George Faulkner

1699-1775; b. Dublin, opened printing and bookselling shop with James Hoey, 1726; started Dublin Journal (1728-1825), acting independently thereafter; reprimanded by Lords for reflecting on the honour of their house, 1733; issued first ed. Swift’s works, supervised by Swift himself, 4 vols. 1735; committed to Newgate for printing Hort’s pamphlet against Serjeant Bettlesworth, 1736; his employee Killingbeck (by his own acc.) employed on copying from the sheets of novels pirated from London printing-houses; successfully pirated Pamela (31 Jan. 1741); acknowledged by Lord Chesterfield, Viceroy in 1745-46, as his adviser and offered title, which he refused; issued Lord Ormery’s hostile Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift (1752); withdrew from publication of Sir Charles Grandison on finding another Dublin publisher had obtained advance sheets, 1753, that novel actually appearing in Dublin before it did in London; satirised by Foote, 1762; published second edition of his friend Charles O’Conor’s Dissertations, 1766; Alderman, 1770; issued Ancient Universal History (1774); published his friend Swift’s works, with notes 20 vols. (1772) [ODNB, &c.; var. 1768]; had bust of Swift made by Patrick Cunningham to be placed outside his shop, being later installed in St Patrick’s Cathedral; attempted to form link between Charles O’Conor of Belangare and Dr. Samuel Johnson, the former and his associates offering fifty guineas to the latter for a pamphlet in the Irish Catholic interest; the Dublin Journal was perpetuated by Faulkner’s nephew; d. 30 Aug. 1775. RR ODNB DIB OCIL

Works
Publications (I) Faulkner’s Dublin Journal (1725-1825); first edition of Swift’s Works printed by George Faulkner, 1735; Henry Brooke, Jack the Gvant Queller (Dublin: Faulkner 1749); Edmund Burke, Thoughts, &c. (G. Faulkner 1770), 8o; John Lawson, Lectures Concerning Oratory (Faulkner 1758); Thomas Sheridan, An Humble Appeal to the Publick Together with some Considerations of the Present Critical and Dangerous State of the Stage in Ireland (George Faulkner in Essex Street, 1758); Frances Sheridan, Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph 2 vols. (Dublin: G. Faulkner 1761); Mr. Sheridan’s Speech Addressed to a Number of Gentlemen assembled with a View of considering the best Means to establish one good Theatre in this City (Dublin: George Faulkner in Parliament St. MDCCCLXXII (1772)).


Criticism

Commentary
Charles O’Conor, Letters, ed. R. E. Ward & Ward (1988), contains letters to Faulkner with remarks: ‘You who acquired so much popularity by weekly paragraphs in favour of the national interest and who have spread your influence by keeping clear of party reflexions, are the fittest man I know to negotiate this affair secretly with our people’ (p.34).

Richard Cumberland, Memoirs (1806, 1807): ‘[Faulkner] a solemn intrepidity of egotism and a daring contempt of absurdity that fairly outfaced imitation. He never deigned to join in the laugh he had raised, nor seemed to have a feeling of the ridicule he had provoked; at the same time he was pre-eminently and by preference the butt and buffoon of the company, he could find openings and opportunities for hints of retaliation, which were such left-handed thrusts as few could parry, nobody could foresee where they would fall, nobody was of course, forearmed, and as there was in his calculation, but one super-eminent character in the kingdom of Ireland, and he the printer of the Dublin Journal, rank was no shield against George’s arrows, which flew where he listed, and fixed or missed as chance directed, he cared not about the consequences.’ Cumberland describes the company at a meeting in Faulkner’s house, which includes both a man who has been reprimed from the gallows and the judge who sentenced him. (See Sir John Gilbert, History of Dublin, Vol. III, p.289.)
Sir John Gilbert, History of Dublin (1854 &c.), 'The Prince of Dublin Printers' [chap. & extract in Justin McCarthy, ed., Irish Literature, Washington: University of America 1904], gives details: Essex-street and Parliament-street, his house; son of victualler, b. 1699; ed. by Dr Lloyd, apprenticed to Thomas Hume, printer, Essex-st.; opened bookselling with James Hoey, Christ Church Lane and Skinner's Row, opp. the Tholsel; commenced the Dublin Journal in 1724 [sic]; the Dean picked Faulkner over Hoey, on the death of John Harding (his first printer); 'you are the man I want'; moved to Essex-st. alone with Swift's patronage; ordered to appear at bar of House of Lords, 1731 for queries reflecting on honour of House; Parliament prerogued; appeared Oct 1733; received reprimand on his knees; Swift describes him in letter to Alderman Barber of 1735 as 'printer most in vogue', and a great undertaker, perhaps too great a one'; anecdote of Faulkner returning from London in finery, and Swift pretending not to recognise him when he presented himself to him; amputation of leg, and various puns, classical and otherwise; published in 1735 pamphlet by disreputable Bishop of Kilmore on 'A new proposal for the better regulation and improvement of the game of quaddrille', containing reflections on character of Sargenteet Bettersworth, regarded as breach of privilege, leading Faulkner to be committed to Newgate for some days, settling with legal officers with copies of Swift; Scott, 'Swift was the first who had the honour of giving the world &c.;' published An Universal History, 7 folio vols. (1744); intimacy with Lord Chesterfield; planned but did not execute Vitruvius Hibemirus, in 1753; satirised as Sir Tady Faulkner, printer in petto to the Court Party, for remarks in his Journal that modern patriotism consisted of 'eating, drinking, and quarrelling'; early member of Royal Dublin Society; one of the proselytes made by Charles O'Conor and Dr. Curry in 1758, according to Mathew O'Conor; very zealous advocate for relaxation of Penal Code; applied to O'conor to collection 50 guineas among Catholics as retainer for Dr Johnson; praised by Matthew O'Conor as 'first Protestant to stretch his hand to the prostrate Catholic, recognised him as a fellow-Christian and a brother &c.'; anecdote of Jephson; after disaffection from publishing quarto edition of Swift in magnificent style, Faulkner published Works in 20 octavo vols. in 1772; notes chiefly by himself, subject to ridicule, but form groundwork of all subsequent commentary, and largely appropriated by Scott; Faulkner's conduct in publishing Orrey's strictures on Swift excited reproach; Orrey, 'the unsuccessful translator of Pliny'; famed for hospitality; d. 30 Aug. Note that Gilbert omits the pirating of Pamela in 1741, and the aborted pirating of Sir Charles Grandison; and while he gives circumstantial account of his involvement with O'Conor, he does not claim that he became a Catholic. Note also, the account of an unsolicited letter from Johnson to O'Conor looks dubious when one reads that Faulkner proposes a fee be raised to pay for Johnson's support of Catholic Relief.

J. Fitzgerald Molloy, Romance of Irish Stage (1897), Vol. II, 156ff., tells the story of Samuel Foote, English comedian, whose play The Orators contains a character, Peter Paragraph, modelled on George Faulkner who at first ignored it but later sued when he found his own mechanics attending with hilarity.

Maurice Craig, Dublin Bookbinding [Ireland Heritage Series], has narrative about Faulkner as follows: Sir Walter Scott said, that Faulkner was "the first who had the honour of giving to the world a collected and uniform edition of the works of this distinguished English classic"; the story of the publication is told by Thomas Sheridan; Faulkner friends with Chesterfield, corresponding with him till the last year of his life; Faulkner "a fat little man with a large well powdered wig and brown clothes"; in his shop stood a bust of Swift [but see supra]; he had a wooden leg; appeared as Peter Paragraph in Samuel Foote's The Orators; Faulkner advised to sue, but at first printed and sold the play, and later sued after all; Foote lost a leg later, and quipped, 'Now shall I take off Faulkner to the life'. (See also Dublin 1660-1800.)

Robert E. Ward, ed. and intro. The Prince of Dublin Printers, Letters of George Faulkner[Lexington: Kentucky UP 1972], x, 141pp. [1 Z 232 F2A4] This book contains letters to and from Faulkner in Correspondence with Samuel Derrick, Edmund Burke [one to], Lord Orrery [one to], and Charles O'Conor, and others; also a long introductory essay which does not explicitly dispute other accounts but makes it clear that Faulkner did not pirate Pamela, and that he did not convert to Catholicism. On the first topic, he writes, Faulkner was Samuel Richardson's business associate for two of the three novels Richardson wrote. Therein lies a story which helped unjustly to lower the English opinion of George Faulkner. / On 14 Feb. 1741., Faulkner and George Ewing advertised for sale Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded. Faulkner's association with such an illustrious man gained him nothing but an infamous name form the English people and financial loss and much frustration from his Irish colleagues' (p.18). Details of the transactions, and the duplication of copytest in other hands follows. On religion, he merely says that Faulkner, a Protestant, was enlisted by O'Conor. The O'Conor Letters are part of Egerton 201 (f-31 to f-61), and also from RIA Bl.1 and Bl.2. Ward cites verse squib copied to Mrs Dewes by Mary Delany, 'A disease this scribbling [itch] is / His Lordship on his Pliny vain / Twas Madam Pilkington in stitches / And now attacks the Irish Dean / Libel his friend when laid in ground / Pray good Sir, you may spare your hints / This parallel I'm sure is found / For what he writes George Faulkner prints / Had Swift provoked to this behaviour / Sure after death resentment cools / And his last act bespoke [a favour?]/ He founds a hospitable for fools. (Autobiography an Correspondence, 3.79.)

Maureen Wall, Catholic Ireland in the 18th c, ed. Gerard O'Brien (1989): Faulkner involved in '[t]he attempt to gain passage for a bill entitling Catholics to rights of mortgage and lease gained supporters, but aroused as many enemies, among them churchmen and merchants concerned with the advance of "popish religion" and competition in town properties. The Protestant case against mortgages and leases was made by George Ogle, member for Co. Wexford, when he said that Catholics had hitherto received only toleration, but the passing of a lease bill would mean that popery "would be established by law". (Reported in Faulkner's Dublin Journal, 8 Feb. 1774.)

Faulkner's treason trial of 1792, which Drennan distained to prosecute; John Giffard should they rob him? (See Ward & Ward, eds., of them, or if he ever pyrated a Book, Play, Pamphlet, or even a single Page or Line upon any of them. If he did not, why of booksellers' and their families welfare, 'Mr Faulkner doth hereby call on all the Trade, to know if he ever offended one Pirates

Dictionary of National Biography

Richard Ryan, in Biographia Hibernica (1821), has no biography of Faulkner but mentions him sympathetically under Thomas Sheridan, the Younger, relating a story of his waiving creditor notes held by him, 'This was a man whom Mr Foote held up to ridicule [as Peter Paragraph] (Vol. 2, p.519-20).

A N. Jeffares & Peter Van de Kamp, eds., Irish Literature: The Eighteenth Century - An Annotated Anthology (Dublin/Oregon: Irish Academic Press 2006), selects Preface to 1735 edition of Swift's works, excusing his poetry: ‘Although we are very sensible that, in some of the following Poems, the Ladies may resent certain satyrical Touches against the mistaken Conduct in some of the fair Sex: and that, some warm Persons on the prevailing Side may censure this Author, whoever he be, for not thinking in publick Matters exactly as themselves: Yet we have been assured by several judicious and learned Gentlemen, that what the Author hath here writ, on either of those two Subjects, had no other Aim than to reform the Errors of both Sexes.’ [174]

De Burca Books (Cat. 32) lists [anon.], Some Considerations on the Laws which Incapacitate Papists from Purchasing Lands, from Taking long or beneficial Leases, and from Lending Money on Real Securities (Dublin: Faulkner 1739), first pages, 39pp [a study of financial implications of the Penal Laws against Roman Catholics, Kress 4471]

Notes
Pirates: Faulkner published in the Dublin Journal for June 1767 a vocal complaint at the pirating of books to the jeopardy of booksellers' and their families welfare, 'Mr Faulkner doth hereby call on all the Trade, to know if he ever offended one of them, or if he ever pyrated a Book, Play, Pamphlet, or even a single Page or Line upon any of them. If he did not, why should they rob him?' (See Ward & Ward, eds., Letters of Charles O'Conor, 1988, p.197, n.1.)

Chesterfield Connection: Philip Dormer, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773), Hague embassy, 1728; intimate with Mlle du Bochet, mother of his natural son; negotiated marriage of Prince of Orange with Anne, princess royal of England; lord Stewart, 1730; signed treaty with Spain and Holland agreeing pragmatic sanction; retired embassy, 1732; dismissed stewardship; witty speech against licencing of theatres, 1737 (printed 1749); visited Voltaire, 1741; denounced plan to hire Hanoverian troops; attacked new ministers as Geoffrey Broadboattom, 1743; bequest from Lady Marlborough for political conduct; entered Pelham min. in retirement of Carteret; as Viceroy of Ireland, 1745-46, kept country quiet by tolerant policy and encouraged national industry; ... the prospectus of Dr Johnson's Dictionary addressed to him, 1747; eulogised Dictionary in the World, 1754; satirised as Sir John Chester in Barnaby Rudge; his prophecy of French Revolution, 1753; letters to natural son published by son's widow, Eugenia Stanhope, 1774; Supplement, 1787; Fr. version, 1775, German, 1774-76; Misc. Works., incl. Memoirs of his Life, prepared by Maty, and suppl. letter, with Chars. of Eminent Personages, 1777; Misc. Works, collected 1779; Letters relative to education of his godson publ., 1817; collected editions of letters and lit. works, ed. Lord Mahon, 1845-53; John Bradshaw, 1892; extracts from unpubl. letters, in Ernst's Life of Chesterfield, 1893. Note that William Stanhope, 1st Earl of Harrington (?1690-1756), succeeded Carteret as secretary of state, 1744; resigned after George II's vain attempt to detach him from the Pelhams, 1746, but exchanged seals in Oct. for LL of Ireland; his vice-royalty, 1746-51, marked by beginning of Irish parl. opposition; was friendly with Lord Chesterfield, but met antagonism of 'patriot party', cited by Gilbert, during the succeeding Vice-royalty of Harrington, another Stanhope.