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Ruth Mack
SUNY Buffalo

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Abstract
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Keywords
formalism, history, Colonel Jack, Daniel Defoe, eighteenth-century literature

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Form plays a crucial role in establishing a relationship between history and individual consciousness in Daniel Defoe's *Colonel Jack* (1722). Jack's fictional world is structured by major historical events: from the War of the League of Augsburg in 1697 to the battle of Preston in 1715. Although Jack signals his desire to participate in these events—and to participate in them as history—he does not do so in any simple way, missing one battle entirely and failing to fight in another. This strange partial action is part of Defoe's larger engagement with a question both philosophical and historiographical: how the individual's experience is related to public history. The chronological structure of historical events in *Colonel Jack* shows history's traditional form, but only in order to demonstrate that the individual's story is never fully pulled into what we might consider history's plot. Form marks off history as related to, but also as distinct from, Jack's experience.

AFTER HE has made it, after he has risen from a lowly servant on the Virginia plantation, to an overseer, and finally to a plantation owner, Daniel Defoe's Colonel Jack does not rest on his laurels. Instead, he enlists his well-educated servant as "Schollar" and "Pedagogue" and begins a comprehensive course of instruction.[1] Unfortunately, the religious part of Jack's learning does not entirely take—"I cannot say," he relates, "I had any Convictions upon me, sufficient to bring it on ... so it wore off again Gradually, as such things generally do, where the first Impressions are not deep enough." Another kind of reading and instruction makes a stronger impression: "History." His teacher, Jack says, "read History to me, and where Books were wanting, he gave me Ideas of those things which had not been Recorded by our modern Histories, or at least, that our Number of Books would not

[1] Daniel Defoe, *The History and Remarkable Life of the Truly Honourable Col. Jacque, Commonly Call'd Col. Jack*, ed. Samuel Holt Monk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 160. References are to this edition, cited as *CJ*.

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reach; by these things he rais'd an unquenchable Thirst in me, after seeing something that was doing in the World, and the more because all the World was at that time engag'd more or less, in the great War wherein the *French* King might be said to be engag'd with, and against all the Powers of *Europe*" (*CJ*, 171–72). In what follows I will be centrally concerned with Jack's subsequent "secret Resolution, to see more of the World, if possible, and reallize those things to my Mind, which I had hitherto only entertain'd remote Ideas of, by the helps of Books" (*CJ*, 172). Jack promptly sets sail from Virginia and arrives at the scene of European military battles, but, as Defoe emphasizes over the course of the text's episodes of military history, it is not at all clear what it means to "reallize" historical events to the "Mind." Trying to do so brings up critical questions about where history lies in relation to individual experience. Defoe's means of probing this issue are formal: *Colonel Jack* treats the integration of individual experience into history as a set of questions about the shaping power of history's chronological structure or plot.

History in Defoe's novels is hardly a topic new to the critical canon, but there are crucial reasons why form—as organizing shape or structure—has not been understood as important to Defoe's fictional historiography. To begin with, Defoe continues to be understood as the novelist who best demonstrates that the eighteenth-century novel is "formless." Ian Watt famously endorsed this view, contrasting the novel's formlessness to the form of a tragedy or an ode. Watt adds that "the poverty of the novel's formal conventions would seem to be the price it must pay for its realism."[2] Rather than on the level of shape or structure, then, the novel's form lies on the level of "narrative procedures": "formal realism" is "the narrative embodiment of … the novel [as] a full and authentic report of human experience."[3] Language registers the details of this everyday experience: "the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions," and so on.[4]

Watt understands the novel's "embodiment" of experience to have a basic connection to major developments in historiography

[2] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 13.

[3] Watt, 32.

[4] Watt, 32.

in the seventeenth century, which "witnesses the rise of a more objective study of history and therefore of a deeper sense of the difference between the past and the present. At the same time Newton and Locke presented a new analysis of the temporal process; it became a slower and more mechanical sense of duration which was minutely enough discriminated to measure the falling of objects or the succession of thoughts in the mind."[5] Yet critics following Watt and wanting to make sense of Defoe's fictional claims for historical truth have insisted that we turn away both from form and individual consciousness in order to do so. Michael McKeon, attending to the novel as a Marxian "simple abstraction," contextualizes Defoe's experiments as part of a "categorial instability" with respect to genre: a broad "epistemological crisis, a major cultural transition in attitudes toward how to tell the truth in narrative."[6] Lennard J. Davis and Robert Mayer also turn away from "formal realism" to discuss Defoe's epistemological relation to history, using Foucault's "discourse" in order to move the novel towards ideas of fact and fiction in other kinds of writing like the newspaper and historiography.[7]

In what follows, I argue that we should return to form in order to understand Defoe's use of history in *Colonel Jack*. Part of what a return to form can show us is that Defoe is interested in questions about history that exceed strictly epistemological concerns about truth.[8] In *Colonel Jack*, Defoe's questions are

[5] Watt, 24.

[6] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 20.

[7] Lennard J. Davis identifies the novel as "a factual fiction," a phenomenon he explains by way of Pierre Bayle's problems in locating a standard of truth for "history" (36). Although Davis begins with this seventeenth-century French context, Defoe's work exhibits the "confusion of attitude toward fact and fiction ... that world of a discourse which is more and more inclining to separate into two subdiscourses but which still has not broken apart" (155). Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). In his full-length study of Defoe's relation to historiography, Robert Mayer builds on Davis's understanding of "discourse," and he too treats Defoe's role as pivotal in bringing the issues of fact and fiction into the novel, focusing on the means by which Defoe's works recalibrate and ultimately lay bare the fictional demands already made by historiography of the previous century. Mayer, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 12–13.

[8] In this way, *Colonel Jack* has a much closer connection than does *Robinson Crusoe* to what I have argued elsewhere is the mid-century novel's philosophy

about the form that historical experience should take. These are questions that formal realism's account of narratively embodied experience does not answer. In the novel we have, Watt says, "a sense of personal identity subsisting through duration and yet being changed by the flow of experience"—an "impression" that begins with Defoe and is more "completely realised" in Richardson, where dates structure the "even greater temporal detail of the letters themselves."[9] In the individual consciousness, in this Lockean idea of duration, history and temporality are one. There is no doubt about Defoe's interest in personal identity as the product of time and experience. But what becomes clear in *Colonel Jack* is Defoe's sense of the inadequacy of this account of consciousness for understanding the relationship between the individual person and history. I will begin my account by showing how Defoe offers history as an aspect of experience, only to pull apart history and experience through the act of reading. Although acting in history then appears as though it will offer a kind of remedy to this problem of representation, Jack's encounters with historical events show us otherwise. They show Defoe wrestling with the formal questions of historical representation: what form can reflect the individual's historical experience?

A Child Historian

In the early modern period, history is understood as preparation for a young man's entrance into the world.[10] Jack does turn to history to provide this form of education, as I have already related, but it is late in life, when he is "above 30 Year old" (*CJ,* 170) and under the guidance of his servant and teacher in Virginia. As a child, Jack's introduction to history is quite different:

> I lov'd to talk with Seamen and Soldiers about the War, and about the great Sea-Fights, or Battles on Shore, that any of them had been in; and as I never forgot any thing they told me, I could soon, that

of history. See Mack, *Literary Historicity: Literature and Historical Experience in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

9 Watt, 24.

10 See George H. Nadel's account of "exemplary history" in "Philosophy of History before Historicism," in *Studies in the Philosophy of History*, ed. Nadel (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 49–73.

> is to say, in a few Years give almost as good an Account of the *Dutch* War, and of the Fights at Sea, the Battles in *Flanders*, the taking of *Maestricht*, and the like, as any of those that had been there, and this made those old Soldiers and Tars love to talk with me too, and to tell me all the Stories they could think of, and that not only of the Wars then going on, but also of the Wars in *Oliver's* time, the Death of King *Charles* the first, and the like.
>
> By this means, as young as I was, I was a kind of an Historian, and tho' I had read no Books, and never had any Books to read, yet I cou'd give a tollerable Account of what had been done, and of what was then a doing in the world. (*CJ*, 10–11)

Jack stresses the extent to which these "Stories" of the old "Seamen and Soldiers" allow him to master history without the aid of books—indeed to master it so that he can tell the stories nearly as well as the old men themselves. Some time ago, James Sutherland remarked on the autobiographical nature of this description, and scholars of Defoe have since endorsed that view.[11] Such a connection, however, should not keep us from seeing the innovative educational system that Defoe creates for his hero.

Like his literary ancestors, the picaros, Colonel Jack is self-taught, but Defoe is unusually precise in the way in which he describes Jack's method of learning.[12] We should view Jack's acquisition of historical knowledge in the context of the text's interest in a kind of social experiment, with three boys named Jack from three different mothers raised by the same nurse and ultimately subject to the same circumstantial "necessity." In all of this, Defoe follows Locke's treatise on education quite closely. As Locke notes emphatically at the beginning of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), "Nine Parts of Ten are what they are, Good or Evil, useful or not, by their Education. 'Tis

11 James Sutherland cited in N.H. Keeble, introduction to *The Memoirs of a Cavalier*, by Daniel Defoe, ed. Keeble, in *The Novels of Daniel Defoe*, 44 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008), 4:10.

12 Although Defoe is keenly interested in John Locke's account of education and its definitions of identity, this does not mean that he creates in *Colonel Jack* a novel of education. As critics have long noted, he goes on to create a character remarkably impervious to change or development of any kind. Everett Zimmerman observes about Jack that "he does not learn the picaro's lessons," in *Defoe and the Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 149. See also G.A. Starr, *Defoe and Casuistry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 97.

that which makes the great Difference in Mankind."[13] Locke continues, "I imagine the Minds of Children as easily turned this or that way, as Water it self" (83–84). This undetermined nature of the child's mind is at the forefront of Jack's descriptions of his early self. When he participates for the first time in a pickpocketing scheme, he says, "I had no Evil in my Intentions; I had never stolen any thing in my Life ... I was made a Thief involuntarily" (*CJ*, 19). So much is education, rather than innate evil, responsible for Jack's criminal career, that Defoe goes so far as to have his child thief consider pickpocketing "as a kind of Trade, that I was to be bred up to, and so I enter'd upon it, till I became harden'd in it beyond the Power of retreating" (*CJ*, 19). The general sentiment but also the particular language of "hardening" is from Locke, who tells us that cruel behaviour, when it becomes customary, "hardens" the mind (180). Locke allows education great power to reform the mind, but he also depicts something he calls the "Original Temper" of the child, for "God has stampt certain Characters upon Mens Minds, which, like their Shapes, may perhaps be a little mended; but can hardly be totally alter'd, and transform'd into the contrary" (122). And thus the Jacks, though all begin similarly destitute and all become criminals, do not have the same fate. Defoe consistently juxtaposes the "Temper[s]" of Captain Jack and Colonel Jack, the bad-spirited boy (who even alienates people as he begs for food) against the boy with a "good Face" and an automatic, God-given conscience (*CJ,* 5, 7).[14]

Locke's point about the power of learning from experience and example, his insistence on teaching children through encouraging "habits" and practice, is well borne out in the example of the child thief, who learns—and becomes a sort of natural at—his "trade" in this way. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that Jack's education in history takes a similar form, beginning in conversation, in the relation of the old soldiers' experiences.

[13] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (1693; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 83. References are to this edition.

[14] See Jenny Davidson's account of Locke's treatment of education as custom as part of a larger eighteenth-century understanding of the relation between "nature" and "nurture," in *Breeding: A Partial History of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 42–48.

Here Defoe follows the kind of recommendation Locke makes for learning language: Locke applauds the teaching of young girls French through conversation instead of grammar, and he mocks the uselessness of ordinary Latin instruction, preferring the example of a mother reading Latin aloud from the Bible (218, 234). In the case of history, however, Colonel Jack seems to beat Locke on his own terms. For Locke's recommendations for studying history remain conservative: put simply, "without Geography and *Chronology*, I say, History will be very ill retained, and very little useful" (237). Locke draws here on Renaissance ideas for reading history, as does Thomas Hearne, the librarian and antiquary, in *Ductor Historicus* (1704), when he notes that the student of history should "proceed methodically in a Study of so vast Extent"—via "analysis" and "Chronological Tables"—an idea that Hearne traces back to Jean Bodin's seminal *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1566).[15] Jack, of course, has no access to classical history, and the modern events he studies would not have been considered proper for a formal education in history. Still, perhaps in the fashion of Locke's disdain for classical languages as the mark of a gentleman, Defoe gives his hero a potentially more useful history of England,[16] and Jack's method of learning it is striking: he manages to take in history in bits and pieces and still to make "a tollerable Account of what had been done" (*CJ*, 11).

To learn through practice and habit is, for Locke, a way of making the task "natural" to the child. In such a case, "Performance will not depend on Memory, or Reflection, the Concomitant of Prudence and Age, and not of Childhood; but will be natural in them" (120). It is much easier to grasp Locke's example of what this means in bowing to gentlemen than it is in the case of history for the child historian. What would it mean for history

[15] Thomas Hearne, *Ductor Historicus: Or, a Short System of Universal History, and an Introduction to the Study of That Science*, 2 vols. (London, 1704–5), 1:112–13.

[16] Formal recommendations to study modern history did appear over the course of the eighteenth century. See, for example, Lord Bolingbroke's recommendation in *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (written 1735–38) that Henry Hyde, as a statesman, study only the history of the modern "period" in order to understand the "causes and effects" that bear on the current moment. *Lord Bolingbroke: Historical Writings*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 82. Bolingbroke's recommendation for how this history should be read, however, still involves the structuring principles of Hearne and Bodin.

to be "natural in" the child? Defoe gives us an inkling of what such an outcome might look like when he says that, after a time, after a "few Years" of practice, Jack could "give almost as good an Account of the *Dutch* War, and of the Fights at Sea, the Battles in *Flanders*, the taking of *Maestricht*, and the like, as any of those that had been there" (*CJ*, 10). What Jack does, Defoe suggests, is to take history as his own. Jack makes those experiences—which start as battles the old men "had been in"—into stories that he can tell himself, and the "naturalness" of his performance is signalled by the old men's acceptance of the stories Jack tells.

In his childhood, the fact that the experience of historical events was not originally Jack's own seems unproblematic: he easily adopts others' experiences of history. Thus, Jack is in an unusual position when it comes to his later book learning. History reading would usually prepare the young man for his entrance into the world by allowing him to draw on the experiences of others, and such reading is often described as though the reader could accumulate experience through historical example. In the story of Jack's relation to history, however, reading has the opposite effect, distancing history from experience, relegating it to the realm of "remote Ideas." Jack's "unquenchable Thirst" for acting in history after reading, then, looks not just like the natural outcome of his studies but like an attempt to re-suture history to experience, after reading has pulled them apart. Defoe's description is telling: Jack wants "to see more of the World, if possible, and reallize those things to my Mind, which I had hitherto only entertain'd remote Ideas of, by the helps of Books" (*CJ*, 172). Although the primary meaning here is the gesture towards the future events that Jack will "see," Defoe's description also carries the implication that the things "reallize[d] ... to my Mind" will be those previously experienced through books. In other words, future events are cast in the language of re-enactment, as though the new, the experiential, is somehow also a making-present of the already-read.

Re-enactment is, after all, an attempt to connect with history through experience. As Simon During observes, taking the term "re-enactment" back to the eighteenth-century context, only one form of "re-enactment" involves "the organized recreational imitation of a historical event by hobbyists"; more broadly, re-enactment can also involve the "reproduction of a historical

genre ... or situation" or "the repetition of a historical event."[17] Such repetition brings together past and present and "collaps[es] temporalities"; as Vanessa Agnew puts it, re-enactment "is less concerned with events, processes or structures than with the individual's physical and psychological experience."[18] Agnew's aim is to contrast the presentist, affective, experiential re-enactment to more traditional forms of historiography; and we might see in Defoe's example a loose parallel, positioning as it does the young Jack's individual and experiential relation to history over and against the structured learning of history via geography and chronology on Locke's (and many others') recommendation.

We must pause, however, to consider the strangeness of a character whose *future* historical actions are cast in the language of re-enactment. In making this move, Defoe pushes us to think of Jack's participation in historical events—here conceived narrowly as military history—not as something different in kind from reading but as an intensification of it. Defoe's empiricist language for historical action and its attention to the "Mind" puts him in a position to think, as Agnew does, that acting out history is primarily about the individual's psychological experience. As he prepares to act, Jack prepares us for the terms in which we are to understand that action. When he does so, he becomes his own historian and perhaps, too, a philosopher of history, ready to instruct us in a way to think about history and experience. Moreover, in treating action as a representation, Jack adopts the position not only of the reader of history but

17 Simon During, "Mimic Toil: Eighteenth-Century Preconditions for the Modern Historical Reenactment," *Rethinking History* 11, no. 3 (2007): 313. During argues that the "prehistory of historical reenactments" begins in the late eighteenth century, when "a new relationship between past and present emerged" (314, 313). Although Defoe falls outside this chronology, he clearly engages the basic theory of mimesis that During points out. We might explain this fact through the representational character of experience in empiricism generally, which allows the ambiguous relation between original and copy that During attributes to Richard Hurd's *A Discourse on Poetical Imitation* (1751). See also Jonathan Lamb, "Historical Re-enactment, Extremity, and Passion," *Eighteenth-Century: Theory and Interpretation* 49, no. 3 (2008): 239–50. Lamb attributes the eighteenth-century roots of re-enactment to various definitions of "sympathy," something that we do not see operating in the consideration of history in *Colonel Jack*. Perhaps Jack comes closest to Lamb's account of Collingwood, who uses a Smithian structure of sympathy without affect (247).

18 Vanessa Agnew, "History's Affective Turn: Historical Reenactment and Its Work in the Present," *Rethinking History* 11, no. 3 (2007): 301.

also of the writer of history. For once historical action is itself understood to be representational in this way—as an attempt to make a stronger impression on the mind—it is not so different from what the historian does in his own psychological attempt to recapture history in order to record it. Jack's example reminds us that the term "re-enactment" originated not in actions on reconstructed battlefields but in the writing of the historian and philosopher of history, R.G. Collingwood: "But how does the historian discern the thoughts which he is trying to discover? There is only one way in which it can be done: by re-thinking them in his own mind ... The history of thought, and therefore all history, is the re-enactment of past thought in the historian's own mind."[19]

Getting Close to History

The premise of re-enactment—whether in the historian's mind or on the battlefield—is that the individual can get experientially close to history. Yet, despite the Colonel's getting his wish and arriving almost immediately on the European battlefield, *Colonel Jack* is not at all certain about the possibility of this closeness. In his introduction to the Oxford edition of the novel, Samuel Holt Monk explains that as the text goes forward "the Colonel becomes increasingly involved in actual, contemporary history." He continues, "Many of the historical events in which Jack takes part can be clearly dated: Jack observes what must have been the last spring campaign of the War of the League of Augsburg, in 1697; the early campaign in northern Italy fought by France and Austria, ... [in] the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701–2, in which Jack won his colonelcy; the unsuccessful attempt of the Old Pretender to land troops in Scotland in 1708; the battle of Preston, in 1715."[20] But Jack does not get "increasingly involved" in history. And when he is involved, his terms for being so are more complicated than Monk lets on. I will look at Jack's three most important involvements in contemporary battles: Ghent in

19 R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), 215. See Lamb's discussion of Collingwood, 240. Thus, Jack is a very different sort of historian than has usually been associated with Defoe's role in what Mayer calls the "Baconian legacy." See also Ilse Vickers, *Defoe and the New Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

20 Samuel Holt Monk, introduction to *Colonel Jack*, by Daniel Defoe, ed. Monk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), xxii.

1697, the War of the Spanish Succession in 1702, and Preston in 1715.

Let us start with the longest and, in the sense that interests me, least remarkable description: Jack's participation in the War of the Spanish Succession, chronologically the middle instance. Having divorced his first wife, Jack arrives in France and "fell into Company with some *Irish* Officers of the Regiment of *Dillon*, who by little and little Enter'd me into the Army" (*CJ*, 207). Jack relates that he obtains a company of his own and joins the Irish Regiment in the aid of Louis XIV in Italy, participating in what would become the first campaign of the war. This episode is closest to Defoe's conventional history writing (fictional and otherwise), as we can see by comparing it to his fiction of two years earlier, *Memoirs of a Cavalier*. Paula Backscheider classifies *Memoirs* as a historical novel and observes that it resembles Defoe's histories of Charles XII and Peter I: "The Cavalier's attention is focused on Gustavus and Charles I, and the plot largely follows the progress of their wars. The Cavalier moves from battle to battle, and most of the narrative alternates between the relatively leisurely account of troop movement, army strategy and layout of battlefields and, in contrast, the intense, concise descriptions of battles."[21] Both the *Memoirs* and this episode of *Colonel Jack* are marked by the ways in which military actions take precedence over personal reflection and drive the narrative forward. When the Cavalier is taken prisoner, for instance, he does not relate his own experience but carries on with the larger military and political events of the war.[22] Even after Jack pauses to make the apparently significant distinction for the reader between "my own History" and "a Journal of the Wars"—he will hasten on with the first, he says, because he is "not writing" the second—

[21] Paula Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: Ambition and Innovation* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 124. Arthur Secord and James Sutherland alluded to the possibility that *Memoirs* was a "historical novel," and several critics have more recently taken up the term. This is, however, usually a very general assessment. For example, John J. Burke Jr concludes that Defoe "combine[s] historical subject matter and fictional techniques" ("Observing the Observer in Historical Fictions by Defoe," *Philological Quarterly* 61, no. 1 [1982]: 13); and Backscheider states that the "historical novel re-creates the mind and experience of the past so intensely that the reader understands that time as an important influence on the present" (120).

[22] Daniel Defoe, *The Memoirs of a Cavalier*, ed. N.H. Keeble, in *The Novels of Daniel Defoe*, 4:107. References are to this edition, cited as *MC*.

his prose is not at all personal in the way we might expect. The very next paragraph begins, "The Summer after this, our two *Irish* Regiments were drawn out into the Field, and had many a sore Brush with the *Germans*, for Prince *Eugene*, a vigilant General, gave us little Rest" (*CJ*, 215). For Jack at this moment, "my own History," signifies merely that he will describe only the battles in which he participated. And even though he does not quite have the Cavalier's luck (what N.H. Keeble calls an "uncanny knack of being in the right place at the right time"), Jack's battles are significant enough to present a nice set-piece on pivotal early battles of the War.[23]

Most interesting about *Colonel Jack*'s treatment of history, however, is that Jack's experiences in Ghent and in the Jacobite uprising at Preston do not conform to this model. Take his arrival on the historical stage. When Jack lands in Ghent, where the English are fighting in King William's War against the Spanish, he observes, "I had no dislike to the Business of the Army, but I thought I was a little above it now; and had other things to look to, for that in my Opinion, no Body went into the Field but those that cou'd not live at Home; and yet I resolv'd to see the manner of it a little too" (*CJ*, 183). Jack does not believe that joining his countrymen is the right thing to do—it is no longer appealing out of financial necessity as it had been several years earlier—but he still wants to "see the manner of it." Already Defoe signals that Jack may be joining the action in no simple way. Although "to see" suggests either "to perceive ... with the eyes" or "to meet with in the course of one's experience," Jack's attention to "the manner of it" stresses the former, requiring some distance in order to attend to "the way in which an action is performed."[24] This is not the plunge into battle we might have expected from the eager history-maker. And Defoe pushes things even further. Jack meets an English officer, who offers his protection if Jack serves as a volunteer: "I should Quarter with him in his Tent, and live as I would, and either carry Arms, or not, as I saw Occasion" (*CJ*, 183). This occasional approach ultimately proves to Jack's advantage, for while the English troops are captured, Jack "was

23 Keeble, 10.

24 *OED Online*, c.v. "see, v." def. 1a, 10a, online version September 2011, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/174749 (accessed 10 November 2011); and c.v. "manner, n. (and int.)" def. 9a, online version September 2011, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113569 (accessed 10 November 2011).

stroll'd away that Day to see the Country about," observing the "Beauty of their Fortifications" (*CJ,* 183, 184).

In order to evaluate Jack's inaction here, it is useful to consider the extent to which Defoe departs from his depiction of historical action in *Memoirs*. There, the Cavalier makes a statement very similar to Colonel Jack's desire "after seeing something that was doing in the World": as the Cavalier puts it, his interactions with great men "gave me Occasions to see every thing that was doing on the whole Stage of the War" (*MC*, 110). But the Cavalier's "seeing" is a bit more active than Jack's—this is, after all, a memoir the entirety of which is made possible (as in Clarendon and Whitelocke, and other sources that Defoe mines) by the Cavalier's active participation in events. His mode is action; even in Rome he has, he says, "no Gust to Antiquities" (*MC*, 51). For nearly the entire story, the Cavalier fights, first for Gustavus Adolphus, then for King Charles I, and is directly involved in battle. Even his moments of leisure have him falling into a Council of War, and every turn towards retirement, as when he returns to England from the Continent, sees a subsequent return to battle. There is, however, an unusual early scene that we might juxtapose to the one I have just related from *Colonel Jack*, for on the verge of the battle at Magdenburgh, the Cavalier leaves his fellow soldiers for the day in order to investigate a fort outside the city. This visit to the fort quickly turns historiographical, not simply active. The moment the Cavalier arrives at the fort, he finds himself with a kind of front-row seat to the "dreadful Piece of Butchery" that is the sack of the city (*MC*, 61). In this case, the view of the fort turns into the view of the battle and serves as an occasion for the Cavalier's first important historical reportage. In the case of the Cavalier, as in all historical memoirs, witnessing and acting are intimately linked: the point, as in Clarendon's great history, is not just that one acts in history but that one *was there*.[25] When Defoe has Jack go to examine fortifications, then, the Cavalier's example puts us keenly in mind not only of Jack's failure to act but also of the kind of historical observer Jack does not become. Defoe goes out of his way not to give Jack this kind of vision,

[25] Clarendon lists as his qualifications that he was "present" in councils and was "near" two kings. Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, Begun in the Year 1641*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1888), 1:3.

instead diverting him from the action entirely and directing his sight towards "Beauty" and "Fortifications."

At this point, we can see how far Defoe is from the seamless merging of time and history in Watt's account. For part of what Defoe draws our attention to here is the way Jack's own experience does not coincide with the historical event—not through action and not through vision. Defoe offers an alternative experience, replacing historical witnessing with another kind of seeing, what the Cavalier calls "Gust to Antiquities." Defoe marks this other kind of seeing as opposed to the historiographical, both in the Cavalier's aside and in its role in keeping Jack away from the action. And in constructing this scene as an answer to the one in *Memoirs*, Defoe conveys something about historical experience that historiography, traditionally conceived, would deny in its very idea of the historian as witness: individual experience may occur in some relation to history without being of it.

My final example of historiography in *Colonel Jack*, the battle of Preston in 1715, shows Defoe again considering his historical actor at odds with historical action. At this later point in the text, Jack explains that his "faithful Wife *Moggy*, with her Tears, and her Entreaties had prevail'd with me not to play the Madman, and openly joyn in the Rebellion with the late Lord *Derwentwater*, and his Party, when they enter'd *Lancashire*; and thereby, *as I may say*, sav'd my Life. But my Curiosity prevail'd so much at last, that I gave her the Slip when they came to *Preston*, and at least thought I would go and look at them, and see what they were likely to come to" (*CJ,* 264). Again, Jack's language is of "looking." He is driven by his "Curiosity" to actually join the fight, but the expression is that of the historian: to "see what they were likely to come to" (*CJ,* 264). Jack does go to Preston, disguised as a French officer, only to desert the cause when he "gave them all up as lost" (*CJ,* 265). The entire affair fills barely three paragraphs, and Jack's participation is nearly invisible to those around him. He slips out to fight without his wife's knowledge, participates in "Debates" about the battle, deserts the cause just before the rebels are captured by the Royal army, kills and buries his horse, and returns without his neighbours having known he was gone. As he observes in recollecting the incident, "I was not known by any Body in the Country to have been among them; no, nor so much as suspected" (*CJ,* 265).

In Ghent, Jack never reaches the battle, never even sees the action; here, he actually makes it to Preston, though he does not fight. In this case, how close is Jack to history? It is a question Defoe forces on Jack and on the reader by having the experience of Preston be Jack's alone. In the Jacobite rebellion, with a centrality worthy of the Cavalier, Jack is part of the crucial decision-making about "defend[ing] the Pass between *Preston*, and the River and Bridge" (*CJ*, 265). Owing to his impersonation of a French officer and subsequent cover-up, he is not a recognized participant, "nor so much as suspected." His suggestion that the pass be defended is ignored: "the hint was not follow'd, as is well known"; it is completely invisible in and irrelevant to the history that everyone, including the reader, knows. If in Ghent we are given an historical event outside Jack's consciousness, here we are given it as exclusively attached to his consciousness. This at first looks simply like a careful evasion, but later, on the Virginia plantation, Jack turns paranoid at the arrival of the transported rebels, hides, and escapes to wait for the king's pardon. Thinking back to Jack's first desire to connect with history, Preston seems to have been "reallize[d]" to Jack's mind in such a way as to leave uncertain its connection to reality. He escapes physically unscathed but is haunted by the event.

John J. Burke Jr writes that *Colonel Jack* is not a historical novel, because "the historical events seem introduced more for establishing certain points about [Defoe's] character ... than for dramatizing how public history impinges on the life of a private individual."[26] Yet Defoe's point is that history may not "impinge" on the individual in any certain way. Both at Ghent and at Preston, Colonel Jack experiences historical events in a way that splits the individual's experience from history. Everett Zimmerman has described H.F.'s historical reporting in *A Journal of the Plague Year* as aiming for "the intersection of private and public": he "wishes to write of the public impact of this private fear and misery, exfoliating the private world according to standards of verifiability and bringing it within history."[27] This is the kind of connection that Jack is emphatically denied. For all that Jack experiences at Preston fails to correspond to the experience of

[26] Burke, 28.

[27] Zimmerman, *The Boundaries of Fiction: History and the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 90.

those around him, and the experience of the national, historical event is, ultimately, too personal, completely unverifiable both by others who were part of the event and those who are a part of his daily life.

How are we to consider this split between the individual and the history that surrounds him? In *Defoe's Narratives*, John J. Richetti argues that we find in *Colonel Jack* a "self enter[ing] history." In Jack, Richetti finds Defoe's fundamental dialectic of individual experience and ideology: "the central myth of consciousness that the self is free and prior to experience must be reconciled with the facts of existence which decree that the self is the mere result of experience."[28] When Richetti brings "history" into this equation, he views the text's military-historical events as sets of circumstances, one of the many "contemporary realities" that Jack encounters, among them "finance, military recruitment, indentured colonial servitude, slavery and colonial management, trade, international European rivalries, and recent English politics and civil war."[29] Katherine A. Armstrong follows Richetti's basic framework quite closely, though her terms are more strictly historiographical: she reads the text as a "thematic investigation of history as both the producer and production of the individual," and she offers social conditions and history as analogous ("the relationship between society and the individual, or history and historical persons").[30] What we can see, however, even just based on the moment at Ghent, is the way in which Jack does not—cannot—deal with military history as he deals with social realities. In a basic sense, the confrontation is still one of individual experience with a larger structure, but this should not lead us to assume that it works analogously to "ideology." The realities of historical experience in the limited sense of military history are different from the financial, social realities that Jack confronts in London and

28 John J. Richetti, *Defoe's Narratives: Situations and Structures* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 162. Also see Richetti's account of Defoe's development of this "explicitly totalizing view of society" in *The English Novel in History: 1700–1780* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 54.

29 Richetti, *Defoe's Narratives*, 187. This leads Richetti to a very different reading of military history in the novel as the object of Jack's "mastery" (185).

30 Katherine A. Armstrong, "'I was a kind of an Historian': The Productions of History in Defoe's *Colonel Jack*," in *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 97.

around the globe, for Jack neither masters military history, nor is there ever the sense that he can be made by it as he could be made by educational and financial conditions. He might be left out of it—a minor player on the stage—or he might experience a version of it inaccessible to those around him, but these possibilities reveal a different set of questions about what it means to be in history. Still, the relation of these military events, in their specificity, to Defoe's concerns with society more generally is an important one, and I will return to it.

When Defoe includes historical events in his fiction, he expects his readers to know them and to use them as a kind of structure for Jack's experiences. In this way, Defoe leads us to a basically formal assumption about how history will work. Looking for a plot in the form of the annals' chronological list, Hayden White reminds us that a plot should be considered "a structure of relationships by which the events contained in the account are endowed with a meaning by being identified as parts of an integrated whole."[31] As Martine Watson Brownley makes clear, sorting out the relationship between chronology and narrative form is not merely an abstract problem for the philosopher of history; chronology was a serious problem for seventeenth-century narrative historiography. On her account, "a major obstruction to effective narrative history was the tyranny of time, the overdependency on chronology for structure," a lack of "more flexible methods of organization."[32] Defoe's account does not mimic what now looks like the awkwardness of these historiographical attempts, but he does show us just such a "tyranny"; to return to White's terms, we might think of what happens in *Colonel Jack* as a lack of "integration," highlighting the distance events have from communal consciousness and from individual consciousness as well. Historical events do serve a chronological function in the text, allowing us to situate the fictional characters in a kind of timeline, as Monk relates. But simply placing those events in a first-person narrative does not make them a part of individual experience or consciousness. Rather, chronological structures in a sense remain too formal, as though even when acting in history, one cannot shake the sense

[31] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 9.

[32] Martine Watson Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 10.

that chronology gives the "Mind a view of the whole current of time" (Locke, 237). Looking back to Watt, history is a form that sets out as an organizer of events but leaves too much of itself unintegrated into the time and consciousness that make up formal realism.[33] Defoe does not simply rest with this as an epistemological dilemma: he makes it a lived condition.[34] In a world of temporal consciousness, chronology ends up looking like something you can wander around in and look at.

Colonel Jack proposes historical action as a meaningful connection between the individual and history. The novel ends up offering something else entirely: not only the failure of individual experience to line up with history, but also, more positively, an account of what it means to be historical. This is something Defoe shows for Jack and allows us to experience as readers, as we wrestle with the relation between chronology and time. Here it is important to note that Defoe's experiment remains distinct from the experiments with form and time that Catherine Gallagher finds in the modernist novel. Gallagher argues that we can see in Romantic theorists of form and in later practitioners of the novel a treatment of form that reflects "modern perceptions of time," and she sets out to offer a kind of genealogy of the modern critical tendency to attach form to time by way of the "ephemeral."[35] This is not something we find in Defoe, who is committed to plunging an atemporal structure of time into representations of temporality and highlighting the consequent interruption. The dramatization of this relationship between form and time is important for thinking about *Colonel Jack* as historiography and should lead us back to question the relation between history and the social forces that Richetti and others highlight in the text. It is tempting to assume that the move towards history's focus on society in the mid-eighteenth century, well documented by Mark Salber Phillips, is the occasion for jettisoning old ways of thinking

[33] For an entirely different use of "form" to critique Watt's account of formal realism, see Lincoln Faller's account of formal expectations in Defoe's development of the criminal novel: *Crime and Defoe: A New Kind of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xiv.

[34] This focus on enactment and experience is what separates Defoe's account from the sceptical historiography of the novel that Zimmerman describes in *The Boundaries of Fiction*.

[35] Catherine Gallagher, "Formalism and Time," *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2000): 232.

about history and implementing new.[36] The coexistence in Defoe of an emphasis on chronology and the more modern attention to social, historical forces could be read as marking *Colonel Jack* as a transitional text, headed in this social direction. But Defoe's focus on history as "reallized" to the mind suggests something else as well. Here chronology is not merely antiquated or retrograde, as Brownley suggests it is for the new narrative historiographers of a less structurally proficient time. Rather, Defoe shows us that the chronological picture so valuable for historical reading and thinking is deeply at odds with the way we experience time. In this sense, the strange fit between the social and the chronological is something with which we must contend, a formal problem that is also an aspect of historical experience.

Ruth Mack is an associate professor of English at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She is the author of *Literary Historicity: Literature and Historical Experience in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2009), and is currently working on a book entitled "Habitual Knowledge: Custom and Meaning before 'Culture.'"

[36] Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).