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In the Restoration and early eighteenth century criminal biography was a popular genre — short, simple, and topical — apparently intended for the barely literate working-class reader. Its market was created by frequent public executions and widespread interest and even participation in the underworld. Today criminal biography is a little-known genre most frequently mentioned by historians of the novel and students of Daniel Defoe [1] attempting to explain the rise of realism. The paucity of studies and the absence of bibliographies of the genre, however, have left criminal biography a subject open to uninformed speculation. Although in 1907 Frank W. Chandler, one of the few students of criminal biography, warned the prospective bibliographer that criminal biographies "are so widely scattered as to be reassembled for purposes of study only at a cost of pains and patience out of all proportion to their apparent merit," [2] today microfilm and Xerox copying have considerably reduced the cost in pains and patience (and money) of assembling these tracts. The bibliography appended should obviate some of the guesswork. In this article I shall describe the genre and some of its outstanding titles.

Setting the early limit at 1651, the date of the first biography of the

[1] See, for example, Arthur W. Secord, *Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe* (Urbana, 1942), p. 116; James Sutherland, "Introduction" to Riverside Edition of *Moll Flanders* (Boston, 1959), p. xi; William McBurney, "*Colonel Jacque*: Defoe's Definition of the Complete English Gentleman," *Studies in English Literature*, II (1962), 321–336; Howard L. Koonce, "Moll's Muddle: Defoe's Use of Irony in *Moll Flanders*," *English Literary History*, XXX (1963), 377–394; Maximillian Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man* (Oxford, 1963), p. 142; Robert Alter, *Rogue's Progress: Studies in the Picaresque Novel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 57; G. A. Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* (Princeton, 1965), p. 126; A. A. Parker, *Literature and the Delinquent* (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 103; and Michael Shinagel, *Daniel Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 168–169.

[2] *The Literature of Roguery* (Cambridge, Mass.), p. 181.

earliest criminal mentioned by Defoe (James Hind),[3] I located fifty-eight criminal biographies published before the end of 1722, the year in which Defoe published his last completed novels of criminals, *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jacque*. The thirty-two criminal heroes of these biographies are all convicted murderers or professional thieves and bigamists whose historical existence can be proved, largely from "Accounts" by the Ordinaries (Chaplains) of Newgate and the four-volume *Compleat Collection of Remarkable Tryals at the Sessions-House in the Old Bailey, for near Fifty Years past* (London, 1718–21), edited by one N. B. All the biographies here listed make some effort to cover more of the criminal's life than his apprehension, trial, and execution. Without these limitations many more titles would have to be added.

A surprising feature of this genre is the high proportion of comic works which can only be compared with the jest-books or jest-biographies studied by Ernst Schulz and F. P. Wilson.[4] This comic majority (thirty-two out of fifty-eight) make almost no attempt at realism and are almost certainly largely fictitious. They have no purpose beyond entertainment, are not interested in prison reform or legal justice, the causes of crime, the condition of the poor, or any other sociological or psychological issues which would require a consistent attitude toward the criminal or any theme they might treat. They attempt to raise a laugh at the expense either of the criminal or his victim, to create admiration for a criminal's ingenuity at the tricks of his trade or at escaping from prison. (Only in the pages of Alexander Smith's *Lives of the Highwaymen* (1713–1719) is a murderer treated comically.) [5]

Today it is almost inconceivable that people would buy a collection of jests about a criminal they had just seen executed, but one must remember that the mood of a Tyburn execution was far from solemn, except for the brief moment when the "hero" was kicking at the end

[3] I have found Defoe referring to almost half (fourteen) of the thirty-two heroes of these biographies (excluding the collective biographies of Alexander Smith and Theophilus Lucas, which by themselves deal with about two hundred criminals). Defoe mentions James Hind in *Moll Flanders*. See *Shakespeare Head Edition of the Novels and Selected Writings of Daniel Defoe* (Oxford, 1927–8), II, 106. Subsequent references to Defoe's work are to this edition.

[4] Schulz, *Die Englischen Schwank-bücher* (Berlin, 1912); Wilson, "The English Jestbooks of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, II (1938), 121–158.

[5] Ed. A. L. Hayward (London, 1926). Subsequent references are to this edition.

of a rope. Bernard Mandeville gives a Hogarthian picture of the procession to Tyburn:

> At last, out they set; and with them a Torrent of Mob bursts thorough the Gate. Amongst the lower Rank, and working People, the idlest, and such as are most fond of making Holidays, with Prentices and Journeymen to the meanest Trades, are the most honourable Part of these floating Multitudes. . . . All the Way, from *Newgate* to *Tyburn*, is one continued Fair, for Whores and Rogues of the meaner Sort. . . . No modern Rabble can long subsist without their darling Cordial, the grand Preservative of Sloth, *Jeneva*, . . . The Traders, who vent it among the Mob on these Occasions, are commonly the worst of both Sexes. . . . Here stands an old Sloven, in a Wig actually putrify'd, squeez'd up in a Corner, and recommends a Dram of it to the Goers-by; There another in Rags, with several Bottles in a Basket, stirs about where the Throng is the thinnest. . . . The intelligible Sounds, that are heard among them, are Oaths and vile Expressions, with Wishes of Damnation at every other Word. . . nothing is more entertaining to them than the dead Carcasses of Dogs and Cats. . . . These well trampled in Filth, and, if possible, of the worst sort are, by the Ringleaders, flung as high and as far as a strong Arm can carry them. . . . And to see a good Suit of Cloaths spoiled by this Piece of Gallantry, is the tip-top of their Diversion.[6]

Mandeville describes the drunkenness of the prisoners and the "three or four, and sometimes half a dozen" stops at taverns along the route to "stifle their Fear" (p. 23), and he concludes, "These Processions are very void of that decent Solemnity that would be required to make them awful" (p. 24).

This is the "holiday at Tyburn," as Henry Fielding later called it,[7] which accounts for the cheap comic tone of so many criminal biographies. All but one or two of the biographies listed here were published in the year of the criminal's execution, probably not in time to be sold at the execution itself, but a few days afterward while interest was still running high. We know that Defoe was able to put only one of his eight criminal biographies on sale on execution day; he intended (but was unable) to publish another, that of the pirate John Gow, on execution day.[8] Many biographers had to wait until the Ordinary of Newgate published his "Account" the day after execution in order to include many of his passages in their biographies.

[6] *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn* (London, 1725), pp. 20–22.

[7] *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers* (1751) in *Works*, ed. James P. Browne (London, 1871), X, 482.

[8] See John R. Moore, *A Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe* (Bloomington, 1960), No. 474 (Gow); Nos. 424, 465, 466, 468, 473, 478, 481.

A frivolous inconsistency in their attitudes toward the criminal hero is an outstanding quality of these tracts, especially the comic ones. Among the biographies and fictitious autobiographies, only *The Memoirs of Mons. Du Vall* (1670) is consistently ironic. The rest, except for five consistently laudatory and fifteen consistently critical, are wildly inconsistent, mixing praise, blame, and covert blame according to no discernible principle. Where irony is part of this mixture, it is usually an obvious and simple form of covert criticism.[9]

Since they purport to be biographies, these fifty-eight books make some show of covering the entire life of the subject, but actually only a few devote more than one or two pages to the important years of childhood and youth. Indeed, it is not unusual to cover the period from birth to marriage in one sentence. Sometimes the biographer tries to find the germ of later developments in youthful character or familial conditions, as in *The English Guzman* (1652), wherein James Hind is said to have disliked school and his father's trade, but was "very notable in jesting" (p. 2). *The Triumph of Truth* (1663), a biography of James Turner, claims to see a criminal pattern developing in childhood and youth: "a bloody morning did foretell a dismal afternoon."[10] And *Murder Will Out* (1692), a biography of Henry Harrison, takes the opposite position: "the Spring of his Youth promised a better Harvest than the Summer of his Life produced" (p. 4).[11] But these generalizations, in pamphlets which devote only one or two paragraphs to the childhood of the hero, are supported by so few details as to be meaningless in the total picture.

Because criminal biographies usually omit particular references to time and age, it is often impossible to tell when childhood and youth end and young adulthood begins. Sometimes marriage or sexual relations roughly indicate the hero's age, after which begins the recital of "exploits," "pranks," or "adventures" without date or continuity. *Don Tomazo, or the Juvenile Rambles of Thomas Dangerfield* (1680) is typical in its lack of dates but atypical in the large number of pages it devotes to the subject's youth. Don Tomazo's age (fourteen) is

[9] The five laudatory are Nos. A2, A3, A4, A19, and A25 in the Finding Lists below; the critical ones are Nos. A9, A11, A13, A14, A21, A22, A27, A31, A33, A34, A36, A37, A41, A42, and C3.

[10] In Spiro Peterson, ed., *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled and Other Criminal Fiction of Seventeenth-Century England* (Garden City, N.Y., 1961), p. 110.

[11] Both Smith's *Highwaymen*, p. 25, and *A Second Capt. Hind* (London, 1700), p. 2, use these identical words about Nevison and Simpson.

given only once, on the twentieth page of Peterson's edition,[12] an unusually large number of pages for a criminal biography to devote to a "juvenile." For eighty-two more pages Don Tomazo grows less juvenile and more delinquent, but one can guess at his age thereafter only with help from outside sources.[13] Even at the beginning of this biography, however, Dangerfield is never dependent or childlike, as are Moll Flanders and Colonel Jacque. The author of Don Tomazo needs a "juvenile" hero only so that he can "ramble" more easily; otherwise, Dangerfield's age is unimportant.

Although criminal biographies as a rule pay little attention to a verisimilar time scheme except at the beginning and the end, a few are exceptional: *Hannam's Last Farewell* (1656) gives half a dozen dates from 1650 until the thief's execution in 1656. *Sadler's Memoirs* (1677) has an unusual number of dates for an eighteen-page pamphlet, including Sadler's birth date (1650). And the William Fuller narratives, both third- and first-person, are unusual in their particularization of time, especially the first biography, *The Life of William Fuller* (1692). Two other biographies of Fuller, *The Second Part of the Life of Fuller alias Fullee* (1701) and *A Fuller but True Account of the Life of William Fuller* (1702), give enough dates to provide a coherent framework, often by means of letters from Fuller to his victims. In many cases these dates correspond with those in Fuller's own writings and with letters in the *Calendar of State Papers*. The only criminal biography in the period which comes close to covering a complete life is the autobiography of the thirty-two-year-old Fuller, *The Whole Life* (1703).

Criminal biographies are much more careful in their treatment of scene and of proper names than of time. Throughout the genre recur the verisimilar names of towns, inns, goldsmiths (bankers), aldermen, bailiffs, judges, and clergymen; thieves usually count their money in realistic pounds and shillings instead of ducats and doubloons. Only rarely does one find a "Crispin" or a "Tonsor" or the glamorized names of romance. *Don Tomazo* is almost unique in its use of romanticized names for main characters. But in place names and names of minor characters even *Don Tomazo* is typical of criminal biography.

[12] *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled and Other Criminal Fiction*, p. 207.

[13] According to Elizabeth Cellier's *Matchless Rogue: or, a Brief Account of the Life of Don Thomazo* (London, 1680), Dangerfield was eleven when he and Jemmy set out for Scotland, the first episode in *Don Tomazo*, and eighteen years old when he returned from Antwerp, just six pages before the book ends (In Peterson, p. 284).

A few biographies stand out because of their intrinsic interest or because of their connection with Defoe. The Mary Carleton narratives, for instance, remain as remarkable as when Ernest Bernbaum first called attention to them in 1914.[14] The biographies and autobiographies of Thomas Dangerfield and William Fuller, a pair of plotter-impostor-authors, are unusually revealing. Alexander Smith's outstanding collective biography, *Lives of the Highwaymen*, reached a fifth edition; the only other criminal biography to do so was Ralph Wilson's *Full and Impartial Account* (1722), which may have suggested one of the episodes in *Colonel Jacque* (1722). Of the four real criminals mentioned by Moll Flanders — Moll Cutpurse, James Hind, James Whitney, and the Golden Farmer[15] — three are prominently represented in the bibliography.

Dangerfield's Memoirs (1685), whose author and subject is also the hero of *Don Tomazo*, seems to be what the *Dictionary of National Biography* calls it, a "genuine diary." Roger North[16] accepted it as genuine and regretted that it was not longer, a sentiment with which one must agree, for it seems to be the only completely disinterested and intimate glimpse into a criminal's daily life in all the genre. Neither vindicative nor penitent, it simply records three and a half months' "adventures, receits and expenses" which show Dangerfield, as Anthony Wood expressed it, "to be the exactest rogue and knave in nature."[17] Short as it is, this pamphlet is long enough to reveal something of Dangerfield's habits. He usually robbed seven or eight people a day, taking about ten shillings from each. He never robbed on Sunday, but usually went to church wherever he happened to spend Saturday night. He always travelled with a servant. On 10 February his servant Mark "grew sawcy" and Dangerfield "took Robin in his room." But Robin proved lazy and business suffered. Mark returned on 3 March "laden with Submission" and Dangerfield took him back, dismissing Robin with a bonus of nine shillings. This witty knave

[14] See *The Mary Carleton Narratives, 1663–1673* (Cambridge, Mass.) and the follow-up bibliography by Charles F. Main, "The German Princess: Or, Mary Carleton in Fact and Fiction," Harvard Library Bulletin, X (1956), 166–185.

[15] Moll Flanders says, "I grew as impudent a thief, and as dexterous, as ever Moll Cut-Purse was, tho' if fame does not belie her, not half so handsome" (II, 15); and again, "[Jemy] had committed so many robberies that Hind, or Whitney, or the Golden Farmer were fools to him" (II, 106).

[16] *The Examen* (London, 1740), p. 265.

[17] *Life and Times*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1891–1900), III, 153.

Dangerfield had his rational pleasures: he frequently visited his friend Wesley, apparently a fellow at Exeter College, Oxford, to whom on 7 December he paid two shillings for a copy of Lucretius! He also went "a Fishing." Less surprisingly, he made periodic visits to "sisters" whom Roger North bluntly identifies as "whores" (p. 264). A crisis occurred on 3 February when he was overtaken by seven horsemen, fled across country, and turned to fight the four who had kept up with him. He fought "about an hour" with them, was wounded, but escaped. For the rest of the *Memoirs* he made periodic visits to "Mr. Arme the chyrurgion."

Dangerfield was best known as a political informer of the order of Titus Oates and William Bedloe, for he came to public notice as a result of the Popish Plot of 1679–80 and his efforts to help Elizabeth Cellier stage a counter-plot variously called the Presbyterian or "Meal-tub" Plot. He was pardoned and lived until 1685, the year of the *Memoirs*, when he was killed as he was being returned to prison from the pillory.

Another plotter *manqué* and criminal autobiographer (whose development, he says, was influenced by his early reading of *Don Tomazo*) was William Fuller. The most impressive and the largest number of criminal biographies, real or fictitious, between the Mary Carleton narratives (1663–1673) and *Moll Flanders* (1722) were written by and about William Fuller. Four of these narratives are autobiographies: *The Life of William Fuller* (1701), *A Trip to Hampshire and Flanders* (1701), *The Whole Life of Mr. Fuller* (1703), and *Mr. William Fuller's Trip to Bridewell* (1703). Fuller's modern biographer George A. Campbell lists twenty-five books by Fuller, including these four, in the years 1692–1717.[18] Most of them concern the major event in Fuller's life, the Warming-pan Plot, a hoax which aimed to prove James II's son illegitimate, but only these four could be considered biographies. Fuller was voted an impostor by the House of Commons in 1692 for failing to bring before the House two spies who allegedly could testify about Jacobite activity. Again in 1702 he was found guilty of publishing false and malicious books about James II and ordered to be sent to the pillory and Bridewell. Both of these crimes, as well as the Warming-pan Plot, were of course political, but Fuller qualifies for inclusion among the non-politi-

[18] *Impostor at the Bar: William Fuller, 1670–1733* (London, 1961), p. 251.

cal criminals, too, for he was a self-confessed confidence man. He seems to have spent most of his life after 1702 in prison, leaving for brief periods only to be indicted again for fraud and reincarcerated.

Comparison of Fuller's autobiographies with what others say about him in five biographies shows that much of Fuller's story was accepted as true. But his claims of gentle birth and the tales of his adventures at age eighteen as a spy for James II and his queen after their flight in 1689, were generally dismissed as lies. His first autobiography, *The Life of William Fuller* (1701) — the titles of the Fuller narratives are confusingly similar — was written in answer to a scurrilous biography published earlier that year; his next, *The Whole Life of Mr. William Fuller* (1703), was written while Fuller was in the Queen's-bench Prison after being voted an impostor for the second time, this time by the Lords.

This *Whole Life* is the most interesting English criminal biography in the period after Francis Kirkman's *Counterfeit Lady Unveiled* (1673). Its tone is serious and its style clear. Fuller's spying adventures (pp. 21–37), as well as many earlier events of his youth, are told in a good deal of detail. His stories of life in the Powys and Melfort families, the escape to France with Mary of Modena, his spying for the Jacobites, the capture of his fellow spy Matthew Crone — which may indeed be fictitious — are interesting in themselves. For example, on one trip to Northumberland to deliver letters for Mary of Modena Fuller stopped for an unforgettable supper at a country inn:

> At a small Village where I lay one Night, I desired a couple of Fowls for supper, inviting my Landlord and his Spouse to partake with me; but just as the Fowls were taken from the Spit, I by chance, stood in a passage looking into the Kitchen, where I saw the Woman cram her mouth full of Salt and Water, which she gargled up and down her throat and Mouth for a while, then squirted the same through the Body of the Fowl, and this she put into the Dish for Sauce, and my Stomach was satisfied before I sate down; however, I took no notice, only pretended I could not eat, and that I was not very well, therefore desired two or three Eggs boiled in the Shells, which were got ready for me, and mine Host and his Wife had the Fowls for themselves (p. 35).

Fuller, probably the most famous criminal before John Sheppard and Jonathan Wild, lived in and out of prison until 1733. After 1703 he advertised himself in a series of tracts, mostly on the Warming-pan Plot, until 1717, when he was again convicted of fraud and imprisoned. In 1718 many of the biographies were reissued as *The Life and Un-*

accountable Actions of William Fuller, the longest criminal biography between 1673 and 1722.

Alexander Smith's *Lives of the Highwaymen* (1713–19) treats approximately 184 recent criminals, the existence of about sixty percent of whom (111) can be verified from *A Compleat Collection of Remarkable Tryals* or the Ordinaries' "Accounts." Chandler is in general correct in his description of Smith's *Highwaymen*: "It comprises the information afforded by whatever criminal pamphlets and last confessions had then been published. Moreover, after the fashion of the 'Histoire Generale des Larrons' it contains most of the tricks presented in jest-books and picaresque literature, assigning to real people the stock incidents of fiction" (p. 172).

Only an annotated edition could do justice to Smith's intricate plagiarism. Chandler pointed out a few jests stolen from picaresque literature, mostly Carlos Garcia's *Desordenada Codicia* (1619), but I have found many more passages copied from this and other picaresque novels, as well as seven passages copied nearly verbatim from criminal biographies.[19] Smith did not even bother to ascribe exploits to the same criminal from whose biography he copied them. For example, he assigned to Nan Hereford (pp. 346–349) the story of Mary Carleton's marriage to an apothecary.[20] Smith even copies from himself: Volume III (5th edition, 1719) repeats the story in Volume I (1713) copied from *A Fuller but True Account of the Life of William Fuller*, attributing it not to Fuller but to other criminals.[21]

Sir Richard Steele, who thought the *Highwaymen* a real biography and praised the book at the same time he admitted he had not yet read it,[22] singled out the chapter on Du Vall for special mention. Yet this

[19] *Highwaymen*, pp. 136, 138, 139–140 are copied from *The English Gusman*, pp. 1–3, 7, 37–38, 44; *Highwaymen*, pp. 273–276, from *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith*, pp. 54–61; *Highwaymen*, pp. 346–349, from *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled* in Peterson, pp. 86–91; *Highwaymen*, p. 227, from *Sadler's Memoirs*, pp. 9–13; *Highwaymen*, pp. 27–28, from *The Life of Capt. James Whitney*, pp. 18–19; *Highwaymen* copies almost the whole of *A Fuller but True Account of the Life of William Fuller: Highwaymen*, pp. 89 and 464 (which are almost identical), from pp. 28–31; *Highwaymen*, p. 102, from pp. 7, 11–14; *Highwaymen*, pp. 103–104, from pp. 7–10; *Highwaymen*, pp. 119–120, from pp. 14–19, 25–28; and finally, *Highwaymen*, p. 570, from *The Life and Adventures of Capt. John Avery*, p. 16. The *Highwaymen* changes a word here and there, but all these passages are undoubtedly copied.

[20] In Peterson, pp. 86–91.

[21] See *Highwaymen*, pp. 89, 464, and *A Fuller but True Account*, pp. 28–31.

[22] *Englishman* No. 48, ed. Rae Blanchard (Oxford, 1955), p. 193.

chapter, so far from being "taken, almost word for word, from . . . *The Memoirs of Du Vall*," as Smith's most recent editor says (p. 144), is copied from Quevedo's *Buscon* and other unidentified sources in four of its eight pages. If, however, Steele had read the chapters on the famous penitents Harman Strodtman, Robert Foulkes, or Thomas Savage, or nine other chapters that appear in the editions after the one he reviewed, he might have had some excuse for regarding the *Highwaymen* as biography, for these eleven chapters are completely serious and copied accurately if without acknowledgement from the original confessions. But read as biography, most of the *Highwaymen* is frustrating. It belongs in the tradition of jest-biography, as Chandler pointed out, where the question of reliability is irrelevant, and even the plagiarism is traditional.[23]

The typical chapter of the *Highwaymen* begins with a few facts about a criminal's birth and family, moves into a large middle section of one-paragraph unconnected jests, and ends with a few facts about his execution. Sometimes the facts are correct and sometimes they are not, but the book is much too long for such a format to hold the interest. Arthur Secord thought *Lives of the Highwaymen* to be "perhaps the most important work of fiction between 1700 and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)."[24] The number of editions (five) indicates that Secord may be right, but I have found surprisingly few (four) contemporary references to Smith's book.[25] If Secord is right, and *Highwaymen* was Defoe's "most important" forerunner in criminal fiction, his competition was weak indeed, for it is a debasement of an already mean genre.

Several similarities between Defoe's *Colonel Jacque* and Ralph Wilson's autobiography comprise the closest connection I have found between Defoe and the genre. Wilson's tract may have suggested several details of the last two robberies committed by Jacque and Will's

[23] See C. Carew Hazlitt, ed., *Shakespeare Jest-books*, 3 vols. (London, 1864), *passim*; and F. P. Wilson, "The English Jestbooks of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, II (1938), 121–158.

[24] *Robert Drury's Journal and Other Studies* (Urbana, 1961), p. 81.

[25] Steele; *The Highland Rogue* (London, 1723), p. vii; William Hawkins' autobiography, No. C4 in the Finding List below, p. 2 of "Preface"; *The Whole Life and History of Benjamin Child* (London, 1722), p. 3. But another evidence of the *Highwaymen's* popularity was its silent inclusion in Charles Johnson's *Lives and Adventures of the Most Famous Highwaymen* (London, 1734, 1736, 1741, 1742, 1753, 1758, 1772, etc.)

gang and Jacque's flight north,[26] as well as several of the names of characters in *Colonel Jacque* (December 1722). We know that Defoe read Wilson's *Full and Impartial Account of All the Robberies Committed by John Hawkins, George Sympson (lately Executed for Robbing the Bristol Mails) and their Companions* (1722), for he was editing *Applebee's Journal* in May when Wilson's account appeared and devoted three full columns to "A Short Abstract" (26 May).[27] Wilson's confessions evidently made quite a stir, for four editions were called for the first year and one the next, and Jack Hawkins' older brother Will, a criminal in his own right, published (or caused to be published) from *his* cell at the Gatehouse a rebuttal which ran to three editions.[28]

The likelihood is strong that Defoe was already writing *Colonel Jacque* when Wilson's tract appeared and that several names — Will, Jack, George, Brentford, Tower Hill — and several events — instruction by an older thief, the confederate butler, the murder, the multiple robbery, the warning, and most important, the flight to the North — were suggested by Wilson's experiences.

The similarities between Defoe's novel and Wilson's autobiography can be seen from the following summaries: Ralph Wilson at about eighteen joined a gang whose members included, like those in *Colonel Jacque*, a Jack (aged twenty-four), a Will, and a George. Jack's last "legitimate" job had been as a a butler in Brentford, where he had been a "Confederate in robbing his Master's House of a considerable Value

[26] I am aware that John R. Moore has pointed out the similarity between Jacque's flight and an actual trip north Defoe took in 1708, but Defoe's "use of personal experience" does not rule out Wilson's experience as another kind of suggestive influence much closer to the writing of *Colonel Jacque*. See "Defoe's Use of Personal Experience in *Colonel Jack*," *Modern Language Notes*, LIV (1939), 362–363.

[27] The only other criminal biography to which Defoe referred by name was *The Life and Adventures of Capt. John Avery* (1709), which plays a part in the sequence of pirate stories leading to *Captain Singleton* (1720). See Defoe's *King of Pirates* in *Romances and Narratives by Daniel Defoe*, ed. G. A. Aitken (London, 1895), XVI, 3.

[28] *A Full, True and Impartial Account of all the Robberies Committed . . . by William Hawkins, In Company with Wilson* (1722). See advertisement in *Mist's Weekly-Journal*, 11 August 1723. *Select Trials at the Sessions-House in the Old Bailey* (London, 1742), I, 181–197, reprints large portions of Wilson's account but dismisses Will Hawkins' account as "fill'd with Lies and Absurdities" (I, 175). Another evidence of the stir made by this robbery is the criminal biography *Tyburn's Worthies* (1722), in the jest-book tradition of Smith's *Highwaymen*, from which it copies one episode.

in Plate" (p. 2). The gang's pawnbroker lived near Tower Hill (p. 10). Jack inadvertently killed a footman (p. 7), and after a few more dangerous robberies Wilson "found that such a Course of Life must be finish'd with great Scandal at Tyburn" (p. 14). He set out for the North — his mother's home in Yorkshire. Much to his horror Jack and George found him there six months later and tricked him back to London. The gang then went on to their greatest exploit, robbery of the Bristol mail twice in one week, which of course has no parallel in *Colonel Jacque*. Soon afterwards Wilson went alone to his favorite coffee house where a Quaker warned him "in a jocular way" (p. 21) that the search for the mail-robbers was closing in. While planning flight to Newcastle, Wilson was apprehended by the postal authorities. Upon being shown a note in George's handwriting offering the authorities to "secure [his] two Companions," Wilson decided to impeach, or turn state's evidence, first. Jack and George were hanged, and according to a notice in *Applebee's* for 16 June 1722, Wilson "afterwards set out for his Mother's at Whitby in Yorkshire."

In Defoe's novel, Colonel Jacque at eighteen was taught to pick pockets by Will, age twenty-four (I, 74);[20] Will then taught his pupil street robbery and housebreaking. First they robbed three parties — a single gentleman on foot, a surgeon in a coach, and an old woman named Mrs. Smith (I, 74–76) — then went on to Chelsea to rob a house where the footman, a member of the gang, let them in. Jacque was not with Will the next time he went out, but it happened that Will, Captain Jacque (not to be confused with Colonel Jacque), and a boy named George went to Brentford where, in attempting a robbery, they murdered the gardener. A friendly neighbor jokingly warned Colonel Jacque to avoid Will and his gang. George was captured and informed on Will and the Captain. Will came frightened to Colonel Jacque's lodgings and left the stolen silver plate and money. Colonel Jacque pawned the plate using the password "GOOD TOWER STANDARD" (I, 86). A warrant was out for Captain Jacque, but the Colonel was arrested by mistake and taken before a magistrate. When Will was captured and later executed, Colonel Jacque realized that he was "ripening a-pace for the Gallows" (I, 73). He and the Captain "fly into Scotland" (I, 97–98), having left the country by way of Newcastle.

[20] Twice Defoe calls him "Robin" (I, 34–35) before he decides on the name "Will."

Although there is no evidence of copying on Defoe's part and the names are not even used for similar characters, Wilson's career and character are, in general, of the type that Defoe imagines for his hero. And Defoe could have learned much about personal relationships in a gang of pickpockets and burglars from Wilson's autobiography, for although Defoe had already shown familiarity with a certain type of criminal activity in *Moll Flanders*, Moll almost always robbed alone. Colonel Jacque and Ralph Wilson both discovered that when they wanted to give up robbery, their older friend and teacher had become their "tyrant." When Jacque, ashamed of robbing old Mrs. Smith, wanted to return to picking pockets, Will called him a fool, and told him he must learn "to fight when they resist, and cut their Throats when they submit" (I, 80). Likewise, Wilson was miserable the morning after his first robbery, but found he had been "made a Property of" by Hawkins:

> It is impossible for me to express under what Anxieties I labour'd, on a consideration that I had engaged in such base Actions which I then apprehended, as I have found since, bring nothing but Poverty and Shame to him that follows them: Besides, there is no Life so gloomy as the Life of an Highwayman; he is a Stranger to Peace of Mind and quiet Sleep; he is made a Property of, by every Villain that knows or guesses at his Circumstances: such a Life is a Hell to any Man that has ever had any Relish of a more generous way of living (p. 9).

Both Wilson and Jacque wanted to abandon crime: Wilson had to suffer imprisonment and inform on his fellows before he could get away; Jacque simply walked out of London.

Defoe shows some familiarity with earlier criminals when he has Moll Flanders compare her favorite husband Jemy with an earlier James about whom an unusually large number of narratives was published, three of which could be considered original biographies. James Hind is depicted in *A Second Discovery of Hind's Exploits* (1651) and George Fidge's *English Gusman* (1652) as a cheerful, benevolent, successful highwayman and royalist. Most of the episodes end with a triumphant verbal repartee from Hind of the type associated with jest-biography. He was almost more philanthropist than felon: on ten occasions in *The English Gusman* he returned or gave away money he had stolen. The only disparaging remarks in the three biographies appear on the last page of *Hind's Ramble* (1651) and are not serious

enough to turn the reader against the character who has amused him for forty-one pages:

> Hind was a man but of mean stature; his Carriage before people was civil; his Countenance smiling, good Language; civilly Cloathed; no great Spender or Ranter in Taverns. But these were onely Cloaks to deceive honest men of their money.
>
> Many of his actions favoured of Gallantry: Most of Wit; but least of Honesty.

One is inclined to see in Hind's "biographer" George Fidge a fellow royalist attempting to turn Hind into a second Robin Hood during the approximately ten months he was kept in prison. If this was Fidge's intention, these laudatory jest-biographies did Hind's cause no more good than the typical (inconsistently critical *and* laudatory) biographies throughout the period, for in September 1652 Hind was finally executed for treason in aiding Charles II to escape from Worcester.

Moll Flanders also compares her Jemy with another James, the hero of two more recent biographies, the highwayman James Whitney. (As a matter of fact, Whitney is too recent to fit into the time scheme of Moll Flanders, which Moll claims to have "written in the year 1683.") According to the later biography, *The Life of Whitney* (1692/3), Whitney was as great a lover as Moll's Jemy, though not so faithful. He was also known as a prodigal killer of horses. The more serious and factual *Jacobite Robber* (1692/3) contains the answer to a question raised by John R. Moore in *Defoe in the Pillory and Other Studies* (1939) heretofore unanswered. In a chapter entitled "Whitney's Horses" (pp. 34–38) Moore quoted four references to Whitney by Defoe from 1703 to 1714, three of which refer to "Whitney's Horses," and a speech which Smith's *Highwaymen* (p. 49) prints and attributes to Whitney's judge, Sir Salathiel Lovell, who was also an official at Defoe's trial in 1703. Sir Salathiel lashed out at Whitney for the wanton killing of horses, whose blood, the judge said, would rise up against him on Judgment Day. Moore had looked in vain for the "explanation of the death of so many horses" (p. 38). The explanation can be found in *The Jacobite Robber* (pp. 24 [for 16], 20, 21, 22) wherein Whitney's killing of a total of thirty-two horses — including one massacre of twenty — is reported in detail. *The Life of Whitney* also mentions this larger slaughter but does not go into any detail, for "The design of this Treatise is only to select those more Intriguing and more Comical Rencounters of his" (p. 2).

The Golden Farmer whom Moll mentions along with Hind and Whitney was a highwayman and murderer named John Bennet. Although he has no criminal biography, Smith's *Highwaymen* (pp. 30–36) contains a chapter on him. Both the *Highwaymen* and a late manuscript notation on the British Museum copy of *The Golden Farmer's Last Farewell* (1690), an uninformative broadside, give his name incorrectly as William Davis.[30] Defoe probably got the name Golden Farmer either from Smith's *Highwaymen* or from a passing reference in *The Jacobite Robber* (p. 2). Like Whitney, he is an anachronism in Moll's confessions.

The fictitious autobiography of Moll Cutpurse, *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith* (1662), is one of the most interesting items in the genre, both in itself and as an alleged forerunner of *Moll Flanders*. *The Life and Death* was published, according to the title page, "for the Delight and Recreation of all Merry disposed Persons," and the book is generally comic. But Moll grows serious, too, from time to time when she reminisces about some of her old friends such as James Hind, when she talks about the miseries of an old strumpet and her own last illness, and finally when she repents. She tells her story in a first-person "Diary." Having thwarted the plans of "friends" to spirit her to Virginia when she was twenty, Mary joined a gang of pickpockets only to prove inept at the work. She soon found her element as a receiver of stolen goods, which is her occupation in Richard Brome's *Court Beggar* acted in 1632.[31] She was never a whore herself, but about the time of the Civil War she "thought the best Course to keep [her] in [her] old Age" was to become a procuress (p. 114), in which transition she was aided by connections with the matron of Hollands Leaguer, a real London brothel which gave its name to a piece of prose fiction by Nicholas Goodman.[32]

Notoriety first came to Moll for wearing "undecent and manly apparel" (p. 69); for this offence she was sentenced to do penance in

[30] As disreputable as was Samuel Smith (current Ordinary of Newgate), his *True Account of the Behaviour, Confession and Last Dying Speeches . . . 22 December, 1690* must be accounted more reliable than Smith's *Highwaymen*. The *Compleat Collection*, I, 125, concurs with the Ordinary that the Golden Farmer's name was John Bennet.

[31] *Dramatic Works* (London, 1873), I, 212.

[32] (London, 1632). Richard Head's *Miss Display'd* (London, 1675) and Joseph Trumbill's *The Dutch Whore* (London, 1690), both almost completely plagiarized from Goodman's book, would be listed as criminal biographies if their heroines had realistic names and I could prove their historical existence.

a white sheet at Paul's Cross during the Sunday morning sermon. A letter by John Chamberlain shows this experience to have been historical and says "she wept bitterly and seemed very penitent, but yt is since doubted she was maudelin druncke, being discovered to have tipled three quarts of sacke before she came to her penaunce." [22] According to Chamberlain she drew a better crowd than the preacher, and in *The Life and Death* she says she would be glad to repeat the penance in all the market towns in England because it provided an ideal occasion for her pickpockets to work. She apparently continued to dress as she pleased, for John Taylor the Water Poet praises her in 1622 in *The Water Cormorants Complaint* "For she doth keep one fashion constantly."

Like *Moll Flanders*, *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith* is about a woman named Moll who tells her story in the first person and repents after a long life of crime, but otherwise the two books are not very similar. Defoe announces the repentance of his heroine on the title page and attempts to show that she had it in mind throughout the writing of her confessions, whereas Moll Cutpurse's repentance comes as a surprise at the end of her story; it takes only two sentences to tell: "These [sins] I cannot but acknowledge were indigitated [i.e., indicated] to me so plainly, that I was forced to take notice of them; and I hope with a real penitence and true grief to deplore my Condition and former course of Life, I had so profanely and wickedly led. . . . I will not boast of my Conversion, least I encourage other vile people to persist in their sins to the last; but I dare assure the world, I never lived happy minute in it, till I was leaving of it, and so I bid it Adieu this Threescore and Fourteenth year of my Age" (pp. 168–169). Although she avoids the absurdity of reporting her own death, as the title promises, Moll Cutpurse makes the request to be "lay'n in my Grave on my Belly, with my Breech upwards, as well for a *Lucky* Resurrection at Doomsday, as because I am unworthy to look upwards, and that as I have in my LIFE been preposterous, so I may be in my Death" (p. 173). She never claims to be ashamed of her professions of fence and procuress while she is telling about those experiences, and her language is racier than Moll Flanders'. Moll Cutpurse is never threatened with execution; — she never spent even a night in Newgate because she was freed on bail while awaiting her

[22] Letter dated 12 February 1611/12 in *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1939), I, 334.

one trial, at which she was acquitted. Her story is much less serious than Moll Flanders', partly because, being a member of the underworld's managerial class, she avoided the everyday danger and confusion that threaten Moll Flanders and give her psychological interest and validity.

If Defoe was familiar with *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith*, it is strange that both of the facts which Moll Flanders alleges about Moll Cutpurse are incorrect: "I grew as impudent a thief, and as dexterous, as ever Moll Cut-Purse was, tho' if fame does not belie her, not half so handsome" (II, 15). The earlier Moll was a failure as a pickpocket and, as *The Life and Death* repeatedly emphasizes, she was not beautiful. Once when she attempted to seduce a neighbor named Mr. Drake, he replied "that [she] looke as if some Toad had ridden [her] and poysoned [her] into that shape, that he was altogether for a dainty *Duck*, that [she] was not like that Feather" (p. 116). Later, when she is old and sick, she says she "lookt like Mother *Shipton*" (p. 167), a famous witch.

The criminal biography which most resembles *Moll Flanders'* penitent tone is *A Compleat and True Account of all the Robberies Committed by James Carrick, John Malboni, and their Accomplices* (1722). It is a convincing imitation of a penitent criminal's confession. I say "imitation" because the *Select Trials at the Sessions-House* (I, 215) calls it fictitious "except a few hints borrowed from the Sessions-Paper and the Ordinary's Account." According to the *Select Trials*, Carrick was not penitent at all, but diverted the mob to the end, telling jokes in Newgate, giggling and taking snuff at Tyburn. Defoe's news item about Carrick in *Applebee's* (14 July 1722) confirms this judgment: "He died in a kind of antic Bravery, between jest and Earnest, but without discovering any Remorse at his Crimes, or so much as taking the least notice of the serious Part of what he was about; neither praying or so much as looking up to Heaven, or mentioning anything about it." Thus Carrick's biography is one of the few which was seriously penitent in tone throughout and one of the few known definitely to be fictional. It could not be regarded as an influence on Defoe, for it was published about six months after *Moll Flanders*.

The following bibliography is divided into three Finding Lists, (A) items written in the third person, (B) those in the first person really written by or for the criminal, and (C) those in the first person known to be fictitious. Items marked with an asterisk are serious; the

ones written in the third person — with the outstanding exception of *The Life and Actions of Lewis Dominique Cartouche* (1722), a translation from the French — do not suggest fiction at all, since they make little use of dialogue and rarely attempt to portray the thoughts and feelings of characters.

A. A Chronological Finding List of Criminal Biographies, 1651–1722

1. Fidge, George. *Hind's Ramble.* London, 1651. [British Museum]
2. *A Second Discovery of Hind's Exploits.* London, 1651. [British Museum] (Reissued the same year as *A Pleasant and Delightful History of Capt. Hind.*)
3. Fidge, George. *The English Gusman* [Hind]. London, 1652. [British Museum]
4. *Hind's Elder Brother* [Thomas Knowles]. London, 1652. [British Museum]

*5. *Hannams Last Farewell.* London, 1656. [British Museum]

6. *The Witty Rogue Arraigned* [Richard Hannam]. London, 1656. [British Museum]
7. *The Female Hector, or the Germane Lady Turn'd Monsieur* [Mary Carleton]. London, 1663. [Yale University Library] (Antedates by ten years the earliest biography (not autobiography) in Main's list, *Memories of the Life of the Famous Madam Charlton* (1673).)

*8. *The Triumph of Truth* [James Turner]. London, 1663. [In Peterson] (A8 and A9 contain much identical language, but which is the original or whether both have a common ancestor I cannot determine. A8 warns of a "false copy . . . likely to come forth" (p. 136 in Peterson), but I hesitate to conclude that A9 is the copy because the engravings are different and A9 is really the more vigorous and unified biography.)

*9. *The Life and Death of James Turner.* London, 1663. [British Museum]

10. Pope, Walter. *The Memoirs of Mons. Du Vall.* London, 1670. In *Harleian Miscellany.* London, 1808–13, III, 308–316.
11. *Memories of the Life of the Famous Madam Charlton; Commonly Stiled the German Princess.* London, 1673. [Harvard University Library]
12. *The Memoires of Mary Carleton.* London, 1673. [British Museum]

*13. Kirkman, Francis. *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled.* London, 1673. [In Peterson]

*14. *The Grand Pyrate* [George Cusack]. London, 1676. [New York Public Library]

15. *Sadler's Memoirs.* London, 1677. [British Museum]
16. Settle, Elkanah. *The Life and Death of Major Clancie.* London, 1680. [Harvard University Library]
17. *Don Tomazo, or the Juvenile Rambles of Thomas Dangerfield.* London, 1680. [In Peterson]

18. *The Life and Death of Capt. William Bedloe.* London, 1681. [Yale University Library]
19. *The German Princess Revived: or, The London Jilt: Being a True Account of the Life and Death of Jenney Voss.* London, 1684. [Harvard University Library]
20. *The Life of William Fuller.* London, 1692. [Henry E. Huntington Library]
*21. Rowe, Robert. *Mr. Harrison Proved the Murderer.* London, 1692. [British Museum]
*22. *Murder Will Out: An Impartial Narrative of the Wicked Life of Capt. Harrison.* London, 1692. [British Museum]
23. *The Life of Capt. James Whitney.* London, 1692/3. [Henry E. Huntington Library]
24. *The Jacobite Robber* [James Whitney]. London, 1692/3. [British Museum]
25. Settle, Elkanah. *The Compleat Memoirs of Will. Morrell.* London, 1694. [In Peterson]
26. *A Second Capt. Hind* [John Simpson]. London, 1700. [In *Smeeton's Tracts* (London, 1820), II, no pagination]
*27. *The Life and Conversation of the Pretended Captain Charles Newey.* London, 1700. [British Museum]
28. *The Life of William Fuller alias Fullee.* London, 1701. [New York Public Library]
29. *The Second Part of the Life of Fuller alias Fullee.* London, 1701. [Yale University Library]
30. *A Fuller but True Account of the Life of William Fuller.* London, 1702. [Yale University Library]
*31. *The Lawyer's Doom* [Edward Jefferies]. London, 1705. [British Museum] (Attributed to Ordinary of Newgate Paul Lorrain but largely a forgery.)
32. *The Ordinary of Newgate's Account of John Hall.* London, 1707. [British Museum] (A forgery).
33. *An Historical Account of the Life, Birth, Parentage, and Conversation of the Celebrated Beau Handsome Fealding.* London, 1707. [British Museum]
*34. *The Whole Life of Deborah Churchill.* London, 1708. [British Museum] (A forgery attributed to Ordinary of Newgate Paul Lorrain.)
*35. *The Life and Adventures of Capt. John Avery.* London, 1709. [Yale University Library]
*36. *A Full Account of the Case of John Sayer* [Richard Noble]. London, 1713. [British Museum]
*37. *A Full and Faithful Account of the Intrigue Between Mr. Noble and Mrs. Sayer.* London, 1713. [British Museum]

38. Smith, Alexander. *Lives of the Highwaymen.* London, 1713–19. 3 vols. Ed. A. L. Hayward (London, 1926).
39. Lucas, Theophilus. *Lives of the Gamesters.* London, 1714. [Columbia University Library] Abridged in *Games and Gamesters of the Restoration*, ed. Cyril H. Hartmann (London, 1930). (Very similar in format and plagiarism to Smith's *Highwaymen*, though much shorter. Eight of the gamesters are also criminals.)
40. *The Life and Unaccountable Actions of William Fuller.* London, 1718. [British Museum]
*41. *A Particular Account of the Life of the Marquis Palliotti.* London, 1718. [Columbia University Library] (Palliotti, a murderer, was the brother-in-law of the Earl of Shrewsbury.)
*42. *The Life, Actions, and Amours of Ferdinando, Marquis of Paleotti.* London, 1718. [Harvard University Library]
43. *The Whole Life and History of Benjamin Child.* London, 1722. [Yale University Library]
*44. *The Life and Actions of Lewis Dominique Cartouche.* London, 1722. [Yale University Library]
45. *Tyburn's Worthies* [John Hawkins, George Sympson, Ralph Wilson]. London, 1722. [British Museum]

B. A Chronological Finding List of Criminal Autobiographies, 1651–1722

*1. *An Historicall Narrative of the German Princess* [Mary Carleton]. London, 1663. [Harvard University Library]
*2. *The Case of Madam Mary Carleton.* London, 1663. [Harvard University Library]
*3. *The Life and Character of Mrs. Mary Moders, Alias Mary Stedman Alias Mary Carleton.* London, 1673. [Harvard University Library]
*4. *Dangerfield's Memoirs.* London, 1685. [Yale University Library]
*5. Fuller, William. *A Trip to Hampshire and Flanders.* London, 1701. [Yale University Library]
*6. *The Life of William Fuller.* London, 1701. [Yale University Library]
*7. *The Whole Life of Mr. William Fuller.* London, 1703. [Indiana University Library]
*8. *Mr. Fuller's Trip to Bridewell.* London, 1703. [Boston Public Library]
*9. Wilson, Ralph. *A Full and Impartial Account of all the Robberies Committed by John Hawkins, George Sympson, (lately Executed for Robbing the Bristol Mails) and their Companions.* London, 1722. [Yale University Library]

C. A Chronological Finding List of Fictitious Criminal Autobiographies, 1651–1722

1. *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith* [Moll Cutpurse]. London, 1662. [British Museum]

2. Head, Richard. *Jackson's Recantation.* London, 1674. [In Peterson] (Head fails to sustain the penitent tone, although Jackson's penitence, according to *The Confession of the Four High-Way-Men* (London, 1674), p. 4, was genuine.)

*3. *A Compleat and True Account of all the Robberies Committed by James Carrick, John Malhoni, and their Accomplices.* London, 1722. [British Museum]

4. Hawkins, William. *A Full, True and Impartial Account of all the Robberies Committed in City, Town, and Country, For several Years past By William Hawkins, In Company with Wilson, Wright, Butler Fox, and others not yet Taken.* London, 1722. [British Museum]