MILTON, AUTHORSHIP, AND THE BOOK TRADE

STEPHEN B. DOBRANSKI

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> Never ... had any man a wit so presently excellent, as that it
> could raise itself.
>
> Ben Jonson[1]

During the past two decades much critical attention has focused on
authorship and the theoretical implications of attempting to deter-
mine responsibility for a literary work. In 1977 Roland Barthes wrote
the author's post-structuralist obituary, claiming that a text finds
unity in its destination, not its origin.[2] According to Barthes,
"writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it"
("The Death of the Author," p. 147) and thus "every text is eternally
written *here and now*" in the mind of its ever-changing readers
(p. 145). Michel Foucault, like Barthes, accepted that the author's
intentions ought not to govern the way we read a text and proposed
to "reexamine the empty space left by the author's disappearance."[3]
In answer to his now famous question "What is an Author?,"
Foucault distinguished between the historical writer of a text and, of
more interest to Foucault, the theoretical construct of the author –
i.e., the "author-function" – that readers assign to texts so as to
classify and interpret them.

But reports of the author's death were greatly exaggerated: in
1992 Roger Chartier officially heralded "the return of the author" as
a subject of critical inquiry.[4] Prompted in part by a renewed interest
in historicism, the author's revival did not represent a regression to
the romantic myth of the sovereign creator; following Barthes and
Foucault, scholars no longer would pursue the author's biography as
the key to unlock the sole meaning of a work. Instead, as Chartier
explains, we now accept the author's limitations within a specific
historical situation:

He is dependent in that he is not the unique master of the meaning of his

text, and his intentions, which provided the impulse to produce the text, are not necessarily imposed either on those who turn his text into a book (bookseller-publishers or print workers) or on those who appropriate it by reading it. He is constrained in that he undergoes the multiple determinations that organize the social space of literary production and that, in a more general sense, determine the categories and the experiences that are the very matrices of writing. (*The Order of Books*, pp. 28–9)

Jerome McGann has similarly argued that no author is an island. In his *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, McGann demonstrated that even the Romantics did not live up to the ideal of solitary creation that they helped to fabricate.[5] The production of a literary work instead requires "arrangements of some sort" that in part determine its form and content. This necessary, complex process of "training" a text engages "many people besides the author" whom the textual critic must take into account when creating a modern edition (p. 52).

A long-standing, alternative theory of bibliography, for which G. Thomas Tanselle is the current and most eloquent spokesperson, also accepts that the "physical means" of transmission influence a text "in one way or another."[6] But, as Tanselle emphasizes, these effects interfere with "a desire to learn as much as possible about the minds out of which works originate" (*A Rationale of Textual Criticism*, p. 75). For bibliographers such as Tanselle, the "minds" that matter belong strictly to authors – not to acquaintances, editors, or printers whose contributions contaminate authors' works.[7]

Seventeenth-century practices of writing in general and Milton's methods in particular recommend a Chartierian/McGannian approach. In *Areopagitica* Milton describes writing as a relational process that requires an author "to be inform'd in what he writes, as well as any that writ before him" (*CP* II: 532). Part of this process included the customary method of culling *loci communes* or commonplaces: during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as Walter Ong has observed, "no one hesitated to use lines of thought or even quite specific wordings from another person without crediting the other person, for these were all taken to be – and most often were – part of the common tradition."[8] Ben Jonson, for example, frequently attacked plagiarism (as in *Epigrammes* 58 "On Poet-Ape" and 81 "To Prowl the Plagiary"), but he distinguished between thoughtless appropriation and "imitation," one of the requisites for being a poet. Jonson praised the true poet's ability

to convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use. To make

choice of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him till he grow very he, or so like him as the copy may be mistaken for the principal. Not as a creature that swallows what it takes in crude, raw, or indigested, but that feeds with an appetite, and hath a stomach to concoct, divide, and turn all into nourishment. (*Discoveries*, p. 585)

Jonson especially found objectionable those writers who pretended to be wholly original, those "obstinate contemners of all helps and arts" who "presuming on their own naturals (which may be excellent) dare deride all diligence" (p. 542).

Recent work on scribal publication and the evolution of manuscript collections suggests that reading and writing were often communal activities during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Harold Love has proposed the term "scribal community" to describe the already existing social groups that exchanged hand-written texts as "a mode of social bonding."[9] As manuscripts passed from one community to another, they were sometimes revised and enlarged. Modern editors' emendations – what these scholars see as "improvements" – ironically resemble the common textual practices of seventeenth-century readers, who not only were invited to correct faults in printed books but also regularly personalized and expunged manuscript copies.[10] As John Kerrigan explains, "What looks to us like a monstrous assault on the integrity of a master-text belongs to a set of practices which would have been recognized in the period as normal" ("The Editor as Reader," p. 117). Some compilers, for example, augmented manuscript collections by incorporating notes about the poems' original social contexts.[11] Mary Hobbs has shown how poets such as Andrew Marvell, Robert Herrick, and the Oxford poet William Strode echoed, borrowed from, and responded to manuscript poems by other writers; Craig Monson has similarly analyzed manuscript collections of verse anthems and consort songs that were created through a communal process.[12]

Throughout the seventeenth century, literary activity was associated with social sites – the court, universities, Inns of Court, and drinking houses – places where friends and acquaintances could socialize and share their work with each other. The seventeen members of the "Sireniacal Gentlemen," for example, were "lovers of vertue, and literature" who congregated monthly at the Mermaid Tavern to socialize, drink, and exchange witticisms.[13] Later, during the 1620s, Ben Jonson and his disciples, the "tribe of Ben," held similar meetings in the Apollo Room of the Devil and Saint

Dunstand Tavern.[14] While neither group was a literary club *per se*, such interactions suggest the social orientation of much seventeenth-century writing, for members of these communities often wrote poems to and about each other.

Other collaborations occurred more immediately. The anagram "Smectymnuus" signified a group of Presbyterian clerics who announced their shared authorship – and disguised their individual identities – by combining their initials into this single attribution. Samuel Hartlib and his circle also worked together on their publications: one person would draft a pamphlet that another member revised and embellished.[15] These books were either published anonymously, printed with an introductory epistle signed by Hartlib, or published under Hartlib's name – even when he was not the primary writer. The name "Hartlib," as Kevin Dunn observes, did not signify the writer of these texts but became a "label identifying a particular ideologically identifiable product" ("Milton Among the Monopolists," p. 183).

In a verse letter to Ben Jonson, a poet who identifies himself only as "Mr. Austinn" recalls writing poetry with six of his friends at Mansell's tavern:

> well supper donne, and cloth tane upp,
> The pipe began succeede the cupp,
> Shall wee do nought but sipp and supp,
> > Quoth Chettwoode,
> Bringe penn and incke and let's provoke
> Our witts to purge, that else will choke,
> And here be smothering in the smoke
> > like wettwood.[16]

We do not know how common group-writing was during the seventeenth century, but when one of the poet's friends proposes that they conduct a writing "match," he is immediately dismissed, "you ever fly to fast that waye," and someone else offers to give "but one word for a theame" to each of his companions ("Master Austinn," lines 43, 44, 52). Mary Hobbs's study of early seventeenth-century verse miscellanies has revealed numerous poems, written by different authors, that share the same title or theme. Commenting on the above poem by Austinn, she speculates that such "associative composition" often occurred in the seventeenth century during the winter or times of plague when people were forced indoors.[17] Bulstrode Whitelocke's diary suggests that this type of collaboration

continued as a form of entertainment at least into the Common-
wealth period. He records that Cromwell would call for a few
members of the Council of State; then, "laying aside his greatness,"
he would become "exceeding familiar with them, & by way of
diversion would make verses with them, & everyone must trye his
fancy."[18]

Examples of professional, theatrical collaborations from the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though too numerous to discuss
here, include, most famously, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher,
who co-authored at least fifteen plays together; Thomas Middleton
and William Rowley, who wrote six known plays together, including
The Changeling (1622); and John Webster and Thomas Dekker, who
not only co-authored two comedies, *Westward Ho!* (1604) and *North-
ward Ho!* (1605), but also worked with Rowley and John Ford on *The
Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother, or Keep the Widow Waking* (1624).
The diary of theater manager/financier Philip Henslowe mentions
282 plays of which nearly two-thirds are created by more than one
author. According to Gerald Eades Bentley's estimate, about half the
plays by professional dramatists written between 1590–1642 "incor-
porated the writing at some date of more than one man." We can
not always trust title pages of the printed editions, as Bentley notes,
because they sometimes simplify their plays' collaborative origins.[19]

While I am not suggesting that all writing during the seventeenth
century was produced socially, these examples provide a useful
context for understanding Milton's method of composition and his
attitude toward collaboration. Gradually, by fits and starts, the
modern author would emerge within the English book trade: early
in the century, for example, some stationers were already extolling
the merit of their wares by claiming to publish an author's authentic,
original manuscripts. But that more than half of the items published
in 1644 and 1688 were printed without an author's name suggests
that little value was generally put on individual authors' identities.[20]
Rather than imposing a post-Romantic concept of the autonomous
author, we need to respect the complex genesis of seventeenth-
century writings and try to reconstruct the circumstances out of
which they originated.

We especially should not assume that the process of authorship
ended once a manuscript was turned over to a publisher. Some
printed books, for example, preserve the social conditions of author-
ship in their preliminary materials – epistles, poems, and prefaces,

written by someone other than the author, which potentially influence the reading of the work. As the bookseller Thomas Walkley observed in a note preceding a 1622 quarto of *Othello*, "To set forth a booke without an Epistle, were like to the old English proverbe, *A blew coat without a badge*" (A2). In like manner, toward the end of the century, the bookseller Francis Kirkman complained that "so much Art and Learning" had recently been used on epistles and prefaces "that oftentimes a greater part of the Book hath been taken up in their composition."[21]

Literary works both before and after the Restoration accordingly emphasize the concept of community instead of isolation. William Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613) contains commendatory poems by, among others, Michael Drayton, Edward Heyward, and John Selden; William Cartwright's collected works are prefaced with a remarkable fifty-two dedications (1651); and Katherine Philips's *Poems* (1667) includes various commendatory verses by Abraham Cowley, the Earl of Roscommon, and other admirers. Philips's collection also begins with a preface by the publisher Henry Herringman, and many, often posthumous books begin with similar introductions or epistles to the reader from the stationer or an author's acquaintance. The preliminary materials in the first Folio of Shakespeare's plays (1623), for example, contain a preface by his fellow actors John Heminge and Henrie Condell; Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) and *Certaine Miscellany Works* (1629) were published with William Rawley's notes to the reader; Milton's *Epistolarum Familiarum* (1674) begins with a note from "The Printer to the Reader"; Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Cabinet-Council* (1658) begins with a note by John Milton; and Marvell's *Miscellaneous Poems* (1681) includes a brief note by his wife Mary. The writers of these introductory materials sometimes functioned as literary executors, editing and arranging a deceased author's manuscripts and seeing them through the press, as in the case of Nicholas Ferrar and Barnabas Oley's work on George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633) and *Herbert's Remains* (1652), respectively.

Members of the book trade also stamped their personalities onto texts and affected the meaning of the books that they helped to produce. Authorship during the seventeenth century included both "book-writing" (to borrow Milton's term from *Areopagitica*, *CP* II: 532) and book-making, two discrete processes that Milton, like many of his contemporaries, did not always differentiate. Printers made hands-on decisions during the physical creation of a text, such as its

spelling and punctuation; publishers were printers or, more often, booksellers who, having put up the capital for a book, could choose the format, determine the layout, and design the title page.[22] We can refer to the 1645 *Poems*, for example, as both a chronicle of Milton's poetic development as well as a characteristic publication by the bookseller Humphrey Moseley; and at the end of the century, William Congreve collaborated with the printer John Watts and the bookseller Jacob Tonson to create an edition of Congreve's plays that uniquely reflects each man's contribution.[23] For this book I use the term "author" to signify the primary writer of a work and treat as co-authors the collaborators who either directly affected the work's meaning or participated enough in the creation to have influenced the way readers approached the published text. Milton, we will see, was capable of conceiving authorship even more broadly when it suited his rhetorical purposes.

THE LABOR OF BOOK-MAKING

To understand better the historical basis for accepting a theory of social authorship and thus for accepting as authorial the contributions of Milton's acquaintances, we need to examine briefly the seventeenth-century book trade. Defining writing and publication as overlapping, cooperative processes raises questions of authority that encompass the power to determine a book's form and content, as well as the responsibility for that book after its publication. If several people worked together to create a printed text, with whom was it identified? Who benefited economically? Who was held legally liable?

Taking these questions in order, we should not assume that an author's name represented the only means of classifying a book during the seventeenth century. The name of a patron, for example, influenced the way readers identified some books, but rather than diminishing the prominence of the author and/or bookseller, the patron coexisted with them; many title pages that refer to all three figures seem to have used the patron's name as a marketing technique, like a celebrity endorsement. The fairly standard rhetoric of James Shirley's dedication to his *Poems* (1646) suggests the complexity of an author and patron's relative authority. Shirley humbly tells "the truly Noble, Bernard Hide, esq." that if the collection proves popular, then he will "acknowledge it rather a debt

which men pay to your Name, then a merit of the Poems.'' On the other hand, if Shirley's works ''meet with the frowning world,'' he pledges to take responsibility for the book and for the ''presumption'' of dedicating it to Hide (A3v). Sometimes the bookseller or an acquaintance – not the author – chose to dedicate a book to a member of the aristocracy. The composer Henry Lawes, for example, dedicated Milton's 1637 *A Maske* to the Viscount Brackley; William Cartwright dedicated the second edition of Thomas Heywood's *The Actors Vindication* (1658) to Henry Pierrepoint, Marquis of Dorchester; and the bookseller Humphrey Moseley presented John Raymond's *An Itinerary Contayning a Voyage Made through Italy* (1648) to Prince Charles.

Members of the book trade also potentially affected the reception of books. As the unique trademark on the sign over a Stationer's shop implied, printers and booksellers developed distinctive styles: they worked with particular ornaments and fonts, produced books of a generally consistent quality, and may have favored a certain size book or a typical layout for their title pages. Customers looking for new plays between 1630 and 1674, for example, might inquire at Andrew Crooke's shop at the sign of the Green Dragon in St. Paul's Churchyard, whereas readers interested in books of divinity between 1631 and 1666 might go to Luke Fawne's shop at the sign of the Parrot in St. Paul's Churchyard.[24] Some master printers established their identity by receiving a patent, that is, the exclusive rights to print a class of books, such as almanacs, books of common law, or proclamations; others developed a niche within the trade without such a privilege.

Just as works by the same author suggest a coherent system of principles or attitudes, books by the same stationer sometimes evince characteristic political and religious preferences. Thus D. F. McKenzie can refer collectively to the printers and booksellers who produced radical literature between 1641 and 1660, and conversely Lois Potter can identify Royalist stationers during the same period.[25] Printers and publishers were not, of course, always consistent, and practical circumstances and changing circles of acquaintances did influence the books that they chose to produce – just as these forces often affected an author's work. The bookseller John Bellamy's conversion from Congregationalism to Presbyterianism, for example, is likely reflected in his decision to stop publishing books by the Leyden Pilgrims and begin working with the New England

Puritans.[26] William Dugard initially printed books defending the divine right of kings, most notably *Eikon Basilike* (1649) and Salmasius's *Defensio Regia* (1649), yet two years later he published Milton's defense of regicide, *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651), and became "Printer to the State" and "To His Highness the Lord Protector."[27] We can chart similar, less dramatic shifts in the careers of many other stationers, such as the bookseller Francis Eglesfield who mostly published books on divinity but also published Robert Herrick's *Hesperides* (1648), or the bookseller Thomas Helder who was known for publishing a popular book of humor in 1667 but also had his name on the 1669 title page of *Paradise Lost.* Unfortunately, because so many publications lack a bookseller's imprint, it is not easy to determine, as Lois Potter notes, "the total output of individual publishers, and thus to know how centralised their activity was and how far it was dictated by commercial, as opposed to ideological, motives" (*Secret Rites*, p. 6).

A letter appended to Thomas Heywood's *An Apology for Actors* (1612) suggests the range of possible relationships between stationers and authors. While Heywood praises his current printer and "good Friend, Mr. Nicholas Okes" for being "so carefull, and industrious, so serious and laborious to doe the Author all the rights of the presse" (G4r), he complains that William Jaggard made numerous errors in printing one of his earlier books, *Troia Britanica* (1609): "when I would have taken a particular account of the *Errata*, the Printer answered me, hee would not publish his own disworkeman-ship, but rather let his owne fault lye upon the necke of the Author" (G4r). The degree of control that authors exerted over the material production of their works depended on several variables, including the stationer's cooperation, the author's reputation, and a patron's influence; sometimes, too, practical constraints – for example, the author's proximity during the print run – limited the author's role in the printing process. Scholars have commonly believed that authors had no authority within the seventeenth-century book trade because they had almost no legal recourse. W. W. Greg located only one acknowledgment by the Stationers' Company "of the right of an author to any say in the printing of his work."[28] Prior to the Copyright Act of 1709, members of the Stationers' Company who obtained a text by any means could have it entered in the Stationers' *Register* to obtain legal ownership. If a Stationer wanted to print an author's work, the author could do little but provide the printer with

a good copy so as to prevent the circulation of a poorly made edition.

Sometimes authors put up the capital themselves to have their works printed; then they either personally circulated the edition, or paid a bookseller to distribute it. Authors could also exert their authority by making arrangements with particular booksellers or printers. That Annie Parent-Charron has located about thirty Parisian contracts between authors and booksellers for the years 1535 through 1560 suggests that authorial rights emerged earlier in France.[29] In these contracts, the bookseller typically agreed to bear all the costs of production and to obtain the license, and the author received a negotiated number of complimentary copies, sometimes as many as one hundred. In Italy during the sixteenth century some authors and translators were paid a small sum for their work – but only when publishers were confident of books selling well. More often authors turned over their manuscripts to printers and received a few complimentary copies (twenty-five or fifty); or they entered into a partnership with their printers to share expenses and the printed product; or they subsidized the entire publication, sometimes with the help of a patron and sometimes by agreeing to buy a large quantity of copies.[30]

A similar range of transactions occurred in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While Milton's contract with Samuel Simmons for the publication of *Paradise Lost* remains the earliest surviving formal agreement of its kind – Milton received £5 up front and £5 and 200 copies at the end of the first three impressions – many other English writers were also compensated for their work.[31] Unfortunately, the existing data is insufficient for drawing conclusions about typical publishing terms, which depended in part on the type of work and its potential marketability. To publish Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, for example, Edwin Sandys paid the author £10 in 1593 for Books I–IV and £20 in 1597 for Book V, along with an unspecified number of complimentary copies of each installment.[32] Almost one hundred years later, for the publication of another theological work, Henry More was paid in kind, what he described as "very mean" terms. More was given twenty-five free copies of his folio *Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis Opera Theologica* (1675) and had the option either to purchase 100 more copies at the publisher's price of fifteen shillings apiece (that he could then sell at the regular retail price of twenty

shillings), or to buy fewer books at the bookseller's price of sixteen shillings apiece.[33]

In one of the letters appended to Richard Baxter's autobiography, the author denies the allegation that his "excessive Rates" ruined the bookseller Nevil Symmons and describes in his defense "all my Covenants and Dealings with Booksellers to this day."[34] For publishing the first impression of *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (1649), for example, Baxter received £10 and subsequently £10 apiece from the two printers for every successive edition – until 1666 when hard times hit these shops. Baxter as the author had no negotiating power and consequently received nothing, "nor so much as one of the Books." More typically, booksellers seem to have given Baxter one out of every fifteen copies that were printed, sometimes with "Eighteen pence more for every Rheam of the other fourteen." Most of Baxter's fifteenth copies he gave away, but sometimes he sold them for "about two thirds parts of the common price of the Bookseller (or little more) or oft less" while other times he himself paid for the printing of copies that he then personally distributed. Baxter explains that "if any thing for Second Impressions were due, I had little Money from them [his booksellers], but in such Books as I wanted at their Rates."

We should not conclude from any of these agreements that an author's work was treated as his/her legal, creative property, for printers and publishers probably paid authors only when it suited their own interests. Again, there were no laws upholding an author's claims against the rights of a Stationer. In the case of Richard Hooker's book, despite the author's labor and the publisher's investment, the printer John Windet owned *Ecclesiastical Politie* because it was entered in the Stationers' *Register* as his copy; after Windet's death in the early 1600s, the right to publish the book passed on to his apprentice William Stansby rather than Sandys or Hooker's daughters. Not until the end of the seventeenth century do authors such as Dryden begin to claim a fair price for their work and assert their continuing rights to their writing.[35]

Still, despite such limited legal authority, a few exceptional writers earlier in the century wielded considerable negotiating power. As editor of his collected *Workes* (1616), for example, Ben Jonson anticipated the emergence of the modern author, arranging the book's contents as well as annotating, revising, and correcting early print runs. Thirty years later in 1648, Robert Herrick seems to have

worked closely with John Williams and Francis Eglesfield in de-
signing and arranging *Hesperides*: the book emphasizes the poet's
authorial presence through its satiric frontispiece portrait and a note
by Herrick on the errata page that playfully instructs readers to
"Condemne the Printer ... not me" for any "Transgressions which
thou here dost see" (π4r). Even this latter verse, however, while it
establishes Herrick's authority, also emphasizes his dependence on
material agents of textual production, for he claims to have produced
"good Grain" but could not prevent the printer from having "sow'd
these Tares throughout my Book" (π4r).

   Although most authors sold their works for publication outright,
the government still held them accountable for their writings. John
Stubbes and William Prynne remain perhaps the most famous
examples of authors who were brutally punished for seditious texts,
and in 1660 Milton, too, was fined and briefly imprisoned for two of
his treasonable books, *Eikonoklastes* (1649) and *Pro Populo Anglicano
Defensio* (1651). Ironically, the books that caused their authors the
most pain often earned their booksellers the most profits: once the
government ordered a book to be burnt publicly, the demand for it
increased. As Crispinella remarks in John Marston's *The Dutch
Courtezan* (1605), "those books that are cald in, are most in sale and
request" (D3v).

   But members of the Stationers' Company were also punished for
scandalous or seditious publications. In August 1645, for example,
the House of Lords imprisoned the printer Robert White and the
licenser Thomas Audley for a vicious attack on the king that had
appeared in the newsbook *Mercurius Britanicus* (*sic*), while the author
of *Britanicus*, Marchamont Nedham, received only a reprimand.[36] Of
those printers who sometimes worked with Milton, William Dugard
was arrested in 1652 for printing *The Racovian Catechism*, and Livewell
Chapman, the bookseller of the first edition of *The Readie and Easie
Way*, was forced into hiding after the Council of State issued an
order for his arrest in 1660. Although we have records of other
material agents who received harsher sentences before the war – the
printer Hugh Singleton, for example, was sentenced along with
Stubbes to have his hand cut off in 1579 – corporeal punishments
were not doled out frequently or consistently. Whether the author,
the printer, and/or the bookseller of an illegal book was punished
seems to have depended on various factors, such as past offenses,
political affiliations, and the government's changing policy for

regulating the book trade. The Ordinance of 1647 suggests that responsibility for a text was conceived in relative terms: according to this law, the author of an unlicensed periodical would be fined 40s. or be imprisoned for forty days; the printer, 20s. or twenty days; the bookseller, 10s. or ten days. The hawker or mercury of an illegal book would be "whipt as a Common Rogue" and have her or his wares confiscated.[37] Although authors had to pay the largest fine, mercuries received the most brutal sentence because as transient merchants they were the most difficult to capture and generally were of a lesser social status.

Such a broad overview of the seventeenth-century book trade illustrates that writing and publishing were frequently conceived as collaborative processes: that is, authority for a seventeenth-century text was dispersed among several people, each of whom to a varying degree could influence its form, profit from its publication, and be held accountable for its contents. Thus, when discussing a book by an author such as Milton, we ought not to assume that he oversaw all stages of its production – or even that he attempted to do so.

We find further evidence of collaborative authorship in the style, layout, and typography of the texts from this period: just as the creation of books required the cooperation of various people, the meaning of books often depended on their containing more than one speaker. I am not suggesting that we can always correlate the contribution of individual collaborators with specific utterances in a text. While the multiplicity of a book's creators often does manifest itself in a book's appearance, it also finds symbolic expression in the multiple voices that occur within a single publication.

Many seventeenth-century texts, for example, derive their meaning relationally, in conversation with each other. In addition to dedications, epistles, and commendatory verses, writers frequently inspired each other to compose responses or produce complementary publications. When Thomas Browne learned that the bookseller Andrew Crooke was planning to publish Kenelm Digby's *Observations* on Browne's *Religio Medici* (1642), he immediately wrote to Digby. Browne explained that *Medici* had been printed without his approval and that he soon would have published "the true and intended Original." Digby replied by prohibiting Crooke to proceed. Some

copies of the authorized edition of *Religio Medici* (1643) include Browne and Digby's letters among the preliminaries, and Digby's *Observations*, printed in the same year, are commonly found bound with successive editions.[38]

The pamphlet wars of this period especially invite the notion of social authorship. William Riley Parker aptly describes the middle of the seventeenth century as a "period of multitudinous debate" when "laymen refuted the sermons of famous divines; ordinary citizens replied to speeches made in Parliament; anonymous writers argued, and were answered by anonymous writers" (Parker, p. 196). Milton's own prose-writings often participate in noisy, published disputes. His *Animadversions* (July 1641), for example, answered Bishop Joseph Hall's *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance* (12 April 1641), which countered Smectymnuus's *An Answere to A Book Entitled An Humble Remonstrance* (20 March 1641), which – as its title suggests – had attacked Hall's initial publication, *An Humble Remonstrance* (13 January 1641).[39]

To respond to a book within such a debate, authors had to quote the tracts that they were answering so extensively that the resulting texts look like dramatic scripts: a response follows each quotation dialogically. In *Animadversions* (1641) Milton and the bookseller Thomas Underhill conduct a conversation between the "Remonstrant," representing (and sometimes misrepresenting) Hall, and the "Answere," representing Milton on behalf of Smectymnuus. A typical exchange between the writers reads as follows:

REMON. No one Clergie in the whole Christian world yeelds so many eminent schollers, learned preachers, grave, holy and accomplish'd Divines as this Church of *England* doth at this day.

ANSW. Ha, ha, ha.

REMON. And long, and ever may it thus flourish.

ANSW. O pestilent imprecation! flourish as it does at this day in the Prelates?

REMON. But oh forbid to have it told in *Gath!*

ANSW. Forbid him rather, Sacred Parliament, to violate the sense of Scripture, and turne that which is spoken of the afflictions of the Church under her pagan enemies to a pargetted concealment of those prelatical crying sins . . . (I3r/726)[40]

Throughout his career, Milton used a similar technique in his anti-prelatical tracts, *Eikonoklastes* (1649), and the three defenses. Even *A Mask* (1637) and *Paradise Regain'd* (1671) echo this polemical style as

the poems evolve into oratorical contests, between Comus and the Lady and between the Son and the Tempter, respectively. Rather than representing what William B. Hunter calls an ''unusual'' rhetorical device, this technique, I would suggest, characterizes the social nature of much seventeenth-century discourse.[41] Perusing the list of anonymous and royal publications in the Wing Catalogue, D. F. McKenzie has counted close to 3,066 items that imply some form of direct address or verbal exchange; he expects this figure to triple at least with the addition of reissues, reprintings, separate-issues, and items by known authors.[42]

We can trace some instances of this polemical style to the closure of the theaters during the Civil War, which prompted an outpouring of political play-pamphlets.[43] Such hybrid texts depict allegorical or stock characters engaging in dialogues about contemporary issues: Alkali argues with Acid (1698; Wing E708), a Brownist battles a Schismatick (1643; Wing D1291), Content converses with Complaint (1677; Wing H2922), Richard Cromwell confronts his late father (1659; Wing W3587), a Cobbler speaks with a Ghost (1660; Wing D1295), and a Monkey in the Old Bayly addresses an Ape in High Holborn (1681; Wing D1296). Although such pamphlet conventions changed rapidly and dialogue was not consistently popular throughout the 1600s, the Wing Catalogue lists approximately 200 items that begin with the word ''dialogue'' – which does not, of course, account for the hundreds of dialogues with less explicit titles.[44] *The Ale-Wives Complaint, against the Coffee Houses* (1675; Wing A905), for example, depicts the Ale-Wife discussing with the Coffee-Man the attributes of their respective beverages, and, as part of an earlier pamphlet debate, *Hæc-Vir* (1620; STC 12599) describes a conversation about cross-dressing between ''the Womanish Man'' and ''the Man-Woman.''

The common practice of printing marginal notes also allowed a text to engage in conversation with other writings.[45] By indicating Biblical citations and source materials, marginalia expanded textual authority to include works by other writers while paradoxically bolstering the credibility of the author who cited them – much like footnotes in modern scholarly editions. Printers who worked with Prynne, for example, set his works with wide margins so as to accommodate his proliferation of proof-texts. In *The Re-Publicans and Others Spurious Good Old Cause* (1659), a typical marginal note occurs after Prynne refers to William Watson: ''In his Quodlibets, p. 92, 94,

95, 233, 286, 305, &c. 306, 307, 308, 330, 332. See my Epistle before my Historical and Legal Vindication of the Fundamental Laws, Liberties, Privileges of all English Fremen: where all this is largely evidenced: And before my *Jus Patronatus*'' (A4r). Of dubious practical value, such comments may have helped to advertise an author's or stationer's other books, though only a few ambitious readers were probably willing to track down obscure sources and decipher ambiguous references such as ''305, &c. 306.'' Often the marginalia are so extensive that they are difficult to decipher: in *Histrio-Mastix* (1633), Prynne's Latin notes not only flood the book's outer margins, but also pour along the bottom of the pages and push the text into the upper corner against the binding.

We can thus sympathize with Milton's contempt for those ''light arm'd refuters'' whose ''learning and beleif [*sic*] lies in marginal stuffings'' (*CP* II: 724, I: 822). In *Colasterion* (1645), Milton invites Prynne to publish something worthwhile about divorce, provided that it does not suffer ''the gout and dropsy of a big margent, litter'd and overlaid with crude and huddl'd quotations'' (*CP* II: 724); in *An Apology against a Pamphlet* (April 1642), he similarly attacks the anonymous author of *A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrilous Libell* (1642; Wing H393) for including such extensive marginal notes that ''he must cut out large docks and creeks into his text to unlade the foolish frigate of his unseasonable autorities'' (*CP* I: 921–2). By objecting to ostentatious scholarship and the tendency to pile on excessive supporting references, Milton acknowledges that these sources are meant to enhance a tract's credibility. A few of Milton's own texts, such as *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (1641), *Animadversions* (1641), and *The History of Britain* (1672), contain marginal notations, and the quotations from famous writers at the beginning of *The Judgement of Martin Bucer* (1644) also indicate that Milton and/or his printers accepted the rhetorical function of citing supporting authorities, as long as they did not drown out the primary author's words.

All of these techniques for conducting intra-textual conversations – epistles, quotations, dialogue, and marginalia – reinforced, in turn, the collaborative process of material production, for they promoted the role of the compositor. If an author wanted to use marginalia, the compositor selected type of a different size to distinguish the text from the notes; if an author wanted to write a dialogue or insert quotations, a compositor indented the text and/or changed the type

face to separate the characters' speeches. Authors and subsequently readers, in other words, relied on a carefully printed text to differentiate various utterances. Milton's *Eikonoklastes* (1649), for example, cites long passages from *Eikon Basilike* (1649), which appear embedded within Milton's prose. The compositors, working either with Milton or from his manuscript, have helpfully set them off, alternating the type face from roman to italic. In like manner, James I in his Folio *Workes* (1616) requires different fonts and type sizes to distinguish his confutations from ''The Lyes of Tortus'' and ''The Novel Doctrines.''

Such techniques also depended on what Walter J. Ong has termed ''typographic space.''[46] To represent a complex exchange required ''the exact situation of the words on the page'' and the careful manipulation of ''their spatial relationship to one another'' (*Orality and Literacy,* p.128). Whereas Ong emphasizes the prevalence of detailed charts and lists in early printed books, intra-textual conversations also illustrate that the invention of print affected the way books were created: the new technology allowed authors and printers to reproduce consistently and accurately multiple and interdependent voices within a single publication.[47]

But unlike printed charts and indexes, which suggest a movement toward a visualist culture, these complex exchanges paradoxically echo auditory and scribal discourse. As recent studies by Keith Thomas, Harold Love, and Arthur F. Marotti suggest, other forms of communication existed outside the seventeenth-century book trade, which probably influenced the way authors wrote books and the way printers designed them.[48] The invention of printing with moveable type complemented rather than supplanted the older forms of speech and manuscript. Tracts written as dialogues, for example, were particularly well suited to being read aloud in taverns and coffee-houses, and introductory epistles and commendations reflected the personal tone of some manuscript copies. Developing within a culture accustomed to the immediacy of the spoken word and the intimacy of hand-written documents, printed books could approximate a sense of community through their intra-textuality.

For economic reasons, too, the creators of printed texts wanted to appeal to a public familiar with the conventions of speech and manuscript. Seventeenth-century readers would have preferred books that imitated auditory and scribal communication, just as computer-users today use software that has adopted the idiom of

printed matter.[49] Even the method of publication enabled readers to overcome the ''anxiety-provoking distinctions'' among the new and older forms of discourse; the prompt exchange of topical books – ''of short pamphlets with short lives,'' as McKenzie observes – emulated speech and manuscript.[50] An anonymous, humorous dialogue from 1641, *The Downefall of Temporizing Poets, unlicenst Printers, upstart Book-sellers, trotting Mercuries, and bawling Hawkers* (Wing D2088), charac-terizes the book trade by its rapid turnover. Suck-bottle the hawker is searching for ''a new booke being out to day''; the poet ''sold a copy last night'' and already he has ''another copy to sell,'' although ''nobody will buy it because it is not licenceable.'' That their fortunes can change within ''one hour'' suggests the hurried pace of business. The call for updated editions, the popularity of ephemera, and the expectation of rebuttals and counter-rebuttals guaranteed continual, if not consistent, work not only for authors, but also for printers and booksellers.

The pamphlet further illustrates the interdependence of the ''Poet, Book-seller, Mercury, Hawker, / And Printer.'' These people relied on each other for their livelihood: ''If Mercuries be mad, and Hawkers sad, / I'me sure no reason I have to be glad,'' the poet in the tract reasons, concluding that the fate of one group of partici-pants in the book trade would equally affect the others. When ''fortune late hath frown'd, / All five are falne, all five do kisse the ground.'' Similarly, Milton in *Areopagitica* compares the search for truth to the collaborative process of building a temple, ''some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars'' (*CP* II: 555). Only through such cooperation could an author like Milton have his texts produced during the seventeenth century and only through such a collaboration, as Milton repeatedly insists, could knowledge be discovered and increased.

MILTON'S COLLABORATION

Milton's most detailed discussion of authorship occurs in *Pro Se Defensio* (1655) as he upholds the claim that Alexander More was responsible for *Regii Sanguinis Clamor* (1652). Because Milton had attacked More as the author of *Clamor* fifteen months earlier in *Defensio Secunda* (1654), some scholars argue that he chose to maintain that position despite new evidence to the contrary. Thus, they claim, he made the ''worst mistake of his public career.''[51]

But we also should note that Milton's justification for calling More the author of *Clamor* reflects the type of collaborative authorship that commonly occurred in the seventeenth century. In *Pro Se Defensio*, Milton dilates the concept of author to include all the people who cooperate in producing a text. He attacks not only More, the alleged writer, but also its printer, Adrian Vlacq, and the other anonymous participants who helped to produce the critique. In a striking rhetorical maneuver, Milton threatens that he can assign responsibility for a text to any of its collaborators, regardless of their particular involvement:

If I find that you wrote or contributed one page of this book, or even one versicle, if I find that you published it, or procured or persuaded anyone to publish it, or that you were in charge of its publication, or even lent yourself to the smallest part of the work, seeing that no one else comes forth, for me you alone will be the author of the whole work, the culprit and the crier. (*CP* IV: 712–13)

In More's case, Milton accuses him of having written *Clamor*'s epistle to Charles II and having supervised and corrected the press work (*CP* IV: 714). Presumably, if Milton had known the other contributors, they would have shared responsibility for the book, as the printer Vlacq does. Milton criticizes Vlacq for lacking the kind of consistency that we commonly associate with authors: how could you publish a book by Alexander More, Milton asks, and then print a book by me (*CP* IV: 718–19; 730–1)? For Milton, Vlacq, too, is the author of *Clamor*. He cites Justinian to support this logic: "If any, to the infamy of another, shall write, compose, or publish any libel or poem or history, or with evil intent shall cause any such to be done," then that person "shall be considered and punished as the author" (*CP* IV: 713).

Based on such a definition, we could hold Milton responsible for *Responsio ad Apologiam Anonymi* (1652), in which he collaborated with his nephew John Phillips, and for *An Answere to a Book Entitled An Humble Remonstrance* (1641), a tract by Smectymnuus in which Milton wrote the postscript. In like manner, Cromwell and/or other Council members "authored" the *Articles of Peace* (1649), *Eikonoklastes* (1649), and the first two defense tracts (1651, 1654): surely these men had lent at least "one versicle" to the formation of Milton's pamphlets, and as his supervisors, had likely overseen the production.

Yet Milton's definition seems to ignore a crucial distinction: who was *primarily* responsible for *Clamor*? Or, we could similarly ask, who

wrote most of *Responsio ad Apologiam Anonymi*? Unfortunately, as Milton discovered with the case of *Clamor*, identifying all of a book's collaborators is difficult, and pinpointing each person's contribution is sometimes impossible. Whereas Milton's tactic in *Pro Se Defensio* is to justify treating More as the sole author of *Clamor*, my purpose is to scrutinize the various people who worked with Milton in producing his texts. When possible, I describe the specific role of each collaborator; more generally, though, I am concerned with mapping out the collaborative genesis of Milton's works and demonstrating why knowledge of the conditions of authorship ought to inform our interpretations.

To illustrate in practical terms Milton's collaborative authorship, I want to conclude this chapter with a brief examination of *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674). Perhaps the most famous single poem in English, Milton's epic is also his most isolated creation. The poem seems disconnected from other works produced in the later seventeenth century such as Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) and Butler's *Hudibras* (1662–80).[52] When critics have considered the historical situation that influenced *Paradise Lost*, they often approach the work as a relic of the 1640s: according to this way of thinking, Milton turned away from politics after suffering defeat and withdrew to an inner paradise.[53] Piecing together the poem's process of creation, however, suggests that even Milton's greatest work was not produced in isolation. Although some of this evidence is anecdotal and much of it is familiar to Milton critics, the cumulative effect indicates the poem's complex origin.

Milton's blindness, for example, necessitated that he rely on friends and acquaintances before *Paradise Lost* went to press. After awakening at four in the morning, having someone read to him, and devoting some time to quiet contemplation, Milton was ready to compose: "leaning Backward Obliquely in an Easy Chair, with his Leg flung over the Elbow of it," the poet asked (as he sometimes called it) "to bee milkd" – that is, he would dictate to an amanuensis the "good Stock of Verses" that he had formulated during the previous night (Darbishire, pp. 6, 291, 33). In addition to soliciting his daughters' aid, Milton asked his students to serve as his amanuenses, and "some elderly persons were glad for the benefit of his learned Conversation, to perform that Office" (p. 33). The biographer Jonathan Richardson reports that Milton was "perpetually Asking One Friend or Another