Introduction

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Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) lived through a period of extraordinary change in the history of the book. His career illustrates, perhaps more fully than that of any contemporary writer, the range of developments by which authors, booksellers and their public transformed the business of print during the first half of the eighteenth century. Throughout his life Swift conceptualized the book in differing and sometimes conflicting ways. As a political fixer he cultivated the reputation of a dexterous manager and patron of the press, but he was careful to keep his dealings with printers and booksellers hidden from public view. As a satirist Swift often placed the writing and publishing of books somewhere near the edges of human experience, despite the trade being an increasingly mundane and well-organized business in the early eighteenth century. He described authors and booksellers as madmen in confederacy, as libertines fathering bastards on the press, as unquiet spirits hovering over sepulchral codices. Swift was a creator of books, a visitor at the printing house, and an observer of the hacks, publishers and book-buyers who peopled the world of commercial print. He also wrote critically and satirically about the nature of text. The shifting moods of irony, complicity and indignation that characterize his commentary on the world of print add a deep layer of complexity to the bibliographic record of his own published works. The essays collected in *Jonathan Swift and the Eighteenth-Century Book* offer the first comprehensive, integrated survey of that record, and a thorough analysis of the challenges that it poses for modern literary historians and critics.

Swift's pre-eminence as author

A letter that Swift received from the printer John Barber dated 24 August 1732 suggests something of the depth of his entanglement with the book trade. Barber had worked closely with Swift on his political publications during the four years before Queen Anne's death in 1714. In return Swift

had secured for 'my Printer' some valuable trade patents, including the printing of *The Gazette* in 1711 and the reversion for the office of Queen's Printer in 1713.[1] At around the same time Barber was elected to the common council of the City of London, later proceeding alderman in 1722 and finally Lord Mayor in 1732. Anticipating the ceremony of his installation twenty years after the period of his closest collaborations with Swift, Barber acknowledges how deeply obliged he is to the Dean for his advancement:

> It would add very much to my felicity, if your health would permit you to come over in the spring, and see a pageant of your own making. Had you been here now, I am persuaded you would have put me to an additional expense, by having a raree-shew (or pageant) as of old, on the lord-mayor's day. Mr. Pope and I were thinking of having a large machine carried through the city, with a printing-press, author, publishers, hawkers, devils, &c., and a satirical poem printed and thrown from the press to the mob, in publick view, but not to give offence; but your absence spoils that design.[2]

It is a striking and rather menacing image, the press carried above the mob like a pillory or a gallows. It may owe something to *The Grub-street Journal*, whose correspondents were much given to allegories of the press: a recent number had suggested that the Lord Mayor's procession was itself 'a prophetical, *figurative*, and *typical*, representation of a Procession of Printers, Booksellers, Authors, &c. to be some time or other *wonderfully* exhibited to the view of the whole Town'.[3] From a book historian's perspective the actors and audience represent a self-contained 'circuit of communication', an almost complete cycle in the production and distribution of printed books.[4]

It is particularly significant that Barber has dreamt up the scene together with Alexander Pope, Swift's pupil in the study of Grub Street and, like him, a fitting patron of its pageantry. Pope joins Barber in pressing Swift to accept a generous dose of flattery: that *he* remains the supreme example of the poet as street-level statesman, despite his years of Irish exile. They imagine a sort of proto-Situationist performance, with Swift as the magus-like director of an instantly responsive publicity machine. This is in many ways what he had been two decades previously when 'His Works were hawk'd in ev'ry Street, | But seldom rose above a Sheet'.[5] And Pope may also be acknowledging a Swiftian hint at the source of his own recent satire of municipal pageantry.[6] The first book of the *Dunciad* (1728), of which Swift was dedicatee, is set on the night after a Lord Mayor's procession:

> (Pomps without guilt, of bloodless swords and maces,
> Glad chains, warm furs, broad banners, and broad faces)
> Now night descending, the proud scene was o'er,
> Yet liv'd in *Settle*'s numbers, one day more.[7]

Pope mentions Elkanah Settle, still alive in 1728, who had held the office of 'City Poet' and devised and then memorialized eleven Lord Mayor's pageants between 1691 and 1708. He was also John Barber's godfather, helping him to an apprenticeship with the printer George Larkin in 1689.[8] In his reply to Barber's letter Swift appears to acknowledge old conversations on these interconnected topics and characters – 'for I never approved the omission of those shows' – and recalls having seen the procession when Sir Thomas Pilkington was elected Lord Mayor, a year or two before Settle took charge.[9] Swift had written to Barber in the first place because he wanted his protégé Matthew Pilkington, a kinsman of the Williamite Lord Mayor, to serve as his chaplain during the period of his office. By drawing attention to the continuity of these old and new connections between authors and tradesmen, Swift confirms and extends the patterns of patronage, obligation and allegiance that Barber had gratefully evoked. And the printing press – emblematized in Barber's tableau almost as a symbol for the city itself – is at the centre of it all.

Swift and the book trade: overview engagement and disengagement

Swift's relationships with the people who manufactured and distributed his books were complicated. Both the English and the Irish book trades at this time depended on close personal, often familial, relationships, and Swift was willing to engage with the trade on a personal level: he was happy to dine with his printer and his bookseller, to use them as bankers, to join in the planning of intricate books and collections, to hunt down revised copy and to intervene to save them from prosecution. He was notably loyal to these collaborators; these were relationships that he expected to last. Some of his contemporaries, however, were even more intimate with the trade. John Dryden, William Congreve, Matthew Prior and Alexander Pope all worked more closely with their booksellers on the design of their books, and benefited financially from innovations in subscription and distribution to which Swift affected indifference.[10] 'I never got a farthing by anything I writ', Swift complained in 1735, 'except one about eight year ago, and that was by Mr Pope's prudent management for me' – meaning the £200 he secured for the copy of *Gulliver's Travels*.[11] But

it is precisely Swift's preference for being seen to keep his distance from the trade that makes his dealings with it uniquely interesting to historians of the book. The pageant imagined by Barber involves workers from many sectors of the book trade: authors, publishers, press-workers and street vendors are all gathered around the press. And yet Swift, the man who directs the scene, the writer who is something more than an author, is not there. Barber assures him that 'your absence spoils that design'.

With Swift off the scene, all the half-hidden workings of the trade are exposed to historical attention – from the dispensation of high-profile patronage to the labours of devils and hawkers. Often Swift relied upon friends and intermediaries such as Erasmus Lewis, John Gay, Charles Ford and Matthew Pilkington to negotiate with booksellers on his behalf. This allowed him to perform a favourite trick, discussed by Ian Gadd in his chapter (pp. 58–9): leaving his most important manuscripts with booksellers in London, and then disappearing to Ireland a few days before publication, as he did with *Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions* (1701), with the *Tale of a Tub* miscellany (1704) and with *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Ultimately, as Ian Higgins reveals in his essay on censorship and self-censorship (pp. 181–3), Swift's printers and booksellers stood between the author and the sanction of the law.[12] John Harding, the Dublin printer who had produced the first five *Drapier's Letters* for Swift in 1724, was particularly resolute when prosecuted for publishing seditious libel: he swore that he was unable to identify the Drapier, and it is even possible he died in prison while awaiting prosecution.[13] As Swift put it to Motte on 4 November 1732:

> I have writ some things that would make people angry. I always sent them by unknown hands, the Printer might guess, but he could not accuse me, he ran the whole risk, and well deserved the property.[14]

If Motte needed a reminder about the precariousness of this arrangement, he got it a year later when he was himself arrested and questioned at Westminster over his part in the publication of Swift's poem *To a Lady*.[15] John Wilford, the poem's publisher and also the distributor of *The Grub-street Journal*, had named Lawton Gilliver, who had in turn named Motte ('he was resolved, if he came into trouble, I should have a share of it'), whose questioning led to Matthew Pilkington and Mary Barber, who had brought the manuscript from Dublin, also being detained.[16] In other words, the government was obliged to dig through four levels of intermediary before it could be sure of Swift's responsibility for the poem. Even then it was unable to gather sufficient evidence to pursue the author, or was reluctant to do so.

Inevitably this cautious, yet half-negligent style of business often resulted in Swift losing control over the publication of his writings. When such a loss occurred, as it did most famously in the case of *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift was loudly resentful, even when his best friends were involved. Having given Pope a free hand in the arrangement of their *Miscellanies* (1727–32), he became increasingly irritated by the clumsiness with which they were edited and printed.[17] But the steps that he took to reclaim authority over his texts tended to be indecisive, if not desultory. Often they were limited to the private manuscript-based traditions of correction transmitted among his Irish friends, as was the case at first with *Gulliver*. Although (as Shef Rogers shows in his essay) *Gulliver's Travels* was a carefully planned and conceived book, an unknown courier dropped the holograph for *Gulliver* at Motte's shop on 8 August 1726. Several dangerous passages in the text were censored before publication, probably (as Swift conjectured in 1733) by Andrew Tooke, a schoolmaster, FRS and sleeping partner in Motte's business.[18] Swift's intimate dealings with his bookseller brother are described below. Swift insisted almost at once that the passages 'mingled and mangled' by Tooke should be restored, but he did so indirectly. He got Charles Ford to write to Motte on 3 January 1726–7 with a list of 109 corrections.[19] Motte incorporated many minor revisions requested by Ford in the second edition of *Gulliver* in 1727, but left the censored passages as he had printed them originally, in prudent defiance of the author. When the Dublin printer George Faulkner offered the opportunity to restore the text of *Gulliver* in the four-volume Dublin *Works* of 1735, Swift had to rely on readings recorded by Ford in an interleaved copy now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum.[20] Harold Love and Robert D. Hume have recently adopted the term 'nebulous authorship' to describe how at the end of the seventeenth century different members of the Duke of Buckingham's circle took diffused responsibility for the writings they produced.[21] Swift's negligence seldom disperses authorial presence in quite the manner they describe, but it does lead sometimes to a certain blurring of personal assignation in his works, and for all sorts of ambiguity of detail in the texts themselves. The history of Swift's dealings with the world of print is a tale of collaboration and relinquishment.

Often Swift ceded control of his texts in a more deliberate way, drawing our attention as he did so to some hidden corner of the print trade. Throughout his career, as Ian Gadd describes in his chapter on the early phase of his dealings with the London press (pp. 51–64 below), Swift deputed 'my bookseller', Benjamin Tooke, or his printers John Barber

and George Faulkner, to oversee the publication of commercially or politically sensitive material, often employing wholesale 'trade publishers' such as John Nutt, Abigail Baldwin and John Morphew. Their imprints offered extra layers of anonymity when it was necessary.[22] But just as often this same mechanism of publication worked against his interests. From 1714 the most prolific publisher to the trade, James Roberts of Warwick Lane, lent his imprint to further dangerous Swiftian titles first published in Ireland, including *Cadenus and Vanessa* (1726) and *The Lady's Dressing Room* (1732), while at the same time publishing the hostile 'gulliveriana' written by Swift's inveterate enemy Jonathan Smedley. These shadowy parts of the early eighteenth-century publishing world would still be obscure to us if Swift's dealings (and non-dealings) with them had not drawn the attention of book historians.

1691–1711 Dublin and London

As Pat Rogers shows in his chapter (pp. 87–100), Swift was until 1711 a miscellaneous writer with a satirical bent. He began with a desire to be a published poet, issuing two unsatisfactory Pindaric odes in the years 1691 and 1692. One, *An Ode to the King on His Irish Expedition*, was published in Dublin, while the other was published in London. At this time the Dublin and London trades were still very different. In theory the Dublin trade was entirely in the control of one man, the King's Printer, who could license other practitioners if he wished. However, between 1660 and 1732 (when the patent had its privileges much reduced), there was significant relaxation in practice. The King's Printers in that period were the Crooke family, but from 1669 to 1693 the patent was held by Benjamin Tooke, Sr (a London bookseller, the father of the man who was to work with Swift), first for his sister Mary, the widow of John Crooke, and then with or for her children. The patent passed to Andrew Crooke in 1693. Their monopoly was challenged first by William Bladen, who had his press closed down in 1673, and then, much more successfully, by Joseph Ray, who became printer to the city in 1681 and resisted a similar attempt in that year. His position was supported by the Guild of St Luke, founded for cutlers, painter-stainers and stationers in 1670. Tooke had joined the Guild, becoming joint first warden of the stationers' section, and this new organization probably helped foster a spirit of co-operation in the trade. Ray prospered, and Mary Pollard thinks that Samuel Fairbrother, King's

Stationer and Printer to the House of Commons, who has a part to play in Swift's story, was his apprentice and succeeded him.[23]

In spite of these developments, the Dublin trade remained small and undifferentiated in comparison with London's. Mary Pollard estimates that there were probably no more than ten printers active in Dublin in 1709, and those who were printers often sold books and did their own binding.[24] When the Copyright Act was passed in Westminster in 1710, its provisions did not apply to Ireland, though they did forbid the import of copyrighted books into Britain, penalties being placed on anyone who 'shall print, reprint, or import … any such Book or Books'.[25] One consequence of the Act was that it was unlikely that an author would be paid copy money by an Irish bookseller, and that created an incentive for ambitious authors to publish in London. Another was that a lively reprint trade grew up in Dublin, where marginally lower labour costs and duties on paper permitted cheap reprints of English books for the Irish market. That these books were sometimes exported to Britain, where they infuriated the copyright holders, is undeniable, but Pollard doubts that the trade was extensive.[26]

In London, on the other hand, as Ian Gadd explains in his essay, there had long been regulation of the trade through the Stationers' Company, and the passing of the Copyright Act in 1710 helped strengthen the notion of literary property and the growth and differentiation of the trade. Although some booksellers simply kept a shop, 'Topping' booksellers, as contemporaries and James Raven call them, had the capital to finance the production of books, paying for copy, supplying paper and employing their chosen printers. They were able both to engage in the extensive exchange of books, building up the stock of their shops, and to distribute their titles widely through the specialist trade publishers, imprints showing success in engaging provincial retailers in large-scale projects as well.[27] The limited size of the Dublin market did not really permit such developments.[28] The first half of the century also saw the development of successful printing houses in London – John Watts (working closely with the Tonsons); the William Bowyers, father and son; Samuel Richardson; Samuel Buckley – whose proprietors were ready to undertake work for the government (their shops often busy with other routine work such as newspapers) and to use their profits to finance projects of their own. Some measure of the relative activity of the Dublin and London trades (with Edinburgh included for comparison) is provided by a simple comparison of the *ESTC* figures for imprints in the decades of Swift's activity:

	1691–1700	1701–10	1711–20	1721–30	1731–40	1741–50
Dublin	675	1,114	1,428	2,481	1,818	2,057
London	16,219	18,277	18,916	14,837	15,941	15,820
Edinburgh	1,593	2,249	1,972	1,895	1,664	2,502

Some general impressions arise from this table.[29] The Dublin trade, owing to the King's Printer restrictions, started well behind the Edinburgh one, but by the end of the period it had caught up. On this indicator (probably misleading) the London trade was static: at the start of the period it was twenty-four times the size of the Dublin one; at the end it was still over seven times as large. The very high rise in Dublin's productivity in the 1720s is unexplained, but it may relate to the controversy generated by Swift's *Drapier's Letters* (1724) and its stimulus to Dublin book culture.[30]

That first poem published by Swift, *Ode to the King* (1691), draws us immediately into those personal relations that are now so difficult to recapture. The printer and publisher was John Brent of Dublin, whose wife Jane was Swift's mother's landlady when she visited Dublin and later (perhaps in 1695) became Swift's housekeeper; when she died in 1735 she was succeeded by her daughter Ann Ridgeway.[31] Brent's was an impressive shop, 'Airy, Great and Noble (and the Top Printing-House in all Dublin)', John Dunton tells us (Pollard, *Dictionary*, p. 52), but Swift seems not to have used Brent to print anything else, perhaps because he retired in 1704 at the age of sixty-five. In another sign of a persisting connection, however, Swift remarks in the *Journal to Stella* that he had once arranged for a boy to be apprenticed to Brent (*JSt* (1948), vol. II, p. 559). Swift sent his second poem, 'The Ode to the Athenian Society' (1692), to John Dunton who was then publishing the *Athenian Gazette* in London. His interest in the Athenian Society seems to have come from his relationship with Sir William Temple, to whom he was acting as literary secretary, with Temple's speaking to him so much in their praise and probably contributing to the *Athenian Gazette* himself (Williams, *Poems*, vol. I, p. 14).

Temple provided Swift with an example of successful authorship, and it was while editing Temple's work posthumously that Swift came to establish his crucial relationship with Benjamin Tooke Jr and to publish his own first major work, *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions … in Athens and Rome* (1701).[32] From the time Swift joined Temple at Moor Park in 1689 until his death ten years later, Temple had published a significant volume of work through eminent members of the book trade

such as Richard and Ralph Simpson, Richard Chiswell, Jacob Tonson, and Awnsham and John Churchill. When Swift assumed responsibility for publication with Temple's *Letters* in 1700, he simply followed precedent and published with Tonson and the Simpsons. But for *Miscellanea* III (1701), he went to Tooke; he later sold Tooke the copyright of *Letters to the King* (1703) for £50, though Tim Goodwin's name also appears in the imprint, and then employed him again for *Memoirs* III (1709), receiving copy money each time.[33] The publication of *Miscellanea* III on 28 July 1701 was just three months before Swift's *Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions*, around 21 October.[34] The *Discourse*, a defence of Lord Somers and the three other ministers who had been impeached by the House of Commons, in a style that echoed Temple's, appeared anonymously and with only the name of a trade publisher or distributor, John Nutt, in the imprint. But Ehrenpreis shrewdly suspects that Tooke, who was later to collect the work in *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1711), was, in the modern sense, the publisher (Ehrenpreis, vol. II, p. 92). What drew Swift to Tooke is unclear. He would have been used to the very common imprint 'Benjamin Tooke, printer to the King and Queen's most excellent Majesties' during his time in Ireland. If his *Discourse* had begun early in the summer, Somers may have directed him to Tooke as the publisher of the second edition of his own *Discourse Concerning Generosity* (1695).[35]

It is clear from Swift's correspondence that Tooke was responsible for the fifth edition of *A Tale of a Tub* in 1710 and *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1711), a significant event in Swift's career and one of the subjects of Pat Rogers's essay (pp. 93–4). In the absence of any reference to copyright holders, it is reasonable to conclude that Tooke published both the first edition of the *Tale* in 1704 and the prose pieces that went into the *Miscellanies*.[36] *A Tale of a Tub* in 1704 was not the layered work it became in 1710, but it was already a work of some length (331 pages) and indulged in the detailed mockery of aspects of the modern book (list of publications, dedications, prefaces, side notes and hiatuses) discussed by Marcus Walsh and Claude Rawson in their essays in this collection (pp. 101–18 and 231–67). For Tooke to undertake so complex and potentially controversial a book, he must have been impressed by the editor of Temple's *Letters* and by the reception of the *Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions*.[37] He was repaid by three editions of the *Tale* in the first year and a fourth in 1705. Although the evidence from imprints is lacking, it seems likely that the success of the *Tale* made it easy for Swift to publish with Tooke the squibs and ecclesiastical papers of the years 1707 to 1711: the various Bickerstaff papers, *Letter Concerning the Sacramental Test*, and *Project for the Advancement of Religion*. At least one of

these, *A Famous Prediction of Merlin* (1709), shows impressive typographical sophistication, as Valerie Rumbold has demonstrated in a recent article in *The Library*. The poem, Merlin's prophecy, is printed in black letter, with notes in roman by T. N. Philomath, on a two-sided half-sheet. At the head is a woodblock portrait of 'Merlinus Verax'. That Swift should want to play with popular publication is itself noteworthy, but this production shows intimate knowledge of Partridge's politics of the 1690s and appears to involve the acquisition and reuse of his woodblock.[38] Rumbold suggests various members of the book trade who might have helped Swift with this exercise, including Tooke, Dryden Leach and Tonson's printer, John Watts. To these might be added Benjamin Motte Sr.

Letters between Swift and Tooke in June and July 1710 provide a unique insight into what appears to be a relaxed but businesslike relationship.[39] Tooke had sent Swift Curll's *Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub* (which had attributed the work jointly to Swift and his cousin, Thomas Swift), doubtless in an attempt to hurry him along with the Apology and notes to the fifth edition and with providing extra copy for the *Miscellanies*. Swift, complaining vigorously about Curll and Thomas Swift, also blames Tooke for not having printed the Apology even though he had clearly neglected to revise it: 'I had neither health nor humour to finish that business. But the blame rests with you, that if you thought it time, you did not print it when you had it.' At the close of the letter, he says he will now send it:

> But, I dare say, you have neither printed the rest, nor finished the cuts; only are glad to lay the fault on me … If you are in such haste, how came you to forget the Miscellanies? I would not have you think of Steele for a publisher [i.e. editor]; he is too busy. I will, one of these days, send you some hints, which I would have in a preface, and you may get some friend to dress them up. (Woolley, *Corr.*, vol. I, p. 282)

This has the air of good-natured teasing over shared plans to bring out an enhanced *Tale of a Tub* and a volume of miscellanies. Swift clearly does not feel obliged to combine his zeal for action on the miscellanies with instant cooperation ('one of these days'), and in reply Tooke tacitly rebukes him with contrasting efficiency. He sends the new notes, which he suggests would be better at the foot of the page rather than at the end; he says the cuts are with Sir Andrew Fountaine, who was going to alter them but warns 'unless they are very well done, it is better they were quite let alone'; and, for the rest, he is waiting for Swift's revisions. The problem with both plans is that if they do not go ahead 'some rascal or other will do it for us both' (Woolley, *Corr.*,vol. I, pp. 283–4).