative of the book's polemical purpose. Any discussion of permissible acts of disobedience would simply have proved a needless obstacle for Defoe's efforts to exhort obedience to George I's lawful government.

Predictably, the older children's justification for their disobedient behaviour is wholly unconvincing. Blinded by their own pride, they merely assert that they are 'too old' and 'too big' for their father's correction (86, 144). The explanation which Defoe's commentary offered for the rebellious behaviour of the two oldest siblings is

rather more insightful, however. The conduct of the pair, Defoe pointed out, was the product of the family's former government. In the past, they had

been indulg'd in all possible Folly and Levity, such as *Plays, Gaming, Looseness of Life, and Irreligious Behaviour*;... [they had] grown up in a long allow'd Course of Loosness in Behaviour, all manner of Liberties having been given them, without any Family-Restraint, *without Government*, and rather encourag'd by their Parents, than *limited* either by Example or Command (74, 99)

It is difficult not to find an allusion to the reigns of the Stuart brothers, Charles II and James II, in Defoe's account of the family's former irreligious life. The period after the Restoration had seen the emergence of a distinctly libertine spirit in England and a 'willingness to tolerate a good deal of licentiousness'.¹⁴³ Moreover, both monarchs had been patrons to the theatre; the notorious social gatherings at court, as well as the two men's sexual liaisons, had firmly associated Charles and James with moral depravity in the public mind.¹⁴⁴ In James' case, this was reinforced by his attempts to once again legalise Popery in England. John Toland had typically described the years between 1660 and 1688 as characterised by a 'general depravation of manners, and almost utter extirpation of Virtue and moral Honesty'.¹⁴⁵ At a time when Jacobitism experienced an increasing popularity, it appears plausible to suggest, Defoe's description of the nature of the family's former government was unlikely to have been politically innocent.

One of the dominant features of the rebellious older pair of siblings in Defoe's imagined family is that, unlike the younger children, they are unable to distinguish between lawful and unlawful government. In a wholesale rejection of Christian values and morality, the oldest daughter allows her vanity to get the better of herself, asserting that she would rather be thought of as '*no Christian*, as you should think me a Fool' (86). She regards herself as entirely disengaged from the familial structures around her and believes that her father's rules are not applicable to her. When her second brother expresses a concern for her reputation, which he incidentally equates

¹⁴³ Novak, *Master of Fiction*, 128

¹⁴⁴ N. Zwicker (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740* (Cambridge, 1998), 82-3

¹⁴⁵ [John Toland], *The Danger of Mercenary Parliaments* (1698), 3

with her identity as a Christian (87), she rejects this by a further assertion of her individualism and independence: 'I shall take care of my own Reputation' (87). Most importantly, however, she fails to understand that the limitations her parents intend to impose on her are necessary for the universal good of the family, including her own. The young woman's plays and novels assume an important symbolic function in this context: while her parents, and also Defoe as a commentator, condemn the books as a source of immorality (75, 108-9), she regards them as an emblem of her individuality and right to express herself in a manner of her choice (91). Consequently, she considers the burning of 'all the Books *that I had any Pleasure in*' (80) as an unjustified encroachment on her personal liberty. Unable to comprehend that immoral actions and habits, even if limited to the individual in a domestic setting, need to be curbed for the greater good, she asks rhetorically 'Can't I be sober as well with all my Books my Mother has taken away, *as without them?*' (89). While her obstinate attitude strongly suggests a positive response, her dutiful brother thinks otherwise: in order for them to be a 'sober Family', he intimates to her, every family member had to be reformed and abide by the father's new rules (89).

The oldest son expresses similar sentiments to his sister, albeit in less ambiguous terms. When his father prevents him from leaving the house to socialise with his friends, Defoe had him state a maxim which had formed a key idea in *Jure Divino*: 'Liberty is a Native Right, *the Brutes seek it*; not a Bird will be in a Cage, if it can be free'(135).¹⁴⁶ For an attack on the doctrine of passive obedience this notion was of course a powerful argument, but almost a decade later, it had become entirely unsuitable for Defoe's polemical purposes. In fact, the oldest son's behaviour demonstrated precisely how the maxim could be used to justify resistance and encourage a general licentiousness, which stood in complete opposition to *The Family Instructor*'s rhetorical aim of exhorting obedience to the established powers. The son's claim to an unchecked freedom is therefore dismissed immediately by the father:

Liberty *to do Evil* is an abandon'd *Slavery*, the worst *Bondage*, and *Confinement from doing Evil*, is the only *true Liberty*: ...I can give

¹⁴⁶ In Book VIII of *Jure Divino* Defoe stated that liberty was the 'Birthright of the World, with Life bestow'd,/ Which most Men will defend, and all Men should'.

Liberty *no longer* to any under my Roof to break God's Commands...if you will not submit to *my Government*, you must quit *my Dominions*...(135)

The Family Instructor thus seemed to be making a case for strong, restrictive laws of the nature of the Whig government's Riot Act, in order to curb licentiousness and regulate popular behaviour. The father's insistence on his son's submission is absolutely rigid and, interestingly, in facing this act of extended disobedience, he no longer feels obliged to justify his regime. In reaction to the son's challenge to paternal authority, the family government becomes stricter and, indeed, unaccountable: '*my undoubted Right to govern my own Family*, without giving an Account to my Children *of what I do*. ...it is my unquestioned Duty, to make all that are under my Command, *do their Duty*' (134). 'Unaccountable', however, did not necessarily mean 'arbitrary' to Defoe. The father's government might be strict but, importantly, it was not unlawful. As a result, any resistance to the new regime was unjustified, as the father explains to his son:

Had I extorted Obedience to any unreasonable, unjust Thing; had I put you to any Hardships; had I exposed you to any Dangers, or depriv'd you of your Lawful Pleasures, *these Things* might ha' been the Effect, and you might have had some Pretence so talking thus *to your Father*; but *all this* for laying before you your unquestionable Duty...This is a deplorable Instance of the woful [sic] Depravity of your Judgment, and Corruption of your Nature...(143)

The prodigal son does not, of course, submit to his father's just rule but instead, in a further act of disobedience, he leaves the family home to travel without his father's consent, before eventually joining the army to fight in Flanders (172). Given that Defoe was advocating the benefits of an authoritative regime, such extended transgressive behaviour could naturally not go unpunished: the son eventually returns home crippled and impoverished but still 'unrepentant' (294). The young man is therefore further punished and 'reduced to the last Extremity of Misery' (392). In a somewhat Faustian fashion, he cries out for his father in the last moments of his life but finally dies sick, disturbed and facing damnation (413-4). The oldest sister, in contrast, is eventually converted to a dutiful, 'sober, religious and shining Christian' (391) by the combined forces of her husband and providence. Her delayed but complete submission both to her father and her husband is necessarily accompanied

by a modification of her concept of liberty; she no longer considers her father's continued insistence on his son's full repentance and submission to his authority as a form of 'tyranny' but regards the paternal demands as an expression of 'affectionate Concern' (412). She is now able to recognise her brother's conduct as 'misguided' and unlawful and even attempts to reform her brother. While the oldest son's conduct represented a '*Warning to Disobedience*' (294), Defoe, in the oldest daughter, appeared to be offering, or perhaps demanding, a path to salvation to those who had formerly sinned against their superiors. As long as a sincere repentance and full obedience were apparent in the present, past transgressions would and should be forgiven (391). Defoe, it seems, was echoing his early plea for Whig leniency in *The Secret History*.¹⁴⁷

Defoe's narrative of a father's attempt to implement a new family government was not only highly topical with regard to contemporary politics, but it also clearly echoed the rhetorical strategy employed by Anglican clerics in their sermons in opposition to the Jacobite unrests. Defoe's case studies of lawful and unlawful resistance unambiguously positioned *The Family Instructor* within this discourse of dutiful obedience and it is therefore not surprising to find clerics recommending Defoe's book from the pulpit. Further evidence that *The Family Instructor* was indeed Defoe's contribution to the campaign against Jacobitism may be found in Part II of the book, which explores the notion of obedience in the context of master-servant relationships. This section sees Thomas, a 'sober, well inclin'd, serious Lad' convert his fellow apprentice Will, a 'loose, profligate, prophane Boy' (175), to a religious life. This story is paralleled by that of Thomas' master being brought to a full understanding of his duties to his apprentices by Thomas' father and Will's pious master. The conclusions which are reached and the pledges which are made in this part closely echo those of the first and last sections: Thomas, for example, typically asserts that 'if you [the master] command it, I think it my Duty to obey you' (234). In this sense, Part II is merely an extension of the discourse of obedience beyond familial constraints.

¹⁴⁷ See above, 173

In the context of the polemical aim of *The Family Instructor*, however, Defoe's motivation for including a part on the relationship between masters and apprentices is of interest. The section suggests that Defoe was concerned that masters were not offering enough moral guidance to their apprentices and, as a result, were failing to regulate the conduct of their surrogate children. The conversion of Thomas' master is preceded by his rejection of any responsibility for his apprentice's moral and spiritual well-being, which prompts Thomas' dutiful father to instruct him to the contrary:

I think you have the whole Duty and Authority of a Parent devolv'd upon you...I put him [Thomas] entirely under your Government, suspending my own Authority over him, *as a Father*; it becomes a necessary Consequence of it, that I entirely committed him to your Care, both Soul and Body; how could this be otherwise? Since as I reserv'd no Power to command him, so I had of course removed him from my Inspection (237-8)

This passage not only reflects the notion of the chain of power discussed earlier, it also demonstrates a concern on Defoe's part regarding a lack of government. In the absence of the father, paternal authority was fully transferred to the master. Yet, if the master did not use this authority to regulate the conduct of his apprentices, they were effectively left ungoverned – the chain of power, which provided the foundation for a well-functioning patriarchal society, was interrupted. The seriousness of this is reflected in the categorical demands made of the master by Thomas' father:

I would have you act like a Master and oblige him to do as becomes a Servant, *viz.* give you an exact Account of his Behaviour: His Time is yours, and you ought to know how he spends it; if any of his Time is employ'd out of your Business, you ought to exact an Account of it from him (242)

Thus, it was the duty of masters to permanently monitor and control the behaviour of their apprentices. Importantly, this constant supervision had to be implemented both in the domestic and the public spheres: it was every master's duty, the reader learns, to 'restrain them from every evil Action, whereby they may offend GOD, or wrong their Neighbour' (276).

Defoe, as Rogers' investigation of the social contours of Jacobite disaffection shows, had every reason to be concerned about the conduct of apprentices outside the homes of their masters. Petty craftsmen and tradesmen represented the main source of

disaffection and a significant percentage of artisans were journeymen or apprentices. Moreover, Whig journalists had highlighted the involvement of the Bridewell apprentices, who were highly visible due to their blue liveries, in the riotous activities.¹⁴⁸ Bearing in mind that Will's master is a tradesman whose 'Employment being a Clothier, caus'd him to take several Apprentices, and several Journey-men' (174), it seems likely that Defoe had this cohort of rioters in mind when he wrote Part II of *The Family Instructor*. This notion is further supported by the circumstances of the first printing of the book. The need for a second edition, as D.C. Ewing has shown, was not so much the result of an overwhelming number of misprinted words but the mis-pagination of the first edition.¹⁴⁹ The pagination problem had occurred because of the late insertion of dialogue five of Part II into the text. Ewing rightly points out that, in terms of the section's cohesion, the final dialogue is not actually necessary, since the narrative structure of the part is 'complete without it'. The references in the dialogue to ecumenical forms of worship offer, according to Ewing, the explanation for its inclusion: by stressing the value of both Anglican and nonconformist values, Defoe could 'appeal to a wide audience without revealing that the author himself was a Dissenter'.¹⁵⁰ Ewing's explanation, however, somewhat detracts from the actual focus of the dialogue, which, in fact, contains the most extensive section concerning the duties of masters in Part II. In this dialogue, Defoe reiterates once again that every master had the 'Duty of taking Care' of his apprentice's 'Soul and Body' (272), while highlighting in the clearest possible terms the hierarchical structure of society and the duty of obedience of every member of this patriarchal society: 'Wives are bid to submit themselves to their Husbands; Children to obey their Parents; Servants to be Subject to their Masters' (276). In order to safeguard this patriarchal system, masters had to be encouraged 'in all that is good, viz. in their Duty to GOD and Man, and this by all possible Methods, such as Exhortation, Command, Advice, viz. but especially by Example' (276), which is, of course, what Part II of *The Family Instructor* provided. It appears plausible to suggest

¹⁴⁸ Rogers, 'Popular Protest', 84-6

¹⁴⁹ D.C. Ewing, 'The First Printing of Defoe's *Family Instructor*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 65 (1971), 270

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 271-2

that, as a result of the involvement of a high number of apprentices in the riots, Defoe decided to include a section which unambiguously highlighted the duty of masters to control their apprentices.

The Family Instructor, as this chapter has shown, consistently engaged in the discourse of obedience. It permanently exhorted the duty of submission to higher powers at all levels of society and strongly advocated methods to curb licentious behaviour. There is perhaps a slight hint of irony when Defoe talked of the father's efforts to 'set up a Family-Government entirely new' (111). The father's efforts to use and assert his authority might have been new to the family, but the structures he implements signal a return to a traditional, strictly patriarchal family government. Defoe, as Richetti points out, clearly assumed that patriarchy was 'simply a neglected rather than diminishing force' and, once it was revived, would lead to the reformation of social conduct.¹⁵¹

There appears to be little convincing evidence for the claim that *The Family Instructor* was Defoe's 'ultimate act of opposition' to the Schism Act.¹⁵² Given that Defoe had publicly encouraged the Dissenters to flout the new legislation, there was no reason for him to publish a tract which repeatedly asked his readers to abide by the law and respect the decisions of their governors. In the context of the cultural and political situation at the time of the book's composition and publication, as well as Defoe's preoccupation with the issue of Jacobitism in his other publications of the period, it seems far more plausible to suggest that *The Family Instructor* was Defoe's response to the continued, Jacobite-inspired unrest of the years 1714-1716.

The Family Instructor has rightly been viewed as an important marker in the development of Defoe's fictional writing, forming 'a part of Defoe's turn toward longer works'.¹⁵³ However, it is important to note that Defoe's choice of genre did not merely reflect an increased interest in longer works and perhaps the need for a reliable income. Rather, it should be seen as a shrewd selection during a highly-charged period in party politics. The format of the genre allowed Defoe, at this time under

¹⁵¹ Richetti, 'Family, Sex and Marriage', 21

¹⁵² Rothman, 'Dissent and the Schism Act', 386

¹⁵³ Novak, 483; also see Sutherland *Defoe*, 211, and Backscheider, 362

attack from the new Whig government, to make a political statement which would have attracted severe criticism if presented in the shape of a standard political treatise. *The Family Instructor* was a political act which at once defied the ministry's attempts to silence Defoe and countered one of the dominant cultural and political movements of the moment – Jacobitism.

Chapter V

**‘One would have thought this had been an Irony’:
The Whig Schism, Toland and Defoe.**

Defoe's political polemic in *The Family Instructor* was, as the previous chapter has shown, overwhelmingly conservative. While it would be inappropriate to suggest that Defoe's language echoed that of 'conservative Tory-royalist antecedents and contemporaries', as Schonhorn suggests is the case four years later in *Robinson Crusoe*, the rhetoric of obedience and the benefits of strong patriarchal government reverberate through the text. What is clear, however, is that the political rhetoric of *The Family Instructor* does represent a clear departure from the Whiggish rhetoric of contractarianism evident in earlier publications such as *The True-Born Englishman* and *Jure Divino*.¹ The political climate had, of course, changed significantly and with it the nature of Whig political discourse in general.² The initial desire of justifying the events of the Glorious Revolution in order to pacify the troubled consciences of both Tories and Whigs gradually gave way to a concern about how the revolution settlement could be protected from High Church and Jacobite attacks. Indeed, to achieve this some of the establishment Whigs, as Dickinson has remarked, were prepared to modify their ideological position to such an extent that the previously much coveted revolution principles became 'so restricted as to become virtually meaningless as a guide to future action'.³ In the context of this general shift of Whig ideology, Defoe's conservative stance in *The Family Instructor* was perhaps not particularly unusual, but the absence in the book of any statement of the right of resistance is notable, especially since this cornerstone of Whig ideology had played a significant part in Defoe's political rhetoric. His silence on this important principle indicated a reorientation with regard to the type of political polemics he felt able and willing to employ.

If *The Family Instructor* may be considered one of the earliest examples of a more conservative political outlook in Defoe's writing, then a one-hundred page long tract published in 1717 seems to offer irrefutable evidence for a thoroughgoing general apostasy on Defoe's part. In what seems an astonishing volte-face, Defoe, in *An Argument Proving that the Design of Employing and Enobling Foreigners, Is a*

¹ Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics*, 150

² Dickinson, 123-26

³ H.T. Dickinson, 'The Eighteenth-Century Debate on the "Glorious Revolution",' *History* 61 (1976), 36

Treasonable Conspiracy, ostensibly rejected some of those principles he had steadfastly defended in the past. In particular his modified stance concerning a standing army in peacetime and his changed attitude towards the English nobility and foreigners appear most noteworthy. As one of the main contributors to the standing army controversy, Defoe had campaigned for over two years during the late 1690s for the retention of a sizable standing force in peacetime. In 1717 disagreement over the size of the army, which had been legitimised each year by the passing of the Mutiny Bill, returned to the political agenda when Robert Walpole attacked the supply for the military.⁴ Defoe, as Chapter I has shown, had developed his position on the army question in considerable detail: as long as Parliament controlled supply, he had argued, a professional military force in peacetime represented no significant threat to English liberties. In *Treasonable Conspiracy*, however, he offered a wholesale rejection of a standing army in peacetime, claiming that it was a thing 'justly esteemed in all Countries, the first Step to the enslaving a free People' (48). In essence, Defoe, in 1717, occupied a position previously held by his country Whig opponents. Similarly, Defoe's attitude towards foreign immigrants and the English nobility appeared to have changed drastically. In *The True-Born Englishman* foreigners, while not altogether without their vices, were characterised as morally and genealogically superior to the emerging species of Englishman.⁵ In particular the English nobility had been, as Chapter II has shown, the focus of Defoe's wrath. English peers derived from 'Beggars and Bastards', he claimed, and therefore lacked all 'Antiquity and Honour'.⁶ In *Treasonable Conspiracy*, however, England was said to boast an 'illustrious' and 'ancient Nobility', which, to its detriment, was going to

⁴ J.H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole. The Making of a Statesman* (London, 1956), 261-64

⁵ Defoe described the English as a 'compounded Breed' which combined all of the individual vices of the invading nations in one 'race' (*True-Born Englishman*, 89, ll.169-170). Also see Daniel Statt's article 'Daniel Defoe and Immigration,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24 (1991), for an account of Defoe's thoughts regarding the great benefits which immigrants would bring to the nation. Statt asserts that 'From the first, [Defoe] was a supporter of schemes to encourage foreigners to settle in England'(295).

⁶ See above, 96

be 'so unhappily mix'd with spurious and Foreign Blood', according to recent proposals by parliament.⁷

The vigour with which Defoe pursued these issues in *Treasonable Conspiracy* and the fact that the rhetorical stance he assumed stood in the starkest of contrasts to the one evident in earlier publications has caused some considerable discomfort among Defoe scholars. Indeed, the tract appears so uncharacteristic for Defoe that, for a considerable period of time, Furbank and Owens felt that the 'complications and anomalies' apparent in the pamphlet made the attribution doubtful.⁸ It was eventually included in their *Critical Bibliography* as a 'probable' attribution, with the qualification that it remained 'one of the greatest puzzles in Defoe bibliography'.⁹ The doubts among Defoe scholars with regard to *Treasonable Conspiracy* are, moreover, reflected in the relatively scant attention it has hitherto received. Sutherland, Moore and Backscheider, for example, completely omit the tract from their biographies, while Novak offers a relatively brief consideration of just over one page, of the pamphlet, which concludes somewhat vaguely that the early fame Defoe achieved with *The True-Born Englishman* did not lend 'much strength to his argument'.¹⁰ The present chapter seeks to address this gap in Defoe studies by offering a close reading of a *Treasonable Conspiracy* both in its immediate polemical context and in the light of Defoe's earlier publications. It proposes that the majority of what Furbank and Owens have called 'complications and anomalies' in the tract represent an example of Defoe's use of irony, which was designed to expose the inconsistencies he perceived in John Toland's *A State Anatomy of Great Britain*, the publication which he sought to attack. What becomes apparent is that, despite appearances, Defoe returned to and reinforced some of the points he had made with regard to the English nobility during the standing army controversy.

⁷ Daniel Defoe, *An Argument Proving that the Design of Employing and Enobling Foreigners, Is a Treasonable Conspiracy against the Constitution, dangerous to the Kingdom, an Affront to the Nobility of Scotland in particular, and Dishonourable to the Peerage of Britain in general* (1717), 13

⁸ *Canonisation*, 157-60; Furbank & Owens, *De-attributions*, 95-96

⁹ *Critical Bibliography*, xxiv

¹⁰ Novak, 496

Irony, as one of the foremost scholars on this subject has pointed out, is a 'slippery' and 'very messy' subject.¹¹ Contending that a text or an element of a text means something other than what it explicitly states always carries with it the risk that the interpreter has in fact misread the author's words and misunderstood his intentions. If a text is consistently ironic, like Swift's *A Modest Proposal* for example, the pitfalls are perhaps not so many. Defoe's *Treasonable Conspiracy*, however, is no such text: it would be unwise to argue that the main body of the pamphlet was wholly ironic – Defoe's eulogy to William III towards the end of this part of the pamphlet strongly undermines such a notion – and the extensive appendix seems to represent a straightforward refutation of the various claims made by Toland in the *State Anatomy*. Moreover, there is no reason why Defoe could not simply have changed his mind with regard to opinions he had expressed almost two decades earlier. After all, he had publicly done so in the past and was now widely considered to be *the* Proteus of hack journalism.¹² The political and literary contexts of *Treasonable Conspiracy* suggest otherwise, however.

The primacy of context for the reconstruction of ironic statements has been widely stated.¹³ Rejecting the primary meaning of a statement requires the interpreter to make a complex set of assumptions and judgments with regard to the validity of the literal statement, the perceived incongruity in it, any possible alternative explanations for this incongruity, and the author's views and beliefs. The latter represents, as Wayne Booth has shown, the most important context for the reconstruction of ironic statements: a conception of where the author is likely to stand with regard to the ironic statement remains the interpreter's 'court of final appeal'.¹⁴ In the case of *Treasonable Conspiracy* the immediate context was provided by what Defoe described as the 'Divisions among the *Whigs*' (3), which are now commonly known as the Whig Schism of 1717. Therefore, before a reconstruction and evaluation of the ironic content of *Treasonable Conspiracy* may take place, it is necessary to explore

¹¹ Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago & London, 1974), xi, 2

¹² See Chapter IV, 154-56, for Defoe's reputation at this time.

¹³ See, for example, Booth, *Irony*, 8; Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London & New York, 1994), 142-44; Claire Colebrook, *Irony* (London & New York, 2004), 16-17

¹⁴ Booth, *Irony*, 11, 41

Defoe's position with regard to the two Whig factions. Moreover, it will also become apparent that a second important context in which Defoe's irony was developed was the standing army controversy of twenty years earlier, a perhaps surprising link which will be addressed in the course of the discussion of *Treasonable Conspiracy*.

In 1716 the Whigs appeared a united and powerful force: the Jacobite rebellion of the previous year had pushed the Tories further towards the political margins, while the passage into law of the decidedly unWhiggish Septennial Bill, which extended the life of Parliament to seven years, meant that the party could enjoy its position in power relatively uncontested for the foreseeable future. Significantly, however, the Whig party lacked a clear leader – the leadership of the party was shared by Stanhope (Secretary for the Southern Department), Sunderland (Lord Privy Seal), Townshend (Secretary for the Northern Department), and Walpole (First Lord of the Treasury) – and the comfort of the Whigs' formidable position brought to the surface disagreements with regard to the king's foreign policy, which eventually split the party into two camps.¹⁵ As the elector of Hanover, George had a particular concern in protecting Hanoverian interests on the continent. The newly acquired political and military power attached to the crown of Great Britain allowed George and his German advisors to pursue an aggressive, expansionist foreign policy in the Baltic designed to curb the threat Russia posed to Hanover.¹⁶ Stanhope and Sunderland showed themselves to be 'understanding of George's dual responsibilities as king and elector' and supported his plans.¹⁷ In contrast, Townshend objected to George's policy, which he regarded as not representative of British interests. In an effort to increase his own political influence, Townshend, joined by his brother-in-law Robert Walpole, attempted to exploit both parliament's sensitivity 'to the possibility that British

¹⁵ Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 185-92; Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 397-98

¹⁶ Derek McKay, 'The Struggle for Control of George I's Northern Policy, 1718-19,' *Journal of Modern History* 45 (1973), 367-68. For further accounts of the Whig schism of 1717-18 see John J. Murray, *George I, the Baltic and the Whig Split of 1717* (London, 1969); Hatton, 180-210; Jeremy Black, 'Parliament and the political and diplomatic crisis of 1717-18,' *Parliamentary History* 3 (1984).

¹⁷ At least until the beginning 1718, when Stanhope, aware of an approaching naval conflict with Spain and finding the cost of defending Hanoverian interests too high, refused to send a further consignment of ships to the Baltic. See Hatton, 194, and McKay, 'The Struggle for Control of George I's Northern Policy', 374

interests were being subordinated to those of Hanover' and a clause of the Act of Settlement which obliged George to secure parliament's consent before engaging in war for the defence of Hanover by demonstrating to George that 'parliamentary support for his foreign policy could only be obtained by coming to terms with them'.¹⁸ However, Townshend and Walpole's plan backfired. 'Differences of opinion over foreign policy,' as Jeremy Black has pointed out, 'were treated as tests of loyalty' and in George's eyes the brothers-in-law had clearly failed this test.¹⁹ Their opposition to George's plans had, in fact, only strengthened the alliance between the king and Stanhope and Sunderland. Townshend, in contrast, was replaced by Sunderland as the Northern Secretary in December 1716 and demoted to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland, from which post he was eventually dismissed in April 1717. Robert Walpole and several other Whigs resigned from their posts the day after Townshend's dismissal and together went into formed opposition to the government.²⁰ Largely for tactical reasons, the next three years were to see a 'revival of the older pattern of Court against Country' politics.²¹

Townshend and Walpole were strongly criticised for their desertion of the Whig government, most notably in *The Defection Consider'd* (1718). The author of the pamphlet, Matthew Tindal, accused Townshend and Walpole of acting 'a Part so inconsistent with all former Pretences' and of preventing the 'doing of those very Things, they themselves declar'd to be necessary for the publick Safety'.²² The divisions caused by the two men were once again raising the hopes of the Jacobites and could potentially embroil the nation in a civil war.²³ It was an unaccountable action, he attacked all opposition Whigs, to put at risk the public good, 'chiefly for the Sake of a single Person, who, not content with the most beneficial Post, threw up a

¹⁸ G.C.Gibbs, 'Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Age of Stanhope and Walpole', *English Historical Review* 77 (1962), 21; Black 'Parliament and the political and diplomatic crisis', 78-79

¹⁹ Ibid, 79

²⁰ Plumb, *Walpole*, 241-42; H.T. Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy* (London, 1973), 49

²¹ Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 191

²² [Matthew Tindal], *The Defection Consider'd, And the Designs of those, who divided the Friends of the Government, set in a True Light* (1718), 4, 5

²³ Ibid, 13, 21

Pet, because he could not govern every Thing'. Not even the hated Tories, with whom the opposition was now collaborating, could be accused of such inconstancy and apostasy. Townshend and Walpole had become 'wicked, confederate Servants' who were 'ready to sacrifice every Thing, Civil and Sacred' to their 'Interest, Ambition, and Revenge'. Tindal's attack on the 'deserters' reached a hysterical crescendo when he compared the former Northern Secretary, Townshend, to the 'grand *Apostate*', Satan:

he had *once* been chief among the good Spirits, and a Favourite of Heaven, ... yet puff'd up... with *Luciferian* Pride, and fall'n from his high Station, [he] has since acted the Part of an Angel of Darkness²⁴

Not least by adding this biblical dimension to the Whig split, Tindal was sure to draw the anger of opposition supporters, who indignantly rejected his accusations and comparison as 'base Malice', while asserting that Townshend and Walpole had 'nothing to answer for'.²⁵ Surely, the two men's apologists claimed, their conduct was evidence for their political integrity, not apostasy: 'to make their Interest give Place to their Judgement, and to postpone all selfish and private Views' was, as one anonymous writer typically claimed, the 'Result of a *Solid* and well grounded *Sense of Duty and Allegiance*'.²⁶

If one disregards the partisanship and hyperbole present in the commentary of both sides, Tindal's assessment of the opposition Whigs appears to have been closer to the truth. In their efforts to inconvenience the Stanhope ministry at every turn, both Townshend and Walpole were prepared to abide by the rules of political expedience rather than follow their convictions. For example, when the Whig schism emerged in late 1716, Townshend was vigorously advocating the continuation of the persecution of Defoe's former patron, Oxford, despite having become convinced that the 'charge of High Treason should be dropped'.²⁷ Yet, within six months Townshend was to

²⁴ Ibid, 10-11, 28-29

²⁵ [George Sewell], *The Resigners Vindicated: Or, the Defection Re-Consider'd* (1718), 7, 31

²⁶ *The Defection Detected: Or, Faults laid on the right Side* (1718), 15

²⁷ See Clyve Jones, 'The Impeachment of the Earl of Oxford and the Whig Schism of 1717: Four New Lists,' in *Peers, Politics and Power. The House of Lords 1603-1911*, C.Jones & D.L. Jones, eds, (London & Ronceverte, 1986), 185, 190, for information on Townshend's conduct with regard to Oxford's impeachment.

change his mind: in order to embarrass the government in the House of Lords and oblige the opposition's new Tory allies, he began to defend Oxford from the charges and was indeed instrumental in his release. Townshend continued to openly work against the king, who had wanted to see Oxford punished for his part in the Peace of Utrecht, and repeatedly blocked the funds George was seeking in order to deal with hostile Swedish designs.²⁸

Similarly, Walpole began to oppose virtually every action of the government in the Commons, despite the fact that 'he and his friends had largely been responsible for the programme which the ministry proposed to undertake'.²⁹ His confidence of success is perhaps best reflected in his threat to Stanhope that 'every unprejudiced whig of any consequence or consideration' would support the opposition.³⁰ By May 1717 Walpole and his supporters had indeed gained their first victory over Stanhope's ministry when they supported a Tory motion to have a prominent High-Church clergyman preach to the House. In the following months, Walpole too performed a complete volte-face by refusing to support further the prosecution of Oxford, while succeeding in rousing the backbenchers over the size of the standing army George desired. In the next session, Walpole committed perhaps the greatest apostasy by speaking against the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, which the king himself had promised, and which the former head of the treasury had vigorously opposed during the previous reign.³¹ It might be noted that Walpole's prediction concerning the support he and his brother-in-law would receive was not borne out. Walpole, and by implication Townshend, had in fact been 'rejected by the weightiest section' of the Whig party when they went into opposition and their subsequent conduct only alienated them further from their former friends.³² In particular the opposition's rejection of a repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts was widely considered a blatant betrayal of a basic Whig principle. His attempt at

²⁸ Black, 'Parliament and the political and diplomatic crisis', 79; Jones, 'The Impeachment of the Earl of Oxford', 186

²⁹ Plumb, *Walpole*, 248; Dickinson, *Walpole*, 51

³⁰ Cited in Plumb, *Walpole*, 245

³¹ Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 191-92; Dickinson, *Walpole*, 52; Plumb, *Walpole*, 249

³² Plumb, *Walpole*, 244

justifying his conduct convinced few of the governmental or opposition Whigs and he was in fact deserted by some of his allies.³³

Defoe's first comment on the Whig schism came in January 1717, a month after Townshend's demotion to the lord lieutenancy of Ireland, in the tract *The Danger of Court Differences: Or, the Unhappy Effects of a Motley Ministry*. Here, Defoe assumed a rather ambivalent stance with regard to recent events in the government. This may be due to the fact that, while the split within the ministry was already widely known at this point, the extent and nature of Townshend and Walpole's opposition to the ministry had not yet become clear.³⁴ Employing an at times viciously ironic tone of voice, Defoe attacked the party as a whole for allowing the rift to occur. Since the Whigs were 'honest Men' and 'no Fools', he stated, they could not but heed the warning the consequences of divisions in past ministries had given them. Surely, he remarked, the current rumours of a split within the party could only be 'a meer piece of Jacobite News'.³⁵ Bearing in mind that Townshend and Walpole had not wanted to hide their discontent, Defoe appeared to be carefully manoeuvring his readers toward the only one logical conclusion. Since the split was not a Jacobite fiction but general, verifiable knowledge, the Whigs must be fools. Projecting the split within Harley's late ministry onto the present case, Defoe, with a distinct air of bitterness, reminded the Whigs of how they had

Upbraided the *Tories* with their corrupt Administration, their gratifying their Avarice, their Ambition, their Revenge; with betraying their Queen, and Country, and Posterity, to push their separate Interests;...how did we laugh at them for Fools in their Politicks, weakening and destroying their new Schemes, and blowing up all their own *Mines*, by breaking among themselves, and dividing into Factions and Parties.³⁶

The Whigs, Defoe thus implied, were hypocritical and unprincipled. He even went as far as to question their suitability for office. Did the split within Harley's ministry not tell them that 'they were not fit for the Post they were in?', he asked rhetorically. If

³³ Dickinson, *Walpole*, 52

³⁴ British diplomats began to express their concerns about the potentially harmful effect of domestic quarrels on international affairs during January 1717. See Black, 'Parliament and the Political and Diplomatic Crisis', 88

³⁵ Daniel Defoe, *The Danger of Court Differences: Or, the Unhappy Effects of a Motley Ministry. Occasion'd by the Report of Changes at Court* (1717), 31-36

³⁶ *Ibid*, 37

this was true for the Tories, than surely it must also be true for the Whigs. Defoe's conclusion echoed what he had been asserting with regard to the Whigs for the last few years: for 'these Men to fall out, to divide into Factions and parties, what would it be, but to tell the World, that they are not the Men they have been taken for'.³⁷

The Danger of Court Differences was almost immediately followed by Defoe's second pamphlet concerned with the Whig split, *The Quarrel of the School-Boys at Athens, as lately acted at a School near Westminster*. The tract was a satirical allegory of the developments within the Whig party. Defoe compared the government to a school, which, during the absence of the schoolmaster, 'became a Scene of Confusion and Disorder'.³⁸ The schoolmaster was, of course, George I, who had travelled to Hanover in 1716, while the unruly students, each divided into forms and headed by caricatures of the leading men in the ministry, represented the two houses of Parliament. As in the previous pamphlet, Defoe did not take sides but concentrated on highlighting the notion that the Whigs as a whole had become consumed by self-interest once they came to power: '...the Concern for the publick Good of the School, which was their duty, and ought to have been their disinterested Care, was quite forgot, or turned almost wholly to the forming of Parties and Interest to supplant and to undermine one another'.³⁹ The current Whig government was 'no better than those that went before them' and from their actions it was clear that rather than govern for the good of the nation, 'they meant no other than their own private Interest and Glory'.⁴⁰ While he resisted coming down overtly on one side, Defoe clearly harboured strong feelings with regard to the conduct of the Whigs and their apparent self-destructive tendencies.

Defoe's recent employment history can provide at least some illumination with regard to where his allegiances lay during the Whig Schism. Scholarship on Defoe's political liaisons during this period has regularly highlighted that his 'sympathies seemed to lie strongly with Walpole and the Whig opposition', which, of course,

³⁷ Ibid, 40-41

³⁸ Daniel Defoe, *The Quarrel of the School-Boys at Athens, as lately acted at a School near Westminster* (1717), 8

³⁹ Ibid, 28

⁴⁰ Ibid, 32-33

included Townshend.⁴¹ Yet, as recent research into Defoe's involvement in contemporary periodicals has shown, this assertion is rather misleading.⁴² In a letter dated 26 April 1718, Defoe explained to Charles De La Faye, Under-Secretary in the office of Stanhope's Northern Department, his recent role as a government employee. According to Defoe, Townshend had employed him as a press-spy to engage in a 'Little Peice [sic] of Secret Service' two years earlier in 1716.⁴³ The former Northern Secretary, Defoe explained, had suggested that he should appear 'as before under the Displeasure of the Governmt; and Seperated From the Whiggs'. In this 'kind of Disguise' Defoe was to take 'the sting' out of a number of Tory newspapers, in such a manner that they 'Will be allwayes kept (mistakes Excepted) To Pass as Tory Papers, and yet be Dissabled and Ennervated, So as to do no Mischief or give any Offence to the Govrnmt'.⁴⁴ However, Furbank and Owens have convincingly shown that Defoe's work on these newspapers did not, in fact, assist the ministry but in reality undermined government policies. In particular Defoe's project *Mercurius Politicus*, which was begun in May 1716, showed 'no signs at all of having been tampered with or emasculated, and indeed (if anything) got a shade more anti-Government in tone as time went on'.⁴⁵ In fact, the available evidence suggests that Defoe himself had founded this Tory journal, thereby adding to rather than reducing the troubles of 'the Ministry of My Lord Townshend'.⁴⁶ The implication of this is that Defoe was

⁴¹ Novak, 495; also see Sutherland, *Defoe*, 214, J.R. Moore, *Daniel Defoe. Citizen of the Modern World*. (Chicago, 1958), 218, and Backscheider, 392-94. These accounts of Defoe's political allegiances are to a significant extent based on texts which have now been de-attributed, in particular *An Impartial Enquiry into the Conduct of the Right Honourable Charles Lord Viscount T----* and *The Conduct of Robert Walpole* (both 1717). On the matter of attribution see P.N. Furbank & W.R. Owens, 'Defoe, Trent, and the "Defection",' *Review of English Studies* 44:3 (1993), 70-76

⁴² P.N. Furbank & W.R. Owens, 'Defoe and "Sir Andrew Politick",' *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17:1 (Spring 1994), 27-39; P.N. Furbank & W.R. Owens, 'Defoe, the De la Faye letters and *Mercurius Politicus*,' *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23:1 (Spring 2000), 13-19

⁴³ Defoe to Charles De La Faye, 26 April 1718, in Healey, *Letters*, 451

⁴⁴ Ibid, 451-53. The first paper Defoe mentioned was *The Shift shifted* but apparently, this project was 'Lay'd aside'. The newspapers Defoe did work on were *Dormer's Newsletter* (no copies of the publication from this period appear to have survived), *Mercurius Politicus* (May 1716 – December 1720) and *Mist's Weekly Journal* (various contributions during 1718).

⁴⁵ Furbank & Owens, 'Defoe, the De la Faye letters and *Mercurius Politicus*', 15

⁴⁶ Ibid, 16; Defoe to Charles De La Faye, 26 April 1718, in Healey, *Letters*, 451

deceiving Townshend and sabotaging the former secretary's plans from the very beginning of his employment as a 'press spy'. This, in combination with the fact that he chose not to express any words of support for the Walpole-Townshend opposition, which he might have done easily enough in the two anonymously published pamphlets referred to above, undermines the notion that Defoe's allegiance lay with the two brothers-in-law.

While Defoe's initial response to the Whig schism was one of indignant general condemnation, Toland's account of the current state of political affairs in the *State-Anatomy* was marked by a 'deliberate unrealism'.⁴⁷ In the format of a letter to a fictitious foreign diplomat, Toland announced in his introduction that he was going to present the '*real State of Great Britain...with regard to all its Parties and Interests foreign or domestick*'.⁴⁸ Yet, his commentary did anything but reflect faithfully the political status quo. The pamphlet began with a panegyric on George I and, in order to document the unrealistic tone of Toland's pamphlet, it will be useful to quote the opening passage in its entirety:

Such of the avow'd enemies of King GEORGE's Title, as have any remains of sense or honour, make no objections against his person. They are charm'd with his very looks and countenance, which they truly observe, give the highest indications of good humour and the sweetest temper; join'd to a penetrating genius, and judicious steddiness of Mind. What they have been so often told, before his happy accession to the Throne, of his Wisdom, Temperance, Frugality, Justice, Affability, and Application to business, with his other private and publick virtues innumerable, appears by his daily conduct, nor to have been the effects of flattery, but of exact and well-weigh'd observation.⁴⁹

The picture which Toland presented of the king was unusual in at least two ways. Firstly, George, as Hatton has pointed out, 'did not impress his new subjects by looks or majestic behaviour'.⁵⁰ Indeed, his failure to appear 'charming' in public had led some of his subjects to (wrongly) question his intelligence.⁵¹ Secondly, George's past actions did not necessarily indicate a man of 'Temperance' and 'Justice'. He kept his

⁴⁷ Furbank & Owens, *Canonisation*, 159

⁴⁸ John Toland, *The State-Anatomy of Great Britain* (1717), 2

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 3

⁵⁰ Hatton, 170

⁵¹ See Chapter IV, 162-63

divorced wife, Sophia Dorothea, in permanent confinement as punishment for her infidelity and possibly even had her lover killed. Moreover, George had himself been unfaithful and was enjoying an affair with a less than attractive German mistress. None of the above suggested ‘private virtues innumerable’ on the king’s part.⁵² In any case, how English subjects, including Toland, could have judged his character by his ‘daily conduct’ remained a mystery – George had been in Germany for the six months prior to the publication of the *State-Anatomy*.⁵³ It might also be remarked that Toland’s reputation must have provided a strange inflection on the above cited passage: in the 1690s he was widely regarded as ‘a violent and controversial firebrand, incautious in his enmity to the institution of monarchy, and disreputable in his religious conduct and beliefs’.⁵⁴ To be sure, Toland had subsequently advocated a limited monarchy and supported the Hanoverian succession, but his public image was still closely associated with anti-monarchical ideas in 1717. The republican overtones of the *State-Anatomy* led one hostile contemporary to comment that Toland wanted to ‘frame a new constitution’.⁵⁵ Toland himself was clearly aware of his reputation and made a point of asserting that he was not ‘for the sovereignty of a Parliament and Privy-Council, exclusive of all Regal Government whether limited or unlimited’.⁵⁶ Toland’s strongly idealised description of George in the context of his own public image made for strange reading indeed.

The opening passage of the *State-Anatomy* set the tone for the manner in which the current state of English politics was represented in the tract. Thus, for example, Toland claimed that the Prince of Wales was a ‘dutiful’ son to George when, in fact, nothing could have been further from the truth.⁵⁷ The king had grown increasingly more estranged from his son and when he departed for Hanover in the summer of 1716, he ensured that the prince enjoyed only a heavily circumscribed regency. Affronted by his father’s actions, Prince George established a rival court at St James’, which became a focal point for the Whig opposition. George eventually ordered his

⁵² Ibid, 49-62; Speck *Stability and Strife*, 172

⁵³ Ibid, 189; Hoppit *Land of Liberty?*, 400

⁵⁴ Champion, *Republican Learning*, 93

⁵⁵ Ibid, 146

⁵⁶ Toland, *State-Anatomy*, 9

⁵⁷ Ibid, 88

son to leave the palace in December in an attempt to neutralise the prince's subversive machinations.⁵⁸ In addition, Toland completely ignored the recent split within the Whig ministry: there were, he asserted, 'not such divisions among our Ministers... that no two of them cou'd trust one another'.⁵⁹ Instead of lamenting and condemning the apparent disunion among the ministry, Toland celebrated the four central figures in the Whig schism for their outstanding abilities and their immovable loyalty to George: Sunderland, the reader learned, was 'famous for his unshaken love of Liberty', Townshend was 'remarkable for his good nature', Walpole was praised for his 'extraordinary Eloquence and Ability', especially with regard to national finances, and lastly, Stanhope was described as 'honourable and brave'. '[I]f you consider all this,' Toland asked his readers, 'how was it possible for the King to make a better choice?' It was surely no flattery to say that 'no Prince in *Europe* is blest with more loyal, able, vigilant, or honest Ministers than King GEORGE'.⁶⁰ In the context of George's actual public reputation, his strained relationship with his son and the public split within the ministry – a split which was characterised by a plain desire for power rather than a concern for George's interests, it is difficult not to view the above statements as ironical. Given that Toland's account of George can be said to be strongly exaggerated and that his unqualified praise of the leading Whig ministers blatantly misrepresented the status quo of the Whig party, his final affirmation that his reader would 'find that I have given you right information in every matter' may be considered a final marker which highlighted that in reality not everything was as it appeared in the *State-Anatomy*.⁶¹ Indeed, Defoe himself raised the issue in *Treasonable Conspiracy* when he remarked that Toland's pamphlet contained so many insolent untruths that 'one would have thought [the *State-Anatomy*] had been an *Irony*'.⁶² Significantly, in contrast to their literal meaning, Toland's ironic statements only served to highlight the shortcomings of the king and his lack of control over the ministry. The king, in reality, offered little to no 'Wisdom, Temperance, Frugality,

⁵⁸ Hatton, 201-10; Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 189; Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 401-2

⁵⁹ Toland, *State-Anatomy*, 102

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 95-96

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 103

⁶² Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 14

Justice, Affability'. This message was, of course, entirely congruent with the anti-monarchical tendencies of Toland and other radical Whigs.

However, Toland's tract also contained much which was clearly not ironic. For example, his defence of the country or old Whigs from accusations of republicanism, which their notion of a Polybian constitution allegedly encouraged, strongly echoed the rhetoric of the anti-army campaign of the late 1690s and was thus unlikely to mean anything other than what was stated. Toland began his refutation with a pledge of allegiance to the king, claiming that there was not one republican in England who wanted to overturn the monarchy. Rather, he paid lip-service to the king: there was a general consensus that the monarchy represented the 'very first of our three Estates' and was therefore 'essential to our Constitution'.⁶³ This '*Commonwealth*' government – Toland insisted that the term 'commonwealth' meant 'free' rather than 'republican' – was apparently one of only two viable forms of government in England. '[W]hoever is not for this form of Government', the *State-Anatomy* gradually assumed a partisan stance, 'is for absolute hereditary Monarchy'. In a later section the reader learnt that this distinction could be readily transferred to party politics: the Whigs, Toland repeatedly insisted, were 'asserters of Liberty', the Tories 'abettors of Tyranny'. This was, of course, a gross misrepresentation, since it ignored that the majority of the Tories actually supported the Hanoverian succession, while the majority of the Whigs did not share Toland's commonwealth principles.⁶⁴

Toland's rhetoric subsequently became increasingly more 'old Whig' in complexion. His definition of the royal powers tellingly described a strictly limited monarchy: the king enjoyed the 'entire executive power, and one third part of the Legislative in their assenting and negative Voice'. Moreover, this first of the three estates had control of the militia and was the 'generalissimo' of the standing army. What Toland failed to state explicitly, however, was that, by virtue of their inbuilt majority, the other two thirds of the legislative power, the two Houses of Parliament, actually determined the powers of the executive and the size of the army. In essence this meant that in Toland's constitutional construct, the king's powers were severely

⁶³ Toland, *State-Anatomy*, 8-9

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 10-11, 14

limited and under the constant control of parliament. The dominance of parliament in Toland's scheme is reinforced by a final emphasis of the supremacy of the nation's legal establishment, as determined by Lords and Commons: we have a 'Government of Laws enacted for the common good of all the people...as they are represented in Parliament'.⁶⁵ The king was notable by his absence from Toland's government of laws.

Another section which did not appear to show any evidence of an ironic undercurrent was concerned with the issue of a standing army during peace time. However, while Toland had shown consistency with regard to his constitutional ideas, here he completely abandoned the position with which he had become associated during the standing army controversy. His initial comment that, if the nation was in a clear and imminent danger of a foreign invasion, an army needed to be raised and kept 'on foot till we have made Peace with our enemy, or conquer'd him' was perhaps uncontroversial enough – Toland's fellow anti-army propagandists, it seems valid to suggest, would have felt able to agree with this proposal. What followed, however, was an astonishing volte-face. The man who had repeatedly condemned the notion of professional peace-time forces now reproduced, almost verbatim, court Whig rhetoric in favour of a standing army:

But supposing us not invaded by Strangers, not so disturb'd by Subjects, neither obstructed in our Trade, nor call'd upon by our Allies, we ought nevertheless at all times maintain such a competent land and seaforce, as will render us considerable to our neighbours...to deprive others of all hopes to surprize us unprepar'd...

Tis agreed on all hands, that in *Great Britain and Ireland*, we must ever keep some forces on foot; and such a method will questionless be found out by the Parliament, as will be sufficient to maintain our reputation abroad, and tranquility at home, without any diminution of our Liberty.⁶⁶

The necessity of providing a military deterrent to prevent foreign invasion attempts had, of course, been the most widely used argument in the pro-army literature of the 1690s.⁶⁷ Toland was clearly conceding this point now and had abandoned his earlier stance. Indeed, his feeble justification for the proposal implicitly acknowledged his

⁶⁵ Ibid, 12-13

⁶⁶ Ibid, 59

⁶⁷ See Chapter I, 48-51

act of apostasy. No-one ought to assume that he was 'pleading here for a *standing Army*, in the sense our nation understands it; that is, a greater army than our foreign or domestick concerns require'. He was merely demanding sufficient numbers to deal with any potential threat. Anything other than that, Toland confidently asserted, would be 'inconsistent with all I have written...and my own Principles'.⁶⁸ Again, Toland's aim was identical with that of the court campaign twenty years earlier and his vain attempt to disguise this fact only served to highlight his apostasy more clearly. The possibility that this passage might contain an ironical subtext may be safely discounted for two reasons: firstly, it did not offer any ironic markers such as clearly contradictory or hyperbolic statements and, secondly, in the context of the growing Swedish/Jacobite threat which eventually culminated in the Gyllenborg plot in April 1717, the demand for a military deterrent was anything but unreasonable or absurd.⁶⁹ Toland, it seems, had simply changed his mind with regard to one of the cornerstones of country Whig political ideology.

What Defoe and his contemporaries were faced with in Toland's *State-Anatomy*, then, was a curious combination of seemingly ironic statements, a restatement of the author's ideas concerning the English constitution, and genuine assertions which clearly contradicted Toland's known principles. That Defoe took a dim view of Toland's beliefs, both political and religious, had become apparent on several occasions during the last two decades. The two men had first clashed over the issue of a standing army in the late 1690s and, by implication, the nature of the English monarchy, although after the controversy, Defoe's attacks on Toland usually concerned his religious views. Defoe categorically rejected Toland's Deism and unorthodox views concerning the Trinity, which had become apparent as early as 1696 in the tract *Christianity Not Mysterious*. In the *Reformation of Manners*, for example, Defoe described Toland as an hypocritical and unprincipled Socinian, who, on the one hand, rejected some of the pillars of orthodox Christianity as 'Excess', yet, on the other hand,

Covets without Rule or End,

⁶⁸ Toland, *State-Anatomy*, 59

⁶⁹ Hatton, 199; Plumb, *Walpole*, 241

Will sell his Wife, his Master, or his Friend.
To boundless Avarice a constant Slave,
Unsatisfy'd as Death, and greedy as the Grave.⁷⁰

Only a year before the appearance of the *State-Anatomy*, Defoe once again attacked the Irishman. In the issue of August 1716 of *Mercurius Politicus*, Defoe bitterly criticised the Whigs for not disowning a deist like Toland and, indeed, subsequently he 'set himself against the heresies of Toland... as fiercely as he could through a wide variety of rhetorical approaches'.⁷¹ *Treasonable Conspiracy* represented one part of Defoe's campaign against his country Whig opponent and in this tract, he used a rhetorical strategy which was remarkably similar to the one employed by Toland in the *State-Anatomy*. This time, Defoe, as shall become apparent, answered his old enemy's 'fancy'd Rhetorick' in kind.⁷² Moreover, there is a considerable amount of evidence in *Treasonable Conspiracy* that suggests that the tract was first and foremost directed at Toland, rather than the government.

An immediately apparent feature of Defoe's tract is that it did not address the entire content of *State-Anatomy*. Defoe's counter attack was, in fact, highly selective in its approach. Toland had discussed some fifteen separate topics in his tract, including issues such as the fundamental differences between Whigs and Tories, credit and trade, and the universities.⁷³ Yet, Defoe largely ignored most of the issues his adversary had raised and focussed on just three: the admission of foreign noblemen to the House of Lords, standing forces, and the Dissenters. The latter was addressed in two comparatively brief chapters on the '*Difference between tolerating differing Opinions, and tolerating different Religions*'. In these sections, Defoe, beside attacking Toland once again for his deist beliefs, restated his belief that the differences between the Church of England and the Dissenters with regard to doctrinal

⁷⁰ Daniel Defoe, *Reformation of Manners, A Satyr* (1702) in *Satire*, Vol.1, 163, ll.230-4. The passage quoted here ostensibly refers to Toland's patron, Sir Robert Clayton. It should be noted, however, that Toland is referred to by name four lines earlier ('*Socinian Tol_d*' is labelled Clayton's 'Ghostly Priest') and that Defoe subsequently leaves the target of his satire ambiguous enough to implicate Toland in the behaviour described.

⁷¹ Novak, 501, 525

⁷² Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 97

⁷³ Toland, *State-Anatomy*, 'Table of Contents'

matters and church government were irreconcilable, thus largely echoing the opinions Defoe had expressed during the Occasional Conformity controversy.⁷⁴ The greatest part of *Treasonable Conspiracy* was concerned with the first two topics, however: approximately half of the pamphlet dealt with the issue of ennobling foreigners, while the standing army issue took up a further quarter. This is significant. The standing army controversy of the late 1690s had seen Defoe and Toland clash on these two issues in a highly public fashion and both men had become firmly associated with their respective points of view. In Defoe's case, the controversy had even resulted in his greatest commercial success to date, *The True-Born Englishman*. Defoe's decision to dedicate three-quarters of his pamphlet to issues which had formed key themes during that earlier controversy was no accident, since, as shall become apparent, it was only in the context of the army debate that *Treasonable Conspiracy* developed its full polemic force.

It will be useful here to briefly recapitulate the positions Defoe and Toland had taken during the standing army controversy. In their efforts to undermine the ministerial pro-army campaign, the country opposition, of which Toland was a leading member, had focused on the issue of political corruption. The modern political tool of crown patronage, they insisted, had all but eliminated the independence of politicians and corrupted the entire governmental structure. As part of their attack on the perceived corruption of modern courtiers, the anti-army writers constantly presented their model of incorruptibility, the ancient nobility. The peers were, in fact, the most important element in the country Whig theory of the balanced governmental triad of King, Lords and Commons. Morally superior to both of the other two branches, the nobility acted as an intermediary between king and Commons in the event of any transgressive behaviour on either side.⁷⁵ Toland's esteem for the nobility was so great that he even excluded them from the Harringtonian rotation model which was designed to prevent corruption and which represented a key concept in country Whig ideology. Virtually incorruptible, the peers could remain in their military posts of Lords Lieutenants indefinitely, unless the king decreed otherwise.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ibid, 71

⁷⁵ See Chapter I, 39; Chapter II, 89

⁷⁶ Toland, *Militia Reform'd*, 48-49

Defoe, as Chapter II has shown, had offered a sustained attack on this aspect of country Whig ideology in *The True-Born Englishman*. The picture of the English nobility offered in the poem was diametrically opposed to the opposition's glorified model of incorruptibility. According to Defoe, the English nobility were merely 'Rascals...enrich'd' (208) who had risen from a common 'Crowd of Rambling Thieves and Drones' (237). Any claims to moral superiority were untenable, since every invading nation had bestowed its vices on the English character. If anything, Defoe proposed in *The True-Born Englishman*, English Lords were an inversion of the country Whigs' classical incorruptible politician.

In many ways it made perfect sense for Defoe to return to the topic of the English nobility in 1717. In order to reward them for their services to the kingdom and to strengthen his own position in the Lords, Stanhope was advancing a bill which was designed to create peerages for George's foreign advisors, the German Barons Bothmer and Bernstorff and the Huguenot Jean de Robethon. Toland wholeheartedly supported this proposal in the *State-Anatomy*, which, in a more general sense, represented a 'blanket endorsement of government and 'German' policy'.⁷⁷ After offering a strongly xenophile general view of foreign immigrants, he no less than demanded that the king's principal advisors be rewarded for hazarding their lives in the interest of the English nation. To deny these 'Patriot' foreigners peerages, he claimed, would 'savour of ingratitude and partiality'.⁷⁸ The House of Lords had thus not only made a return to the sphere of political discourse but, importantly, Defoe's old enemy had once again involved himself in the discussion. Bearing in mind the enormous success of *The True-Born Englishman*, it can be of little surprise that Defoe decided to attack a radical Whig on an issue which had earned him a major triumph two decades earlier once more. This time, however, the positions had changed entirely, since Toland's *State-Anatomy* strongly echoed the xenophile sentiments of Defoe's famous verse satire. Consequently, the way to a successful attack lay in taking the opposite direction.

⁷⁷ *Critical Bibliography*, 169

⁷⁸ Toland, *State-Anatomy*, 57

Defoe followed exactly this strategy in *Treasonable Conspiracy* and he duly negated virtually everything he had said in *The True-Born Englishman*. The tone of voice he assumed was one of outrage and disgust. How could ‘any *British* Reader see such an Assertion in Print, and not be fill’d with Abhorrence and Execration?’, he attacked the author of the *State-Anatomy*. If the Lords were to consent to the admission of ‘spurious and Foreign Blood’ into the House, they would be ‘Murderers of their own Honour’ and bring ‘Infamy’ on themselves.⁷⁹ Significantly, Defoe’s anti-foreign sentiments in *Treasonable Conspiracy* almost exclusively centred around the notions of racial purity and (un-)interrupted genealogy and thus he clearly returned to the central concerns of *The True-Born Englishman*. This time, however, he appeared to be taking a stance that was reminiscent of Tutchin’s *The Foreigners*. From the outset, the reader is told that it was the ‘prostituting the illustrious Blood of our Nobility to Foreigners’ to which the author objected. The honour of a peerage, he claimed, was ‘anciently incommunicable but to Men of Birth and Blood’ and only a ‘Son of the same Race’ ought to enjoy this privilege.⁸⁰ The focus then gradually shifted from the notion of the racial purity of the nobility to the nature of the House of Lords. The consciences of the peers, the reader learned, was just as clear of any pollution as their genes:

Untainted in Honour, calm and mature in deliberating, impartial in judging; when in passing Sentence you lay your Hands upon your uncorrupted Hearts, how much superior is it allowed to be, even to an Oath sworn by the ETERNAL GOD!⁸¹

Defoe invited his readers to conclude that, due to their supposedly uninterrupted lineage, English Lords were whiter than white, even to the extent at which their judgement became divine. Defoe’s prolonged use of hyperbole in his “character” of the British nobility noticeably stood out: the Lords were variously ‘*Illustrious and August*’, a ‘Fountain of Honour’ and the ‘greatest Body, and most considerable of its Kind’.⁸² It is difficult to imagine how Defoe could possibly have created a greater contrast between the respectively xenophile and xenophobe contents of *The True-*

⁷⁹ Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 11-13

⁸⁰ Ibid, 5, 19, 22

⁸¹ Ibid, 19

⁸² Ibid, 12, 15, 18

Born Englishman and *Treasonable Conspiracy* and the opposing characterisations of the nobility which the two publications offered. It is this glaring disparity between these two stances which has baffled scholars and, it seems, prevented any further scrutiny of Defoe's pamphlet. Critical evaluations of *Treasonable Conspiracy* have tended to view the 'very chauvinistic attitudes' it displays as genuine and, in an attempt to explain the uncharacteristic nature of the tract, suggested that Defoe was perhaps so blinded by his enthusiasm to attack Toland that he 'failed to realise quite how fatally he was laying himself open to the charge of self-contradiction'.⁸³ The possibility that Defoe's newly acquired xenophobia was perhaps a deliberate rhetorical tactic and that the pamphlet might represent, in parts at least, an ironic attack on Toland has hitherto not been considered, although there is strong textual evidence to suggest this.

Northrop Frye has pointed out that, in order for an ironic attack to be effective, the attacker must commit himself and his readers, 'if only by implication, to a moral standard'.⁸⁴ As we have seen, Defoe provided this moral standard in his hyperbolic praise of the allegedly uncorrupted nature of the English nobility, both with regard to its moral integrity and its racial purity. This standard was, of course, not his but Toland's and in order for his irony to have the desired effect, Defoe had to somehow alert his readers to this. Wayne Booth has observed that, in order for a reader to be able to reconstruct the meaning of stable ironies, s/he requires markers which indicate that the literal meaning of a statement must be rejected. These markers are found either in the relations between the ironic statement and the context to which it refers and/or in what the reader knows of the author's knowledge or beliefs.⁸⁵ A 'deliberate illogicality' in these relations can be understood as an 'invitation to join the author in denouncing the absurdity of things'.⁸⁶ Defoe, it can be shown, provided markers both with regard to *Treasonable Conspiracy*'s immediate political context and his own beliefs.

⁸³ Furbank & Owens *Canonisation*, 157-60; idem *De-attributions*, 96; Furbank and Owens have offered the most extensive commentary on *Treasonable Conspiracy*. For a further brief discussion which reads the pamphlet literally see Novak, 495-96.

⁸⁴ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), 225

⁸⁵ Booth, *Irony*, 8-11

⁸⁶ Ibid, 75

The first ironic marker Defoe offered lay in the picture he presented of the House of Lords: it clearly did not reflect accurately the actual state of the House or the assembly's history. It was widely known that as a result of the split in the ministry, the Lords had become deeply divided and its session had in fact seen very little of the 'calm and mature' deliberations emphasised by Defoe. In addition, the actions of the peers could hardly be described as honourable: in order to demonstrate his political value to the king, the leader of the opposition in the Lords, Townshend, began 'openly to work against the king' by obstructing George's plans.⁸⁷ Moreover, the behaviour of opposition was not attributed to any high principles but to an 'insatiable lust for power and money'.⁸⁸ In this context, it might also be remarked that Townshend had a 'violent temper', which he regularly failed to control.⁸⁹

It would have been difficult for Defoe's readers not to take note of the stark contrast between Defoe's greatly idealised picture of the peers and the present, highly partisan state of the House. However, this was perhaps not so true with regard to his assertions concerning the supposed racial purity of the nobility. To highlight the ironic nature of this element of his account of the nobility, Defoe appears to have included a series of markers in *Treasonable Conspiracy* which referred the reader to his earlier account of the origins of England's peers, *The True-Born Englishman*. In what is arguably the clearest allusion to the poem, Defoe commented that it was inconceivable that

the Peerage of *Great Britain* will consent to debase itself any farther, by admitting Foreign Families into the Rank of Nobility, and give Occasion for more Satyrs to be written and jested with over the World, upon the Mixtures, and unknown Originals of our Peers.⁹⁰

The True-Born Englishman had of course been the most famous early eighteenth-century satire on the origins of the English nobility and, significantly, further editions of it appeared in London in 1716 and in Edinburgh in 1717. The poem therefore still

⁸⁷ Clyve Jones, 'The Impeachment of the Earl of Oxford and the Whig Schism of 1717: Four New Lists', in C. Jones & D.L. Jones (eds), *Peers, Politics and Power. The House of Lords 1603-1911* (London & Ronceverte, 1986), 186; Black, 'Parliament and the political and diplomatic crisis', 79

⁸⁸ Kenyon, *Revolution Principles*, 190

⁸⁹ Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 186

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 16

attracted public interest and Defoe clearly wanted to ensure that his readers recognised it as an important context for *Treasonable Conspiracy* and, significantly, as a genuine representation of his beliefs. Importantly, he reiterated the above message in several places. In what appears to be an initial reference to his satirical treatment of the nobility, Defoe expressed astonishment at those who wanted to award peerages to foreigners. Surely, he stated,

These Men must be perfectly *ignorant* of the Reproaches cast upon our ancient Nobility, and the Dishonour it has already been to that illustrious Body, to have had so many foreign Families, *upon various Occasions*, engrafted into the Rank of the Nobility⁹¹

Two pages later, Defoe once again drew attention to the nobility's genealogical impurity by highlighting that if recent proposals became law, 'further Mixtures in the Blood' of the peers would follow. On another occasion, Defoe again explicitly emphasised that the nobility's 'Dignity' had already been 'depreciated' and that the peers' 'Honour of Antiquity' had already 'too much abated'.⁹² Defoe's repeated explicit references to the fact that the British nobility could not boast an uninterrupted lineage strongly indicated that his character of the Lords was indeed highly ironic. The readily apparent effects of the Whig schism and the allusion to satires like *The True-Born Englishman* completely undercut Defoe's picture of the 'illustrious' assembly and subverted the moral standard to which the reader had temporarily been committed. The rhetorical effect was the realisation that English peers were, in fact, corrupt and corruptible and, by implication, that *Treasonable Conspiracy's* attack on foreigners was wholly spurious. In this sense, Defoe had simply continued the attack on country Whig ideas which he had begun with *The True-Born Englishman*.

Defoe's polemical strategy of creating an absurd image of the nobility which was then immediately undermined by numerous allusions to a text that was highly subversive of this image indicates that his own apostasy was entirely deliberate. Moreover, the huge discrepancy between *Treasonable Conspiracy* and *The True-Born Englishman* seemed to be an open invitation to accusations of hypocrisy against himself and it is not stretching the point to suggest that Defoe was possibly laying a

⁹¹ Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 12

⁹² *Ibid.*, 18-19

trap for his adversary. One of the strongest appeals of irony is that it is ‘essentially, avowedly and positively elitist’ because it accepts, and indeed thrives on, the possibility that an unenlightened reader or someone who is not privy to the context will be excluded from the actual meaning of the text.⁹³ More specifically, it is usually the target of irony who remains excluded from the subversive meaning of the ironical statement, since, as Booth has pointed out, ‘every reader will have the greatest difficulty detecting irony that mocks his own beliefs or characteristics.’⁹⁴ Toland’s response to *Treasonable Conspiracy, The Second Part of the State Anatomy* (1717), seemed to illustrate this notion perfectly. Toland gleefully exploited the chance to show up Defoe, highlighting that Defoe was in fact the author of both of these strongly contrasting publications.⁹⁵ The fact that he fell for his trap is more than likely to have given Defoe much mirth. The satiric tone of *The Shortest Way* had fooled ‘those who were secretly so committed to extremist arguments that they could not see the trick’ and the current tract appears to have functioned in the same way.⁹⁶

The successful deception of Toland and the satisfaction this would have brought Defoe also explains his rather indifferent response to Toland’s attack. In *A Farther Argument Against Ennobling Foreigners* (1717) Defoe, writing in the person of an outside commentator, denied his authorship of *Treasonable Conspiracy* and stated that even if he had been the author

it amounted to no more than this; either that he had been wrong before, and was now better inform’d; or second, that he had contradicted himself, and wrote one time one thing, and one time another, a fault which Modesty should have taught Toland to have pass’d over in silence...⁹⁷

Given that Defoe’s benevolent attitude towards foreigners had remained largely unchanged and that he explicitly highlighted this in the references to *The True-Born Englishman*, one can safely dismiss the first statement.⁹⁸ The second statement,

⁹³ Colebrook, *Irony*, 19

⁹⁴ Booth, *Irony*, 81

⁹⁵ Abel Boyer was the first to accuse Defoe of the authorship of *Treasonable Conspiracy* and to highlight Defoe’s inconsistency in his monthly journal, the *Political State*. See Furbank & Owens, *Canonisation*, 158

⁹⁶ Novak, ‘Defoe’s “Shortest Way with the Dissenters”’, 411

⁹⁷ Daniel Defoe, *A Farther Argument Against Ennobling Foreigners, in Answer to the two Parts of the State Anatomy: with a short Account of the Anatomizer* (1717), 5-6

⁹⁸ Statt, ‘Daniel Defoe and Immigration’, 295

however, was exactly what Defoe had been doing and the fact that he openly acknowledged writing ‘one time one thing, and one time another’ is a further indication that *Treasonable Conspiracy* had not been all it seemed. Utilising his ability to use a variety of convincing public voices, Defoe must have taken some pleasure in toying with Toland. Here he was, dropping one hint after another and yet Toland fell from one trap into the next. Even the manner of response to his alleged hypocrisy which Defoe proposed may be viewed as a further joke at Toland’s expense. Given the partisan nature of early eighteenth-century journalism, no writer would have missed the opportunity to expose his adversaries’ shortcomings and contradictions. Therefore, Defoe’s suggestion that the obvious inconsistency between *Treasonable Conspiracy* and *The True-Born Englishman* was a ‘fault which modesty should have taught *Toland* to have pass’d over in silence’ only added insult to injury.

Not only can Defoe’s response be construed to be an ironical charge which highlighted Toland’s own inconsistencies, it can also be interpreted as ridiculing Toland’s status as a journalist, telling him that his ‘modest’ ability to perceive a hoax like Defoe’s should have prevented him from replying. Indeed, Defoe’s motivation for using irony in *Treasonable Conspiracy* was most probably Toland’s attempt at using this rhetorical device in the *State Anatomy*. As we have seen, Toland’s remarks about George may be read as an example of the anti-monarchical stance evident in some of the anti-army writings of the radical Whigs. Defoe’s own campaign in favour of a standing army had highlighted this aspect of the opposition campaign and he had vigorously asserted the rights of the king.⁹⁹ In *Treasonable Conspiracy* Defoe, it seems, turned the tables and countered Toland by once again satirising the Country Whigs’ much-acclaimed nobility. Importantly, Defoe may also have decided to answer Toland in kind in order to demonstrate his superior ability as a polemicist. Toland had committed an obvious act of apostasy with regard to the issue of a standing army and vainly tried to conceal this fact by insisting that the professional military forces he had in mind were not an army. Tellingly, Defoe’s irony explicitly drew on the notion of inconsistency – without the numerous references to *The True-Born Englishman*, the eventual ironical inversion of Defoe’s account of the nobility

⁹⁹ See Chapter I, 67-68

would have been virtually impossible – and by implication this reflected on Toland’s pamphlet and political outlook. However, not only did Defoe’s use of irony emphasise Toland’s altered stance, it also highlighted his own consistency: if the reader recognised Defoe’s ironic approach, he should also realise that little had changed in Defoe’s outlook since the first time the two men clashed in the 1690s. After all, his attack was not actually aimed at foreigners but at England’s nobility.

That Defoe did indeed attempt to belittle Toland’s abilities as a writer is strongly suggested by the rather revealing statement he made with regard to the authorship of the *State-Anatomy*: the tract, Defoe insisted, had not been written by Toland but by a set of conspirators; his opponent was merely the ‘*editor* or Compiler’ of the *State-Anatomy*.¹⁰⁰ Yet, no evidence appears to exist which would suggest that Defoe’s contention is correct and, on closer inspection, it seems to be strongly coloured by Defoe’s hostile feelings towards his old enemy. Once again, the standing army controversy assumes particular importance here, as the reference to Toland’s function as an editor strongly hinted at his activities at this time. As part of his anti-army campaign, Toland had edited Sidney’s *Discourses*, a collection of Milton’s work and Harrington’s *Oceana*. In addition, he had produced an extensively manipulated edition of Edmund Ludlow’s *Memoirs* which, unlike the original manuscript, overtly promoted country Whig values and was thus skilfully appropriated for the purposes of the anti-army campaign.¹⁰¹ The picture Defoe presented of Toland did not show him as an accomplished editor, however. According to *Treasonable Conspiracy*, Toland was merely ‘an Instrument set on Work by a Wicked Party of Men’, a witless ‘Creature’ who had been ‘imposed upon to commit such gross Mistakes and assert such Falshoods, which no Man of Sense could knowingly be guilty of’. There was no evidence of any skill or intelligence in the *State-Anatomy*, Defoe claimed, and it was quite apparent that Toland lacked true insight into the current state of the ministry: the ‘editor’ knew as much about politics as a shopkeeper knew about the watches he sold, which was ‘often no more of the working Part, than just the Shape, and how to put every Thing in its Place’.¹⁰² In other

¹⁰⁰ Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 7

¹⁰¹ See Chapter I, 36

¹⁰² Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 8, 50

words, Toland was no master-editor but an unknowing, easily manipulated hack. Defoe's comments about the authorship of the *State-Anatomy* were clearly designed as a personal attack on his old adversary and it is suggestive of the nature of Defoe's pamphlet that one of its stated purposes was to 'unmask this Writer effectually'.¹⁰³ *Treasonable Conspiracy* was thus as much about party politics as it was about John Toland and it is conceivable, and indeed likely, that the stance which Defoe assumed with regard to the Whig split was shaped to a significant extent by his desire to expose his enemy's flaws.

Echoing his earlier pamphlets on the Whig schism, Defoe began *Treasonable Conspiracy* with a general condemnation of the recent split in the ministry. He once again attacked the entire Whig party by asserting that the 'Breaches among King GEORGE's Friends' would inevitably 'overthrow all that Felicity, that Peace, and those *Halcyon* Days, which the People of this Nation had Reason to hope for'.¹⁰⁴ The irony of labelling the Whigs 'George's friends' is readily apparent here – the party's divisions were clearly undermining the king's business. However, in contrast to the consistently non-committal stance of Defoe's previous two pamphlets, *Treasonable Conspiracy* appeared to eventually declare its allegiance to the Walpole-Townshend faction.¹⁰⁵ It did so by launching an extremely xenophobic attack on Stanhope's plan to pass an act that was to create British peerages for George's foreign advisors. The 'Design of prostituting the illustrious Blood of our Nobility to Foreigners', the reader was told, was a 'Horrid Conspiracy, against the Honour and Liberty' of the nation. The men behind this plan were 'selfish and designing' and merely wanted to 'engross Power, amass Wealth, and gratifie the unbound Avarice and Ambition of a few'. The proposal was, in fact, no less than treasonable and the present pamphlet was designed to 'detect and expose' the sinister machinations of the 'Conspirators'.¹⁰⁶ In this context it is significant that Defoe describe the *State-Anatomy* as being of central importance for the conspirators. Toland's pamphlet had apparently been instrumental

¹⁰³ Ibid, 50

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 4

¹⁰⁵ See Furbank & Owens, *Canonisation*, 159

¹⁰⁶ Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 5-6, 9

in publicising and promoting the ministry's plan.¹⁰⁷ As a result, any attack on the pamphlet and its author automatically reflected on the cause they supported. If the *State-Anatomy*, as Defoe claimed, was designed to neutralise the threat which 'some honest and loyal Patriots, who yet remain in the Administration' (presumably a reference to Townshend and Walpole, since Townshend was not dismissed until two months after the publication of *Treasonable Conspiracy*) posed to the ministry's plans, his own pamphlet inevitably had to involve an attack on the supposed instigators behind the publication of the *State-Anatomy*, namely the Stanhope ministry. Defoe, it seems plausible to suggest, distanced himself from his paymasters because his rhetorical approach necessitated this move, not because he had finally decided to pledge his allegiance to the Townshend-Walpole opposition.¹⁰⁸ The ambiguity in Defoe's emphasis on the partisan nature of *Treasonable Conspiracy* – he did not name either the ministry or the opposition – supports this notion. However, confirmation of the validity of the above suggestion may be gained from a pamphlet Defoe published in late July 1717, *The Old Whig and Modern Whig Revived, in the Present Divisions at Court*.

The Old Whig and Modern Whig Revived constituted Defoe's most in-depth discussion of the Whig schism and it was in this pamphlet that Defoe most obviously sided with the court Whigs. Assuming the voice of a saddened Whig, Defoe related how early in Anne's reign the Whigs established a stable government, under which 'Things went on with wonderful Success'.¹⁰⁹ However, 'the craving Appetite of the ambitious' divided the Whigs into two factions which could be distinguished as '*Whigs out of Place, and Whigs in Place*'. It soon became clear which of these two factions Defoe believed to be most deserving of condemnation: the opposition or old Whigs, having joined '*High-Fliers, Jacobites, or Non jurors*' in order to exert pressure on the court Whigs, 'obtained the Character of Men of more *Policy* than

¹⁰⁷ Furbank & Owens, *Critical Bibliography*, 169; Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 7, 10

¹⁰⁸ According to his own account, Defoe passed into the service of Sunderland after Townshend's dismissal. See Defoe's letter to Charles DeLaFaye, 26 April 1718, in Healey, *Letters*, 452-53

¹⁰⁹ Daniel Defoe, *Old Whig and Modern Whig Revived in the Present Divisions at Court* (1717), 8

Principle'.¹¹⁰ As the pamphlet moved closer to the current breach among the Whigs, Defoe's assessment of the 'whigs out of place' became increasingly more scathing. The assertion that Townshend and Walpole's opposition were entirely mercenary and that their actions showed that 'SELF lies at the Bottom' of their designs was repeated numerous times in the second half of the pamphlet.¹¹¹ The 'Men out of Places', Defoe stated unequivocally,

act without Regard to the Publick Good, of which before they claim'd to be esteemed Protectors and Patriots.

Thus we see them clashing with the new Ministers, voting against them upon every Occasion, straitning, and as much as in them lies, threatening and opposing the Publick Interest, even his Majesty's Affairs, for whom a little before they were the greatest Sticklers, and the most faithful Espousers of his Service against the World.¹¹²

Over the course of the year 1717, then, Defoe's attitude changed from an ambiguous stance towards both the court and the opposition Whigs to an outright condemnation of the actions of the opposition. Had Townshend and Walpole really been the patriots they claimed to be, they should have 'submitted their Judgements in some Things...rather than to have distressed the Administration by their unreasonable Strife'. The only outcome they could expect from their behaviour was, as the past had shown, a Tory revival and the destruction of the Whig interest. It should be noted, however, that, whilst he clearly held the opposition responsible for the most recent split within the Whig party, Defoe did not describe the government as void of self-interest. The 'common Good is but a common Whore', he concluded, 'and serves every Purpose; every Party will to Day condemn, to Morrow acquit; to Day reproach, to Morrow embrace the same Person'.¹¹³

The rhetoric of *The Old Whig and Modern Whig Revived*, then, demonstrates two things: firstly, Defoe's denunciation of the Walpole-Townshend opposition indicates that the anti-ministerial stance in *Treasonable Conspiracy* was most probably determined by the fact that he was answering Toland. Secondly, that two decades after the standing army controversy, Defoe remained firmly attached to the

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 10-12, 14

¹¹¹ Ibid, 27; also 28, 29-30, 36, 40

¹¹² Ibid, 34-35

¹¹³ Ibid, 22, 39-40, 47

court interest and opposed to the country opposition. His attack on the 'Roman' Whigs was at once aimed at to the anti-army cohort of the 1690s, who had assumed this title and of whom Toland was a well-known representative, and the current Walpole-Townshend opposition.¹¹⁴ According to their professed principles of virtue and incorruptibility, these men should have been the greatest patriots of the nation but 'Experience tells us, that EVEN THESE are not the Men':

...no sooner had the King *George*...put the Administration into their Hands, but these Men fell out again in the most violent Manner, about that old, ridiculous Question, that even divided the Disciples of Christ, viz. *Who should be the greatest?*¹¹⁵

Defoe insisted that the old Whigs' constant talk of their principles was simply a smokescreen for their own avarice, which in turn was responsible for the damaging breach within the ministry. Moreover, what became clearly visible in the writings of old Whigs such as Toland was that the 'Men out of Places act without Regard to the Publick Good, of which before they claim'd to be esteemed Protectors and Patriots'.¹¹⁶ The author of the *State-Anatomy*, Defoe insisted without any visible irony, was as 'heterodox' in his politics as in his religion. One of the key concepts of the radical Whig campaign to which Toland had contributed was the Gothic balance, or the equilibrium between the three estates of king, Lords and Commons. This balance, the old Whigs had maintained, needed to be protected from corrupt courtiers and placemen who were prepared to sell their votes to the king and his ministry.¹¹⁷ Yet, was Toland not openly encouraging the corruption of the Lords' independence by demanding the admission of the king's foreign courtiers? In addition, was this not 'against the *Law it self*' which William III had wisely installed to protect the English constitution? Defoe similarly attacked Toland's 'shameless Proposal' of a standing army. Did this man not remember the answer he and his fellow anti-army campaigners had given 'in this Case to King *William's* Ministry'? Why should

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 31, 42; that Defoe was indeed targeting the Walpole-Townshend opposition is shown by his allusion in the above context to the Duke of Argyll (33), who was dismissed from his various posts in June 1716 and subsequently began to intrigue against the king's ministers. See Speck, *Stability and Strife*, 189

¹¹⁵ Defoe, *Old Whig and Modern Whig Revived*, 31-32

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 34

¹¹⁷ See Chapter I, 40

standing forces be any less dangerous now than they were two decades ago? The illegal proposal advanced in the *State-Anatomy* finally showed this radical Whig to be a 'Man, whose Life has been to act in a Mask' and a 'Traitor to our Constitution'.¹¹⁸ What the Whig schism had shown quite clearly was that the old Whigs were not in fact the highly principled defenders of the law and English liberties they claimed to be but self-interested 'Men acting to Day one Part, to Morrow another'.¹¹⁹ The *State-Anatomy* had only been one example of a professed country Whig acting against his principles to gain favour with the court. A 'disinterested Patriot' Toland was certainly not, and nor were Townshend or Walpole.¹²⁰

This chapter has demonstrated that if *Treasonable Conspiracy* is placed in the relevant contexts, the 'complications and anomalies' referred to by Furbank and Owens are perhaps not so great. To assert that a statement or an entire work is ironic is, of course, somewhat problematic, since irony is a figure of indeterminacy. The assumptions which the commentator has to make to arrive at the conclusion that the literal meaning of a statement must be rejected to allow a secondary meaning to emerge are inevitably strongly guided by the commentator's idea of the author's character and beliefs. This preconceived picture of the author naturally shapes the interpretation of a text and, in the worst case, can lead to a detection of irony which the author did not intend and the meaning of a text is inverted in order to fit the interpreter's idea of the author. In the case of Defoe, this danger of a fallacious reading is perhaps greater than with any author of the period. Yet, to not read Defoe's comments on the nobility and on foreigners in *Treasonable Conspiracy* as ironic, would be to ignore his undoubted talent as an ironist. Defoe himself, as this chapter has shown, certainly offered enough markers in his text to allow such a reading. What becomes apparent in the above analysis of Defoe's rhetorical strategy is that his stance in *Treasonable Conspiracy* was not quite as inconsistent as some of his contemporaries and biographers have suggested. The Defoe scholar might also feel a little more comfortable with the addition of the pamphlet to the Defoe canon.

¹¹⁸ Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 38, 40, 51, 56-57

¹¹⁹ Defoe, *Old Whig and Modern Whig Revived*, 42

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 35

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Defoe could appear, to use the words of a contemporary observer, 'One hour a *Whig* and the next hour a *Tory*'.¹ Any study of Defoe's political rhetoric will inevitably find that his stance changed considerably during the two decades or so he commented on matters of high politics. His public voice of the 1690s was easily recognisable as that of a Court Whig. He took the side of William III in the standing army controversy and repeatedly demonstrated his adherence to the Whiggish notion of contractual government and the central Whig tenet of the right of resistance in his pamphlets. What his writings of this period also show, however, is that his early political rhetoric and polemical strategy may be described as unique within the context of the controversy. Firstly, as is well known, his public voice was not that of a radical Whig. Unlike some of the propagandists of the Country opposition, Defoe did not believe that the king's powers should be reduced to an absolute minimum in order to make his constitutional position merely titular. However, a second important aspect of Defoe's writing has hitherto not been sufficiently highlighted, namely that his polemical strategy also clearly differed from that of his fellow Court propagandists. While the other pro-army writers predominantly focused on the argument of military necessity – France was still regarded as too great a threat to be without an army – Defoe, it has been shown, offered a more substantial case for the retention of professional forces.

To be sure, Defoe too suggested that an army was needed as a deterrent to a potential French invasion attempt, but he appears to have realised that, in order to counter anti-army propaganda effectively, he needed to engage with the opposition's forceful constitutional arguments. England, he maintained throughout the controversy, needed a strong monarch both to protect its international interests and to maintain the domestic power balance between king and parliament which was integral to the stability of the constitution. To transfer virtually all political power to parliament, he claimed, would not eradicate the possibility of tyrannical rule in England. The opposite was, in fact, true: an unbalanced 'republican' government of this kind simply meant 'exchanging one Tyrant for Three hundred'.² Political stability could only be

¹ *The Weekly Journal; or, British Gazetteer* (8 November 1718)

² Defoe, *An Argument*, 73

guaranteed if the king was able to counterbalance parliament effectively, which, in turn, could only be achieved if he was allowed to retain the 'sword in his hands', that is, to maintain a standing army. Parliament, Defoe claimed, was perfectly able to limit the king's power through its control of supply. 'The Power of Raising Money', he concluded, 'is wholly in the Parliament, as a Balance to the Power of Raising Men, which is in the King'.³ It is this focus on the constitutional arguments advanced in the army debate which made Defoe's voice different from that of other pro-army writers. In addition, his pro-army rhetoric demonstrated that his own constitutional ideas contained conservative elements which one might even call 'royalist'.

Despite the fact that the standing army controversy officially ended in 1699 when parliament voted for a substantial reduction of William's forces, Defoe continued his attack on anti-army rhetoric. At the beginning of 1701, he published an extensive refutation of Country Whig constitutional theory in the shape of the verse satire *The True-Born Englishman*. The tract was designed to simultaneously establish Defoe's reputation as a serious poet and to dismantle the most important element of Country Whig ideology, the nobility. Radical Whig constitutional theory firmly rested on the notion of the 'Gothic balance', which offered a perfect equilibrium between the three governmental estates of king, Lords and Commons. Importantly, this Gothic government was, in the main, protected by the 'Barons', the ancient equivalent of the modern nobility. Due to their natural incorruptibility, the Country Whigs claimed, they had the function of curbing any transgressive behaviour of the king or the Commons. Morally superior to the two other governmental estates, the nobility represented the bulwark of English liberties. In *True-Born Englishman*, it has been shown, Defoe systematically subverted and dismantled this cornerstone of Country Whig political thought. In his version of ancient British history, the Barons were not morally superior but became 'Beggars and Bastards' and 'Rascals...enrich'd'.⁴ Indeed, Defoe argued that it was the nobility, not the king or Commons, who established a tyrannical rule. What becomes apparent is that Defoe rejected the notion of the governmental triad. His balanced constitution was achieved through the

³ Ibid, 76

⁴ Defoe, *True-Born Englishman*, 208

juxtaposition of the king's power with that of the Commons. The nobility occupied only a marginal position in Defoe's version of the English constitution. *The True-Born Englishman* thus offered the first and most extensive attack on Country Whig historiography and constitutional theory of the early eighteenth century.

The standing army controversy was a purely political debate. Whether or not one advocated the retention of a significant standing army was essentially determined by the individual's political principles and their idea of the English constitution. In contrast, the occasional conformity controversy appeared to be a different matter; this debate ostensibly focused on the religious conduct of the individual. High Anglicans did, of course, believe that religion and politics could not be divorced from one another: if an individual refused to conform to the national church, s/he also stood outside the country's political establishment and legal structure. The practice of occasional conformity, they asserted, demonstrated beyond doubt that the Dissenters, like their Roundhead ancestors, were irreligious regicides, who sought political power in order to turn the kingdom into a republic. In contrast to the extreme Anglicans, Defoe viewed the issue of occasional conformity as a purely theological problem. If his writings on the army issue had marked him as a court Whig, his public voice at the beginning of the debate surrounding occasional conformity was that of an 'apolitical' Dissenter. To Defoe, the Dissenters' taking of annual communion in an Anglican church represented a serious threat to the integrity of religious nonconformity. It undermined the very grounds on which the Dissenters had separated from the Church and as such the practice could potentially prove the end of Dissent. Defoe's condemnation of occasional conformists was remarkable close to the rhetoric of the High-Churchmen.

However, after Defoe was imprisoned and pilloried for publishing the seditious libel *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, his voice changed noticeably and almost instantly. The episode seemed to have clarified to him that the extreme Anglicans represented a far greater threat to nonconformity than the occasional conformists ever could. Moreover, High-Churchmen were advocating a regime which was clearly in opposition to the much-coveted 'Revolution Principle'. From this point onwards, Defoe considered the debate to be about fundamental political and constitutional

questions. He began a campaign which was designed to re-assert the liberties and rights of the individual and he now defended the occasional conformists. He consistently refuted the High-Church accusation that nonconformity represented a political threat and at every turn he attempted to counter High-Church demands for an abolishment of liberty of conscience and the eradication of Dissent. Moreover, Defoe once again decided to refute his opponents' extremist ideas in the elevated form of a verse satire. *Jure Divino*, it has been shown, may be viewed as the culmination of Defoe's effort to provide a comprehensive system which showed the legality of religious dissent. It might also be remarked that Defoe's public voice at this point was one of popular Whiggery. His rhetorical focus had necessarily changed from the rights of the king to the rights of the individual.

When Defoe wrote volume one of *The Family Instructor* in 1714, he had been a political propagandist for almost two decades. His work as a government writer had required Defoe to perform some high-profile changes of stance and consequently earned him the reputation of being an unprincipled hack and political Proteus. Defoe, however, had never abandoned his belief in the traditional Whig principles of contractual government and the Protestant succession. When Jacobitism experienced a dangerous resurgence during the succession crisis of 1714, he published a series of ironic pamphlets which were designed to highlight the dangers of a restoration of James Edward Stuart. The pamphlets failed to have their desired effect and he was, in fact, prosecuted for, and later convicted of, the production of libellous materials. With his reputation at an absolute low point and the nation experiencing a series of Jacobite-inspired, anti-Hanoverian riots, Defoe produced a public voice which was unlike any of his previous ones. In order to aid the restoration of national peace and unity, he produced a conduct book in *The Family Instructor* which relentlessly preached the need for an obedience to higher powers. In the process, Defoe largely ignored the previously much coveted right of resistance (although it is never rejected), while he actively promotes strict, at times autocratic, paternal government. Adjusting his rhetoric to the demands of the historical moment, Defoe's voice was now, in some respects, remarkably close to that of earlier paternalist writings. Moreover, while his verse satires were predominantly aimed at an upper class readership and intended to

make an impact in the public sphere of political debate, *The Family Instructor* was a public voice which intruded into the private sphere. Defoe's choice of literary form was an important part of his polemical strategy, as it targeted directly the very people who could be seen rioting in the streets of the major cities of Britain, craftsmen and tradesmen and their families and apprentices. In this sense, Defoe's *The Family Instructor* was not merely a guide to the private practice of family prayer, but represented a public political act.

One of the most puzzling of Defoe's voices is that of *Treasonable Conspiracy*, which came as a response to Toland's *State-Anatomy*. The pamphlet appeared to renege on almost every one of Defoe's earlier ideas. The tract celebrates the moral superiority and genealogical purity of the nobility, dismissed foreigner as being of 'spurious blood', and described standing armies as one of the greatest threats to English liberties.⁵ At the same time, Defoe displayed an undiminished veneration for William III and expressed largely the same sentiments regarding the nature of Dissent as he had done over a decade earlier. A literal reading of the tract certainly suggests that Defoe had become an apostate to some of his fundamental beliefs. *Treasonable Conspiracy* does, however, contain a number of markers which indicate that some section of the pamphlet should be regarded as ironic in nature. If understood in this way, what becomes apparent is that the tract represented a personal attack on Defoe's old country Whig adversary Toland. In this context, Defoe's ironic apostasy served to draw attention to his opponent's inconsistencies, while, through the ironic inversion, reaffirming some of his own beliefs. If read literally, Defoe's voice in *Treasonable Conspiracy* is very different from the country Whig voice of the *State-Anatomy*, to the extent where Defoe's own Whig credentials become questionable. If, however, the ironic content of the pamphlet is taken into consideration, one of Defoe's final public voices on matters of high politics returns to the mould of his voice of the 1690s. Two decades after his first attack on the country opposition, Defoe's rhetoric still marked him out as a court supporter.

Even a study which focuses on a selection of Defoe's public voices clearly demonstrates that his polemical strategy was largely determined by an ad hominem

⁵ Defoe, *Treasonable Conspiracy*, 13

approach. His political rhetoric was shaped and re-shaped by the general re-adjustments evident in political and religious discourses after the Glorious Revolution. The fact that political positions were not fixed was necessarily reflected in Defoe's own writing. In this sense, some of Defoe's inconsistencies are simply a sign of the times. However, there were also occasions when Defoe sacrificed a previously held position in order to achieve a specific polemical goal. It is at these points that Defoe's nature as an occasional writer becomes most apparent. To Defoe, it was the end product which was most important, not the means by which it was achieved. Even if, in order to support the political stability of the nation, he was required to renege on an earlier public voice, Defoe was always prepared to do so to safeguard what he considered to be in the interest of the public good.

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