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Constructing Authorial Personae

Case Studies Illustrating the Conceptualizations, Myths, and Critiques of Eighteenth-Century Authorship

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Introduction: Authorizing the Author

Defining Authorship in the Eighteenth Century

The theme of the "rise of the author" in eighteenth-century English literary history has received significant critical consideration, including contemporary observations on the profession and authorial practices that contributed to the definition of the author, which impacted on the teleological narratives of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The supposed "rise" has since culminated in the more recent deconstructions of the myth of *the* author. In this dissertation, I revisit eighteenth-century textual practices to reassess constructions of authorship. The study is not a comprehensive investigation of the long eighteenth century, but discretely considered case studies that represent the diverse facets of authorship. Considering the primacy prose fiction and the novel have already been given in eighteenth-century studies about the development of authorship, I do not present a case study of this particular genre.[1] By engaging eighteenth-century studies, poststructuralist theories of authorship, media studies, and book history, I investigate

[1] Some examples of the scholarship dealing with the novel's significance for shaping eighteenth-century culture and authorship (including deconstructions of the novel's "rise" and the degree of its influence), in response to Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel* (1957), are: Patricia Spacks's *Imagining a Self* (1976), Jane Spencer's *Rise of the Woman Novelist* (1986), Dale Spender's *Mothers of the Novel* (1987), Michael McKeon's *Origins of the English Novel* (1987), J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels* (1990), William Beatty Warner's "Social Power and the Eighteenth-Century Novel" (1991), Margaret Anne Doody's *True Story of the Novel* (1997), Michael Seidel's "The Man Who Came to Dinner: Ian Watt and the Theory of Formal Realism" (2000), Nancy Armstrong *How Novels Think* (2005), Brean Hammond and Shaun Regan's *Making the Novel* (2006), Ingo Berensmeyer "Eighteenth-Century English Poetry and the Novel: Decline vs. Rise or 'Novelisation'" (2009),.and the recent special issue of *Eighteenth Century* ed. by Julie Park, "The Drift of Fiction: Reconsidering the Eighteenth-Century Novel" (2011).

diverse facets of authorship, including reading, writing, and publication practices that affect both the writer's fashioning of an authorial identity and the developing writing culture's construction of one-dimensional, seemingly stable definitions of authorship. In doing so, I also reveal the mythical status that was increasingly attributed to authors to be a product of discourse. An example of this type of ideal notion includes the view of the author as an autonomous genius, which in fact hides the diversity of authorial practices. The reduction of authorship to a one-dimensional definition with a singular function covers up and simplifies the essence of authorship, which I argue to be flexibility and variety. I examine authorship's versatility as it exists within the single author whose authorial identity is in flux. The diverse writing cultures and publishing practices that co-existed also reflect the author's multiplicity, which was simplified in the historical discourse that created the field of literary authorship.

In this study, paradoxes regarding notions of authorship are emphasized, especially the tensions between practices of authorship and the discursive strategies employed to define the profession and to assist an individual author's self-fashioning. Many writers were involved in defining the author so as to control the profession, an exercise that was also partly intended to make the writer's practicing an economic profession acceptable in society by turning the author into a cultural authority. The discursive practices and forms of publication that underpin constructions of authorship also created a hierarchy within the realm of authorship. This hierarchy matched social stratification, but it involved specific value judgments, determined by class, politics, and economics, which were applied to different types of textual production. Different writing cultures defined the author in various ways, although eighteenth-century authors usually did not limit themselves to one genre and rather represent versatility. Although the author's choice of writing and publication practices, as well as the various cultural forms of authorial discourse, seem to function at odds with each other, the author's activities and discourses of *meta-authorship*—explicitly writing seriously or satirically about the state of the profession—share similarities. They are linked by their suggestion of manipulation. Authors' (successful) negotiation of print culture, including the various genres available to explore, contributes to the authorial identity they create for themselves, while it also influences the readership's view of them. At the same time, readers engage more critically with texts and have more interest in the individual author, and their interpretations can revise the authorial persona and attach new meanings to the author's textual productions. The literate audience is growing, and the public opinion is becoming a force to be reckoned with. For instance, Thomas Gray's self-fashioning included the careful performance of a humble, self-effacing author hesitant toward print publication. Gray's persona contributed to the view that Gray harbored an anti-publication point of view. A similar concept of manipulation applies to the negative trope of victimization used in forms of authorial discourse meant to call attention to the writer's unjust battle for agency and struggles for independence. This

kind of trope posits the author as dependent on the bookseller, who might be depicted as evil, greedy, or the slave-driver of helpless writers. This manipulation of the public's sympathy is intended to support the author's cause, but it paints an extremely static view of the relationship between author and bookseller.

The dichotomy of practice versus discourse is also connected to another main theme that arises out of an investigation of authorship, namely, order versus chaos. The social project of creating definitions of the author and the discourse, including forms of satire, behind the creation of notions of authorship and the manipulation of society's view have to do with constructing order out of chaos and establishing authority in order to control the increasingly complex field of print culture. In the predominant view of the history of authorship, the chaos resulting from the explosion of the forms of the new print media, the excessive numbers of individuals proclaiming themselves authors, and the countless publications, needed to be held in check, if even by constructing an illusion. For instance, the discourse on the danger of reading novels or other texts for pure entertainment stimulated the need to regulate what young people read by influencing aesthetic values in favor of literary writing and valuing highly realistic and didactic compositions. The growth of literacy was initially a development to be prevented or controlled, but subsequently was viewed as a tool that could function as a form of regulation. Another issue of control that is associated with both the construction of authority and the author's struggle for professional agency is copyright. The introduction of copyright occurred in 1709, and the discourse surrounding this legislation claimed the rights of authors and the improvement of society as the reasons for its introduction. However, a study of the author's continued state of dependence, including clashes with the bookseller, reveals that the first copyright statute in fact ensured the monopoly that the London booksellers—the copyright holders—held over the print market. The narrative of commerce versus culture is occasionally presented as too basic or crude: the calculating booksellers—driven by a desire for gain—retain a monopoly of the book market and oppress authors. Key questions for an analysis of authorship with regard to cultural authority are therefore: Who controls discourse? Who owns copyright? The two are interconnected. However, one should be careful not to oversimplify the bookseller's dominance of the commercial book trade. Authors in fact turned to other strategies of constructing authority, although they could be seen to lack literary property, such as association with literary patrons, or finding social support by proposing subscription publication. The writer's struggle for agency and professional mastery is about (the semblance of) control. Also, the authorial victimization through discourse shows complexity: the author performs the role of the manipulated, while actively manipulating a persona and (potential) audience. The author assumes the role of the manipulated while actively asserting agency as a manipulator.

By analyzing various forms and practices of authorship, a noticeable connection appears between the perception of the self as singular, as opposed to the collective, with the growth of the notion of the autonomous author and a transformation of authority. The autonomous self offers a counterbalance to views of reality where authorities are controlling one's words, and customs and values are regulating one's behavior. This self is created with the desire to become an authority and establish one's own brand. The search for autonomy that marks humanity can be adapted for application to personal or individual use in the ways in which the author connects with the reader. For instance, the authorial tradition of directly addressing the reader creates an autonomous dyad of author and reader against the world. The autonomous self needs a foil (the reader) to establish authority, a deferral to authority. Another paradox linked to the creation of authority is the actual effect of print on the conceptualization of the self. The writer becomes split, or fragmented, rather, by the act of publication. As explored in the preface, the printed word gives the false impression of singularity by temporarily fixing knowledge; consider the existence of several copies of the same work, the attempts at creating and organizing language (dictionaries, indexes), practices of perfecting textually represented knowledge (revisions, reprinting new editions). The author is multiple in several senses, such as the collaboration or cooperation he engages in and the role that social networks play in revising, publishing, or advertising a work. Some forces that contribute to shaping a writer can be unintentional, for instance, the influence of a certain writer on a poet's style, or the impact of a favorable (and not commissioned) review on an author's success. These elements still play a role in writing and publication practices today, and yet, because of the dominance of the modern notion of author as singular and exceptional, the cooperative, multiple aspects of authorship are often neglected.

The Creation of Authority

With the title of my dissertation's introduction, I emphasize two sides of authorship, or the duality of authority, while also referring to several key issues of authorship that are explored in this dissertation. The word "authorizing" is replete with meaning: For instance, it refers to the struggle for control and the author's battle for professional (intellectual and financial) independence. At the same time, "authorizing" also encompasses the author's textual performances and the notion of the author's self-fashioning via the author's career trajectory (including the author's oeuvre and

professional choices of composition and publication). More specifically, with the expression *authorizing* I mean the ongoing process of the individual's self-fashioning as an author via authorial acts. This form of *author-ization* is also coupled with forces outside the individual's direct control, which contribute to producing and revising the author. These external forces include, among others, printers' and booksellers' decisions, reception processes, criticism, unauthorized publication of the author's work, and satires of other author's work. Included in the word *authorization* is also the sense of creating authority, which is connected to the power of the printed, particularly when appearing in print, the ownership of discourse and the control of book culture. Authority recalls social power, and who has the right to speak and shape cultural definitions or notions of authors. In order to become an author, the individual must do more than merely write and proclaim his authorship. A writer's compositions, the medium of publication, and the form of his products must also receive approval or confirmation before the proclamation of authorship is supported or considered genuine. In addition to the booksellers who control the commercial market, other members of society (cultural authorities) decide who deserves the title of author. These influential figures include members of the government who patronize the arts by offering pensions to authors, the readers and purchasers of texts and author-critics who publish their reviews in periodicals, which can influence (purchasing) readers. Public taste in turn affects marketing and publication strategies. For instance, the design of printed products begins to make use of signals to lure potential buyers. These actors also shape the dominant notions of authorship at a given time, and exclude some professionals from the realm of authorship. For example, Alexander Pope must be considered a key authority among a group of authors who had a hand in constructing an elite form of authorship based on traditional writing forms while relegating other writing practices to the margin of the cultural sphere. Pope's satirical text, *The Dunciad* (1728), continued the mythmaking project by stereotyping the hack, who was cast out of the developing literary culture into the depths of Grub Street where worthless writers churning out print ephemera belonged. The conservative discourse—infused with authority and saturated with moral values—employed by men of letters such as Pope, created polarized notions of authorship based on genre and writing cultures the author practiced.

The project of defining, satirizing, and authorizing the author leads to an unattainable ideal, which is, however, presented as an authentic form of authorship. In other words, it contributes to a tradition attached to conceptualizations of the author that I term *authorial exceptionalism*. This is connected to a stage in the discursive conceptualization of the author where more attention is paid to writers' individuality and character, in addition to their compositions. In this way, authors gain social recognition and also a form of celebrity status, which includes the downside that their work and personal character risk becoming inextricably linked. Views expressing

authorial exceptionalism connect the transition from laborious imitation to natural originality with respect to the author's talent and ability to compose. I use the term *exceptionalism* because these conceptualizations regard authors as possessing a kind of inherent skill, oftentimes called genius, which automatically defines them as authors and distinguishes them from others in the matter of writing skill. These notions of the author as authorial genius were often opposed to the commercial, professional author. However, some authors, like James Ralph, who argued for more commercial independence and professional visibility of the author, also believed that authors possessed a special characteristic that drove them toward the practice of writing. The conviction that there are inherent characteristics of authors that made them enter into the professional literary sphere and become writers contributed to the modern development of authorship in the direction of independence and originality. Samuel Johnson also contributed to "authorial exceptionalism" while supporting the economic notion of authorship, as he became increasingly regarded as the paragon of the autonomous author. For instance, in his critical *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81), he aimed to offer the definitive version of the author, while encouraging those aspects of poetic talent that singled out the poet's contribution to society. At the same time, his focus on the biography of the individual behind the poet, for example, induced him to discuss personal anecdotes. Johnson attempted to humanize the author, while also trying to show how the author created authority with his exceptional skill. Eventually, the transition of the definition of the author to the autonomous genius replaced the notion of the author as protean, and obfuscated the diverse forms and practices of writing, like revising, compiling, and imitation, and multiple types of authorship like collaboration, anonymous authorship, and subscription publication, that actually characterize the versatility of the successful eighteenth-century author. The construction of a singular notion of the author is driven by a desire to control knowledge and define ideas.

Kaleidoscope of Authorship: The Case Studies

The selection of case studies featured in this dissertation is not meant to give a definitive or exhaustive account of authorship in the eighteenth century, but functions as representative of the diverse facets of authorship by illustrating authorship's complexity and variety. I use the kaleidoscope as metaphor to represent the real portrait of the eighteenth-century "Age of Authors" as a period when different types of authors coexisted and writers were exercising their versatility by exploring different types of writing. The view when looking into a kaleidoscope is that of a constantly changing symmetrical design. As with the author's mutable persona, the different yet symmetrical patterns are created by a combination of changeable factors (the "pieces of coloured glass" that produce the kaleidoscope's "brightly-coloured symmetrical figures, which may be constantly altered by rotation of the instrument," as the *OED* formulates it). Thus, perspectives on various aspects of the print market or on authors will change depending on which facet comes under study, but certain aspects, the actors involved, remain constant. Additionally, certain discourses and ideologies can color one's view, or alter the practices being reflected. The conviction, for instance, that all female authors only wrote and published out of financial necessity appears to be misguided. Such a self-justification which assists publication practices is more complex and potentially a manipulation, or even subversion, of social conventions. Women often employed a specific discourse to excuse their impropriety in publishing, and masked their agency behind male contemporaries who helped them secure publication. The strategies of female authors have been shown to display a keen understanding of the construction of authorial personae and of the mechanisms of the print market (see, for instance, Schellenberg 4-8, 14-16). But gender acts as so potent and specific a force to construct and revise an author that I have opted to restrict my account to case studies that illuminate the project of defining authorship without that key challenge.

I present four case studies which offer a distinct view of different facets of authorship. A central feature of all subjects of each chapter is meta-authorship. Each writer, group, or network under study performs and constructs authority in some manner as they shed light on notions of authorship and authorial strategies or activities in the sphere of print and writing. I examine the range of publishing activities connected to the print marketplace to reveal the debates bearing on the project of defining the vocation of the author. For each chapter, the kaleidoscope's cylinder is twisted to reveal a different perspective. As with the kaleidoscope's mirror effect by which reflections of the colored glass are connected to form the different patterns, the subjects of my individual chapters also contain reflections of the other chapters which serve as connecting threads and points of similarity. The test case in the preface on the

circulation of Gerard Langbaine's play catalogs contains many of the assumptions on authorship being developed in the eighteenth-century. His role as "primitive" dramatic critic and organizer of knowledge with a strong focus on the author (e.g., table of contents alphabetized by name and the combination of biographical details of the author with a critical evaluation of his work) created a system that was adopted and developed in eighteenth-century critical textual practices. James Ralph wrote in various genres before synthesizing his experiences as a poet, hack, and political writer in a manifesto on the state of the profession of authorship which presents an alternative for authors to realize their (financial) independence. The Society for the Encouragement of Learning was set up partially in reaction to the inequality of the print market resulting from the booksellers' monopoly and the authors' (and consumers') lack of rights with respect to the ownership of literary property and earning a feasible income. The Society's programmatic writings provide details of first-hand business relations with booksellers. In his collaborative endeavors with regard to publication, Thomas Gray successfully negotiated the effects of unauthorized and forced authorship on his authorial persona by escaping responsibility for publication. In Johnson's function as a biographer of poets, he delves into several aspects of the field of authorship, including the author-reader relationship, and the critic's social and cultural role.

The first chapter presents a discussion of Grub Street culture, satires on authors and booksellers, and the writing career of James Ralph. My investigation shows political conflict to be a source of the development of literary authorship. England's free press gave rise to an explosion of political propaganda, which stimulated professional writing in the first decades of the century. Political hacks combined with and the conditions of writers struggling to make a living enabled the polarized mythmaking of "hacks" and "genuine" authors and the construction of ideologies of authorship. To illustrate these two central aspects of Grubstreet culture versus authorial discourse, I investigate the practices of authorship that stimulated both the necessity to define authorship and the development of literary authorship, including notions of "hack" writing, especially during the period of 1720-1760. In addition to examining the background of political hack writing, which stimulated notions of the profession of the author, and analyzing examples of satirical discourse that helped shape the author, I investigate James Ralph's writing career as representative of the diversity of eighteenth-century authorship. Ralph is often classified as a hack writer, probably because Pope cast him as one in the second edition of *The Dunciad* (1729), after Ralph's satirical poem *Sawney* (1728) criticized Pope's attacks on his fellow-authors. The diversity of his work also sheds light on anonymous publishing practices and their uses, another key issue, considering the freedom and control it implies. For instance, Ralph signs off *The Case of Authors* (1758), a text which calls for more independence and rights for authors, with the signature "by no matter whom". Ralph was discouraged by the booksellers' dominance of the literary realm and enslavement of authors. He relies on a discourse of victimization which is

satirized in the text "The Brain-sucker, or The Distress of Authorship," originally printed anonymously in two parts in the periodical *The British Mercury* in 1787. In the narrative, a young man dreams of becoming a writer, and is enslaved by an "evil" bookseller, also known as the "Brain-sucker," and wastes away while scribbling texts. The implications are that reading and writing rot the brain. The power configuration that is sketched between the bookseller and author is static; the bookseller totally controls the author whom he abuses until he is practically used up. However, this image attempts to deny the fact that the bookseller is dependent on the author's skill. The satire also complements my discussion of Ralph's viewing the booksellers' authority and power as the disease infecting literary culture, which contrasts with Pope's perspective sketched in the *Dunciad*: untalented, worthless writers are the parasites infesting and corrupting literary culture.

The second chapter continues an exploration of how the tensions between authorial practices and an author's struggle for agency and discursive strategies defined authorship and influenced its development. With the case study of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, active from 1735 until 1749, I investigate relationships between authors and bookseller-publishers, and the discrepancy between cultural ideals of politeness and book trade practices. The Society aimed to contribute to societal progress and to improve the author's social and financial situation by offering an alternative publication route to circumvent bookselling monopolies. This society illustrates how cultural ideals informed or justified cultural activities. For instance, these values contribute to the conceptualization and construction of the singular author, while, at the same time, the Society members' activities demonstrate how the rise of commerce is at odds with disinterested concepts that influence the conceptualization of authorship, such as liberty, democracy, and the dissemination of knowledge. There is also a discrepancy between the Society's elevated discourse emphasizing altruism and the actual publishing activities, as the latter shows that the Society was not always primarily concerned with the author's independence, but merely wished to take over the role of manager, thus keeping the author in a subordinate position. The Society also upheld an elitist attitude that is reflected in their choice of works to publish. It contributed to carving out a niche in professional authorship for scholars and intellectuals by contributing to the author's authority and social standing. This raises questions regarding democratization and equality in addition to the group's purpose of encouraging learning and improving society.

The third chapter deals with Thomas Gray, who experienced during his lifetime a very high degree of public admiration—the result of the popular success of his "Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard." I explore Gray's various constructions of authorial personae and how Gray's career choices and strategies illustrate Gray's vision of literary authorship. Gray's ideal, traditional gentlemanly poet was created as a means for Gray to retain control of his authorial agency, but he struggled to reconcile with his authorial

ideal the other constructed versions of the poet, thrust on him by the "Elegy"'s success. The chapter's main focus is on the active and passive constructions of Gray's authorial personae, as motivated by the different versions of the "Elegy." The dominant characteristic of Gray's authorship is an ever-present duality: a desire for recognition accompanied by a tendency toward self-effacement. I explore the publication history of the first edition of Gray's "Elegy," published in 1751 by Robert Dodsley (after being circulated in manuscript form by Gray and Horace Walpole). Gray chose publication as a way to retain a degree of control over his authorship when he was first threatened with the unauthorized publication of his poem in the periodical *Magazine of Magazines*. To reconcile the commercial side of the publication with his ideal persona, he turned his being forced into publication to his advantage and emphasized his lack of agency by placing responsibility for the endeavor in the hands of Walpole and Dodsley. I compare the 1751 publication with the illustrated collection, *Designs by Mr. R. Bentley, for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray* (1753). Gray's involvement in the material production of the two editions illustrates how Gray's poetic identity is formed by his active and passive personae. I pinpoint four facets of authorship linked to Gray's personae, namely: *manuscript* authorship, *unauthorized-exploited* authorship, *forced-commercial* authorship, and (*re)asserted* authorship. I explore the tensions grounded in Gray's strategies of self-fashioning. For instance, Gray manipulates the material form of his poetry publications to reassert his agency in the face of a loss of authorial control, which was itself brought on by publication and its effects. I investigate a unique form of joint authorship in the illustrated Bentley edition of 1753. The book's elegant packaging contains a complex interplay of text and image that rewrites the poetry's meaning and uncovers the author's carefully crafted persona. The illustrated edition also raises the issues of the commodification of literature, social class and audience, and the purpose and aesthetic valuation of books.

The final chapter deals with the specific notions of authorship revealed in a selection of Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779-1781). I interpret Johnson's critical approach in the *Lives*, which combines the genres of biography and literary criticism, as a critical guide for aspiring writers. I assess Johnson's own construction as an author and the way in which criticism can be a form of writing that recreates a version of the author through commemoration or negative biographical narratives. Criticism alters or revises the author's (self-)construction. Johnson's critical reinventions of the poets in turn influenced cultural conceptions of these authors and of authorship in general. The critical biographies both validate and deconstruct versions of poets. To emphasize that Johnson's position in literary society was not as infused with authority as Johnsonians later anachronistically projected, I juxtapose Johnson's critical-subjective practice with other more historically-oriented views, like the "Romantic" school of the Warton brothers, Thomas and Joseph. Their literary taste and views differed from Johnson's conceptual criticism with its realist tendencies. Issues of

authority are also central to this chapter, considering how Johnson receives the authority to control judgment through his critical discourse. Johnson's critical practice includes a literary-historiographical construction of a canon and a subjective-morally informed assessment of both author and individual. Most importantly, these two elements combine to underpin an economic canon that was to be Johnson's edition of the *Lives*. The economic factors attached to the project of the *Lives*, including the marketing of Johnson's name as author of the "prefaces," contribute to the creation of the critic's authority. Criticism always entails a rewriting of the author's own critical persona and relationship with his subject and Johnson offers a definitive revision of the poets he writes about. A selection of three of the "lives" is assessed in detail to illustrate Johnson's ideologically-driven and inconsistent critical method. The case studies of *The Life of Richard Savage*, originally published in 1744 before being collected in the *Lives*; "The Life of Thomas Gray"; and "The Life of James Thomson" reveal Johnson's ideal author. He is proactive and charitable, he encourages the acquisition and synthesis of knowledge in terms of societal utility, and he creates a form of realist poetry that serves a didactic purpose, and is concerned with the notion of progress, both on the individual and national level. His biographical narrative of Savage as the tragic author serves as a warning to aspiring authors, but his sympathetic view of Savage's questionable behavior was influenced by his personal friendship and empathic identification with the man. Some of Johnson's "lives" were quite controversial. For instance, his harsh evaluation of Gray, one of the most admired poets of Johnson's day, produced a critical backlash from writers who felt the urge to vindicate their admired Gray, such as Percival Stockdale and Robert Potter. The critically engaged reception of the "Life of Gray" is an example the dialogical aspect of criticism. The inconsistencies of Johnson's critical approach with respect to the genre of lyric poetry are also an issue in the "Life of Thomson." Johnson greatly admired the poet's descriptive power to such an extent that he encouraged the booksellers managing the project to include Thomson in the collection. My analysis reveals that Johnson's definitive accounts later earned him more authority, but an informed study shows the variety of authorship. The placement of Johnson as the central critic of the eighteenth century is an outdated construction reflecting nineteenth-century views on his supposedly monolithic position.

A Gateway into Eighteenth-Century Authorship by Means of Gerard Langbaine's Late-Seventeenth-Century Play Catalogs

Circulating Authority

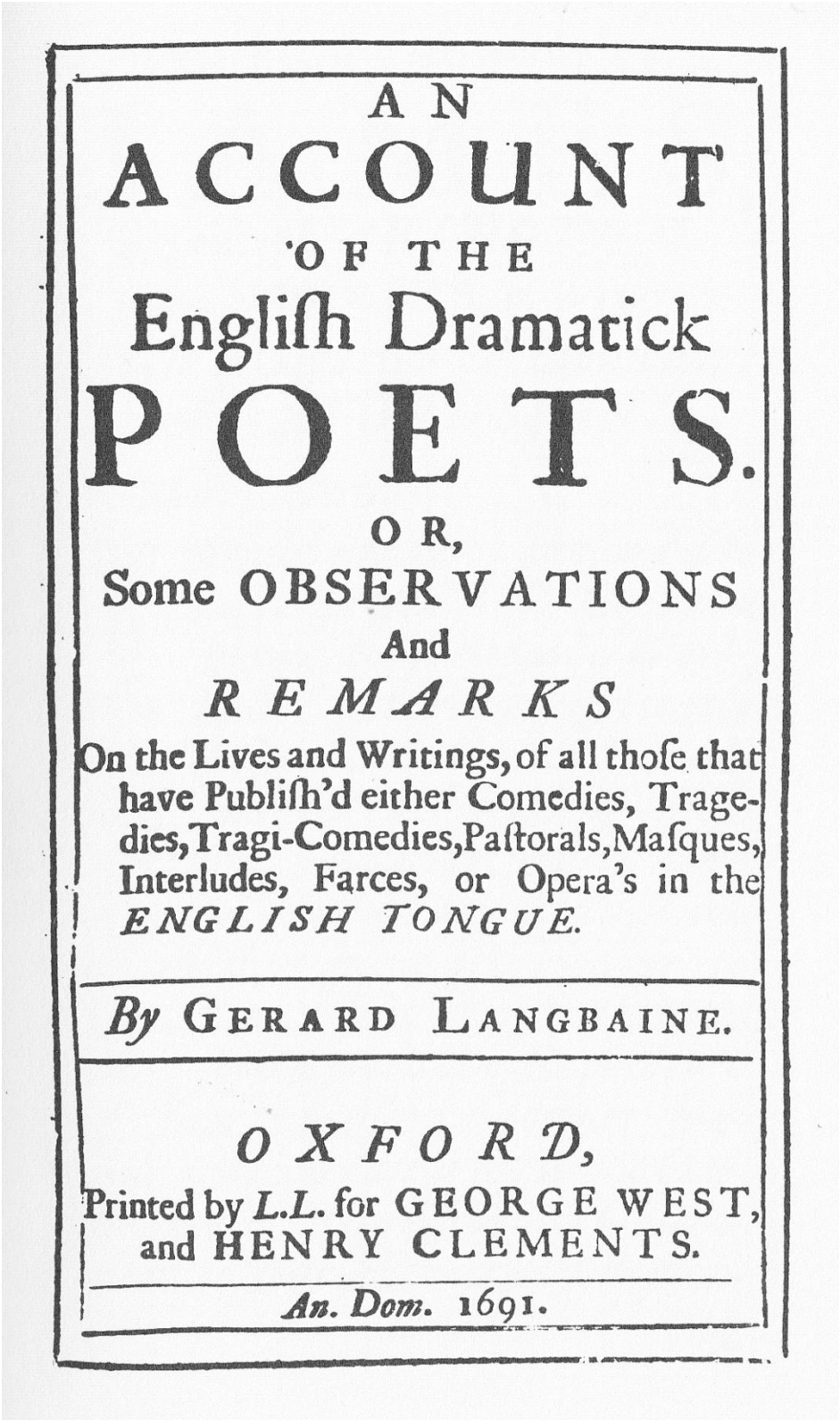
This preface focuses on the contexts of late seventeenth-century textual practices underpinning the construction of eighteenth-century authorship, which are generally associated with establishing authority and ordering knowledge. More specifically, to use Jerome McGann's phrase, I illustrate the essence of the "textual condition" with an example of the circulation and transformation of printed text. I sketch the history of Gerard Langbaine's (1656-1692) play catalog from 1691, a reworking of his previous catalog *Momus Triumphans* (1688). The complete title reads: *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets: or, Some Observations and Remarks on the Lives and Writings of All Those That Have Publish'd either Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-comedies, Pastorals, Masques, Interludes, Farces or Opera's*. Langbaine has relevance for my dissertation as a whole because of how his play catalogs influenced the conception of eighteenth-century notions of authorship. My examination provides a gateway into the facets of authorship under study in each chapter. Langbaine's example illustrates how the printed word becomes a malleable commodity, despite the durable appearance of its form. Printed matter invites its readers to engage actively with interpretation processes by inscribing their own ideological stances onto the pages of the printed page, often by means of manuscript annotation. Print publications can be reprised and wholly appropriated by their individual owners, thereby making the publications of the past relevant for the authorial engagements with textual production in the present. Such forms of authorial interaction recreate the textual object and embed it within a history of consumption

and reception that entails multifarious instances of authorial self-definition. Hence, this examination of the history of Langbaine's transitional text functions as a pattern narrative to test various assumptions about constructions of eighteenth-century authorship that are developed further in the individual chapters. This late seventeenth-century form of dramatic criticism anticipates the development of genre criticism in the next century. The gathering of plays to systematically compile them in a catalog format intended to function as a cultural guide that resembles the regulatory impulses driving later practices of canon-formation. Langbaine's focus on the author is central, and even the printed catalog's title transforms into the "lives" to emphasize more fully the system developed by Langbaine, which becomes meaningful for eighteenth-century conceptualizations and evaluations of authors and their works.[1] The title of the 1699 edition, published by Charles Gildon with additions, also reflects the authorial rewriting of the textual condition: *The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets Also an Exact Account of All the Plays That Were Ever Yet Printed in the English Tongue; Their Double Titles, the Places Where Acted, the Dates When Printed, and the Persons to Whom Dedicated; with Remarks and Observations on Most of the Said Plays. First Begun by Mr. Langbain, Improv'd and Continued down to this Time, by a careful hand.* The juxtaposition of "the lives and characters of the English dramatick poets" with "an account of the English dramatick poets" shows that the primacy of the author has also influenced audience expectations. The transformed title reflects a shift in reading practices that effects the form of print design. The case of Langbaine anticipates eighteenth-century impulses regarding the formal packaging of a work. The print design projects a different signal to the reader. The organization of information regarding the author would have further motivated the eighteenth-century cultural project of defining the professional author in a one-dimensional fashion. The significance and novelty of Langbaine's catalog is the production of a systematic account of literary production in the vernacular in the late seventeenth-century. The continued circulation of and engagement with the text throughout the eighteenth-century via annotations and reprinting reveals its status as not only a product, but also property of that century.

I investigate both the catalog's function of organizing knowledge in the form of the print medium, and the textual engagement that the printed texts stimulated. The circulation of copies of Langbaine's catalogs illustrates a process of textual morphing as the owners and borrowers of the editions began to annotate their volumes. The combination of print and manuscript publication practices exemplified by the multiple versions of Langbaine's catalog—the printed copies of the catalogs annotated by numerous readers and commentators—shows how knowledge is in fact constructed,

[1] I explore this type of author-centered system further in my examination of Johnson's critical practice in the *Lives of the Poets* in Chapter 4.

synthesized, and recast into a different form. The process that Langbaine's descriptive play catalogs undergo in being circulated and annotated, and recopied, reveals how print opens up the textual field for creating and evaluating knowledge. The catalog illustrates how readers contribute to the textual production of knowledge. After publication, the catalog is then revised, interpreted and authorially amended by palimpsetically inscribed author-critics. The circulation of different annotated copies of the print publication shows that the single-minded notion of authorship represented by Langbaine's focus on the author's centrality develops into a collaborative, multifarious form. Authorship is in fact characterized by a diffuse form of authority, because of the diversity of the engaged author-critics who literally inscribe their voices into the text. Printed text is a reflection of authorship that evokes a sense of stability—the printed word fixated by the medium that has transferred it to the page. However, the printed word is a temporary fixing of meaning, just as an author's identity and authority, represented by publications, is mobile, instable, and dependent on revisions. The potential to create new meanings through critical readings of texts implicates engaged readers, or author-critics, as an integral part of the textual condition. The medium of print led to a greater visibility of authors, and allowed for a new form of direct negotiation between authors and their audiences. The genre of drama particularly suits the collaborative nature of authorship that the text reveals. Plays invite audience participation in two unique ways: the experience of attending a dramatic performance and the involved and performative reading of the printed version. However, since Langbaine documents all plays that exist in printed form, his catalogs can be seen to function as mediated gateways for the reader into the reality of the individual author's life and work.



AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
English Dramatick
POETS.
OR,
Some OBSERVATIONS
And
REMARKS
On the Lives and Writings, of all those that have Publish'd either Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques, Interludes, Farces, or Opera's in the *ENGLISH TONGUE.*

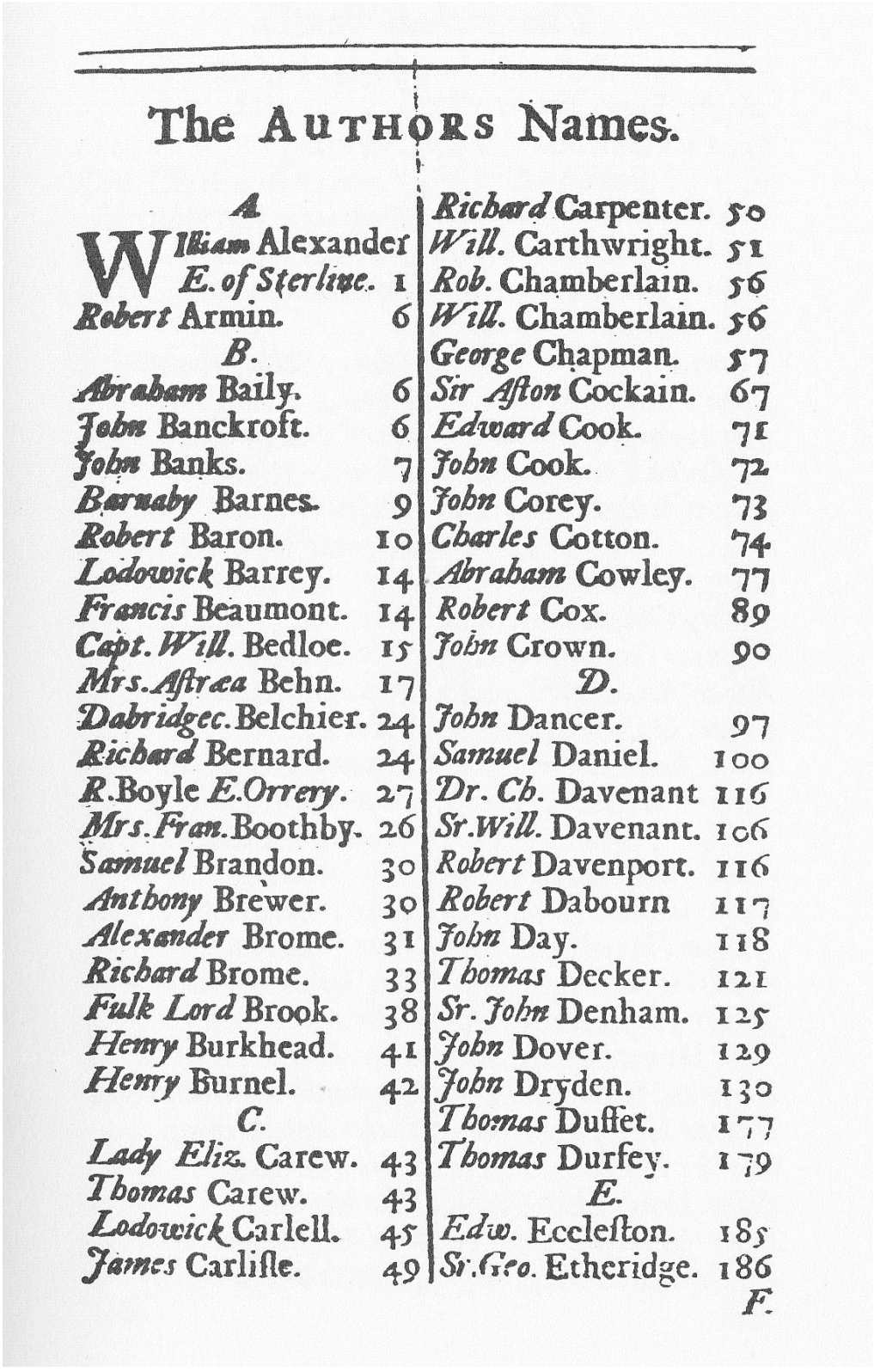
By GERARD LANGBAINE.

OXFORD,
Printed by *L.L.* for GEORGE WEST, and HENRY CLEMENTS.
An. Dom. 1691.

Figure 1 Title Page of Gerard Langbaine's *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691)

Play Catalogs

Langbaine enjoyed a life of leisure, which he devoted to his passion for literature and drama. "Having begun to build his own collection of plays while in college, by 1688 [he] owned no fewer than 980 titles" (Kewes "Gerard Langbaine"). Langbaine's play catalog, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* and its history of annotations form the focus of my consideration of both the construction of authorship and knowledge. Play catalogs compiled information about dramatic texts available for purchase in print. They included such information as a summary of the play's content, the author's sources, the name of the playwright (if known), and the dates of publication and theatrical performances. In this way, they served as cultural guides to theater-goers and collectors of printed plays. Langbaine's work of compiling and constructing knowledge influenced the further development of conceptions of authorship, including discursive constructs of the ideal author. The centrality of the author, rather than the play, in Langbaine's catalog contributed to the individuation of the author. This is visible on the title page, which gives primacy to the "lives" of published authors before their "writings" (see figure 1). The title explicitly draws attention to the growth of professional authorship with its emphasis on publication. References to the various dramatic subgenres in the title implicitly suggest that authors will also be evaluated with formal considerations. The difference between high and low forms is reflected in the critical assessments of the authors. Langbaine used divisions to group and rank plays, although invention (the fewer sources the better) and structure were key considerations in his aesthetic evaluations (see Kewes *Authorship* 209-16). Langbaine was also the first to organize the entries of his play catalog alphabetically according to the authors' last names, which illustrates print's tendency to organize knowledge and fixate meaning (here the primacy of authors) (see figure 2). In entries on anonymous plays, he emphasized the importance of certainty in authorial attribution, which reveals the culture's "mounting interest in the personal agency behind text production" (Kewes *Authorship* 105). Langbaine's entries also included biographical details of the playwright as well as critical evaluations of the plays. Langbaine's entry on Dryden, for instance, became quite notorious because of the vitriolic attacks made on the playwright, including accusations of theft (Kewes *Authorship* 88-89). Langbaine's critical practices surely influenced the compilation of eighteenth-century literary anthologies, such as Theophilus Cibber's *Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753) and Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781).



The AUTHORS Names.

A

William Alexander *E. of Sterline.* 1
Robert Armin. 6

B.

Abraham Baily. 6
John Banckroft. 6
John Banks. 7
Barnaby Barnes. 9
Robert Baron. 10
Lodowick Barrey. 14
Francis Beaumont. 14
Capt. Will. Bedloe. 15
Mrs. Astræa Behn. 17
Dabridgec. Belchier. 24
Richard Bernard. 24
R. Boyle *E. Orrery.* 27
Mrs. Fran. Boothby. 26
Samuel Brandon. 30
Anthony Brewer. 30
Alexander Brome. 31
Richard Brome. 33
Fulk Lord Brook. 38
Henry Burkhead. 41
Henry Burnel. 42

C.

Lady Eliz. Carew. 43
Thomas Carew. 43
Lodowick Carlell. 45
James Carlisle. 49
Richard Carpenter. 50
Will. Carthwright. 51
Rob. Chamberlain. 56
Will. Chamberlain. 56
George Chapman. 57
Sir Aston Cockain. 67
Edward Cook. 71
John Cook. 72
John Corey. 73
Charles Cotton. 74
Abraham Cowley. 77
Robert Cox. 89
John Crown. 90

D.

John Dancer. 97
Samuel Daniel. 100
Dr. Ch. Davenant 116
Sr. Will. Davenant. 106
Robert Davenport. 116
Robert Dabourn 117
John Day. 118
Thomas Decker. 121
Sr. John Denham. 125
John Dover. 129
John Dryden. 130
Thomas Duffet. 177
Thomas Durfey. 179

E.

Edw. Eccleston. 185
Sr. Geo. Etheridge. 186

F.

Figure 2 Example page of list of author's name from Langbaine's *Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691)

Authoring Contradictions

Langbaine values invention in imitative forms of authorship such as "reworking" and "improving." He juxtaposes improvement with theft, and so forms a precursor of theories on plagiarism. Kewes has done extensive work elucidating Langbaine's theory on textual theft, so I only focus on its contradictions, particularly regarding the singular notion of the author that is foregrounded by Langbaine's structuring of the catalog's entries. Langbaine's stance that imitation was an essential aspect of the creative process of composition emphasizes the interdependence of texts and the collaborative nature of authorship: "'This Art has reign'd in all Ages, and is as ancient almost as Learning it self . . . . [T]he most eminent Poets . . . are liable to the charge and imputation of *Plagiary*'" (*Momus*, sig. a1^{r} , qtd. in Kewes *Authorship* 112). Langbaine contrasts imitation as a characteristic of writing with theft, which—no matter what criteria are applied—assumes the creative genius concept, in which everything of aesthetic value is deemed original. In Langbaine's critical catalogs, he presents value judgments on both the play productions under investigation and the individual author's overall skill developed in his oeuvre. Langbaine's use of the term *Genius* does not yet refer to the mythical, god-like status or natural skill of the writer, but instead it signifies the writer's inventive talent and skillful synthesis of knowledge that is recast during the process of composition (Kewes 215). Langbaine's criteria for defining *theft* left room for this middle ground: laboring hard to mask sources of inspiration by transforming them into something novel, into a more valuable product, which could then be regarded as one's own intellectual possession (Kewes 119). The emphasis on improvement forms a contrast with the theory of natural originality that is to become more significant in eighteenth-century conceptualizations of authorial talent.

The catalogs present a model of authorship that consists of "compiling," "rewriting," and "remixing," forms which were considered respected literary productions at that time, although today such acts of textual recycling would be considered copyright infringement. The authorial activities involved in Langbaine's play catalogs show two sides of authorship that are central to this dissertation: the professionalization of the author and commodification of literature because of the commercialization of the print market, on the one hand, and the (self-)fashioning of the author with a focus on individual identity, on the other. Langbaine also included value judgments on the variety of (high and low) genres included in his catalog. Langbaine thus includes aesthetic and economic impulses that later inform authorial practices and the conceptualization of the author: elite, literary authorship and the more economic professional type. The appearance of the author's name on the title page and the fact that the staging and publishing of plays were financially the most lucrative modes of

authorship is another example of a clash between notions of an independent, elevated author and professional practices of authorship that emphasize commerce:

> The playwright's expectation of a substantial financial return was repeatedly emphasized in prologues and epilogues spoken in the theatre; the claim to authorship underlying that expectation was made manifest by the appearance of the author's name on the title-page of the published play. (Kewes *Authorship* 3)

Langbaine was partly driven to produce his catalog by a desire to support consumer rights of those purchasing printed plays by presenting them with a guide to the plays on offer. He denounced market practices that capitalized on the author or took advantage of the reader's ignorance as unethical, such as the reprinting of a work in a similar package, or the publication of a play stolen by one author from another playwright. Considering his high evaluation of invention, his negative attitude toward dishonest marketing practices should be interpreted as a call for the property rights of authors. The catalogs also had an instructive, regulatory function. Langbaine aimed to instruct the literate consumer how to interpret and evaluate plays. Compilers of play catalogs also intended to instill aesthetic values, and thus could be considered as early examples of critics contributing to the formation of a national canon (Kewes 182). The regulatory function of literary criticism becomes fully exploited during the eighteenth century as both the literacy rates and the production of printed texts rapidly increased. The fear of democratizing reading was connected to the belief in one true meaning per text, underpinned by readings of the Bible as the paradigmatic text advocating objective truth. This led to criticism that laid out "correct" interpretation processes—or created them, rather—that were in turn distributed in print: "One can imagine the emphasis shifting from the idea that literacy was something that required regulation to the idea that literacy was a form of regulation" (Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse 68).

Mediated Gateways

The textual practices of structuring and organizing knowledge in the medium of print produces knowledge and temporarily constructs authority, but the reader's critical interaction reveals the instability of meaning. Langbaine's loss of his position as main critical authority forms a link with my dissertation's central theme of the fleetingness of authority, as it is constructed and established in connection with textual practices as well as its susceptibility to change. Gradually, his name disappears from the successors of his catalogs. The effacing of authorship that the multiplicity of authors gives rise to is also a common feature of miscellaneous collections of poetry. The catalog's entries function as mediated gateways to guide readers into the world of dramatic textual practice and the life of playwrights, which illustrates the paradoxes of print logic, that is, the aspects of the medium that lend it an illusory stability and power to organize knowledge. According to Alvin Kernan, print received increasing authority (from readers) due to three factors: multiplicity, which refers to both the variety of books available and the multiple copies of a single work; systematization, which means the textual ordering of information in the structure of publications; and fixity, which points to a belief that a book represents true, objective knowledge after a certain period of time, due to its formal durability. The circulation of annotated versions, with a mix of print and handwritten marginal notes, illustrates how uncontrollable the increasing textual output in fact was. Even the print publication of multiple editions of a single text, a practice influenced by the desire for the ideal text, exposes the fixity of knowledge to in fact be an illusion. Systematization merely gives an illusion of control (52-55). The tension between multiplicity and fixity is particularly significant in the case of the *Account*'s trajectory, as the annotations suggest a striving toward a perfect definitive text. The numerous linked, yet separate, copies with their differing variety of notes form anything but a unified whole. The mutation of Langbaine's catalog in various, unforeseen directions presents a diverging view of knowledge as alive, as evolving organically through reading and writing practices.

Although his play catalogs foreground the problematic one-dimensional notion of the author, his explicit invitation to readers to continue his work causes a transformation of his text into multiple, mixed-media versions, which deconstruct the singular author. Allen Watkin-Jones explains: "Langbaine simply cried out to be corrected, in matters of bibliography and biography" due to the catalog's incomplete nature and other faults (78). An entire reconstruction of the trajectory made by Langbaine's work during its history of being rewritten is virtually impossible, but a brief overview of the printed revisions, based mainly on Watkin-Jones, serves to demonstrate the catalog's mutation. Langbaine's *Account* was first printed in 1699 with additions from the annotations as *The*

Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets . . . First Begun by Mr. Langbain, Improv'd and Continued down to this Time, by a careful hand. In a prefatory, remark, Gildon informs the reader that "'the following Piece is not writ all by one Hand'" (qtd. in Kewes *Authorship* 23). In 1719, Giles Jacob published another revision as annotated by Gildon entitled *Poetical Register: or, The Lives and Characters of the English Dramatick Poets*. Twenty years later, Langbaine was still receiving the recognition he deserved for being a major authority of the field, at least in the print versions. As for those who made annotations without printing them, the list is lengthy. William Oldys worked on two copies from 1724-30. Thomas Coxeter got a hold of one of the copies, refused to return it to Oldys, and this one was sold to Theophilus Cibber, according to Thomas Percy, which he might have used for the publication of *The Lives of English Poets* in 1753 (Watkin-Jones 81). Thomas Birch received Oldys's second copy in 1763, which he lent to Percy (82). Percy's annotations were composed in 1764-5, and this copy was lent to Thomas Warton, George Steevens, John Nichols, and others (82). Warton used Percy's copy in 1769 for his *History of English Poetry* (82). Steevens's copy from approximately 1770, also based on Percy's notes, passed through several hands and contained at least Isaac Reed's and Thomas Park's notes (83). Nichols used this copy around 1783 "for the benefit of new editions of the *Spectator*, *Tatler*, and *Guardian*" (82-83). Edmond Malone "transcribed from Steevens's copy in 1777, as he himself informs us—and added copious notes of his own during the next ten years" (83). David Garrick's "annotated copy appears in the sale-catalog of his library (1823) . . . The present whereabouts of this copy is unknown" (83). Joseph Haslewood worked on his copy during 1810-14, based on Steevens's copy, but many annotations of Oldys and Percy were wrongly attributed to Steevens. "A selection of Haslewood's own notes was printed in the account of Gerard Langbaine in the Bliss's edition of Anthony Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses* (1820)" (84). This textual practice of passing around the copies and writing marginal notes that were in turn transcribed by others, a practice Watkin-Jones terms "literary sport" (78), emphasizes the cooperation involved in the textual condition. The *Account* evolved via this hybrid form of printed text and marginal notes throughout the eighteenth century, morphing into a variety of texts that informed the dialogic author-centered and genre criticism of the eighteenth century.

Conclusion

To understand the complexity of the development of authorship in the eighteenth century under study in this dissertation, I investigate the impact of Langbaine's catalogs as a discursive process on eighteenth-century readers' conceptualization of the author. I focus on two aspects that uncover the paradox of authority: the systematization of knowledge through print that creates authority and the self-construction as authority through writing practices. The mutability and multiplicity of the annotated editions of his catalogs, rewritten by several men of letters who longed to improve and perfect it and Langbaine's eventual disappearance from view as the original or main authority reveal that knowledge and authority are not made permanent or unchanging by print. Knowledge is not a static, given fact, but can be likened to an evolving organism. A characteristic of knowledge during this era appears to be its dependence on subjectivity and critical interpretation. The conceptualization of knowledge illustrated by the textual revisions of Langbaine's text can be linked to the debate about who actually possesses the authority to evaluate published plays and other forms of writing. The circulating trajectory the play catalog made amongst such a diverse assortment of hands shows that meaning is only temporarily fixated by print. The multiplicity behind the practice of revision undermines the notion of a stable, definitive authority. It is best described as a fleeting and mutable force. The impact of Langbaine on eighteenth-century critic-authors and their striving for perfection was actually conducive to the construction of the ideal, yet unattainable, notion of the autonomous genius. Like commonplace books, Langbaine's catalogs contribute to an individual's construction of their own authority: "In both method and message, these books celebrate individual authority and social and moral independence . . ." (Benedict *Making the Modern Reader* 43). These kinds of publications function as guides for the cultural consumer. Catalogs provide an overview of what is on offer in the realm of dramatic publication. Langbaine's work thus also brings both market and cultural considerations together in his dramatic criticism. The interplay of commerce and intellectual ideals is relevant for my investigation of the development of authorial practices, including the project of defining it. The printed word's potential for transformation, despite its projection of stability and authenticity, reflects the essence of authorship as dependent on various

forces of reinterpretation and socio-cultural impulses. Authorial practices also aim to create a singular meaning and to establish authority. For instance, the formal packaging of the work can alter the meaning of an author's text or the audience's conceptualization of the writer's identity. Discursive definitions of the author and the individual's construction of authorial personae are processes, capable of mutation, and critical reinvention.

Chapter 1 The Author's Battle for Agency in the Context of Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture: James Ralph's Attempt to Unshackle Grub Street "Hacks"

Introduction

The first chapter of this dissertation offers an analysis of how, starting at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the tensions between an author's practices and his struggle for agency and discursive strategies that defined authorship and influenced its development. My study explores such issues as how the opportunity arose for men to earn a living from writing performances and how economic authorship was discouraged by discourse. Following James Alan Downie's work, I argue that the development of authorship was stimulated by political conflict, combined with a free press in the first decades of the century (*Robert Harley*). With the growth of the print marketplace, the number of writers increased, causing some authors to feel the impetus to define the "genuine author." Relying on specific discourses, or repertoires, these authors in fact contributed to the creation of a hierarchy consisting of different socially defined groupings of authors that underpinned the profession. The authorial groupings of the hierarchy are constructed in terms of the author's income and independence. Some examples of these groups include authors such as the aristocratic, gentleman poet, who writes only for social esteem and recognition; poets emulating the elite, but relying on social patronage; and employed professionals who write for an institution. A particularly effective strategy for creating hierarchical groupings of authors was the oppression—or relegation to the margins—of types of writers by constructing them as

disease-ridden "hacks," as Alexander Pope did in *The Dunciad* (1728). Authors like Pope aimed to impede lower groupings of professional authors from infecting the dominant literary culture, a practice that was in fact a form of censorship. In this chapter, I both explore Grub Street culture and extend the term to include a writing culture that consciously deals with the perceived threat of professionalization to the elite author's social status as well as the negative conditions writers experienced trying to establish agency and earn a living. Authors with an upper class background viewed the increase of writers who lacked the capital to publish as potentially corrupting to their culture. The conservative Tory faction of landed gentry looked down on new money gained through professionalism because of its potential for change and innovation. Traditionalist authors wished to keep a handle on the competition, so some conservative figures from the dominant culture used professionalization as a tool against their own culture, by stimulating economic authorship. Paradoxically, the practice of managing professionalization in this way assisted the illusion of control of the chaotic field and was a way to construct authority. The reality of Grub Street and the conditions of writers struggling to make a living enabled the mythmaking of "hacks" and "genuine" authors and the construction of ideologies of authorship. To illustrate these two central aspects of Grub Street culture versus Grub Street discourse, I investigate the practices of authorship that stimulated both the development of literary authorship and the necessity to define authorship, including notions of "hack" writing, especially during the period 1720-1760. In addition to examining examples of satirical discourse, I investigate James Ralph's writing career as representative of the diversity of eighteenth-century authorship. Ralph (b. 1695-1710,[1] d. 1762) is usually defined in scholarship as friend of Benjamin Franklin, Henry Fielding, and/or as one of the unfortunate authors attacked in Pope's *Dunciad*. Although Pope's satire constructed Ralph as a hack, Ralph refused to give up his professional career, despite his early financial struggles. If Ralph's name is now recognized at all, it is usually for his essay *The Case of Authors by Profession or Trade, Stated. With Regard to Booksellers, the Stage, and the Public* (1758).[2] Written at the end of his career, this essay expresses his views on the problems of the book trade and authorship, including his dissatisfaction with the author's lack of rights. Based on his personal experience, Ralph lamented the harmful state of authors' conditions, particularly their enforced dependence, and the negative

[1] John Shipley argues that 1705 is the most likely date of Ralph's birth, and mentions that his marriage to a woman 10 years his senior in America, might have encouraged him to change his age on official documents (343-44).

[2] I use the first edition of this text, which is available on *ECCO*. There is a mistake, however, in this edition's pagination: after pages in the seventies, the pagination reverts back to sixty, rather than continuing chronologically into the eighties. My references will correct this.

view of professional writing dominant in society, and he encouraged writers to declare their agency.

Satire

Satire was a pervasive form during the eighteenth century, especially in the early decades. The genre of satire exemplified both the changes in the literary culture and the socio-cultural environment. Satire's generic flexibility contributed to its centrality in the period. Despite satire's modal diversity, it is characterized by the fact that it is always employed for a specific reason or to express a specific aim that can be determined through study. For instance, David Nokes defines it as a "form with a remedial purpose (however ambiguously that purpose may be expressed), such as the exposure of scandal, the censure of hypocrisy, the punishment of vice" (2-3). Additionally, it is usually socially and/or politically charged (Nokes 3). In this chapter, I argue that satirical discourse played a central role in defining the author, as it influenced cultural notions about authorial and writing culture, and ultimately shaped the development of authorship. I explore specific satirical strategies used by a number of authors, like Pope, who aimed to make other writers appear insignificant. Pope did so by oppressing the status of some authors, a practice which at the same time would raise the value of his authorial standing within the dynamically developing literary culture of the time. There was thus not a clear plan to ban writers completely from the profession, which had not developed into an exclusive writing culture. Rather, considering the political energy feeding this writing culture, strategies of relegation should be regarded as part of a last resort of the Tories to enforce forms of censorship through reduction and control of the writing culture. It is worth noting that literature and political writing were not yet distinct cultures. However, a study of the satire on authorship shows that those writers who were not deemed part of the active, dominant culture were discursively relegated from it. Further, the practice of relegation could be symbolized textually by placing such authors in footnotes, such as Pope did with his reference to Ralph in his *Dunciad*.

In Grub Street culture, satire was a mode also employed for various purposes. For instance, by demonstrating the dreadful physical living conditions of hacks, an author could be arguing for the improvement of the writer's social and economic status. The writer's lack of intellectual property rights and his struggle to achieve professional agency and financial independence influenced both satirical and serious constructions of the poor hack wasting away in his garret. Within the realm of authorship, the idea that harsh satire could be seen as a type of textual revenge, driven by desire, could be an actual motivation (Nokes 15). Considering the arbitrary nature of the market and an

author's ability to achieve success, satire could be used to come to terms with an individual's feelings of social incompetence as an author.

Definitions

Given the centrality of satire and written discourse for this chapter, some definitions applied to writers should be clarified. For instance, the terms "professional authors" and "hacks," are both ambiguous, partly because of the diverse groups of writers engaging in various forms of professional writing cultures. In addition, society's acceptance of some writers as "authors," and others as "hacks," contributes to the complexity of defining the author. However, the authorial duality present in society was created and perpetuated by satirical discourse. The absoluteness of the "hack versus (professional) author" polarity is misleading since hacks were also professionalized authors. The term "hack" comes from "hack writing," originally "hackney writing." A hackney was a horse kept for hire, and "hackney" denotes a common drudge, a woman for hire, and ultimately a low writer for hire (*OED*; Hammond). The profession of hacks was different from the profession that writers engaging with high-culture contexts worked in. For example, the writing context and cultural value of the final textual product of the satirist working for a newspaper differs widely from the leisurely poet's retirement poem composed in an idyllic country setting. The degree of cultural value would be dependent on the text's complexity and how specific or general the intended audience. The ambiguity surrounding the terms reflects the tensions between, on the one hand, Grub Street culture, including the authors' negative conditions, that is their struggle for agency and financial compensation in their dependent position in the print market, and on the other, Grub Street discourse. With the term "hack" I refer to those writers who either were satirized by the (usually) socially-respected authors and thus constructed in the role of "hack." In this context, Pope presents an interesting case because of the strategies he used to forge his way into the polite culture. Pope had in fact turned to satire in part to reclaim an identity from the oppression Catholics were suffering at the time. As a Catholic, he was not allowed to receive government patronage and was ostracized as a hack writer. He used satire to create his own authoritative voice which helped him make his way onto the political and authorial stage. I also use "hack" to refer to those who futilely struggled against the writer's condition of lacking rights. This condition of dependence included a lack of agency and financial possibilities in the print market, due to the fact that writers had to sell their copyright, and so were victimized and oppressed by the booksellers, the figures dictating the market. The definition of "professional author" covers those writers who devote themselves to writing as a career and is not clearly distinguishable from "hack writers," because of the shared aim of financial success. Johnson's definitions of "to profess" and "profession" from his

Dictionary (1755) are useful as they give a better sense of what eighteenth-century writers meant by these terms. Johnson gives the verb, "to profess," the following definition, where the third is most significant:

(1) To declare himself in strong terms of any opinion or passion.
(2) To make a show of any sentiments by loud declaration.
(3) To declare publickly one's skill in any art or science, so as to invite employment.

In contrast, he defines "profession" as a "calling; vocation; known employment" and the adjective "professional" is used with regard to "a particular calling or profession" (202). A connotation of the definition "to profess" that could also be satirized, as it links to hack writing, would be the meaning connected to declarations. The ease with which an individual could proclaim himself an author, without actually possessing the skill or first proving the value of his writings, could be perceived as a threat to the status of the literary author. The claim of authorship is central to constructing authorship. Textual declarations show this to be especially true: consider title pages and the ways in which the paratext advances particular constructions of authorship through its declaration of the author's name, pseudonym, or signature. Here the boundaries between the terms "hack" and "professional" grow hazy. In this study, the dominant, conservative view that prevailed in literary culture defines the hack as that type of commercial professional who will write whatever the publisher proposes in order to secure a profit. This notion of the hack is often associated with propagandists who occupy various political positions, depending on their current contract or writing project as well as the views held by their political patron or an individual commissioning their work. A hack, for example, could be one of the many authors that Dr. Johnson employed to produce entries for his *Dictionary*. Or a hack could be a political writer, specializing in the production of panegyric or propaganda. An example of this, as Sandro Jung has illustrated, is the pro-Government writer Joseph Mitchell, active in the 1720s, who hoped to obtain Sir Robert Walpole's patronage; he ended up being satirized by both Pope and James Thomson (see *David Mallet*). The term hack thus also shows ambiguity in that it includes diverse forms of professional writing. As Pat Rogers has shown in *Grub Street*, the term "Grub Street," has changed since its introduction in the English language in the eighteenth-century. "Grub Street" has evolved from referring to the literal locale to the satire of hacks, to metaphorically encompassing the struggles of the poor, victimized writers.[3] In my study, the metaphorical sense of Grub Street is most

[3] See Rogers's *Grub Street*, for instance: "The fundamental technique of Augustan polemic is forcibly to enroll one's opponent in the lowest segment of society. One branded his literary effusions as criminal, as prostituted, as pestiferous; and if possible one showed that his actual living quarters (as they might be) were set in a

dominant, especially with regard to the mythmaking achieved through satire, and by the more elite literary culture at the time. Strategies of mythmaking tried to refine the definition of authorship by contrasting the traditional ideal with the unacceptable practices of "professional authorship" prevalent in Grub Street. In this analysis, "Grub Street" is used metaphorically to refer to the reality of the struggling author's condition. Grub Street is also used to refer to satiric discourse and hack constructions of authorship.

Pope's Construction of Hacks versus Ralph's Career

After first briefly sketching how political propaganda informed the development of a public literary culture and commercial authorship, I begin with the period of the 1720s to explore more fully these two main sides of the conflict about authorship. This conflict between the traditional, conservative view versus the commercial, professional view was a construction. This binary conflict was generated by the political disagreement between Tories and Whigs that kept the propaganda machine running. I use James Ralph's career as a case study to show how he was discursively constructed as a hack writer. . Ralph's textual conflict with Pope illustrates this relegation to the margins of literary culture. Ralph published a satirical poem, "Sawney" (1728), in response to Pope's first edition of the *Dunciad*, which earned him a scathing attack in Pope's second edition of 1729. I explore Ralph's various practices of authorship, including the impact that Pope's manipulative satire in his *Dunciad* had on writers' careers and the public's conception of authors. I also investigate some of the typical "Grub Street discourse" expressed in Ralph's manifesto for professional authors, *The Case of Authors by Profession or Trade, Stated* (1758). Ralph's career, in which he explores several genres, including poetry, drama, satire, historical and political writing, and criticism, reveals a progression of three phases. First, Ralph begins his career as the aspiring professional poet, who, after Pope's attack and his lack of commercial and social success, finds himself as a frustrated writer. He then turns to other forms of writing associated with hacks in the 1730s and 1740s, including writing for the stage and for periodicals. The third phase of his career occurred during the 1750s when he became a pensioned political writer who successfully fashioned a cultural identity as a Whig writer, which he used to further the cause of authors. Ralph's diverse career inspired the notion of authorship developed in his *Case,* which is the culminating point of his career. Ralph's

district whose social character partook of the same qualities. One placed him, that is, within the precincts of Grub Street" (279).

versatility as a writer shows similarities with the eighteenth-century's definition of the "Grub Street hack," a writer who was active in several genres and diverse topics. Despite what the actual personal motivations of writers may have been, such writing and publication practices were satirized as being motivated by financial greed. The economic growth of the print market was partly responsible for creating a specific niche for this type of Grub Street satire. Ralph believed the author's independence was suppressed by the negative socio-cultural bias against professional writers. The professional writer's focus on selling their texts as a commodity was stressed in satire, including that of those great hero-authors with traditional, conservative views on authorship, like Jonathan Swift in his *Tale of a Tub* (1704) and Pope in his *Dunciad* (1728), who lamented how commercial professionalism had infected their gentrified field. In contrast, Ralph, who encouraged authorial independence and professionalization of authorship, attacked the bookseller's control of the book market and the developing literary culture's masking of the commercial aspects of their own tradition.

Grub Street Satire

This chapter will analyze two satirical productions from the second half of the century to illustrate "Grub Street" discourse, which I argue is used to define specific forms of authorship and to exclude others. The satirical texts, "A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship" (1762) and "The Brain-sucker: or, the Distress of Authorship" (1787), demonstrate how propaganda writing influenced the myth of the Grub Street hack created by Pope, during the period when the author was increasingly being defined as less political and more imaginative. Although the texts are satirical, and include authorial stereotypes from the discourse regarding the polarized views of the elite and professional author, they actually show the dynamism of early eighteenth-century authorship when the boundaries of different writing forms and genres were not so clear-cut or static. Although exaggerated, as satires always are, "A Genuine Sketch" and "Brain-sucker" show some of the actual conditions of writers and their battle for agency, for example, against the figure monopolizing print culture, the bookseller--what I call "Grub Street" culture. Satire also sometimes depicts the difficulty writers had in reconciling the commercial or professional side of authorship with the socio-cultural version of the disinterested gentleman-author. The satirical texts I investigate reveal discursive elements stemming from the dialogical conflict earlier in the century that informed the development of authorship. One particular satirical repertoire was used to construct a certain type of elite authorship, which excluded other forms by viewing "hacks" as the monstrous other that infects the cultural sphere of letters. This type of discourse contrasts with the negative satirical motifs used by some authors to

emphasize their poor economic status and victimization at the hands of the greedy booksellers.

Satirical Definitions and the Development of Authorship

Central to this chapter are the different discourses on authorship: the modern, commercial one versus a conservative, anti-professional one. The different perspectives on how contagious, parasitic illness is seen to infect literary culture represent this conflict. In this sense, high culture often projected low culture as an aberration, and sometimes this was represented in the form of a canker that needed to be removed in order to purify society and save the high-culture ideals. For Ralph, the disease-bringing bookseller denigrates literary culture. Pope illustrates his traditional view by addressing the infectious potential of writing. The dominant literary culture would have been interested in non-satirical forms, since satire was associated with subversion and criticism. Professional authors are constructed as monstrosities, as "hacks" whose otherness poisons the book trade. Pope was involved in the artificial purification of literature, including the construction of a hierarchy of textual genres. The discourse of the deformed writer versus the infectious bookseller constructs a static definition of authorship, based on the conflict of the genius versus the hack. The case study of Ralph illustrates how many authors attempted to carve out a type of authorship in the mythical Grub Street. Ralph aimed to refashion the model of the "economic" author that had been thrust on him by satirical texts depicting him as a hack because of the diversity of his publications. Based on his personal struggles as an author in achieving financial success and in his reputation as a skilled writer, he developed a different discourse to counteract the anti-professional one. He constructed a persona to encourage his fellow writers to declare independence from the controlling booksellers and to break out of the dominant culture's oppressive definition of writers. Ralph's account is one-sided, focused on portraying the author's powerless condition as a victim, because he wants to invite sympathy. I illustrate that Ralph moved beyond the model of authorship defined as a purely commercial profession, and this shift is influenced by the tensions between commercialism and traditional views of authorship, tensions that in fact contributed to definitions, satires, and myths of authorship. More importantly, I view the tension between conservative, traditional points of view regarding authorship and more modern professionalized ones as a result of the propaganda machine fuelled by political conflict between Tories and Whigs, between the government and its opposition, begun at the beginning of the century by Robert Harley.

Considering the various definitions of the author under study, Ralph's claim about what he perceives as the innateness of authorship is particularly relevant. I argue that

this could explain why some authors tolerated the inhumane treatment in Grub Street. Ralph's career and his views expressed in *Case* reveal that he was against the print market's current condition, because of the writer's lack of rights and agency. Ralph's definition of authorship was shaped by the conflicting definitions of the author and the various writing cultures of the time. Ralph's essay includes paradoxes, such as his ideas on the author's special status and his attempt to bring equality to literary culture. Economic considerations dominated his professional perspective, which included his urging of writers to recognize their literary compositions as products of a commercial trade. And yet, he appears idealistic about the author's achieving a financially rewarding state of professionalism based on complete independence. This might have been stimulated by his belief that an individual's ability to become an author is partly defined by an inherent quality. At the same time, Johnson's definition of "profess" is also applicable to Ralph's claim about the author's specific skill. The claim that authorship has the power to transform the individual into a professional should be linked to Ralph's ideal concept of the author. However, the innateness of authorship forms a paradox with his other views regarding authors' textual products being of equal value. Such a view as Ralph's surely influenced conceptualizations of the author as being an original genius who was born with exceptional skills that just require cultivation.

Robert Harley's Propaganda Machine: The Role of Politics and Satire in the Development of the Author

Political writing forms a significant stage, preceding satire, in the development of professional authorship and the construction of its definitions and myths. With politics, I mean more specifically, the propaganda machine created by Robert Harley, which was fed by the party-political conflict between the Tories and Whigs, the government and the opposition, all of which manipulated public opinion. Harley was a powerful figure in politics: "earl of Oxford and Mortimer, lord treasurer of Great Britain, and prime minister in all but title" (Downie *Robert Harley* 2). Political writers in the service of the government as well as politicians were not "greedy hacks," whose only concern was making a profit. I argue that the aspect of greed attached to the stereotype of the hack was emphasized later, as the political print culture was turning into a more literary one. The political history of the development of authorship underpins commercial writing, which is later constructed in opposition to a much more idealistic form of authorship.

Harley's organization of a political press was influenced by specific historical events which created an environment that was particularly ripe for propaganda literature. A significant factor was the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, which put an end to the culture of censorship before printing. The state of a free press was exploited by Harley, who created a specific form of press policy based on the conflict between the two political parties. Harley recruited writers to compose texts for newspapers, supporting the Tory government and attacking the Whig opposition.[4] Another event that contributed to the heated party conflict, both within and outside Parliament, was the 1694 Triennial Act or the Meeting of Parliament Act, which guaranteed an annual meeting of Parliament and elections every three years. The Triennial Act intended to give continuity to the administration. However, the Act was not always applied. Harley, in fact, flaunted it and ended up being in power for 18 years. Political essays, printed as pamphlets, also combined with the increasing number of newspapers to form the political press. Extremely important for successful propaganda was the manipulation of public opinion. With the free press, this literature was also becoming more universally available. If individuals could not afford printed matter, or were not literate, they gathered where someone would read the newspapers aloud (Downie *Harley* 6). Downie notes that political propaganda is written with a "target reader" in mind, which would be the party MPs and the electorate, and the text's "polemical objective" would be to justify or confirm the beliefs of that reader. Successful political propaganda preached to the choir, as it were. It did not aim to convince one's political opponents to join the "right" side, although it may have been written in such a fashion (Downie "Public Opinion and the Political Pamphlet" 550-53).

Harley's organization actually influenced the careers of some writers like Daniel Defoe and Swift who were both recruited by him and paid by the ministry to supply propaganda for the government's cause. Whig propaganda only became successful around 1712, under the organization of Richard Steele, with Joseph Addison's contributions to the papers *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, which aimed to undermine the Tory views. Particularly the early atmosphere of party conflict would have encouraged the creation of the hack writer prepared to write anything for whichever side was paying. Other elements that informed the development of authorship, especially the conflict between traditional and professional forms that was exploited in satire, came from practices of political satire itself. Swift functions as a good example of this. As

[4] Downie reveals in *Robert Harley* how the political press exploded during the first decades of the century: "In 1702 all ministerial printed matter was carried by the official newspaper, *The London Gazette*; in 1713 the Oxford ministry boasted five press organs. In addition to the *Gazette*, the *Review* addressed the whigs and the *Examiner* the tories in regular periodical essays. The *Post Boy* was a newspaper with a tory bias. The *Mercator* was devoted to the province of commerce and trade." (1)

Downie notes, Swift was an exceptionally skilled propagandist, and one of his best polemical strategies was "to attack the Whig writers' credibility . . . by drawing attention to 'that peculiar Manner of expressing himself, which the Poverty of our Language forceth me to call their Style'" (*Prose Works* 5: 57, qtd. in "Public Opinion" 557-58).

I argue that Pope and Swift, amongst other writers, adopted a similar technique in criticizing writers and devaluing their literature, to illustrate their view that "hacks" denigrate literary authorship. Another key characteristic of political propaganda, which was also used in conceptualizing "genuine authorship" and stratifying the profession, was a reliance on class terminology. Emphasizing class distinctions was particularly in fashion in pamphlets attacking Sir Robert Walpole.[5] Myths of Grub Street were created by writers who lamented the mass of unqualified writers who were degrading literary culture by likening the press and its hacks to a machine, while strengthening their own authority by emphasizing their superiority and genius.[6] A final skill of effective propaganda that also influenced the discourse of disinterested authorship was how a writer worked at constructing an influential public persona. Informed by Downie's view that John Wilkes did just that by fashioning himself into a "synecdoche" that stood for the rights of all Englishmen ("Public Opinion" 563), I argue that authors like Pope and Ralph practiced a similar form of self-fashioning in order to speak for certain types of authors and forms of writing. Genre is shown to be connected to particular conceptualizations of authorship. This fact also contributes to authors' often hiding the political, commercial sides of their careers.

The aspects of propaganda culture, especially those surrounding political conflict and the press's stimulation of print ephemera, created Grub Street, and its myths, satires, and the trope of the victimized writer.[7] Downie emphasizes two factors of the propaganda machine of Queen Anne's reign that led to the development of literature: the rise of imaginative writing in prose stimulated the use of novel strategies in political pamphlets and the writer's manipulation of the public, which resulted in an audience that desired more reading material (*Harley* 14-15). The large amount of writing being produced contributed to the novel and other imaginative writing cultures, which in turn perpetuated the writing of political propaganda. Although a form of political

[5] Downie writes that the use of class terminology "sets the aristocracy (the nobility and the gentry, the 'Men of Breeding') against the upstarts who have made their fortunes at the expense of the natural leaders of society" ("Public opinion" 560).

[6] For more on the stratification of the profession of authorship, see Linda Zionkowski's "Territorial Disputes in the Republic of Letters: Canon Formation and the Literary Profession," in which she focuses mainly on the economic side and this tension between the mechanization of writing and authorial genius.

[7] See Downie *Harley*, especially 12-15. He writes "[t]he rise of the political press, then, prepared the way for the tremendous growth of the popularity of fiction after the political environment had cooled after 1715" (15).

stability returned after 1715, partly under the influence of the Septennial Act of 1716, the propaganda machine continued to shape society, transforming print culture into literary culture.

Ralph's Construction as the Hack and his Career Phases

Very little information is available about Ralph or his family prior to the 1720s, the period in which he was developing his poetry-writing skills, first in Pennsylvania and later in London.[8] In Philadelphia, Ralph was acquainted with Franklin, who played a role in encouraging Ralph's aspirations of becoming an author. In his autobiography, Franklin wrote, "Ralph was inclined to pursue the study of poetry, not doubting but he might become eminent in it, and make his fortune by it, alleging that the best poets must, when they first began to write, make as many faults as he did" (54). Ralph believed that professional authorship only existed across the ocean in London. In Elizabeth McKinsey's investigation of Ralph's career, she explains that the American colonies had plenty of journalists and preachers who published their sermons (see 61). However, a literary form of professional authorship only came to America later, during the American Renaissance of the nineteenth century. Franklin financially supported Ralph's journey to London in December 1724 to enable him to pursue his literary career.[9]

In England, however, Ralph struggled to make a living as a writer (McKinsey 61). It must have been a disappointment for him to see the toiling writers of Grub Street competing for the booksellers' and society's recognition. Still, Ralph managed to publish his poetry *The Tempest* (1727), *Night* (1728), which reached a second edition, and *Zeuma* (1729), all under his name. Also, two miscellanies were published in 1729: *Miscellaneous*

[8] Ralph might have been born in or near Philadelphia, or in England, and he died in Chiswick on January 24, 1762. See Shipley, who argues that he was an Englishman.

[9] In his autobiography, Franklin writes that "Ralph was ingenious, genteel in his manners, and extremely eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier talker" (54). Franklin explains further that Ralph lied about his purpose for joining Franklin in London. "Ralph, though married, and having one child, had determined to accompany me in this voyage. It was thought he intended to establish a correspondence, and obtain goods to sell on commission; but I found afterwards, that, thro' some discontent with his wife's relations, he purposed to leave her on their hands, and never return again" (58). Still, Franklin continued to lend Ralph money until they had a disagreement in 1726. Because Franklin had behaved inappropriately toward Ralph's mistress, Ralph refused to repay his debt of £29 to Franklin.

Poems, By Several Hands...Published by Mr. Ralph and *Miscellaneous Poems*, which included "Zeuma," "Clarinda," and "The Muses' Address." According to Helen Hughes, Ralph may have authored many of the productions in the former publication. Ralph published his poetry under his own name, which contrasts with his other anonymous publications. The act of explicitly declaring authorship of his poetry with his name also contrasts starkly with the anonymous signature of Ralph's *Case,* "No Matter by Whom." Anonymous publication, though often the publisher's choice, could offer the author a form of freedom from genres previously published in, and from the constraints of social class and gender. Anonymous authorship is a complicated phenomenon with various motivations and functions. Robert J. Griffin's work on literary anonymity—defined as all forms of undeclared authorship, including pseudonymity—critiques Foucault's author-function, especially the latter's emphasis on the manner in which the author's name operates within a certain cultural discourse, and Foucault's dismissal of the significance and omnipresence of anonymous publication practices. Taking anonymity into consideration alters the misconceptions about authorial identity as, "over 80 percent of all new novel titles published between 1750 and 1790 were published anonymously" (Raven "Anonymous Novel" 143). Anonymity reveals the author to be an amalgam of various identities:

> [Foucault] theorized that one aspect of the author-function was the way, in the act of writing, it produced multiple selves; his example is the distinction of voices in a text and their relation to the person writing, but this point is exemplified quite clearly in the history of publication as well. (Griffin "Anonymity" 890)

Anonymity can represent both a rejection of authorship and, perhaps an unintentional, highlighting of it, given the attention drawn to the puzzle of the writer's identity, which almost invariably sets off chains of speculation. As a tool of manipulation, anonymity creates a space for performing diverse types of authorship, lending the writer control over the authorial image, which potentially contributes to the development of authority. The ubiquity of anonymity in publication history renders visible the distance between the physical individual—the "empirical author"—and the performed or constructed author—marked by the name, signature, or lack of these—and this is the case in all instances of authorship, declared or anonymous.[10] With this

[10] Griffin states that "the author's name is another artifact, at a distance from the empirical writer and part of the semiotics of the text, even when the legal name is given. This distance, theorized as impersonality, is a figurative version of anonymity, which potentially suggests, further, why anonymity does not simply disappear, even though historical circumstances develop which obscure it behind the glare of authorial celebrity. On the most general level, the possibility of publishing anonymously and pseudonymously is given in the nature of the medium: although it is the power of great writing to close the gap and create the illusion

paratextual phrase, Ralph is re-satirizing the satire about the Grub Street author as seen in Pope's *Dunciad*. Ralph is showing that the identities and creations of professional writers are viewed by some as worthless, because they are deemed as unqualified to count within the developing culture of literary authorship. At the same time, Ralph may be reacting against the growing celebrity of certain authors and the power of names, which might affect the price of the copyright and the public reception of the work, regardless of its actual value. As his career exemplifies, Ralph is arguing for the multiple nature of authorship.

The style of Ralph's poetry suggests that he may have been trying to align himself with Aaron Hill's circle of poets, especially those like David Mallet, James Thomson, and Richard Savage who were experimenting with imaginative poetry. His miscellanies illustrate his idealistic desire to be a truly inspired poet, like some of his contemporaries. A letter to Reverend Gough, probably from February 1727, after the publication of *The Tempest*, reveals Ralph's admiration for Thomson. Ralph expresses a desire for Gough to send him a copy of a new publication, "another poem on Summer" from the "Author of Winter" (qtd. in McKillop 47). Ralph's career also has similarities with Savage's, who also worked on a publication of miscellaneous poems, and authored most of the poems himself. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I further explore Savage's career by analyzing Johnson's construction of the poet in his *Life of Savage*. Savage's early writing phase when he was establishing himself as a poet also shows parallels with Ralph's experience as a struggling writer. Publishing miscellanies was a way to appeal to a wider audience, by collecting diverse texts in one anthology. It was a way to shape public taste and reading practices while simultaneously catering to the growing power of public opinion (Benedict *Making the Modern Reader* 7- 9). The variety on offer in miscellanies also symbolizes the multiple voices of the author. Although "Pope condemns anthologies for sanctioning sloppy, nonprofessional writing" (Benedict 130) he turned to the form, publishing anonymously, and manipulated it to earn a profit, and to further shape his gentlemen persona and his elite readership (130-140). However, Ralph was not particularly successful in publishing his miscellanies. This could be attributable to the fact that, during Ralph's career, at least two writing cultures also clearly connected to social class were clashing with each other. These cultures are the subscription ventures of gentlemen and professional authors aimed at publishing for an elite audience, and the commercially driven culture. The latter arena is for the "hacks" or the economic writers who produce ephemeral matter, such as political essays and propaganda. Ralph attempted a project for subscription publication of a collection

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of immediacy, the empirical person of the writer is not physically manifested in script or print . . ." ("Anonymity" 890).

of poems in 1729 without success (McKillop 47-50). Despite the clear hierarchy, which informed the developing notions of acceptable authorship, Ralph's writing practices show that the boundaries between these cultures were flexible.

Ralph's writing career can serve as an example of a writer's negotiation of the professional marketplace for literary production. His transition from idealistic and pseudo-polite writer to hack subsisting on the basis of occasional commissions reflects the precarious dynamics of authorship in eighteenth-century London. Despite Ralph's talent in adapting to several genres during his career, he never attained the popular status as a literary professional. In addition, Pope's inclusion of him in the *Dunciad* negatively influenced his reputation as it constructed him as the hack writer. [11] Arguably, Ralph's career shows an apparent resignation to the role Pope thrust on him. Yet, the progression of his authorship is better evaluated as a professional negotiation of the marketplace and engagement in the various writing cultures of the time. The diversity of his writing projects, which seemingly matched satirical projections of the hack, partly explains why Ralph was later known as "the Grub Street architect, and [was] burlesqued under the name of Vitruvius Grubeanus" after he started writing essays dealing with London architecture in 1734 (Rogers 362). The nickname suggests Ralph's imprisonment in the stereotype of the hack, but it also uncovers the complexity of Ralph's professionalism. The allusion refers to architecture and has strongly ironic high-cultural relevance. In the eighteenth century, Colen Campbell's work, *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1725) was most significant for its influence on the further growth of the field of architecture in England, moving into the classical direction, strongly inspired Palladianism. [12] Ralph's nickname, meant to degrade his authorial status by aligning him with hacks, in fact ties his authorship to the cultural field of architecture dominated by Campbell's artistic vision. Campbell's elegantly illustrated book appealed to more than just those in the building trade, and had mainly an elite readership, as the subscription list shows with its high number of nobles. By the publication of the third volume in 1725, there were "692 subscribers, headed by five members of the royal family, indicating a degree of popularity reached by few books of comparable scale" (Connor). The parallel with Campbell also specifically alludes to Ralph's critical text on architecture *A Critical Review of the Public Buildings, Statues, and Ornaments, in and about London and Westminster* (1734).[13] Ralph's publication was valued highly by architects and

[11] See Uwe Böker on the stereotype of the hack.

[12] The first volume of this work appeared in 1715 and its second volume was published in 1717. The third and final volume dates from 1725. See T. P Connor's *ODNB* article.

[13] Rogers states that this work was based on essays originally published in the *Grub Street Journal*, which led to Ralph's nickname. While using this periodical to illustrate the myth of the Grub Street hack, he explains that "the Grubean trope became staler through usage, and the weapon less keen in the satirist's hand" (*Grub Street*

so "Vitruvius Grubeanus," a reference to the hacks of Grub Street also known as Grubeans, could in fact be regarded as encomium. Ralph's work on architecture promotes the idea that the medium of the book was suited to the specific genre that an author is engaging in and architecture, linked to the fine arts, is part of high culture. In this case, Ralph's status as hack writer is again deconstructed.

The genre that Ralph excelled at was political journalism, which had created the need for hack writers in the first place. The connection to politics is abused by Pope and can even encourage modern scholars to regard Ralph as a hack. However, Ralph's political writing phase also subverts his construction as a hack, because he successfully negotiated the political arena and found it a place to express his ideas. His writings found a suitable audience amongst Whig-minded individuals, who helped him secure lucrative pensions. Ralph's political phase stretched from the early 1730s, when he first started contributing to newspapers supporting the Whig opposition, to the early 1750s, when he was "pensioned into silence by the Pelham ministry in 1753 at £300 per year" for attacking the Jewish Naturalization Bill of 1753 in *The Protestor*, which contributed to its repeal (Okie).[14] Ralph had previously attacked Robert Walpole for his administration's corruption, negligence of the constitution, and disregard for liberty in his *Critical History of the Administration of Robert Walpole* (1743). He had enjoyed a pension from the Broadbottom administration and George Bubb Dodington in 1744 (£200 per year), and from 1760 until his death in 1762, he received one from John Stuart, the third earl of Bute.[15] The monetary value of these pensions reveals that Ralph did achieve recognition as a professional. Ralph's issues with government did not match the changed political situation of the 1750s. After the death of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales in 1751, the Broadbottom opposition was no longer necessary (McKinsey 75).[16] Still, the pensions are evidence that the Whig faction recognized Ralph's merit as a writer who exposed government corruption and who supported constitutional rights, which, at the same time, shaped Ralph's political identity. Although being a beneficiary of patronage elevated the writer's social status, Ralph reacted against the politics involved in securing a pension, particularly the limits on the author's liberty. His experience of being pensioned into political silence probably encouraged his retaliation against

362). Ralph also published pieces in this periodical, although Pope had at one time been associated with the publishers of the *Grub Street Journal* (McKinsey 60).

[14] McKinsey explains that he received the pension from Pelham "not for ministerial service but merely for ceasing his opposition" (76).

[15] Jeffrey Broadbottom was the pseudonym employed by William Guthrie, political writer and Whig supporter who attacked government policy for, among others, its weak administration (Allan). The earl of Bute was an engaged patron of the arts and recognized many writers for their literary merit, such as Samuel Johnson, David Mallet, and Tobias Smollett (see Karl Wolfgang Schweizer).

[16] Frederick's politics were informed by Lord Hervey and Dodington (Matthew Kilburn).

patronage in the *Case.* Nevertheless, the merit associated with receiving a pension shows a clear progression from the absolute dependence experienced by hack writers. Ralph's career was not that of a life-long hack, nor was he the "hack of all hacks" (McKinsey 60). Characteristics of his professional career—the variety of genres he practiced, particularly his periodical work and success as a political writer–and his essay in support of commercialized authorship, together with Pope's construction of him as a hack—contribute to Ralph's often being regarded and studied purely from that perspective.[17]

Satire characterizes Ralph's entire writing career, and yet partly contributed to his not being able to establish himself as a successful poet, because Ralph's turn to satire instigated his inclusion in the *Dunciad* (1728). Ralph stood up for his fellow authors in response to Pope's polemical text in the anonymous blank verse poem *Sawney, an Heroic Poem Occasion'd by the* Dunciad (1728), which provoked a vitriolic retaliation from Pope in the *Dunciad*'s second edition in 1729. In the poem's dedication to the "Gentlemen Scandaliz'd in the Dunciad," Ralph begins his satirical assault on Pope by describing his work as being "so notoriously full of Pride, Insolence, Beastliness, Malice, Prophaneness, Conceits, Absurdities, and Extravagance, that 'tis almost impossible to form a regular notion of it" (iii). Ralph expresses frustration with both Pope's downgrading of professional authorship and his refusal to publicly accept or acknowledge the commercial side of his own authorial practices. Pope was a living paradox: he had achieved the status of professional author with his lucrative translations of Homer, but Pope carefully fashioned an authorial persona which seemingly rejected the idea of monetary compensation, because he viewed the commercial side of literary culture as degrading to the author's (dependent) social status.[18] Dependence is one of the main reasons why Pope expressed ambivalence toward the conceptualization of the commercialized author. Ralph also takes issue with the authors' lack of independence in the print market. He attributes the problem of authorial dependence to the booksellers' dominance of the trade, but also finds fault with the unwillingness of writers to acknowledge professional agency and their refusal to integrate themselves openly in

[17] For more on the political period of Ralph's writing career, see McKinsey, especially 70-76. However, her position in this article is highly dependent on the conviction that Ralph was born in the American colonies and that this motivated his Whig politics, particularly the emphasis on such values as individual liberty (70). Also, she describes the various forms of writing he practiced as "unusual" (60), while I argue that his career exemplifies the variety of professional authorship in the mid-eighteenth century.

[18] See Brean Hammond: "Those authors who contrived to have themselves perceived as least professional, who evolved a *raison d'être* for the writer's career that most artfully concealed the profit motive, and who created an art that could plausibly be seen to transcend its material conditions of production are today the most studied" (5).

the trade. He shows an awareness of Pope's manipulative strategy and strongly disagrees with Pope's capitalizing on the deficiency of other authors:

> Poverty and ill Circumstances represent an Object of Pity and Compassion, to the humane, generous, and friendly Mind, but, in this, and some other Poems of the same *Authors*, are made a standing Jest, a continual Butt for the exercising their little, paultry Witticisms, and impotent, pointless Railery; as if the want of a Dinner made a Man a Fool, or Riches and good Sence only kept company . . . . (vii)

Ralph identified with part of the hack culture Pope was ridiculing. Ralph supported authorial independence and equality for authors. He argues for the recognition of the writer's role in the market, and discourages hiding or manipulating the commercial side of authorship. Pope's authorial practices extend even further than that, because his satire partly shapes the conceptualization of authorship as consisting of different hierarchical groups. Hammond maintains that in the *Dunciad* "Pope endeavoured to construct a canon of British worthies from which writers with a professional orientation would be excluded" (2). The *Dunciad* is part of the discourse that brings social stratification into the definition of authorship, which contributes to the notion of the genuine author as an elevated individual who is removed from professionalization and whose activities are not determined by economic forces. Ralph, however, attempted to illustrate in *Sawney* and later in his *Case* that professional authorial culture was more diverse than Pope's polarized depiction and that Pope knew this, but was hiding this element in his traditional definition of the high-cultural author as independent from market forces. In fact, this type of discourse uses the negative connotation of professionalization and the creation of the Grub Street myth to strengthen the definition of the privileged poet and to measure the value of writing in order to determine the authorial hierarchy.

In Ralph's satirical poem, he reveals that Pope is not that far removed from the authors he humiliates. Ralph's work is highly subversive in, for example, his use of Pope's own discursive strategy to demean the author and his work. The poem's title is an example of a personal attack on Pope. The etymology of the word "Sawney" can be found in Lowland Scots. It was an alternative form of the name Sandy, a diminutive form that refers to the popular Scottish name, Alexander. The word later became an insult with its connotations of "jock" and "worthless fool" (*OED*, MacKay). The *OED* specifically defines Sandy as "a derisive nickname for a Scotchman" and "a simpleton, fool." Ralph is thus calling Pope a fool for attacking his fellow authors in the *Dunciad*. In addition, many Scottish authors tried to hide and purify their nationality, not least because of the negative cultural association with the Jacobite uprisings and the Catholic Stuarts. The reputation of Scotland only began to improve under the rule of George III, with Bute's patronage of Scottish authors, scholars, and universities (Schweizer). The unpopularity of Scotland probably affected the term's transformation into an insult. By

titling his poem "Sawney," Ralph addresses Pope and immediately singles him out as being outside mainstream society. The politically charged term brings to mind Pope's Catholicism and Toryism and ties him to the Jacobites, although he never explicitly identified himself as a Jacobite (Rumbold 9-10). The title reveals that Pope was as much of a social outsider as Ralph was, and, by pointing this out, Ralph aims to lower the high authorial status Pope constructed in the *Dunciad*. With *Sawney*, Ralph refers to Pope's hypocritical discursive strategies of excluding authors by also reminding the reader that Pope himself experienced a limited independence because of his religion, including the exclusion from many social activities such as the right to live in central London, to attend university, to own land, and to receive pensions (Rumbold 9). At the same time, Ralph may also be aligning Pope with the legend of the Sawney Beane, a dishonest thief, murderer, and incestuous cannibal. Printed versions of the legend first appeared at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Ralph might have been familiar with the narrative collected in the fifth edition of *A Compleat History of the Lives and Robberies* published in 1719. The legend of Sawney is not devoid of politics given the legend's connection to the Stuarts. Beane's reign of terror occurred under either King James I of Scotland (1424-1436) or James VI, who first started his rule of Scotland in 1566, and later became King James I of England (1603-1625) (Sarah Moss). If Ralph's title also alludes to the story of Sawney Beane, it again connects Pope to the line of Catholic Stuarts and Jacobinism. The comparison with Beane implies that Pope's writing practices and self-presentation are deceitful and that the ruinous effect that his destructive attacks had on the careers of the authors featured in the *Dunciad* is likened to Beane's acts of murder and cannibalism. Ralph accuses Pope of deceitfully degrading his contemporaries and condemning their raillery against each other, while practicing what he reproaches.

After Pope's attacks on him, Ralph ceased to publish his poems. Ralph might have believed that Pope had ruined his career by turning those involved in the developing literary culture, including publishers and other authors, against him (Okie). It was indeed no mean feat for a writer featured in the *Dunciad* to return to a state of respected authorship after Pope's scathing attacks. However, Rumbold argues that Ralph was perhaps not as explicitly vocal about this: "dubious testimony suggests that Ralph claimed his chances of literary employment had been ruined by Pope's gibe" (239). Nevertheless, Ralph's inclusion in the *Dunciad* encouraged the publishers of *The Grub Street Journal* to degrade everything that Ralph subsequently published, calling him "'one who would have lived and died in obscurity had it not been for the ingenious author of the *Dunciad*'" (*Grub Street Journal*, n. 21, qtd. in McKinsey 60). The idea that Pope's satire is benevolent and actually bringing talentless hacks into the spotlight is another discursive strategy aimed at the construction and strengthening of the authority attached to traditional authorship by contrasting it with lower or lesser-known forms linked to the professional. The *Dunciad*'s incriminating lines about Ralph occur in Book Three, read: "Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls, / And

makes Night hideous—Answer him, ye Owls!" (165-66). Pope includes a note, explaining he had never heard of Ralph prior to his abusive publication of *Sawney* to emphasize further Ralph's worthlessness and lack of poetic talent, revealed by Ralph's inability to make a name for himself with his poetry. Pope informs the reader about what type of "low writer" Ralph is, explaining that he

> attended his own works with panegyricks in the Journals, and once in particular praised himself highly above Mr. Addison, in wretched remarks . . . . He ended at last in the common Sink of all such writers, a political News-paper, to which he was recommended by his friend Arnall, and received a small pittance for pay (239).[19]

Pope draws explicit attention to Ralph's involvement in political writing, a further degradation of Ralph's worth as an author. The reference to money is connected to Pope's low view of political hack writing, which he suggests is unimportant since such writers earn little profit. The mere mention of payment has significance for it brings into view Pope's conceptualization of commercialized authorship with its high degree of dependence as base and corrupting. On this point, Rumbold sees "a degrading contrast between venality conditioned by the need to earn a living and Pope's ideal of the writer's independent vocation" (239). Upon being informed of *Sawney*, Pope must have perused Ralph's poetry, considering the *Dunciad*'s lines refer to Ralph's "hideous" poem *Night* (1728), which is described by Rumbold as "haphazard accumulation of blank verse description and meditation on night and death" (238). Pope would not have appreciated Ralph's deviation from poetic language. This distaste is implicit in the owl reference, which symbolizes philosophers or wits. More specifically, the "owls" allude to those elevated poets who are criticizing and deconstructing poems, like Ralph's, because the form and style does not match the new language of poetry that the likes of Pope and Dryden wished to implement as the most venerated and thus ideal form. In another reference, Pope criticizes Ralph's audacity to speak out against his *Dunciad*, by blatantly constructing Ralph as ignorant and wrong. Most importantly, Pope characterizes Ralph as overconfident by mentioning Ralph's proud claim to undeserved credit and an upper-class audience, while Pope simultaneously reveals his own arrogance in his self-construction as the superior author. Since this passage forms part of the commentary written by his created persona, Martinus Scriblerus, the editor of the D*unciad Variorum,* Pope hopes to remain at a safe distance from being personally implicated. However, the distinction between Pope and his Scriblerus persona becomes murky "as the focus shifts

[19] Pope also included other references to Ralph throughout *Dunciad*. The section presented as written by M. Scriblerus, "Testimonies of Authors Concerning our Poet and his Works," mentions Ralph as "the obscure poet of a poem called Sawney" (49).

to Pope's sense of the true state of his reputation: esteemed by respectable figures, ludicrously abused by the insignificant, and treated by the venal with an inconsistency which only exposes their lack of integrity" (43).[20]

The 1743 version of the *Dunciad* includes a new reference to Ralph in Book One which again deals with his role as a political propagandist: "And see! thy Gazetteers give o'er, / Ev'n Ralph repents . . . " (215-16). Pope continues to strengthen his construction of Ralph as a political hack by showing that Ralph has explicitly laid claim to authoring political pamphlets. Rumbold explains, "Pope professed to believe that Ralph had been writing for both sides at once" (127), and, in satire, this inconsistency was made a typical trait of the hack. Actual hacks show more complexity, and writing for political parties was a volatile business. Political parties shifted quite quickly from being in power to forming the opposition. Although Ralph's political convictions matched Whig values the closest, he had effectively satirized Walpole's Whig administration. Ralph's dissatisfaction with Walpole had a personal side as well. When trying to establish himself as a poet, he failed to secure a pension from Walpole, who ignored Ralph's dedication to him in *Night* in 1727 (McKinsey 69). Also, Ralph was disgusted with political factions because party conflicts about power had only destructive results for the nation and its people (McKinsey 71-72).

Although the *Dunciad* is peopled by actual writers, Pope's construction of authorship is fiction. Pope creates another world where authorship is simplified in its presentation as the polarization of wit versus dunce, author versus hack. Ralph also engages in mythmaking in his *Case* and in *Sawney* when he expresses his aversion for Pope's hypocritical construction of authority based on commercial exploitation. Ralph's alignment with Pope shows how similar strategies in this period could result in divergent career trajectories and cultural acceptance of authors. Pope's construction of Ralph as hack reflected negatively on Ralph's authorial reputation and hints at the influence of discourse on the development of authorship into a one-dimensional notion. At the same time, society's role in contributing to an author's success is arbitrary. Ralph's later self-construction as a victim helps to conceptualize the progression of his career, particularly when one of Ralph's main themes is considered, the liberation of the professional author. Authorial careers are formed over time and Ralph's case demonstrates the transitional models of authorship. Ralph's dynamic career illustrates that the eighteenth-century author did not usually stick to one particular genre, or

[20] This reference to Ralph occurs in the section "The Mighty Mother, and her Son": "Wonderful is the stupidity of all the former Critics and Commentators on this work! It breaks forth at the very first line. The author of the Critique prefixed to Sawney, a Poem, p. 5. hath been so dull as to explain the Man who brings, etc. not of the Hero of the piece, but of our Poet himself, as if he vaunted that Kings were to be his readers; an honour which though this Poem hath had, yet knoweth he how to receive it with more modesty" (97).

writing culture, but that both influence the type of author-construct that becomes attached to individual writers. Forms and genres become increasingly perceived in terms of their cultural value and influence discursive strategies that function to create a hierarchy within authorship.

Considering the often underrepresented and unexplored function of the bookseller contributing to an author's career and persona, it is worth looking at some similarities between Ralph and one of the bookseller's he worked with. Ralph Griffiths (1720?-1803) published the first and second editions of Ralph's *Case* in 1758 and 1762. Griffiths's character was constructed later in the nineteenth century as a harsh businessmen who maltreated the writers he employed. However, a consideration of Griffiths as a selfish tyrant is difficult to reconcile with his publication of a tract that essentially demands greater social and financial independence for authors, while it criticizes the bookseller's control of writers and the print market. Griffiths's posthumous reputation may have even been influenced by Ralph's *Case* and caricatures of booksellers featured in satire would have compounded the negative bias regarding his mercantile practices. There are similarities between Ralph's and Griffiths's careers. Griffiths had personal experience with financial difficulties and worked as a political hack writer. In fact, he faced legal troubles when he authored and published *Ascanius, or, the Young Adventurer* (1746) (Knapp 199-205).[21] Appearing immediately after the Jacobite Uprising of 1745, the pamphlet about Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, was deemed by the government "dangerous propaganda" because of its favorable presentation of the Pretender (200). Griffiths avoided punishment by emphasizing his previous service writing anti-Jacobin propaganda for the government and claiming that his writing practices were merely "a pleasant expedient to pass away the time" ("Examination of Griffiths, Jan. 9, 174[7]" qtd. in Knapp 202).[22]

Griffiths was more of a low-end bookseller but one of the chief figures in eighteenth-century periodical culture, which contributed to both an increase in reading and mass distribution. He edited and published several periodicals, including the *London Advertiser and Literary Gazette* (1751–53), *The Library, or, Moral and Critical Magazine* (1761–62), and the *Grand Magazine of Universal Intelligence, and Monthly Chronicle of Our Own Times* (1758–60). A bookseller since 1747, Griffiths started up the *Monthly Review* in 1749, which aimed to offer critical reviews of all the newest published texts, including novels, poetry, and pamphlets. Ralph started contributing book reviews to the *Monthly Review* in 1756. It was

[21] In 1749, Griffiths was also accused of obscenity for the publication of John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749).

[22] Knapp notes an interesting point that Griffiths's financial destitution are not mentioned as a motivation for his writings, which he had in fact stressed in a petition to the Duke of Newcastle from August of 1746: "I am a young Man of no fortune, have a Family to maintain, and no means of subsisting but by my Pen" (qtd. 198).

the relationship between Griffiths and Oliver Goldsmith that proved detrimental to the editor's reputation. Goldsmith, in 1757, began writing reviews for the *Monthly Review* for a year. Henry Robert Plomer's account of Goldsmith's experience under Griffiths's employment illustrates some of his negative practices that were later exaggerated. The agreement was that

> Goldsmith should lodge at Griffiths's house, and receive a small salary. From April to September, 1757, Goldsmith contributed twelve articles to the *Monthly Review*, amongst them reviews of Smollett's *History of England* and Gray's *Odes*. Griffiths's treatment of his reviewer was harsh in the extreme. He kept him short of food and money, accused him of being a thief, and threatened him with imprisonment. (111-12)

The harsh treatment depicted here fuelled the inaccurate revisions of Griffiths's bookseller persona, which sullied his reputation. Although the accounts of Goldsmith's experience have overshadowed Griffiths's professional image, the original "story of Griffiths's cruel treatment . . . was spread by Forster's 1854 life of Goldsmith" (Forster "Griffiths"). Not all scholars followed Forster's incorrect account which exaggerated the actual conflicts between the two men. It is difficult to believe that Griffiths would have forgotten his own roots in Grub Street only a decade later. I argue that the slave-driving bookseller is a cliché, based only on kernels of fact. Like hacks, booksellers were fashioned into caricatures in the satirical discourse that grew out of the divergent views on authors' rights and independence and the commercialization of published writing. The thoroughly complex and ephemeral print culture of the period shared characteristics with an economic franchise, which stimulated society's need for a definitive notion of professional authorship.

Ralph's *Case* and His Notions of Authorship

Similar to *Sawney*, Ralph's *Case* is another attack on traditional views on authorship. He claims that writers are in fact poisoned by the corrupt state of print culture, which is manipulated by booksellers, who exploit writers. Ralph's view is in contrast to Pope's claim that diseased minds of unqualified Grub Street hacks poisoned literary culture. Pope's traditional, neoclassical poet shows off his wit and elite status, while Ralph's modern writer achieves commercial success by means of social visibility. Pope's ideas about social performance in the polite sphere of coffeehouse culture where authors

discuss their writing also contrasts with the garret culture that dominates notions of professional writers. Ralph's text recounts the struggle for authorial agency felt by authors who constantly fought against their dependence on other actors who ran the print trade. With this essay, Ralph offered his definition of what a professional author was and should be. He tried to release his fellow-authors from their social and economic shackles by arguing that writers should be given equal opportunities and financially compensated for their textual labors and societal contribution. He urged professional authors to realize they are selling a product, and to assert their independence within a commercial market. He did this by encouraging authors to grasp their liberty, as a diverse collective, and to develop their vocation in part by recognizing their natural status as authors. To quote Ralph:

> We . . . having nothing but Phantoms before our Eyes; are only the Dupes of our own Delusions----But then alas! We *are* Writers; consequently incapable of taking up any other Trade; and consequently, instead of Examples, can only bequeath our Advices and Warnings to others. (72)

In Ralph's definition of authorship, a writer is not a role imposed by someone else, but an ontological determinant of the person. Ralph's view shows ambiguity; writing initially appears to be something entirely commercial. He tries to bring equality to the marketplace by arguing that all texts are commodities of equal value. Ralph's *Case* surely would not have been written or published if his and his fellow-authors' struggles for independence, authority, and fair compensation had been answered sooner. Although Ralph argues for an author's financial independence, his manifesto also comments on the valuation of texts and authors, and in fact continues the debate about copyright already at issue in the Act of Queen Anne (1710). Ralph took issue with the paradoxical nature of both the copyright act and, more particularly, the book market, or the rules dictating commerce within society as a whole. He supported, for instance, the Society for the Encouragement of Learning's attempt to push the bookseller into the role of a mere tool in the publication process rather than dominating it, while he lamented the objectification and oppression of authors.[23]

[23] The Society's history and its legacy is discussed in Chapter 2.

Satire is not lacking in Ralph's *Case*. Still bitter about Pope's hypocritical authorial strategies intended to manipulate his active professionalism and Pope's inclusion of Ralph in the *Dunciad*, he writes

> instead of censuring an Author for taking Money for his works, we ought to esteme Those most who get most Money by them: And then *Pope*, and *Voltaire* after *his* Example, would deserve to be considered more, for what they *made* of their *Works*, than for the *Works* themselves. (6)

Ralph shed a bit more light on the absurdity of the book market by criticizing its function in valuing authors who make the most profit.[24] Regarding the significance of liberty in Ralph's life and texts, he also had a keen sense of the corrupting force of power: "Power is what *all* covet, but *few* are fit to be trusted with . . ." (28). And in this vein, probably the most well-known, or most frequently quoted passage of Ralph's is when he likens the bookseller's treatment of authors to enslavement:

> there is no Difference between the Writer in his Garret, and the Slave in the Mines; . . . Both have their Tasks assigned them alike: Both must drudge *and* starve; and neither can hope for Deliverance. The Compiler must compile; the Composer must compose on sick or well; in Spirit or out; whether furnish'd with Matter or not; till, by the joint Pressure of Labour, Penury, and Sorrow, he has worn out his Parts, his Constitution, and all the little Stock of Reputation he had acquir'd among *the Trade*; Who were All, perhaps, that ever heard of his Name." (22)

The slavery trope was often used by those who struggled to live by their pens. Disgruntled authors, like Charlotte Lennox,[25] as well as the Society for the Encouragement of Learning turned to this type of derogatory expressions, which created the stereotype of the bookseller victimizing the poor, starving writer, which featured in satire, such as "The Brain-sucker." Although Ralph comes across in *Case* as having a completely "anti-bookseller" attitude, he is exaggerating the bookseller's control to emphasize the author's dependent status in society and to strengthen his

[24] Pope earned a fortune from his translations of Homer's *The Iliad* & *Odyssey*. Howard Erskine-Hill writes "Pope earned £1275 from Lintot for his translation. Subscriptions raised this sum (by a modern estimate) to about £5000. Pope's version of the Odyssey, for which he recruited William Broome and Elijah Fenton as collaborators, was completed in 1726 and brought him (he said) £600 0*s*. 0*d*. from Lintot; again subscriptions are thought to have raised his profit to around £5000 (Spence, 201; Foxon, 63, 101). In 1976 David Foxon estimated that the value of Pope's Homer to the poet, translated into the financial values of that year, was about £200,000. This established Pope's fortune and set his fame on a firmer foundation."

[25] Lennox used the expression "Slavery to the booksellers" to describe her experience as a published author in a letter dated October 1760 to the Duchess of Newcastle (qtd. in Catherine Gallagher 152).

argument for authorial independence. Ralph's own experience with Griffiths, who published his *Case*, and his relationship with John Nourse (1705-1780), who assisted the Society for the Encouragement of Learning (years active 1735-1749), and who had a well-established reputation as a learned bookseller specialized in scientific and foreign texts, might have improved Ralph's own social esteem in the literary spheres (Barber).[26]

An interesting essay in the *Morning Chronicle* for 16 July 1773, titled "Hints for a Literary Society," offers a critical review of the ideas expressed in Ralph's *Case*. That this review is written (under the anonymous moniker of Q. R. S.) and printed 15 years after the manifesto's original publication illustrates the complexity of defining authorship and its role within society. What was acceptable or not within the realm of literary production, especially with regard to the author's rights and financial situation, remained under debate throughout the century and not just during the early days of political propaganda and the introduction of copyright. The reviewer discusses the Society for the Encouragement of Learning endeavors and Ralph's argument that such a literary society is destined to fail eventually because of the control that booksellers have over the print market. Q. R. S.'s view differs from Ralph's in that he disagrees with Ralph's solution to the author's dependent status, a call to his fellow authors to come together and join ranks against the booksellers: "'Combine, combine, and you may even outcombine the Booksellers.'" The reviewer believes rather that writers can only achieve success if they form a collective with the booksellers. As the next chapter on the Society for the Encouragement of Learning's history shows, it did spend some of its active years working with the booksellers, but the rigid publishing agreements and some members' distrust of the booksellers seem to have spoiled this arrangement and led them to attempt to market the Society's publications on their own. The reviewer insightfully points out that the author and booksellers are mutually dependent:

> The more respectable part of the Trade, by which I mean those who purchase original copies, or engage able Writers in useful and necessary compilations, are the best friends to Authors, and to Literature in general. Industry and economy are so seldom allied to parts and genius, that without the aid of the Bookseller, the best designs of the Author might perish in embrio, and his talents, however great, remain unprofitable to himself, and useless to the world.

[26] "He specialized in language books, contemporary foreign literature, and in scientific, particularly mathematical, books, becoming bookseller to the SEL and to the commissioners of longitude, and claiming the title of bookseller to the king from 1762 to 1780. . . . His editions were so well known on the continent that his name was used by clandestine publishers there as a disguise. . . . [O]ne of the great European booksellers of the Enlightenment; he made English publications available abroad and was a major source of Enlightenment works, both in the original and in translation, in England" (Barber).

Here the reviewer avoids discussing any inherent characteristic of the author that would give him an exceptional status, or elevate him above financial compensation or involvement in the market. He addresses views of booksellers as entirely determined by commercial gain, but he logically sees this type of businessman as only concerned with the interests of authors with an "established reputation, by whose works they expect to be soon and largely reimbursed from the Public, "and would not be helpful for aspiring writers. He claims that booksellers are not entirely to blame for the author's struggle for financial independence, because the bookseller's business differs from the literary author's purpose. The bookseller's choices are influenced by the commercial market and not by their own knowledge about the value of literature: "the Booksellers who set themselves up as patrons of Literature are certainly to blame: but as to the Trade in general they are excusable. Gain is the God of *Tradesmen . . .*" The reviewer thus offers a solution which calls for more involvement of authors in the trade, who could instruct the booksellers, "the only tradesmen who deal in a commodity, of which they know not the value." On the subject of the contemporary state of the literary marketplace, the reviewer holds the conservative view that there are too many authors, while pointing out that the "Augustan Age of English Literature is passed" and that the quality of both literature and science are on the decline. He argues that the encouragement and cultivation of genius makes sense for a culture in its youth when it is developing from a prior state of "barbarism": "in such a state, when writers are few, and few thoughts have as yet been well expressed, the cherishing of rising genius is a laudable, a necessary object." And yet, with too many writers, the progressive development is stunted and cultural novelty is disappearing. The reviewer supports a form of regulation for literary authorship. For instance, he claims that the public should not waste time on "pretenders to literature," those unworthy of the title of author. He blames the decline of the patronage system together with the introduction of copyright for the decrease in the author's social esteem. Authorship is being downgraded by the increasing number of writers and by the fact that many earn too much money. Q .R. S. considers financial compensation as often not equal to the value of the author's production. He demonstrates this with various examples, juxtaposing authentic genius with a false form of authorship: "Hence literary patronage among the great has ceased with the cause that gave rise to it; and as literary property has risen upon its ruins, the once divinely-inspired, disinterested author is sunk into the worldly-minded, interested man of business." The reviewer concludes his essay with a solution: an alternative literary society that would restore a benefit to the public while protecting the author's property and liberty and ensuring the quality of literature. He finds that such a society would be better suited than the government for implementing a form of censorship: "I could wish to see it equally useful to the public. Such a society, Sir, under proper regulations, might become not only *protectors* of the *property*, but *guardians* of the *liberty*, and *chastisers* of the *licentiousness* of the press." However, he has run out of space to expand any further

on this society. Although he initially appears to have a more modern perspective on the commercial market, the reviewer's ideas closely match the traditional views held earlier in the century by authors, like Pope.

Grub Street Stereotypes: Satirical Definitions and Myths of The Author

To illustrate the construction of Grub Street, I present a brief analysis of two satires about professional writing: "A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship" (1762) and "The Brain-sucker: or, the Distress of Authorship" (1787), which relate to the author's condition and practices, while also revealing various cultural perspectives on the profession. Satire pervaded eighteenth-century periodical culture. Contemporary views on the genre were polarized. Some viewed it as morally corrupting and socially subversive, while others thought that satire had didactic value (Griffin *Satire*).[27] The way in which the polemical background of political propaganda and satire fed writing practices made print culture resemble a machine. A central factor promoting the growth of the newspaper and print industry was political, and the chaotic context of commercialization, including the explosion of print, the increase of booksellers, and the lack of regulation, raised questions about the nature of authorship. The desire to control the profession by way of defining it was partially due to negative perceptions about the unprecedented growth of printed matter, which debased the author's social standing and value (Downie 10). Satire held a powerful role in the discursive construction and development of the author. By exaggerating characteristics, satire created stereotypes of the author, often modeled on the hack. Driven by positive and negative attitudes toward the professionalization of writing practices, satirical discourse created myths about the author. Satire in this vein might focus on hacks' lack of cultural value, their work's potential for corrupting readers and the writing culture, and their ignorance and pride revealing their worthless social status. By depicting writers as monstrously deformed and disease-ridden, satires express fears about the otherness of writers and about the unregulated press's potential to poison and degrade culture. Other elements could include overemphasizing the author's arrogance and sense of superiority, while

[27] See also Howard D. Weinbrot *Eighteenth-Century Satire* and David Nokes *Raillery and Rage*.

exaggerating his lack of intelligence, knowledge or skill, such as in "A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship." Another common feature of this type of satire is the exaggeration of the power dynamic between the "enslaved" hack and the greedy booksellers, as shown in "The Brain-Sucker." The caricatures and superficial versions of the author presented in satire depict static roles which, at first glance, give satire a deceptively simple appearance. For instance, satire's depiction of one-dimensional relationships does not represent how booksellers and authors could mutually benefit from their business interactions. An investigation of satire's author-constructs reveals multiple, even conflicted, meanings. For instance, the author in "A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship" appears as both the hack writer, forced to write in the lucrative genres to make a living, but his transition through genres also represent the trajectory made by mid-eighteenth-century authors, like Ralph. The satirical discourse attests to the complex reality of eighteenth-century authorship, which included, for instance, a dynamic interaction between writers and booksellers and diverse forms of writing cultures. Although a satire of literary culture might include elements from both sides of the debate, showing that the boundaries between forms and practices were blurred, I argue it was informed by conflicting notions of the author. The more conservative view criticized the growing number of individuals proclaiming themselves authors in the writing sphere and the commodification of literature. An attempt to control that very sphere by elevating certain forms of writing, like poetry, above others aided the construction of authorial exceptionalism. The other more modern view, also inspired by professionalization, criticized the author's poor and dependent status and lack of rights and constructed them as victims of commercial society. The two opposing views became further polarized by satire's stereotypes.

"A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship" (1762)

The satire "A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship" appears to be inspired by the traditional view against the professionalization of the author. Especially the central theme of financial profit illustrates the criticism of commercialization of the profession. At the same time, however, the text also exposes the hypocrisy of the conservative stance by specifically drawing attention to the commercial aspect which these authors painstakingly hid, or downplayed, by constructing themselves as elite, gentleman-authors using traditional rhetoric. The text appeared in *The Library: or Moral and Critical Magazine . . . By a society of gentlemen*, published by Ralph Griffiths and C. Henderson in 1762, four years after Ralph's *Case*.[28] The author's pseudonym, Elias Mountgarret, refers to the hack's clichéd abode and the term "sketch" in the title recalls something that is hastily written, such as the ephemera produced under pressure by scribblers. That the name Mountgarret is also a title of viscounts in the peerage of Ireland, suggests the author conceives of himself as superior.[29] The narrator elevates himself both by aligning himself with the group of "exalted geniuses" (86) and by professing his noble parentage. While relating the history of his becoming an author, he characterizes himself as dignified, a "lover of truth, a well-wisher to his country," Ireland, which reveals that this work is also tied to the ephemeral culture of patriotism (87). The discourse of nationhood is embedded in the propaganda machine that defined the print and writing culture of the earlier decades.

The narrator is shown to encapsulate both types of author: the exalted genius and the professional hack. The authorial coming-of-age story is driven by financial motives. Despite his noble status, his family no longer possesses a fortune to be inherited, so he is sent to Dublin to pursue a career as an attorney. There he makes badly informed decisions and runs into a significant amount of debt, which leads him into military service. He eventually arrives in London, where he becomes acquainted with an author who convinces him to take "'the path not only to subsistence, but renown. . . . If you can but read and write, your way to glory is easy and expeditious'" (88). The mentor

[28] Andrew Kippis (1725-1795) was one of these gentlemen. He edited and wrote for *The Library* and may be the text's author. Other periodicals he contributed to were the *Gentlemen's Magazine* and *Monthly Review*. A minister and biographer, he is best known for his *Biographia Brittanica* (Ruston). In a letter to the reader, the editors of *The Library* explain what kinds of texts they publish, specifying that morally instructive satire is allowed: "But let not the young and gay imagine, that we intend to exclude matters of amusement. Pieces of wit and humour, that are not unfavourable to the cause of virtue, will find a place in the LIBRARY and we shall undertake to carry on a set of papers, which will contain observations on the manners and fashions of the age, ridicule prevailing foibles, and present such narratives, real or fictitious, as are calculated to convey instruction in the vehicle of pleasure" (ii).

[29] The noble title dates back to 23 October 1550 (Lodge 255).

expresses the view that achieving successful, lucrative authorship is effortless and does not demand any true talent. One only has to gain experience in various genres; familiarity with the various forms contributes to an author's versatility. His mentor's advice that imitation is the author's secret to success forms a link with eighteenth-century literary trends: "'the art of writing now a-days is no more than the art of saying over again what hath been said a thousand times already: nothing therefore is requisite to an author of the present day. . .'" (88). This expresses a bowdlerized version of the eighteenth-century dictum of mimetic imitation.

The mentor's comments refer to the contemporary anxiety regarding the excess of writers and print media. Conservative views feared these changes would lead to the mechanization of authorship to the detriment of the profession and the quality of literature. The satire criticizes such views on authorship that regarded commerce as injurious to authorship, but also criticizes notions of authors as possessing a natural-born talent. A basic familiarity with the diverse textual genres being printed is sufficient to imitate them. No genuine skill is required to enter into the realm of this profession, but an author can learn from printed material how to develop his writing skills. To train himself, the author immerses himself into the "mysteries of authorship" and purchases a variety of printed materials, "news-papers, an old gazetteer, a new art of poetry, an English dictionary, and a bundle of dirty pamphlets . . ." (88). The variety of material mentioned shows that the eighteenth century was an age defined by the recycling of earlier materials. The documents bring to mind not only the ubiquitous, and cheap, printed ephemera being churned out by hacks, but also specialist resources such as rhyming dictionaries or anthologies of beauties that encouraged authors to hone their skills. "A new art of poetry" could be a work of classical criticism, like Horace's, Sydney's or Puttenham's, or it could refer to the actual manuals produced as tools for aspiring poets, such as Edward Bysshe's *Art of English Poetry* (1702) or Charles Gildon's C*omplete Art of Poetry* (1718). In addition to these instructional materials, the aspiring writer also has to secure a garret to compose his work "near the sky" (88). The idea of the garret was not only a fiction, but is an image that brings together the negative conditions of writers with notions of the high-cultural poet. The latter form would enable the original genius discourse where the author's exceptional ability guarantees him an elevated position in society. With regard to the hack, however, there is the discrepancy between place (high) and status (low), and, in satire, the garret can function as a prison that refers to the writer's dependence.

Mountgarret continues his autobiographical account revealing that his first attempt at writing was done in verse, but this proved unsuccessful when it reached publication, which is reminiscent of Ralph's early career. Rather than becoming discouraged, the author turns to prose fiction out of financial necessity. Although poetry often was culturally valued more highly than prose, prose was more lucrative than poetry and less risky for printers and booksellers. There is critical irony again when he relates his

forays into travel writing. He gains all the needed information through research, rather than first-hand experience; there is no need to set foot outside of his garret. There is an opposition in the various types of textual performances the narrator produces. He composes, among others, "surprising love tales," which recall the genre of romance, made popular in the seventeenth century (86). Romance, although popular in society, was rejected because it lacked truth and was far too distant from realism.[30] The author also composes "faithful narratives" (86), following the eighteenth-century form of realism with its significant theme of verisimilitude. This form of mimesis was preferred because it could potentially counteract the danger of fiction by showing that exemplary, probable narratives had social value as didactic and regulatory tools. The comparison of the two genres that were opposed is humorous, as the writer places himself above the debate about the danger or value of fiction by expressing impartiality. In this context, he shows characteristics of the hack, with his willingness to work in any genre for profit. Read more positively, his versatility ensures that he can survive in an ever-changing marketplace.

Significantly, the author calls himself a "Proteus," when referring to his imaginative and imitative ability to compose texts in various genres. Proteus, the mythological God who possessed the power to transform into any shape he desired (*OED*), is the perfect symbol for the eighteenth-century writer's flexibility, which was viewed negatively by some and constructed as a typical trait of the hack. Mountgarret's career again shows a similarity with Ralph's when he reveals that the branch he excelled in the most was politics. The political genre's ephemeral nature was perceived by some to contribute to the devaluation of print and conservatives feared the negative effect unqualified writers would produce on literary culture. The author explains that he just follows fashion and the dominant views, claiming to have "no opinions of my own" (90). The author is constructed along these lines of a conservative's notion of the hack. Political writing forms a link with the typical caricature of the hack, who assumes whichever stance will best assist his securing the most lucrative writing tasks. Regarding the instability of politics, he even admits that he had to abandon some writing projects because they lost their social relevance. The positive quality of the author's versatility is hidden behind the satirical construct of the political hack: his successful negotiation of the volatile and quickly changing field of political writing.

A final comparison of the text's title with its content reveals contradictions regarding the type of authorship being promoted. Mountgarret claims to be authentic, yet his various authorial manifestations reveal a fragmented authorial persona, or sketch,

[30] For more on the conflict in the eighteenth century regarding the forms of the romance and realism, see Margaret Anne Doody (274-93).

which seems less than genuine as it shares characteristics with satirical notions of the hack. Only toward the end of his autobiographical narrative does the author reveal the true purpose behind his "genuine sketch": financial profit. I suggest that the text is criticizing the tendency of some authors to manipulate their commercial involvement. "I have ruined my health, wasted my spirits, and exhausted my flock of wit in the service of my country" (91), he writes, declaring that his cultural importance and service to society deserves to be rewarded with a pension. He concludes with a proposal for subscription publication of a completed "bulky performance," which initially had been slated for publication. However, a disagreement with the bookseller about his remuneration resulted in the contract's being dissolved. His use of the statement "the useful and honorable profession of an author" contrasts sharply with his financially driven text, which reveals the absurdity of hiding the commercial side of authorship. This satire reveals the true nature of modern professional authorship to be "Protean," as illustrated by the author's journey through various alternative writing cultures and genres.

"The Brain-sucker: or, The Distress of Authorship" (1787)[31]

A later piece of satire, "The Brain-Sucker: or, The Distress of Authorship," subtitled a "serio-comic caricature,"[32] presents the bookseller as the contagion that ruins literary culture. Also motivated by a desire for profit and continued control over the commercial market, the caricature of the bookseller exploits the aspiring author, turning him into the scribbler that cranks out texts. His inhumane treatment shows a complete lack of conscience; the writer becomes objectified and, for the Brain-sucker, he is just a tool to help him meet commercial ends. This piece, though not entirely pro-author, forms a link with the discourse of the victimized author, as the satire's hack lacks agency and rights once enslaved by the Brain-sucker, a censure of the author's dependent social condition. The criticism is directed at the commodification of literature and at the control that booksellers have over the print market. However, the satire is multilayered in its criticism of social constructions of authorship and aspirations of social mobility. Reading and writing literature are presented as hazardous to one's mental and physical health. Intellectual activities in general are depicted as dangerous and contrasted with pragmatism and "wholesome" activities. The effect of the satire is a criticism of those who lack education and learning. One meaning of the satire is that the writer is truly inspired by literature, but the bookseller ruins him and is responsible for the devaluation of literature and learning. The satire has an even deeper meaning informed by social stratification, and illustrates the dangers of social mobility, within the context of literary culture. The depiction of the author as a farmer's son who becomes obsessed with literature and attempts to escape his station, using writing as a tool for his social mobility is key. The fact that he ends up on the verge of madness, unable to escape on his own from the Brain-sucker's prison, reveals the impact of elitist notions of authorship on this complex satire which criticizes the author's dependence, but also appears to function as a deterrent to social and literary aspirations.

[31] Parts of this section also appear in the forthcoming publication "'The Brain-sucker: Or, the Distress of Authorship': A Late Eighteenth-Century Satire of Grub Street" by Ingo Berensmeyer, Gero Guttzeit, and Alise Jameson.

[32] "Serio-comic" is a term similar to the tragi-comic and could be viewed as closely linked to drama. For instance, the term is mentioned in an article (translated from French) appearing in the *Gentleman's Magazine* on "Serious Comedy": "The Serio-comic or Mixt Drama exhibits human passions, virtues and vices, which are incompatible both with Tragedy and Comedy" (*Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, vol. XX, London 1750, 32).

The anonymous satire first appeared in the first issue of *The British Mercury,* edited by John Oswald (c. 1760-1793) and printed by James Ridgway.[33] The short-lived magazine published political propaganda, satire, and other literary ephemera, and included etchings by caricaturists James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson. The author was very likely Oswald himself, a Scottish radical, political writer,[34] and poet who lost his life fighting with the French Revolutionary Army. The "Brain-sucker" is told from the point of view of a farmer named Homely in letters addressed to an "absent friend." Homely relates how his imaginative, moody son, Dick, is drawn to London to be a writer. He runs away from his native Yorkshire after his father burns his books, the sources of his first obsession, and the terrifying gateway to Grub Street. In London a bookseller, nicknamed the Brain-sucker, enslaves him. Realizing where he has trekked off to, the father makes it his business to locate Dick and save him from the malevolent Brain-sucker's clutches.

"The Brain-sucker" suggests that poetic inspiration is a pathological condition, but it also presents the hack's economic and physical suffering with a degree of sympathy that is notably lacking in elite verse satires like Pope's *Dunciad.* It satirizes both the idea of poetic authorship as the result of inspiration without formal education[35] and the working conditions of professional hacks. It indirectly supports the professionalization and independence of the author. The implication that reading rots one's brain is present throughout "The Brain-Sucker," given its many references to parasites and maggots. The repertoire of disgust is employed in the form of metaphors for (useless or impractical) knowledge, reading and writing poetry. The metaphors of monstrosity show the reader those negative parts that are cast out of the realm of authorship, and disease and rot are particularly connected to London and the Grub Street garret. As Rogers explains, "[w]riters constantly saw disease as coming to silent life in unobserved crannies, the hidden ulcers of the city. The trope could be applied to the spread of both the Plague and the Fire" (136, see also 143). Dick's characterization even illustrates mental illness caused by his passion for reading, which was very much a trope by the 1750s.[36] For instance, Dick is initially described as displaying "the strongest symptoms of insanity" (15), which include a dualistic personality and mood swings ranging from anger to melancholy: "Sometimes he looked up, with a contumacious countenance, towards heaven, shaking, with impious audacity, his clenched fist; at other times his

[33] A duodecimo volume, the New Edition of 1788, containing all four issues of the magazine (from May 12 to June 23, 1787), was printed by Ridgway and L. MacDonald.

[34] Oswald's work appeared in various periodicals, such as *The World*, *The London Gazetteer*, and the *Political Herald and Review* (T. F. Henderson).

[35] When an abridged, pirated version of the story was printed in *The Historical, Biographical, Literary, and Scientific Magazine*, edited by Robert Bisset (1: 196-200, London 1799), the introduction described it as "exemplifying the effects of superficial learning" (v).

[36] An example of this trope can be found in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752).

arms were folded on his breast, his eyes fixed melancholy on the ground, and the tears trickled down his cheek" (15). He also begins to exercise his creativity in poetically renaming everyday objects. From Homely's point of view, these are useless activities, even harmful, as opposed to the practical, honest activity of farming. Dick's illness and insanity grow as he lives increasingly in his fantasies, occasionally staying out all night. It is revealed that the seeds of this "distemper" (21) were in fact planted by a fellow-farmer's son, George: "This youth, who had been educated at Cambridge, communicated to my son all the learned *maggots* with which his own brain was *infected*. At his departure he left with my son a few books, which served to nourish and increase the *disorder*" (21-22, my italics). Homely views Dick's bookish activities as perverting his mind and resorts to burning these books, instigating Dick's rash decision to run off to London. Books thus indirectly serve as a means of emancipation for Dick. Literature stimulates Dick's aspiration to social mobility and temporarily liberates him from his father. Dick prefers the dead object to his bond with his father and the wholesome values attached to farming the land, because he imagines that through writing he could gain access to forms of social privilege that, as a farmer, would normally be unavailable to him. The equation of reading and writing poetry with disease or insanity in this satire suggests that Dick's attempt to climb the social ladder of authorship should be stopped at any cost. This is especially true when one considers how clearly Homely is defined within his own social sphere and how Dick, although he entertains other wishes, lacks the appropriate social and educational background to make use of his knowledge of literature to successfully negotiate the cultural realm of authorship as a writer.

The satire's complexity is influenced by conservative notions of the elite author, but also by its being written in the vein of a traditional allegorical tragedy. Much of this satire's humor derives from literary allusions that are misunderstood by Homely, taken literally or given a sexual connotation, because he would have only been familiar with the Bible. For instance, in Dick's letter from London to his parents, he confesses that his whole life is now devoted to the nine muses, but the farmer takes this to mean that his son has become a polygamist: "my son had forsaken the faith of his forefathers, turned Saracen, and lived in a state of incest with *nine sisters!* This sad piece of intelligence threw his poor mother into a violent brain fever . . ." (23). In his letter, Dick masks his reality as a slave to the Brain-sucker behind a devotion to the muses or literature, and Homely's misunderstanding forces him to rescue Dick from London's seedy, corruptive influence.[37] Homely thus functions as his savior, the only one that can reform his son. The fact that there is no other possible cure for Dick's malady suggests further that the

[37] London literary culture was often viewed as irreligious, especially by provincial clergymen from about the 1730s on (Fergus).

brain of a farmer is not made for creative work, but only mechanical labor. In this sense, Dick rises in the garret, but his social status declines further as he loses everything in his enslavement to the Brain-sucker.

At the center of the satire is an extremely static representation of the power configuration between bookseller and writer. The Brain-sucker is given complete control over the literary market and fully manipulates Dick, almost to the point of ruin. The story does not depict a direct confrontation between these business-partners. Everything we learn about the Brain-sucker comes from Dick's revelation, which occurs after Homely has already released him from his garret-prison. Considering the limited point of view, the satire reduces the complex commercial and personal networks of eighteenth-century print culture to a conflict between two highly unequal parties: writer and bookseller. The monstrous description of Dick when first discovered by his father illustrates the toll of the Brain-sucker's exploitation and Dick's mistake in assuming he could successfully become a writer: "he turned upon me his hollow eyes, astonished and ashamed—his voice issued from his famished jaws faltering and faint" (24). Upon feeding him ("about twenty pounds of butcher's meat, and . . . a proportionable quantity of strong beer" [25]), he takes on the task of cleaning him up as "the collected filth of several months had formed on his hands a crust like an allegator's scales, his face intersected with frequent lines of party-coloured nastiness, resembled a map of the terraqueous globe . . ." (25-6). The exaggerated master-slave relationship between bookseller and author is visualized in the caricature print that accompanies the text, entitled "The Brain-Sucker, or the Miseries of Authorship" (see figure 3)[38]. The print depicts the filthy and gloomy garret, whose size resembles a prison cell, insinuating the author's state of captivity. Rowlandson shows the opposition of the two figures, contrasting the author's emaciation with the bookseller's portliness, which is strengthened by such details as the lean dog and the meatless bone. The writer is hurriedly scribbling away—notice the hourglass—intensely focused on the task at hand, yet a disgruntled look accompanies his features, perhaps hinting at his understanding that his work will never be complete, as one can imagine that the impossible-to-please bookseller is spouting off directions for the author's next project. Dick has been robbed of his passion for literature and its pleasure.

Dick's enslavement has clearly traumatized him, as is demonstrated not only by the emaciated condition in which his father finds him, but also by his nightmare, which likens his writing for the Brain-sucker to being in hell. At this point, a contemporary level of political reference emerges when we learn that one of Dick's tasks was to write "an Apology for Mr. Hastings" (45), the governor-general of Bengal whose impeachment

[38] The print is not signed by Rowlandson, but most likely attributable to him; see David V. Erdman, 35.

proceedings were the talk of the town in 1787.[39] In his nightmare, Dick is condemned to eternal damnation because of his crime of political propaganda; however, the dream suggests that Grub Street is a worse punishment than all the tortures of hell. After Dick's mind and body are cleansed, he is cured and returns home to the safety of his provincial roots.

[39] One of the three surviving copies of *The British Mercury* is in a collection of political tracts from 1788-89, beginning with Articles exhibited by the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, in Parliament assembled, . . . against Warren Hastings, Esq . . . . (Bodleian Library, shelfmark G Pamph 1192).



Figure 3 Attributed to Thomas Rowlandson, “The Brain-sucker, or the Miseries of Authorship” (1753)

Conclusion

During the early stages of the development of professional authorship in the eighteenth century, a polarization grew out of a convergence of factors: the increase in print media, the lapse of censorship laws, the manufacturing of a political propaganda machine, an excess of writers of various skill, the existence of several writing cultures, and a continued hold on conservative notions of authentic authorship. The polarization made it difficult for authors to reconcile commercial activity and social respectability. And yet, the traditional idea that authors must stand above something as base as financial compensation was becoming outdated and threatened by the commercialization of the print market and the professionalization of writers. Writers were alert to the precariousness of their social esteem, but also demanded more rights as economic professionals, and wrote about it in essays, fictions, and satire, which affected the further development of authorship into the opposing factions of "genuine" authors and hack writers. Ralph's *Case*, for instance, reveals his keen awareness of the paradox of modern society, which was at the heart of the discursive schism: "Wit and Money have been always at War, and always treated one another with reciprocal contempt" (1). The reality of authorial practices shows that definitions of the author could also function as a mask for the booksellers' control, or for the writer's complicity in profiting from the booming market, as in Pope's case. The manipulative discourse was used in a similar fashion in the language of copyright law, which emphasized the Act's aim to be the encouragement of learning and author's rights, while it in fact sustained the monopoly that London booksellers had. Ralph argued for a visible form of economic authorship, and disputed both the author's state of servitude to the booksellers' market and the inequality of the patronage system: "Instead of reproaching Authors . . . for living by their Labours, we ought to reproach ourselves for allowing them no other means to live" (60-61). Ralph claimed that authors possessed an innate characteristic that urged them to pursue this vocation, and he sought to release them from their social and economic shackles by mobilizing them. His solution was to form a professional guild, called the "Society for Incouraging Arts & Sciences," which would protect authors' rights. Only as an outspoken collective could authors retain control of their intellectual products and achieve liberation from their "hackhood," through financial independence and positive social recognition. "Ralph's acceptance of cultural norms about the special qualities and talents of authors deflates his protests against writing as an elitist activity . . ." (Zionkowski "Literary Profession" 17). Ralph's solution for viewing author's productions as commodities of equal value contradicts his perspective on the author's special genius. The *Case* does not resolve the tensions between the natural quality specific to authors and the economic book trade.

In this chapter, I explored how entertaining and critical satires, like Pope's *Dunciad*, also worked to perpetuate the myth of the Grub Street Hack, which was based on the actual practices of professional writers who produced the large amount of political ephemera necessary to feed the propaganda machine. The satirical mythmaking is one example of how print culture can revise writers' personae and thus influence the continued formation of society's dominant notion of the Author. Ralph was just one of the poets whom Pope *de-authored* by thrusting the persona of the hack onto him, after Ralph attempted to engage Pope in a game of authorial satire. Rogers comments on Pope's constructive authority in his satire that "Pope's victims are often 'mythical' rather than individual" (*Grub Street* 177), yet, the effect on the individual victims was very real. Ralph was unsuccessful as a poet and struggled to make a living writing in other genres. Ironically, he achieved the greatest financial success with political propaganda, which enabled him to secure some pensions. Ralph's trajectory as an author is not an atypical example of the profession in the first half of the century, but he is still remembered, if at all, as one of Pope's dunces. Ralph's diverse career recalls Downie's categorization of three types of writers in the first half of the eighteenth century. To the satirized Grub Street hacks, Downie opposes the "gentleman-writer who dabbled in political literature" and individuals intent on turning writing into a lucrative profession (*Harley* 12-13). Ralph occupied similar positions, sometimes unwillingly. His attempt at fashioning himself into the gentlemanly poet at the beginning of his career was subverted when Pope cast him down into Grub Street. Ralph's performance as a poet was not only motivated by a desire to join the ranks of the elite, but also by a desire to make writing a financially viable profession. His wish to make a living from his pen was a driving force behind his relocation to London. Further, the growing conceptualization of the author in one-dimensional terms, which erases the true dynamism of authorship, was in part stimulated by negative discourse, such as the myth of the hack, which was directly opposed to the authentic author. The political scribbler functioned as a foil to define and make certain forms of professional authorship more respectable.

Political propaganda is a principal source of the development of modern authorship. Downie explicates in detail how it was initially introduced and evolved into a tool to express and manipulate public opinion and functioned in opposition to the current government's policies: "Public opinion emerged as a weapon that could be wielded against the establishment" (*Harley* 42). Harley attempted to harness what was recognized as the dangerous, potentially corrupting force of print; the "press was seen as a means of persuading large numbers of men to act in a certain way" (24). I have investigated a similar occurrence of using the press to control and define authorship. The surplus of political propagandists and other professional writers was then turned on by traditionalists who perceived the potential collective power of these writers as a threat. The status quo notion of authorship had to be controlled and maintained,

therefore, these types of writers were excluded from the cultural realm because they went too far in stimulating the public and could potentially subvert literary culture. And yet, one way of making professional writing more acceptable was by building up the writer's socio-cultural role as seer, wit, or teacher who brought knowledge and morals to the reader, thus stimulating the improvement of the individual and society. Constructing authority in this fashion and the influence of cultural values on authorial ideals are explored further in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Polite Altruism and Refining the Professional Author: The Case of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning (1735-1749)[1]

Introduction: The Society's Values and the Development of Authorship

One of the intellectual fruits borne by the cultural ideas that would later form Enlightenment thought was a mid-eighteenth-century group, driven by a desire to improve both society and the status of the author, aptly named The Society for the Encouragement of Learning. Imagine that a set of like-minded individuals, aiming to cater to both the cause of authors and the greater good and improvement of society, tried to eliminate the monopolistic booksellers from the chain of book production. The Society attempted just that. An analysis of the Society's scholarly publications reveals a new form of authorship that is developing, under the influence of the Society's ideological values and cultural practices in the arena of the print market. The Society's views on authorship can be studied in the programmatic writings that they produced about their aims as a group and their views on the realm of print publication. The Society's discourse of politeness fashions elite and scholarly forms of authorship, in line

[1] A version of this chapter was published in as "Enlightenment Authorship?" in *De Achttiende Eeuw* (2011).

with Enlightenment thought.[2] In this chapter, using the Society as a case study, I examine some tensions between eighteenth-century practices and cultural values, particularly how they informed the construction of idealized notions of authorship. The group's (at times contradictory) practices and aims form the subject of this chapter. My argument is centered on practices tied to book production and the print market, and on the Society's ideas and use of polite discourse that are employed to further the conceptualization of the intellectual, learned author. This type of author was ideologically very different from the hack and the literary author, but an investigation of the Society's commercial practices reveals parallels with professional forms of authorship. This case study illustrates the author's condition regarding copyright, booksellers, and the commercial state of the book market and shows how polite, altruistic discourse, such as the form used by the Society, underpins the formation of the modern notion of authorship.

The unique case of the Society's activities surprisingly has not warranted much in-depth research. The group's original and courageous form of publication *sans* booksellers is often mentioned in scholarship on the history of authorship.[3] My account is based in part on Clayton Atto's 1938 article in *The Library* outlining the Society's formation and history and on the manuscripts of the Society's meeting minutes in the British Library. I present the Society as an example of the ways in which cultural values influenced the further development of notions of authorship, during a time when the products of the book market were becoming increasingly diversified. Active from 1735-1749, the Society reveals how both economic and cultural ideals affected the professionalization of the author, and demonstrates the complexities of the (stratified) development of authorship. The Society, quite possibly "the earliest considerable example of amateur publishing on any extended scale" (Atto 264), was created in part with societal improvement in mind. An analysis of the group operates as an illustration of how values inspired by the eighteenth-century culture of politeness, such as sociability, societal and individual improvement, intellectualism, and the dissemination of knowledge, were put into practice.[4] These values shaped the twofold idealistic aim underpinning the Society's business of publishing learned books. The group reasoned that its activities contributed to the social standing of professional writers by aiding the author's independence and construction of cultural authority as well as the stimulation

[2] I take my cue from Richard Sher's *The Enlightenment and the Book*, an investigation of how Enlightenment thought and cultural values informed author-publisher relations as well as practices of book production and dissemination.

[3] For example Sher, Brean Hammond's *Professional Imaginative Writing*, and Diane Leenheer Zimmerman. F. Viglione's article "Paolo Rolli and the Society for the Encouragement of Learning" is an exception.

[4] Markman Ellis offers a thorough exploration of polite culture. See also Sher 16.

of learning and society's valuation of knowledge. Authorship is characterized by contradictions between the individuals' ideals and the socio-economic reality of the print market, especially in relation to the discourse legitimizing the author's profession in the name of literary property and its reliance on presenting the author as a victim. However, the influence of the commercial market on the Society's functioning is revealed to be unavoidable, considering the group's main activities involved the manufacturing and selling of books. Also, the author's struggle for financial independence and ownership of his intellectual labor is perhaps difficult to reconcile with ideas of social improvement and the conviction that access to knowledge should be democratized and free. I argue that the discourse used by the Society in support of authors' rights pushed the development of authorship in a less economic, more socially privileged direction. These conflicting points, as illustrated by the Society's history, demonstrate the dynamism of the culture of politeness and the role it played in constructing elite authorship at a distance from commercial considerations. The reliance on discourse assisted the masking of commercial practices and influenced the hierarchical classification of types of authorship and print matter.

In my investigation, I attend to a set of cultural values that are crucial in the conceptualization of authorship in general. Authorship is marked by an incongruity between developing theoretical or ideal notions of the author as it gained more cultural prestige as a profession and the diverse writing and publishing strategies available to individual writers, depending on the genre.[5] During the process of defining the author, idealized characteristics such as originality and self-sufficiency were developed within authorial discourse. In contrast, authors still turned to more dynamic and versatile writing practices such as imitation, anonymity, collaboration, compilation, which uncovers the author's flexibility and dependence on other figures involved in the processes of composition, printing, and publication. Additionally, some of these practices, connected to commercially-driven authorship, were excluded from some culturally acceptable notions of authorship.[6]

Founded in 1735, the Society itself foundered financially and officially disbanded in 1749, according to Atto, "as a consequence of the lack of interest of its members and the antagonism of the booksellers" (264). I argue that this case study involves two paradoxes. One principal raison d'être of the Society was to reward authorship with more respect, liberty, and monetary profit, which meant circumventing publishers' monopoly of the book trade. In the first paradox, the Society was financially successful only to the extent that it engaged in successful business agreements with the despised

[5] See Hammond's *Professional Imaginative Writing*.

[6] See my investigation of the construction of the hack in Chapter 1.

booksellers. In the second, the Society aimed to free the author from the bookseller's shackles but, in taking on the role of the author's manager or patron, the Society found itself replicating many of the booksellers' actions, hence curtailing authorial liberty yet without generating a lucrative alternative to the book market. Nonetheless, to justify their actions and failure its members presented themselves as cultivated and influential intellectuals of society victimized by the booksellers. Given the significance that booksellers have in this case study, I also explore their dominant function in operating the print market in general. The manner in which the bookseller informed the development of authorship is illustrated by a discussion of those booksellers, for example, Andrew Millar, who had publishing agreements with the Society. While relating the Society's history and analyzing their aims, I also discuss the general socio-historical context of eighteenth-century writing cultures. Certain individual Society members are examined in greater detail: the group's first secretary, Alexander Gordon; James Thomson; and those who were formerly booksellers, like Gordon. I conclude the chapter with a synopsis of the Society's legacy. Recognition of the Society's project illustrates how its members perspective on authorship, expressed through a repertoire of politeness and strategies of constructing authority by means of high-quality productions of scholarly works refined print culture and the definition of the author.

The Society's History and Aims

Organized in 1735, the Society offered mainly scientific, lesser-known authors, translators, and editors of philosophical, scientific, or historical works of scholarship an alternative means to reach the public rather than submitting to the bookseller's monopoly (Atto 263-64). As is the case with subscription publication, the Society's publications were funded by a form of collective patronage. A modern strategy used by professional authors, Betty Schellenberg describes subscription publication "as a synthesis of a traditional patronage system and a market-based print culture" (109). The individual members acted as patrons: the group's income stemmed from a membership fee of ten guineas and annual dues of two guineas. The Society functioned as publisher and worked with various printers, including Samuel Richardson, and at times had publishing agreements with the booksellers Andrew Millar, John Gray, and John Nourse (MS BM Add. 6185, f. 23). Once the costs of book production and distribution were reimbursed, any surplus funds were awarded to the author. Significant for its orchestration was the Society's committee consisting of 24-30 managers, five of whom

became the quorum, or minimum number of members necessary to conduct a meeting (see MS BM Add. 6184). At the committee meetings, decisions were made regarding such issues as business agreements with authors, booksellers, and printers; which authors to publish; and printing arrangements.

Over its lifetime, the Society had a total of 133 members: they were not just learned men, antiquarians, university fellows, and ministers seeking in part to publish their ideas, but also gentlemen, members of the highest echelons of the nobility, and businessmen. The original composition of the group shows diversity: members included "Dr. John Ward, George Sale the orientalist, Roger Gale the antiquary, George Lewis Scott the mathematician, and three of the most eminent doctors of the time, Richard Mead, James Douglas, and Alexander Stuart" (Atto 265). All members wished to cultivate knowledge and improve the reputation of authors of a scholarly cast within society. Some members were less active than others and perhaps only wanted to enjoy the prestige of being connected to such a distinguished group, considering the negligence of many members in paying their membership dues. The secretary was salaried at £50 annually (BM Add. MS. 6185; f. 16). The first member to hold this position, between 1736 and 1741, was Alexander Gordon (c. 1692-1754?), a Scotsman with diverse interests. Initially an opera singer, Gordon developed a fascination for Egyptian antiquity that the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* evaluates as "border[ing] upon the obsessional," only to abandon the whole pursuit in 1741 in a "most extraordinary change of direction" that saw him sail to America as secretary to the new governor of Carolina. There he enjoyed considerable financial success as a business attorney, dying a wealthy man in 1754 (Brown).[7] This is all the more remarkable because Gordon had enjoyed a dishonest and manipulative reputation while in England. For example, Iain Gordon Brown explains that

> [a] succession of unrealized ambitions, incomplete scholarly projects, and occupations taken up and abandoned in despair or heavy debt, a growing reputation for less than honest dealing, and a persistent discontent at his lot all conspired to increase the level of contempt in which Gordon was held.

Among the various positions he held prior to serving as the Society's secretary, was that of bookseller, but he was said to be ill-suited for business: '"he had some learning, some ingenuity, much pride, much deceit, and very little honesty"' (Nichols *Literary Anecdotes* 5: 699, qtd. in Brown). That some of the clearly "anti-bookseller" Society's members had in fact been in the business (another was David Lyon) is not so peculiar.

[7] The *ODNB* is incorrect on the dates Gordon served as the Society's president. He had planned to go abroad in 1739, but stayed on because the elected candidate, Dr. Baylie, declined the appointment (Atto 272).

Such professional experience was surely deemed useful for the Society's publication practices, but perhaps Gordon's lack of skill influenced the Society's not always sharp business sense and their contractual decisions. However, with their first-hand knowledge as booksellers, the members could polish the group's rhetoric to elevate its altruistic initiative above the booksellers' profitable trade. Remarkably, their cultural ideals encouraging independence, improvement and knowledge convinced them to return to the publishing world as amateurs, even after some of its members had failed to achieve much success as professional booksellers.

In its proclamation of 1735, the Society's aims reveal a degree of friction, particularly between the issues of democratic dissemination and availability of knowledge and professional authorship. The group proposed

> to supply the want of a regular and publick encouragement of learning; to assist authors in the Publication, and to Secure to them the entire Profits of their own works; to institute a republic of letters, for the promoting of arts and sciences, by the necessary means of profit, as well as by the noble motives of praise and emulation. (MS BM. Add. 6184, f. 1.)

There is a tension between supporting an author's right to a lucrative profession and the Society's stipulation that the group assume a responsibility to public service. I argue that the author, through his association with the Society, is implicitly connected to the state of being a social exemplar. The prospect of public recognition and a regulatory function also act as motivators of the Society's actions and this shapes their notions of authorship.

The Society's uncertain beginning appears to have augured its later fate. The members had planned on Dr. Richard Bentley's *Manilius* as their first publication, an offer which Bentley first accepted, then declined, subsequently declaring that he "'condemned . . . the whole undertaking'" of the Society (Monk *Life of Richard Bentley* [1833] 2: 395, qtd. in Atto 266). The members lamented Bentley's backing out of the deal while criticizing Bentley's manipulative behavior and his preference to be published by a bookseller. It is unclear what specifically caused him to change his mind or what "'ill-grounded objections'" he held against the Society (Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes* 2: 91, qtd. in Atto, 266). Perhaps he recanted when offered a more profitable deal from a bookseller. Yet, the letter from Secretary Gordon to fellow-member Dr. Richardson is quite revealing of the Society's stance toward booksellers, although given its tone, might also illustrate Gordon's idiosyncratic qualities. He complains of Bentley's

> throw[ing] it into the hands of a common Bookseller, rather than in those of the Society, which has not only made several gentlemen of letters and high life exclaim against the discouraging and ungenerous act, but will be recorded to the learned world, perhaps, when he is dead and rotten. Such men deserve fleecing from Booksellers . . . . (qtd. in Atto, 266)

Gordon's letter is another instance of the Society's altruistic discourse contrasted with commercial profit. The Society presents itself as dignified, superior, and philanthropic, for its members are concerned not with getting rich but with the improvement of the author's lot and of society as a whole. The Society's superiority is opposed to the "common" booksellers, who, according to the Society, are only interested in profit and entertainment. Yet Gordon's words present Bentley's book as an object that can be "thrown"—treated roughly. Rather than using a more customary phrase like "consigning it to a bookseller," the aggressive expression recalls perceptions of commodities as disposable objects and ultimately aligns the Society with those "common" booksellers. Gordon's discourse reveals an understanding of the book's quality in contrast with the Society's valuation of intellectual works and forms a link with the various forms of print ephemera produced by hacks, regarded by some as worthless.[8] However, it should be pointed out that dealing in intellectual books could be profitable and that the Society's choice of books to be published was not the main reason for the poor state of their finances, as will become clear.

The Society continued to struggle, as shown by the pitiful sales of the next work they decided to publish in 1737, the form and content of which illustrates the type of books the Society valued. The publication was an edition of the dissertations of the Greek philosopher and rhetorician, Maximus Tyrius, "with the notes and emendations of the late learned Dr. Davies of Cambridge, under the care of Mr. Prof. Ward" (MS BM Add. 6185, f. 37). The octavo book included a preface written by John Ward, followed by the Greek text with its Latin translation on facing pages. Appearing in 1740, this Greek philosophical work sold poorly, partially because political factors hindered trade. England's war with France discouraged exportation to the continent: "The copies of the book 'lay by' until 1747 when 408 out of an edition of 600 were remaindered at three shillings a copy after more than forty copies had been given away (Atto 267)."[9] John Davies was a classicist and the president of Queen's college from 1717 until he became vice-chancellor of the university in 1726; he had died in 1732 (Cooper). Dr. John Ward (1678/9-1758), Society member, was responsible for the preservation of the Society's

[8] The commercialization of the press and the conservative view on the quality of hack writing is explored in Chapter 1.

[9] Ward wrote of this in the Society's memoirs: "There was indeed a very large and particular account of this book published the same year in the *Acta eruditorum*, printed at Leipsic. And as this was a work equally designed for the benefit of the learned in foreign parts, as of those at home; had a number of copies been sent abroad at that time by the booksellers, they might very probably have come to a good market. But as this was omitted, and the war with France broke out some time after, which discouraged the exportation, it unfortunately lay by to the great detriment of the sale" (MS BM Add. 6185, f. 161).

minutes and records, which he compiled into a coherent manuscript.[10] A member of various societies, Ward became professor of rhetoric at Gresham College in 1720. I have been unable to unearth the details of Davies's work making its way into Ward's hands, but his own translations and essays on classical Rome had earned him a learned reputation (McConnell). This example is especially relevant from a perspective of authorship, for it presents us with the centuries-deceased Maximus Tyrius and the recently deceased translator and editor of that work, Davies. Publication obviously does not benefit these authors, which raises questions regarding the Society's motives. The members, like the booksellers, might be capitalizing on these dead authors' reputations, but the Society functioned differently from the publishing world. If the work had sold well, the profits would have gone to the collective, to be distributed amongst Davies's family and Professor Ward, after the Society's costs for production had been reimbursed. Alternatively, one might view the example as proof of the Society's altruistic ideals, driving its members to publish the works of late, great authors for the sake of the dissemination of knowledge and the improvement of society.

The type of books published by the Society (scientific and philosophic treatises, ancient works in Latin, etc.) shows that its intention was not to popularize the growing field of *belles lettres*. The Society's publications express a concern with fashioning an elitist image and represent early practices of the stratification of authorship and culture, which anticipate canon formation. For example, Johnson's *Irene* was suggested once as a publication possibility, but Atto remarks that it was never seriously considered because the Society's members did not deal in contemporary literary works with an entertainment character (Atto 276). However, the Society's focus on voluminous works with an intellectual character, although not fitting with the democratization of knowledge, also connects to the Society's advancement of the author's social situation. The Society's dignified status awarded a standard of high quality to its publications, thus strengthening the author's authority by association.

The Society's production of a publication catalogue of specialized titles that limited the possibility of publishing a "best-seller" and the war between England and France were not the only economic factors hindering the Society's financial progress. Clifford Siskin points out that there was in fact a slowing down in the book trade, a kind of depression during the middle of the century. His explanation deconstructs views of the eighteenth century that project a narrative of progression onto the book trade and regard it as continuously expanding and growing ever more profitable (*The Work of Writing* 160-61). Statistics support this claim: "the number of London booksellers

[10] The Society's meeting minutes and members' correspondence make up a collection of nine volumes (MSS BM Add. 6184-6192), which are housed in the British Library. Atto states that they were first "presented to the British Museum in 1810" (264 n2).

dropped by more than half—from 151 to 72 between 1735 and 1763" and the number of published books was strongly reduced during the 1740s (161).[11] Significantly, Siskin does not view this reduction as a depression but rather as what he terms "profitless prosperity" because these decades were not marked by "a collapse of economic activity but . . . a failure to induce the flow of capital. This distinction is crucial . . . it was the activity that prospered *even during the contraction* which helped to produce the means of reversing it" (161). In other words, writing and reading printed text prospered during a period when books actually were not selling well because the periodical was booming. Yet one must not underestimate that the practice of sharing books, for example, in reading societies, was also common. Given these details, it is no wonder that the Society fought to find a stable home in the book trade and to compete successfully with booksellers.

From a financial point of view the Society, owing debts and facing bankruptcy, met an exceptionally bleak end when it disbanded in 1749. However, the group did enjoy some success. Despite the precarious beginning, as societies go it enjoyed a relatively long life of 13 years, which included a "few books which repaid the expenses of publication, such as Dr. Alexander Stuart's *Muscular Motion* (1738)" (Atto 269). Stuart (1673?-1742), a Scotsman, had practiced as a ship surgeon and briefly in London before studying medicine at Leiden under Boerhaave from 1709-11 (Guerrini). Stuart's education was sponsored by his correspondent Hans Sloane and David Hamilton (another Scot and a physician of Queen Anne's). After establishing himself as a physician back in London, Stuart distinguished himself amongst other things by being elected to the Royal Society (1719) and successfully passing examination for a license from the Royal College of Physicians of London (1720), which later admitted him as a fellow in 1728. That same year, he was "awarded the MD from Cambridge . . . and named one of Queen Caroline's physicians-in-ordinary" (Guerrini). Around this time, Stuart returned to the subject of muscular motion and worked on revising his thesis. He gave a lecture on this topic at the Royal Society in 1738. That same year he offered his revised "treatise written by himself, both in Latin and English" to the Society, of which he had been a member since its founding, and the committee agreed to assist with publication (MS BM Add. 6185; f. 47). According to the committee's report on the general meeting from 2 February 1738, when this occurred, Stuart had also been elected one of the Society's new committee members, another being Professor Ward (50). The work was printed by Samuel Richardson who had started printing for the Society in 1736 although he was not a member. Richardson even helped fund the costs of some of the Society's publications, like *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* (1740) (Dussinger "Richardson"). As a printer,

[11] See also Alvin Kernan's *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print* (61).

Richardson gave assistance to several other societies, such as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Booksellers Society, and had offered his printing services to some to produce education manuals (Dussinger).[12] The Society's edition of Stuart's influential work on physiology, *Dissertatio de structura et motu musculari*, was published in quarto, with illustrations, on 26 May 26 with a print run of 300 copies.[13] Through his medical research, Stuart gained further distinction: the Academy of Bordeaux gave him a prize for *Motu musculari*, and the "Royal Society awarded him its Copley medal in 1740 in recognition of his research on muscles" (Guerrini). By 1740, the sales of Stuart's treatise had completely reimbursed the Society's production costs for its publication assistance and "the committee directed the treasurer to deliver [Stuart] the remaining copies, and reassign the right of impression, which was done accordingly" (75). The profit Stuart earned would have been welcome since the doctor constantly fought to dig himself out of debt despite his distinguished social status. The motivating factor in Stuart's republication of his dissertation should not be solely attributed to cultural ideals of disseminating knowledge or a desire to further his standing in the scholarly field.[14] Stuart's book is the only publication managed by the Society that reimbursed their capital while they still had a publishing agreement with the booksellers.[15]

[12] See also W. M. Sale biography of Richardson for an account of his charitable activities as a printer.

[13] Stuart's work was based on his dissertation, published in Leiden, 1711 as *Dissertatio medica inauguralis de structura et motu musculari*.

[14] "Despite his apparent success as a practitioner Stuart was continually in financial difficulties. He borrowed money to invest in the South Sea Bubble in the early 1720s and lost heavily, and in 1727 was forced to the expedient of turning over his assets to his wife with the exception of his manuscripts, which he hoped to sell to pay off some of his debts" (Guerrini). Stuart had even hoped that his remaining research could be published posthumously by subscription to ease the burden of debt on his wife. However, Stuart's bequest was refused and his unpublished work was left for his wife to sell for piddling amounts.

[15] "A contract was first made with three booksellers, which commenced February the 3, 1737, and continued three years. By that contract the profit of the booksellers was upon an average about £30 per cent which some members of the Society thought very exorbitant, and all saw it was too much. . . . And it was not to be expected, that the booksellers would discover all those mysteries of their art without some additional advantage to themselves. Nor could a more favorable opportunity have offered to the committee for gaining this knowledge; since the only books printed by the Society during the continuance of this contract were that of Dr. Stuart *De motu musculari*, Sr. William Keith's *History of Virginia*, Mr. Carte's *Letters*, and professor Stuart's *Necessity of revelation*, none of which were very large or expensive. And besides, the first of them repaid the Society, and the author had the remaining copies delivered up to him, within a year after the publication . . ." (BM MSS 6185, f. 159).

The Growth of Public Power and Sociability

Considering both the necessity of collaboration between the Society's members and authors, and the significance of the public sphere for the Society's functioning, this section explores the cultural value of sociability. Many factors stimulated the creation of social connections: an increase in printed material, the growth of literacy, and the popularity of coffee-houses and clubs as public arenas to exchange new ideas and discuss political views as well as to form social and professional networks. The public sphere has been fittingly termed "Enlightened" by James Van Horn Melton, rather than "bourgeois," because it was not primarily determined by class but contained a mix of nobles and middle-class men. The alternative description also avoids both the connotation of subversion or rebellion and "a certain teleology" that the term "bourgeois" carries with it (11). Melton explains three principles on which the public sphere was based: inclusiveness, criticism, and publicity. "[R]eason and not the authority or identity of the speaker" was most significant, so anyone possessing it could belong; the individual was free to critique and to debate issues and to express his/her opinion on any subject from art to government; and the "public sphere was hostile to secrecy" so that there was a preference for transparency, surely an effect of the political turmoil of the seventeenth century (8). All three aspects of the public arena, stimulated by venues for sociability, should be coupled with the mediatization of society attributable to print. Print became another public channel to communicate thought and to interact with others. As the literate public grew, so too did the demand for reading materials, and fiction gradually lost its stigma as a dangerous or corrupting power in the social realm. With print's aspects of relative fixity and increasing availability, print could potentially function as a didactic tool also employed for social regulation and homogenization while controlling the circulation of knowledge, despite the lack of censorship. Yet, at the same time, commerce continued to grow, strengthening public taste which in turn began to determine the print market. The public sphere, now an arena of heterogeneous opinionated voices, became difficult to completely control or influence.

The eighteenth century is marked by the hustle and bustle of socializing and cooperation amongst individuals. Poets and scholars mingle with nobles and merchants to share their thoughts, to discuss works-in-progress and to develop ideas via printed products. Even the composition and publication processes of texts should be perceived as collaborative because of the multiple actors involved in these ventures such as booksellers, printers, patrons, and the author's contemporaries. The cooperative spirit of authorship is often neglected or erased, especially in traditional authorship and literary history studies. The dynamism is covered up by a simplified narrative depicting

a smooth, progressive evolution from imitation and the patronage system to the ideology of original genius where the revered independent author reigns supreme. However, eighteenth-century society's increasing "awareness of, and . . . preference for, the social character of human nature and human society" (Sher 16) was praised by Samuel Johnson, who, paradoxically, is often regarded as *the* model of so-called modern authorship—that is, of the solitary, self-sufficient, creative man of letters.[16] Johnson was recorded by his biographer and protégé, James Boswell, as acknowledging the significance of the power of cooperation with its potential for developing and increasing knowledge while bettering humanity:

> *Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory*, is the great test of truth. A system, built upon the discoveries of a great many minds, is always of more strength, than what is produced by the mere workings of any one mind, which, of itself, can do little. There is not so poor a book in the world that would not be a prodigious effort were it wrought out entirely by a single mind, without the aid of prior investigators. (Boswell 1: 246, my italics)

Johnson's awareness of the inconsistencies that exist between "human experience," or practice, and theory is of central importance to understanding the development of authorial practices towards the limiting definitions and ideologies of authorship. Johnson's view echoes the dynamism of authorship and scientific study that contradicts discourse while epitomizing proactive qualities such as the cooperative side of sociability and cultural improvement: the more minds that contribute to something, the more authority and value it deserves.

[16] Compare Kernan's *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print* and Helen Deutsch's "'The Name of the Author.'" See also Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

The Rise of the Author?

To understand more fully the relevance of what the Society attempted in their endeavor to support the cause of authors, a brief sketch of the complex social background of the concept of the author is necessary. Authorship is often taken for granted and consumers of textual products project onto past writers a seemingly transcendental notion, influenced by an idealized construct of the autonomous author who singlehandedly creates a literary masterpiece purely from his own imagination. However, reliance on such a notion results in the neglect of other actors and forces that affect the production of writing. Editing and printing processes, for example, or the cultural, economic, and political climate can influence the writing, publication, and sale of texts. Because of the commercialization of print, the material form also becomes significant in affecting the public's view of the writer's authorial identity. Abstract definitions of the author only serve to distance one from the packaging of books. The object's design can reveal much about the construction of knowledge, the self-presentation of authors themselves, the function of publishers, aesthetic values, and the transformation of reading practices. In Chapter 1, I explained how authors struggled to establish agency and meaningful cultural reputations in an often negative social atmosphere in which the profession was satirized and granted little merit. As illustrated by satire, the stereotype of the Grub Street hack was a dominant fixture in this climate and demeaned the status of writers by representing them as monstrous, obtuse, fickle, and profit-driven. Another example of a negative definition of writers can be found in the connotation of the derogatory term "scribbler," which refers to something unreadable and therefore worthless (Ross 232). Ironically enough, a group of writers that included the likes of Swift and Pope, who held traditional views on authorship, reclaimed this negative term by naming their club The Scriblerians.

While the author's social worth and property rights were heatedly debated, a specific cultural discourse was developed to help justify and shape the profession's values. At the same time, however, some forms of discourse can also be regarded as working against authors. An example of this paradox is the introduction of copyright in 1710. Prior to the Statute of Anne, the Stationers' Company enjoyed a monopoly of the entire printing and publication enterprise. The Stationers had initially formed something like a guild to control competition and production and eventually won support from the crown. This cooperation had advantages for both sides. By working for the crown, the Stationers further ensured the crown's authority to control its literate public as censorship was made easier. Meanwhile, royal support strengthened the Stationers' monopoly of the trade, for only those works approved by a member of the company could legally be printed (Zimmerman 191-92). Regarding ownership of the texts at this

stage, John Feather explains that "[o]nce it had been registered, the copy was the sole property of the person who had registered it, provided that he had the right to make the entry in the first place" (Feather "From Rights in Copies to Copyright" 198).

The full title of the 1710 Statute, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by Vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or Purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned," invokes a false concern for the social and economic interests of authors (Rose "The Author in Court" 199). The cultural ideals of spreading knowledge, intellectualism, and learning referenced in this repertoire of societal improvement forms a screen for the economic motivations of the Statute. The Society's members employ a similar repertoire in their programmatic writings, leading one to question their philanthropic activities. Diane Leenheer Zimmerman regards this landmark legislation "as a compromise between the demands of the Stationers for protection of its copyrights and the growing numbers . . . who were developing a distaste for the economic consequences of monopolies" (193). Although copyright was limited to fourteen years and the printed works no longer had to be registered, authors still faced struggles similar to those under the dominance of the Stationers as the Statute primarily served booksellers. Feather reveals that the "so-called Copyright Act of 1710 mentions neither copyright nor authors; it was little more than a codification, an inadequate and inaccurate codification as it proved, of existing book trade practices." 208-9). Moreover, the "author's right to be treated as the creator and owner of literary property is not defined in any English statute before the Copyright Act of 1814" (191). The Society thus took as one of their duties the advancement of the author's cultural reputation and his financial situation, since the group's activities were also aimed at awarding him a more professional and independent status.

The case of *Donaldson v. Becket* (1774) has relevance for a comprehensive understanding of the history of copyright in England because this ruling finally decided the debate between perpetual copyright on the one hand and limited copyright on the other. The effect of the ruling put an end to perpetual copyright, which violated the first Copyright Act (Siskin *Work of Writing* 109). The decision appears to support the author's battle for more control of his intellectual property. With *Donaldson v. Becket*, the Statute of Anne's original ruling that copyright should lapse after 14 years was finally enforced, putting an end to the booksellers' dishonest practice of producing texts as if perpetual copyright were the order of the day, which reinforced their reigning monopoly. Though seemingly advantageous for writers, perpetual copyright exposed writers to be "a means to a specific economic end for the monopolists—a weapon wielded by the booksellers" (Siskin 111). The decision of House of Lords was intended to break the trade monopoly, and not necessarily to aid the writer's struggle for agency (111). The government's decision also made works whose copyright had expired available for resale by their author. If the writer was no longer alive, the work would enter the public domain. This change is relevant from a perspective of democratizing

literacy and learning because the works of dead authors, which had previously been pirated, much to the detriment of the booksellers practicing perpetual copyright, legally belonged to the public (Altick 53).

Given the growing sense of individualism characterizing the period as well as the significance of personal responsibility in this debate on perpetual copyright, economics, and liberty, it is worth mentioning John Locke's ideas on property rights. Locke argued that if an individual invests time and energy into producing something, then that creation becomes the individual's property without question. Locke's extension of this idea to intellectual activity was employed in the defense of professional authorship, including in debates on perpetual versus limited copyright, where a stance of pro-perpetuity was viewed as strengthening the author's position in society. Johnson, for example, although a proponent of the encouragement of learning in society, supported perpetual copyright because he believed that it gave the writer more power over his work. However, he was very aware that such a view supporting the commercial aspect of the book trade contrasted with his investment in a democratic public sphere.[17] In other words, in support of the author's ownership of his textual property, commercial considerations began to affect discursive constructions of the professional author. Zimmerman summarizes how authorial independence becomes linked with commercialized authorship: "to Locke, security in one's property was not solely an economic interest, but a liberty one as well. . . . [I]t became increasingly common to hear the argument that authors were intellectual laborers and that they had a 'right' to protection for their work product" (196-97). Other voices in the debate went outside the realm of labor and, while often arguing for perpetual copyright, regarded ownership as the inherent right of the author based on his originality (Bisla 182). More in line with the democratic ideal of the free circulation of knowledge were those who viewed abstract ideas as no longer being private property once they had been expressed and published (Rose "The Author in Court" 227).[18] This perspective suggests that once read, a book would become not only the reader's material possession but also an abstract one. This idea of the textual object's becoming appropriated by the reader via interaction reflects eighteenth-century forms of engaged reading that produce critical rewritings of the textual product. Jerome Christensen summarizes the discursive process that brought the author into existence by means of the medium of print, which assigned the completely autonomous writer with a mythical status of authority, yet he mentions the significant role of the reader in this process: "The press made possible the man of letters, but it also determined his equivocal stature. Publication increasingly made

[17] See George Justice: "[Johnson] acknowledges that the ideal and the reality of the literary marketplace—and the public sphere it brings into being—will always conflict" (106).

[18] See also Susan Eilenberg "Copyright's Rhetoric and the Problem of Analogy."

possible authorial independence . . .; yet publication depended on an eager, intelligent, and affluent public, which bought, stored, and occasionally read books" (7-8). The role of an educated audience in the publication network and their influence on professional writing cultures became silenced by conceptualizations of the author as acting independent from the print market and public opinion, overemphasizes the author's authority and autonomy.

The Society's attempt to revolutionize the book trade and their problematic association with the booksellers can only be fully grasped if the standard method of operation of the eighteenth-century book market is explained. Despite some form of copyright since the 1710 Statute, published authors were not in possession of their intellectual property because, to enter the printed world, they were forced to sell the copyright to a publisher. The difficulty for, especially new, authors to make a living solely by writing, was partially due to the London monopoly on the book trade (Gallagher 156). The publisher then made decisions about the edition, number of copies, and printing arrangements. Once printed, the books were then shipped to the booksellers, the great mediators between authors and their audience (Darnton "What Is the History of Books?" 75-78). Sher explains that these terms, publisher and bookseller, were often used to mean the same thing, because during this period many publishers were also booksellers (xxiv). That the distinction between these two roles is fluid might have contributed to the bookseller's monopoly, which might have been less prominent had publishers and booksellers been separate entities. Some authors could make a comfortable living if they had a patron supporting them or if they went the alternative route of subscription publication, a method with prospects of enjoying more control over book production and more financial independence if there was enough interest in the work. For example, Pope's translation of Homer earned him a fortune by means of subscription, around £5000 (McLaverty 189). Although in theory the copyright returned to the author after 14 years, as mentioned, this was not the general practice until after the *Donaldson v. Becket* ruling in 1774. When the copyright did come back into the author's hands, it was rare that a text would remain popular long enough to warrant a resale. Gallagher argues that the return of a useless copyright symbolized the author's humiliation stemming from the battle for authorial agency and financial stability (196). Gallagher maintains that the author's state of "dispossession" marked a form of discourse combining "victimization and heroism," based on ideas of the author as possessor of intellectual property. This discourse strongly influenced the emergence of the definition of the author as autonomous. Some authors revised and subverted the negative construction of the Grub Street hack to serve their honorable purpose (155). The author's reliance on these kinds of subversive tropes to construct authority forms a link with the Society's discourse used to distance them from dishonest booksellers and the exploitation of authors. The Society's views not only constructed authority for the

group and deconstructed the superiority of booksellers in the realm of print culture, but even encouraged its members to change their business relations with booksellers.

The Society's Relationship to Booksellers and Authors

Initially, the Society had a publishing agreement with booksellers: in exchange for information on "'how to treat with the printers, purchase paper, lodge their printed copies'" and so forth, the booksellers received a fee and were allowed to sell the Society's books (MS BM Add. 6191, f. 22, qtd. in Atto 273). Although the business arrangement was strict, the members constantly fought against cooperating with booksellers, which was blamed for their poor profits. For example, they charged that the booksellers' "enormous allowance of thirty three per cent if not more, for vending their books, have brought the affairs of the society low, and defeated hitherto the generous intention of its institution . . ." (MS BM Add. 6185, f. 76-7). Therefore, the Society reduced the percentage to fifteen. According to some members, the booksellers also failed to advertise the Society's works enough because their meager compensation was hardly an incentive to do so (Atto 274). The members' dissatisfaction with the uncooperative tradesmen influenced their repertoire of blame and culminated in the dissolution of the publishing agreements: "it is natural to conclude, that most of the trade are in a plain opposition to the prosperity of this generous and disinterested institution . . ." (MS BM Add. 6185, f. 99). In 1741, against the booksellers' advice, the Society thus took the drastic step of vending their publications themselves in a special warehouse open to both booksellers and "gentlemen." Frustrated that the booksellers would not bend to their whims, this unique move was clearly meant as an affront to the monopoly holders and, paradoxically, as a way to gain more authority in the commercial sphere. The Society wished to have a stronger foothold in the market but refused to adhere to its rules because they desired more profit and did not wish to support the commodification of culture.

Given the Society's efforts in cutting the bookseller out of the publishing equation, and the group's decision to award the author all book profits, it is safe to speculate that the majority of its members shared a similar perspective on authorship to those who were fed up with the bookseller's determining practices. James Ralph, for example, was responsible for republicizing and applauding the Society's failed initiative almost ten years after its demise. As we saw in the previous chapter, in his *The Case of Authors* (1758) Ralph lamented the bookseller's exploitation of the author and advanced the trope of

Ralph applauds the Society's unique endeavor and charges the booksellers, "Masters of all the Avenues to every Market," with the Society's failure (60). Ralph's text reveals that conditions for authors had not improved much a decade after the Society's end, and that discourse exaggerating the author's oppression increased while authors became more mobilized and self-possessed. Yet one should bear in mind that representations like Ralph's slavery trope are terribly black-and-white and fail to attend to the literary marketplace's complexities, but they are employed to critique society. Sher, for instance, calls for further investigation of author-publisher relations. Although booksellers held a crucial position in print market, the stereotype as neglectful or abusive does not fit with those who collaborated closely with authors and provided them with generous commissions. In certain cases, booksellers functioned as a new form of patronage.[19] To illustrate these complexities, Sher presents Andrew Millar's dual business attitude: he had quite a positive reputation among writers and showed generosity, especially toward those authors who sold well. Yet, his aggressive and selfish business practices, like outbidding other booksellers, soured his relationship with many authors and booksellers (282-90).

In the end, one might question whether the Society was in fact striving for the author's increased independence.[20] Instead, the group appeared keen to take over the role of business manager to the author. For instance, the articles of contract with authors included limitations on the author's liberty to publish additional editions via subscription or to reprint any work published by the Society. In this way, the Society remained in charge of regulating the price and authors could not increase their profits. Articles II and VIII of the Society's contract with authors explicitly states that

> no work be printed by the assistance of this society, the author of which has taken, or shall take, subscriptions for the printing thereof. . . . That no work shall be printed by this society, the author whereof will not give full power to the society to reprint the same at pleasure, in case the author, or any person or persons under him, shall raise, or cause to be raised, the price above what the committee have set thereon. (MS BM Add. 6184, f. 33).

The Society was acting on a desire to be in command of its competition. The members wished to remain in complete control of their publications, including the marketing side. Although this form of amateur publication did not really take hold, its practices resemble those of bookseller congers.

[19] For example, Boswell's publishers went out of their way to support him (Sher 199).

[20] This paragraph is based on Ward's manuscript of the Society's memoirs and minutes (MS BM Add. 6185).

A closer investigation of Millar, a bookseller who had an arrangement with the group, demonstrates the power dynamic in the author-bookseller configuration and shows the Society's similarity to booksellers. One critical concern includes how the author's performance played out under the circumstances imposed by the bookseller and, more broadly, by the print market's regulations. In this regard, the bookseller resembles an instrument of authority, given the economic force he enacts over the author's career. At the same time, booksellers held more legal responsibility than the authors of the works they published, which explains why the anonymous authorship was tolerated (Griffin *Faces* 5). Saunders and Hunter's example, based on obscenity law, unravels the legal significance of publicizing the bookseller's name rather than the author's (487-98). They maintain that "liability for obscenity attaches not to the activity of writing but to that of *publication*" (487). Anonymity could indeed function as a safe haven for authors, but borderline work could prevent publication since the author had to find someone prepared to assume responsibility for the expressed ideas.

Many eighteenth-century discourses constructing the author, from the serious to the satirical, broach the topic of the bookseller's exploitation of authors.[21] However, both booksellers and authors had various intellectual and financial motivations for their profession though they cooperated and negotiated to reach some common ground, for booksellers were naturally highly dependent on authors. In addition to the author-function, there exists a "publisher function": the bookseller's identity and reputation assisted readers in classifying printed manuscripts and influencing their purchases (Sher 7-8). Clearly, the bookseller also influenced the public reputation and reception of an author, especially of those publishing anonymously. The image of the author was likely grafted onto that of the bookseller, considering the greater importance of the publisher's names for issues of obscenity. The bookseller is another example of an external figure whose own deeds and actions—that is, the books and authors previously published—partially co-fashion the author. It is clear that the Society's activities align with the bookseller's function.

The scholarly publications and degree of knowledge attached to the Society's catalogue of titles ultimately leads to the conclusion that the group's activities would have placed the Society in competition with university publishing. At this point in the eighteenth century, university presses would still have been in their infancy. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge in fact started to gain some ground in the print market in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Cambridge's University Press dates back to the sixteenth century, making it the oldest in the world.[22] For instance,

[21] See chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[22] On the history of Cambridge University Press, see David McKitterick, Vol. 1.

after some conflict with the London Stationers after Cambridge's publication of the Geneva Bible in 1591, Cambridge's long-standing tradition of publishing the Bible began. Monopolies like this one, held by the universities, could not easily be broken, which would have contributed to the growth of academic presses. The Oxford University Press also turned to publishing the Bible when it produced an edition of the King James Bible in 1675, which brought them into conflict with Cambridge and the Stationers (Barker 24). Oxford did not only publish titles of a religious character but focused on scientific and philosophical scholarship (Carter). The case of the Society reveals the relevant point that many academics were actually moving away from the universities and exploring and supporting alternative routes to publication rather than encouraging the growth of academic publishing. Nicolas Barker explains that Oxford's press stagnated during the first half of the eighteenth-century when its publications were characterized by sloppiness and dishonest practices, though it survived on the strength of its Bible productions (32). The declining quality of Oxford's publications suggests that the Society's publications could have drawn interest from the academic presses' educated audience.

The Society's proliferation as superior and altruistic, with an explicit focus on specialized knowledge and a high regard for (elite) authors, spoke to many intellectual men. Authors who held similar visions regarding the elevation of authorship within society found the Society's endeavors particularly encouraging. The group's pledge to bring change to the landscape of the commercial book market would have appealed to authors as well. Many professional authors would have identified with the Society's views, especially those who had struggled for an active foothold in the market and who lamented their limited publication options. By being associated with the Society, authors could construct authority based on the wholesome and intellectual values for which the group stood. The Society's stance helped ease the problems that were connected to a writer's reconciliation of an elite, traditional notion of authorship with the economic realities of professionalism. As explored in the previous chapter, commercialization tainted authorship, and writers often attempted to hide or manipulate their active involvement in the market. James Thomson, for instance, was among the founding members of the society. James Sambrook suggests that Thomson's choice was motivated by the more esteemed view of authorship that Thomson and the Society shared: "Though Thomson enjoyed good relations with Millar, he resented the fact that the book trade was in the hands of men whose standards were firstly commercial and only secondly moral, aesthetic, or scholarly" (Sambrook "A Just Balance Between Patronage and the Press" 144). However, Thomson's early engagement with booksellers shows he had more success at securing patronage, gaining more profit and independence this way. For example, at the beginning of his career as a professional author in London he only received £3 from John Millar for the copyright of *Winter* in 1726, a payment that was far off the mark of comparable publications (Sambrook "Just

Balance" 138). Thomson's personal experience with publishers and patrons fits well with his being one of the Society's pioneers. One of the group's early activities that Thomson was involved in was the creation of the Society's emblem, a design that consisted of "Brittania raising drooping Knowledge" (Sambrook "Just Balance" 144). The symbol was made by George Vertue, English engraver and antiquary (after a design by William Kent, the architect). In the image, the figure of Brittania appears on the right and is touching the hand of a young man who represents "Knowledge." He is shown kneeling while holding a book under his right arm, pointing to Britain on a globe. The background shows a column on the right and a temple on the left. The symbol is inside an oval shape, with a banner below on which appear the letters "Resvges."

Thomson did not remain an active member of the Society; his name is absent from most of the meeting minutes, and Sambrook concludes that his "involvement . . . was no more than a gesture" (144). However, it must again be noted that the Society did not publish poetry or literary prose. Thomson was attracted by what the Society stood for, including their discourse aimed at increasing the cultural value and authority of authors. His association with the Society would have contributed to the type of dignified, enlightened poet he was trying to cast himself as. Thomson's frustrations with the author's lack of rights and dependence on patronage or publishers were shared by many a writer. He expressed the author's battle for agency to Aaron Hill in a letter dating from 1736: "In lieu of all Patrons that have been, are, or will be, in England, I wish we had one good Act of Parliament for securing to Authors the Property of their own Works" (qtd. in Sambrook 147). The Society brought attention to the dependent status of authors and championed an elite, intellectual notion of authorship that attempted not only to distance the author from the demeaning side of the oppressive commercial book trade but also to make financial compensation for authors more culturally acceptable.

The Society's Legacy

Although the Society did not last into the second half of the eighteenth century, its discourse and practice influenced conceptualizations of authorship. The Society's legacy and influence can particularly be found in views of the author as a victim of the bookseller and the construction of individual authors as possessing exceptional talent. The latter is also connected to the social stratification that occurred within the profession of authorship, under the influence of notions of the author as culturally

superior. I have already discussed Ralph's *Case* mentioning the Society. The ideas in Ralph's essay went on to influence Isaac Disreali's views on authorship (Kenny "Ralph's *Case*").

During its active years, the Society achieved international renown when "a complete description of the Society's organization and purpose, written by Pierre Desmaiseaux, appeared in the *Bibliothèque Brittanique*" (1737), itself a work which the Society had agreed to publish, to be printed by Richardson. However, to speed up publication the author brought the book out himself and reimbursed the Society for its expenses (Atto 271-72). A different textual instance referencing the Society occurs in the satirical dedication of Aaron Hill's poem, *The Tears of the Muses* (1738) (iii-vi). Hill had also been a founding member of the Society and, like Ralph, found himself relegated to the cultural margins by Pope in the *Dunciad*. Another similarity with Ralph, and the Society, was Hill's view on the dominance of booksellers: "Throughout the 1730s Hill sought to ameliorate the economic standards of authorship by challenging the stranglehold that booksellers had over authors" (Hammond 289). In his dedication "to the Right Honorable, and Publick-Spirited, President, Officers, and Committee of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning," Hill demonstrates his awareness of the duality of satire: by means of criticism he is glorifying the Society (Weinbrot *Eighteenth-Century Satire* 18).

The Society also served as an example for similar groups. One such society was founded in the nineteenth century under the name of the Society for Encouragement of Literature. William Hone mentions the group's 1826 proposal for a joint stock company, in *The Every-day Book and Table Book* (1830) (353-54).[23] Hone's description of how the Society's joint stock company would operate shows that the founders' inspiration was likely gained from the Society for the Encouragement of Learning. Hone remarks, however, that by the beginning of the nineteenth century the Society's unique history appears to have been forgotten: "If the literature of the present day owes its existence to that society, its offspring is most ungrateful" (355). Hone concludes with his view that the only society for the encouragement of literature is society itself, arguing that rules and regulations are only detrimental to literature as they stunt the natural process of composition (356-58).

[23] Hone explains that "the capital to be £100,000. in shares of £25. To be increased, if advisable; shareholders to be allowed to subscribe at par; each shareholder to be entitled to a copy of every work published by the society, at two-thirds of the publication price; interest 5 per cent., to be paid half yearly on the instalments subscribed; a deposit of £1. Per share to be paid on subscribing, the remainder by instalments as the extension of the society's concerns may demand; of the profits one-fourth to form a fund for the benefit of authors, at the discretion of the society; two-fourths to be divided among the proprietors annually; the remaining one-fourth to accumulate into a perpetual triennial fund, to meet unforeseen expenditure, the possibility of loss . . ." (353-4).

Another mention of the Society dating from the nineteenth century can be found in a historically relevant work, the *Dictionary of Printers and Printing with the Progress of Literature* (1839). The author, Charles Henry Timperley (1794-1869), was a journeyman printer and also engaged in writing verse and in editing (Woolrich). Before his dictionary was produced, Timperley was responsible for additional publications dealing with printing, such as a collection of songs, *Songs of the Press and other Poems Relating to the Art of Printing, Original and Selected; also Epitaphs, Epigrams, Anecdotes, Notices of Early Printing and Printers* (1833), and an instructional manual for printers in 1838. The entry for the Society is reproduced in a footnote.[24] Most relevant for my analysis is that Timperley depicts the Society's purpose as being purely commercial. He does not mention their altruism toward authors, but focuses on the status of their business arrangements with the booksellers, of whom they are represented as being direct competitors:

> However liberal the idea of such an institution might have been, the execution of it counteracted the intention of its founders. It was, in fact, a direct attack on booksellers, who, after all, are certainly no bad "rewarders of literary merit;" and their assistance having been found indispensably necessary to the undertaking . . . (659)

Timperley might have regarded the Society's discourse as a mask for their commercial aims. The quote comes from a 1737 letter of a certain Mr. Clarke, convincing one of the

[24] "1736, *May* 27. A society for the encouragement of learning was established upon this day, in London, the object of which was to assist authors in the publication of their works. The duke of Richmond, president, with about one hundred members. Mr. Bowyer, Mr. Bettenham, and Mr. Richardson, were the three first appointed printers; Mr. Gordon was the secretary, with a salary of £50 a-year, and Dr. Birch, treasurer. However liberal the idea of such an institution might have been, the execution of it counteracted the intention of its founders. It was, in fact, a direct attack on booksellers, who, after all, are certainly no bad 'rewarders of literary merit;' and their assistance having been found indispensably necessary to the undertaking, a contract was entered into, for three years, with A. Millar, J. Gray, and J. Nourse. A new contract was afterwards entered into with six other booksellers (G. Strahan, C. Rivington, P. Vaillant, J. Brindley, S. Baker, and J. Osborn, jun.), whose profits on the business were so injudiciously retrenched, that the avowed purposes of the society were entirely frustrated. In 1742, a third method was adopted, and the society chose to become their own booksellers. The experiment was tried with Ælian *De Animalibus*, 4to. In 1743. A few months were sufficient to demonstrate the impracticability of the attempt; and before the year was at an end, they again had recourse to three booksellers, on a plan in some degree enlarged. Thus circumstanced, they published bishop Tanner's *Notitia Monastic*, folio, in January, 1743-4; and professor Stuart's English translation of Sir Isaac Newton's *Quadrature of Curves*, in September, 1745. But their finances were then become almost exhausted, after having suspended a subscription of nearly two thousand pounds. The *Bibliotheca Britannica* of bishop Tanner was, however, completed under their patronage in 1748; but, by *A Memorial of the present State of Affairs of the Society, April* 17, in that year, it appears they had incurred so considerable a debt as to be deterred at that time from proceeding farther in their project of printing" (*Dictionary of Printers* 659).

printers, Mr. Bowyer, to engage in business dealings with the Society: "I suppose this society for encouraging learning alarms the booksellers . . . . [T]hey will certainly be a society for encouraging printing; Learning perhaps may be too far gone, and past all private encouragement" (qtd. in Timperley 659). Timperley's emphasis on the printer's involvement recalls the professional trade, which, as a printer, he is compelled to defend. Clarke's humorous letter places commerce over the futility of improving society, which echoes the conflict of market-driven practices with idealistic values in the Society's operations.

The Society's programmatic writings and their difficult relationship with booksellers characterizes the later influence this group's ideas had on the further development of authorship. The way in which its members contributed to the elevation of academic authorship aligns with elite forms of literary authorship, including the tendency to hide or manipulate one's involvement in commerce. Normally scholars might be expected to share their work for free, but, despite the Society's focus on encouraging learning, the members were also concerned with awarding the author a profit for sharing his intellectual property. The Society was more outspoken about market issues, but the economic involvement was justified by a philanthropic front. The similarities with high-cultural notions of authorship explain why the Society is most often mentioned in discussion of professional, usually literary, authorship. Unfortunately, the role the Society played in shaping an intellectual, scientific form of professional authorship has been neglected.

Conclusion: The Society's Altruism and Authority?

The group's project seems to have been wholly idealistic as it clung to the hope that on being exposed to their altruistic activities, the booksellers would, in Samuel Johnson's words, "'erect themselves into patrons, and buy and sell under the influence of a disinterested zeal for the promotion of learning'" (qtd in Atto 280). However, booksellers were involved in a trade profession; their activities were determined by the possibility of profit, and the terms offered by the Society were a problem in this regard. From 1743-49, the Society had in fact returned with its proverbial tail between its legs and formed publishing agreements with booksellers once again.

If we take the Society's apparent failure at face value, with the booksellers forming a dam rather than the conduit they normally function as, it would appear that the competitive business practices of the book trade won out over cultural values where

publication is concerned. And yet, as time progressed, the author gained more esteem, authority, and control until "he" reigned over culture, dwarfing the literary market. As this rather complicated case has shown, authorship consists of dynamic values. For the Society itself, divided between disseminating knowledge, financial survival, and offering a social outlet for intellectuals, it is difficult to pinpoint a singular aim. I have argued that the Society's double purpose of serving both the social public and the author's financial and social needs is characteristic of the dynamic tensions of the period. However, one can argue, as Anne Goldgar does, that the Society's claim of encouraging public learning was just a strategy to hide their actual function of professionalizing authorship (230). Similar arguments were sometimes used by the Stationer's Company when they tried to present themselves in a better light to achieve something that would strengthen their monopoly (Zimmerman 193). Rather than downplay these tensions by choosing an either/or view of the Society's purpose, I have uncovered its complex duality. Such a stark opposition of authors' rights to the improvement of the social sphere does little in furthering an understanding of the author function. The Society did not express a complete opposition, but the aims contained in The Society's documents suggest they worked to reconcile practices of professional authorship with cultural values inspired by the elite culture of the polite. The form of authorship promoted by the Society is indeed far from clear-cut. The group aimed to improve both the author's condition and to encourage societal progress, which for its members including changing the rules of the book trade. With its implementation of drastic changes to traditional publication methods, it purported to democratize the publication process by giving the individual author more control and hoped to convert the profit-driven booksellers to their version of philanthropy. Sociability clearly stands out as a significant aspect defining the form of patronage offered by the Society, considering its basis of cooperation. Its members encouraged scholarship and specialist learning by giving lesser-known authors and works the chance to appear in print. The group's name and their publications represent the cultural values of intellectualism and aestheticism, which Sher links to "Kant's famous motto of Enlightenment, 'Dare to know,'" and which he defines as "a concomitant belief in the power of learning as a means of bringing about improvement" (16-17). Whether or not the Society members wished to inculcate these values by furthering specialist knowledge or not, their practices catered mainly to an intellectual audience of a higher class and their choices imply a form of exclusion.

The case study of the Society has shown that the authority constructed in its programmatic writings and their cultural views pushed against economic roadblocks implemented by the print market. Nevertheless, the members' elevation of the group through discourse, which included a projection of the group at odds with the "Common" booksellers (only driven by profit), shows that they were offering a service to authors. The Society also attempted to bestow on its authors the laudable qualities that its members worked to cultivate for the group in the hopes of spreading learning

and influencing the public's perception of authors. Supposedly less self-interested than booksellers of the trade, the Society functioned as a modern, elite patron to authors, which is audible in its last breath: "Thus expired this truly laudable Society, for want of due support and encouragement; after it had continued about 13 years, and was so well calculated both for the honour and benefit of the public . . ." (MS BM. Add. 6185, f. 188). By collaborating with the Society, authors could enjoy some of the group's cultural capital, which in turn would encourage society to view authors not as "scribblers" but as cultivated individuals who serve knowledge to the public. As the Society's history demonstrates, however, appearances can be deceiving. Ralph's work on authorship, written a decade after the Society had disbanded, showed that the situation for authors in 1760 had yet to reach a state of professionalization. The development of authorship was not marked by a singular progression, although the simplified definitions of the author created by a variety of discursive repertoires to justify commercial practices, have influenced that view.

Chapter 3 Thomas Gray's Active and Passive Authorial Personae, Illustrated by *Elegy* (1751) and *Designs by Mr. R. Bentley, for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray* (1753)

Introduction

The early career of the poet Thomas Gray (1716-1771) was largely defined by the publication of his "Elegy Written in A Country Churchyard," first printed in 1751. In this chapter, I explore Gray's various authorial personae and how Gray's career choices and strategies illustrate Gray's vision of literary authorship. Gray's ideal poet, the bard, is revealed through an analysis of his authorial practices of self-fashioning which are juxtaposed with other versions of the poet Gray created by other actors. I explore the tension between Gray's carefully crafted personae and both the elite literary culture's and the general public's views of the admired poet. The chapter's main focus is on the investigation of active and passive constructions of authorship and how these are exemplified in two publications of Gray's poetry. I investigate the first edition of Gray's poem *Elegy*, published in 1751 by Robert Dodsley (after being circulated in manuscript form by Gray and Horace Walpole). Also under investigation is the 1753 illustrated collection of six of Gray's poems, including the "Elegy," *Designs by Mr. R. Bentley, for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray*. The edition's pages included copper-plate engravings based on Richard Bentley's detailed illustrations. The images accompanying the poetry formed a unique, alternative way to package the poet's work which was very new in book production. The expensive edition's elegant form appealed to the aesthetic taste of a privileged audience and Bentley's visual interpretation of the verse, stimulated by the

complex interaction between the designs and poetry, created an extra layer of meaning to the poems. The production of the book was the result of a collaborative endeavor initiated and managed by Gray's friend, Horace Walpole. It was published by Walpole's Strawberry Hill Press and disseminated by Robert Dodsley. While the 1751 edition reveals a professional author catering to a general group of polite readers, the illustrated edition, being more in Gray's control, reflects Gray's elite persona as it was intended for a select, well-to-do and discerning middle-to-upper-class circle. The way in which Gray presents his authority constructs a specific relation to his work's audience. The books inscribe a sense of Gray the poet, both through the poetry's expressed meaning, but also as a result of the product's material form.

In my comparison of the two publications of Gray's poetry, tensions and dualities characterizing Gray's authorship are of particular significance. I explore how factors connected to publication either reinforce or disrupt Gray's ideal form of authorship. These tensions are linked to external forces, such as social recognition, the reception process, practices of commercial and professional authorship, notions of traditional, literary forms, and the active involvement of Walpole and Bentley in the construction of Gray's personae and the presentation of illustrated poems to the reader. The dynamism shown to characterize Gray's authorship counteracts society's static image of the popular, supposedly melancholic poet. In the face of literary recognition upon the publication of Gray's successful "Elegy," Gray struggled to keep control of his carefully crafted identity as a traditional gentleman-poet and scholar. Gray's authorial image collided with other notions and practices of authorship characterizing the diverse forms of writing in the eighteenth century, for instance, the professional author, the political hack writer, the popular and commercial writer, the elite scholarly author, and the scholarly poet.

By discussing in depth the writing and publication practices connected to Gray's transition to published poet, particularly those involved in the production of the 1751 and 1753 editions of his poetry, I analyze Gray's strategies of creating and maintaining his authority. This includes an exploration of the different functions of authorship that are associated with the evolution of Gray's career as he struggled to negotiate the realm of print publication, while continuously molding and keeping his authorial persona intact. The aversion to publication often attributed to the poet is discussed and, informed by Heidi Thomsen's and Linda Zionkowski's interpretations of Gray's relationship to the print culture and his audience, I argue that he attempted to manipulate the form of print publication as part of the active construction of his authorial persona. Gray's enthusiasm toward publication and its potential to reach a wider audience is reflected in his direct involvement in producing his work, both in collaboration with Walpole and in his later independent ventures (Thomsen 164). Although Thomsen overemphasizes Zionkowski's representation of Gray as unwilling to publish, Zionkowski focuses on the source of Gray's negative attitude toward the press

and how his experiences reinforced his hesitant feelings (see Thomsen 163 and Zionkowski 323-33). Gray was uncomfortable with the print market's potential effect of commercializing literary authorship, which threatened his authorial persona. The impact of the "Elegy"'s popularity on his authority heightened his suspicion. Central to this chapter is the effect of the interplay of text and image on conceptualizations of the author and the individual's construction of authority. I analyze how the interaction between Bentley's illustrations and Gray's reflected and influenced Gray's experience of authorship and revised his poetic self-construction. I argue for a less static version of Gray's career than the narrow interpretations of the sentimental poet who feels estranged from society and eschews publication. His compositions, publication activities, networks, and intense studies illustrate the pluralistic poet. Although I offer detailed accounts of only two publications, the analyses show the diverse forces affecting Gray's self-fashioning, a complex and continuous process. This case study argues for the revaluation of authorship in general as a multiple, mutable notion.

Authorial Personae

Gray experienced difficulties reconciling the popularity of the "Elegy" with his ideal notion of the poet, as the fame thrust upon him by his success disrupted his poetic vision. The universality of the "Elegy" that caused the audience to identify with it threatened to undermine Gray's poetic attempts to explore traditional and classical themes, using his specialized knowledge, for an elite readership. The dominant characteristic of Gray's authorship is an ever-present duality: a desire for recognition accompanied by a tendency toward self-effacement. The publication history of the two editions of Gray's poetry from 1751 and 1753 illustrates Gray's authorial evolution. Through a comparative study of the two publications, I will pinpoint four types of authorship linked to Gray's construction of personae, namely: I. *manuscript*, II. *unauthorized-exploited*, and III. *forced-commercial* authorship, as well as IV. the *(re)assertive self-fashioning* of his poetic ideal. The two forms, commercial and reasserted authorship, are of particular relevance for an understanding of Gray's negotiation of publishing practices to create sustained authority, as these two types motivate the 1751 and 1753 editions, respectively. An additional form of authorship is Gray's posthumous persona, which was perpetuated by a new generation's admiration for the poet and new editions of his poetry, such as John Murray's illustrated edition from 1776, made possible by the lapse of perpetual copyright. Chapter 4 discusses Gray's posthumous persona, more specifically Johnson's revision of Gray in his "Life of Gray" and the critical backlash that Johnson's controversial views unleashed.

I) Gray first actively explored authorship by publishing in *manuscript*. He enjoyed sharing his poetry with a limited audience of his close friends, such as Richard West and Walpole. While performing manuscript authorship, the author risks a potential loss of control with regard to his literary creation. Gray's first experience with print publication in 1748 was a disappointment and might have encouraged his preference for manuscript authorship for poems such as the "Elegy," because of the more intimate link he could establish with his readers. The wider circulation of Gray's "Elegy" by Walpole amongst his circle stimulated the growth of Gray's audience, but, at the same time, diminished Gray's control over the poem's distribution and the reader's interpretation. II) The second type, *exploited* authorship, is associated with the *Magazine of Magazines*'s unauthorized printing of the "Elegy," which is depicted as forcing Gray into the realm of professional authorship. III) Gray's loss of control of both the poem's medium and his authorial intention prompted him to initiate publication of the poem as an alternative strategy to counteract the periodical's exploitation of his authorship. Although an active form, Gray's self-fashioning of his *professional-commercial* persona entails the appearance of passivity, because this third type of authorship stemmed from the threat of unauthorized publication and was mediated by an agent, Walpole. Gray avoided responsibility for the 1751 publication of his poem by placing Walpole in the role of agent, although he actively made demands regarding this edition's form. Gray masked his professional agency behind a persona of powerlessness to reconcile commercial elements with his ideal notion of the poet. IV) The fourth type, *(re)asserted* authorship, matches Gray's desired authorial identity the closest, as he attempted to manipulate proactively the form of the Bentley edition to reassert his damaged authority and to reflect his elite poetic persona. His central authorial problem consisted in the difficulty to reconcile his agency and involvement in the work's production with a constructed persona that reveals humble self-effacement. The abstract identity of the author is given shape, just like the abstract language of poetry takes on a material form in print. Gray reasserts control with the Bentley edition to repair the damage of unauthorized publication and to modify the effects on his image brought about by the hasty 1751 edition of the *Elegy*.

Publication History of the *Elegy* (1751)

To explore fully the types of Gray's authorship and Gray's status as one of the most popular poets of the period, I discuss the background and publication of the "Elegy," both its manuscript form and 1751 edition publication, before considering the Bentley edition of 1753. I attend to the impact on the poet's personae made by the illustrated book and its reviews. I explore the tensions surrounding Gray's authorship further by examining two reviews of the Bentley edition, which are both very positive, but which nevertheless draw attention to both Gray's celebrity status and the commercial marketing of the book trade.

Prior to the "Elegy"'s appearance in print, Gray had engaged in manuscript publishing by sending poems to his close friends for constructive criticism. Three of his odes had also been included in the second volume of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by several Hands* (1748) (Thomsen 167-69). Gray expressed embarrassment to Walpole about his published authorship in early 1748, upon seeing the end product, with his image in the frontispiece: "I am ashamed to see myself; but the company keeps me in countenance" (*Correspondence* 2: 90). "Gray's response affirms a sense of authorial identity which considers itself slighted by the form in which it gets presented to the world" (Thomsen 168). Gray was frustrated with the poor material quality of the publication and the frontispiece, which Dodsley had designed as a marketing device. The *Collection* was too much a commodity, and this conflicted with Gray's aesthetic ideals and his understanding of his poetic persona. However, in a letter to Walpole, who was assisting Dodsley's project for his anthology, he had mentioned the poems he was willing to offer with more enthusiasm, which strengthens the argument that Gray was not entirely opposed to publication[1]

Walpole, was in fact indirectly responsible for the print publication of the "Elegy" in 1751. In June 1750, Walpole received the poem that Gray had started to compose in 1742 (and revised in the years following) and praised the piece in his correspondence to Gray. Walpole shared it with his friends in his social circle, some of whom made their own copies, which were circulated further (Mack 388, 412). Thus began the initial stage of Gray's authorial success as poet of the "Elegy," which should be interpreted as a familiarity, on the part of London's literary society, with the poem rather than knowledge of the personal life of the author or a kind of fame. The idea that Gray disliked the poem's popularity is usually supported by his own admission about publication: Gray had never desired to publish the "Elegy," he confessed to his friend

[1] See *Correspondence* 2: 87-89.

Thomas Wharton in 1750.[2] Gray openly blamed Walpole for transforming him into a published author, claiming that he would prefer to perform as a poet only for a small, elite circle. Gray writes in a letter to Wharton dated 18 December 1750 that the poem

> had the misfortune, by Mr. Walpole's fault, to be made still more public [than "A Long Story"], for which [the poems] certainly were never meant; but it is too late to complain. . . . I should have been glad that you and two or three more people had liked them, which would have satisfied my ambition on this need amply." (*Letters* 1: 221)

However, Gray's resistance to fame and publication could just as well be a strategy of self-fashioning, fitting with the polite, sentimental poet who shuns publication for fame and fortune. By presenting both manuscript and print publication as an accident or problem meant that Gray could actively distance himself from the act and deny any form of intention. This kind of accidental authorship is connected to his creating and becoming the living embodiment of the celebrated author. As a result of his manipulative strategies that construct a passive persona, for instance, his performance of powerlessness, he in fact reasserted his authorial control.

The story behind the publicizing of Gray's "Elegy" shows the extent of the uncertain control even manuscript authors have of their compositions. Michele Turner Sharp maintains that an "autonomous circulation of texts in a print culture milieu . . . discomfited writers like Gray who doubted the capacity of readers to properly assimilate their texts" (6). The same applies to manuscript circulation, which also proved to be risky business. Once disseminated, the author faced the possibility of losing control of its social trajectory and his audience. The author cannot follow who has copied his poem and to whom it has been passed on to. The spreading of the manuscript forms of the poem marks the first shift in the evolution of Gray's authorial persona. Manuscript publication of the "Elegy" led to its unauthorized printing, exploiting Gray's authorship, which encouraged or forced Gray to become a professional author. Gray chose publication to reassert authorial control upon receiving a letter from, in his view, a disreputable publication entitled the *Magazine of Magazines*. Walpole and Gray were opposed to this publication because it was a periodical for "hack" writers who were not on the same social level as the Gray-Walpole circle. Gray turned to Walpole for guidance on how to handle the *Magazine*'s threat of publication. Walpole had already attempted to convince Gray to publish his poems. Gray expresses his conundrum to Walpole, writing: "They tell me, that an *ingenious* Poem, call'd *Reflections* in a Country-Churchyard, has

[2] Gray to Wharton, 18 December 1750 (*Letters* 1: 220-222). The poem was sent to Wharton on 11 Sept 1750 (Mack 397).

been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith: that they are inform'd , that the *excellent* Author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his Indulgence, but the Honor of his Correspondence" (*Correspondence* 2: 203).[3] Walpole's reputation made him the ideal manager, as Gray could rely on extensive social connections. The bookseller Robert Dodsley agreed to the venture, and publication was expedited so as to precede the appearance of the unauthorized version. A few days after Gray's letter, the anonymous quarto pamphlet was available and the following day, February 16, an imperfect version of the poem also appeared in the *Magazine*. The periodical exposed Gray's identity by attributing authorship of the "Elegy" to "the very ingenious Mr *Gray* of *Peter*-house, Cambridge" (qtd. in Ketton-Cremer 108-9), stripping away his anonymity while cashing in on the reputation already established by the scribally published version of the poem. The race to publish was, in fact, a competition between Dodsley and the owner of the periodical, William Owen, who had somehow received word of Dodsley's publication plans. Owen rushed to put his issue to bed, rather than waiting until the month's end when the M*agazine* usually made its appearance (Straus 156-67). Owen's unauthorized publication also recalls the limited control an author had over his productions since the Copyright Act of 1710 did not cover periodicals or publications outside London. Gray, however, was not pleased with the final product of the 1751 publication, and we can see him attempting to reclaim his authorship and to reassert his agency in his demands on how the production of the Bentley edition should proceed. Through these two print publications in 1751, the "Elegy," already admired by those who had been acquainted with it in manuscript form, reached a wider audience and was widely quoted, imitated, translated, and even satirized. Dodsley reprinted the "Elegy" four times that year, two more in 1752, and five more during his career.

[3] Letter from Gray to Walpole, 11 or 12 February 1751, *Correspondence* 103-35. For more details on the 1751 publication see Mack 421-25 and Thomsen 169-70.

On Form

More than in any other chapter in this dissertation on the various concepts and practices of authorship in the eighteenth century, form plays a significant role in the three closely related aspects that underpin my investigation of the interaction of text and image, its production of meaning, and the influence of this interplay on notions of authorship. The central aspects of my discussion are the typographical form and the packaging of the material object, the book; the intersection of the meaning(s) of the text with the visual imagery (literally the illustrations); and the construction of the ideal author (both the individual's and a literary culture's notion).

Gray's Agency

Gray's aversion toward publication has been misunderstood. He was actually interested in print publication as a way of performing his role as poet for an audience. However, Gray found himself in the higher echelons of society, as part of an elite coterie of well-to-do collectors, scholars, and amateur authors, so he did not resort to publication for financial reasons.[4] The contradictions marking Gray's hesitancy toward publication is partly attributable to the commercialization of print. The vision of the poet that Gray held in his mind matched his social standing and he wished to find an audience with the appropriate aesthetic taste to suit his ideal author. It is significant that some authors were involved in the decision-making process of shaping a book's formal package, as this is a major strategy for the conscious tailoring of the author's image as well as the fashioning of one's professional career. Barbara Benedict explains how Pope, for example, relied on typographical signals to alert the elite and learned audience to other works, to irony, to jokes. She writes:

> [a]lthough Pope was clearly a master of . . . typographical manipulation of meaning, he was certainly not alone in using the physical appearance of print in a book to aid interpretation. Indeed, authors, printers, booksellers, and readers were increasingly aware of the ambiguity of a book's physical statues in a literary

[4] See Thomsen, who explores the misunderstanding regarding Gray's attitude toward print publication: "To some extent the distinction between professional writers and authors like Gray who did not depend on, and often despised the idea of writing for a living, has led to a notion that Gray did not wish to appear in print. Like most writers, however, and contrary to the coy pose he often struck on that account, Gray dearly loved to be read and recognized that print offered an opportunity to reach an audience" (163).

> climate that increasingly valorized *aesthetic principles bridging material and abstract meanings*—balance, design, and elegance. (138, my italics)

Gray was picky about how his published poems would appear, because the material form functioned as a mediating link between the poet and his audience. The appearance of Gray's work had to match the aesthetic values of his poetry and present the writer as a genuine poet. Although time was of the essence in the case of the 1751 edition, Gray still influenced the visual presentation of the "Elegy." In a letter to Walpole from 11 or 12 February 1751 he offers instructions for the poem's publication:

> I have but one bad Way left to escape the Honour they would inflict upon me, and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately . . ., but without my name, in what Form is most convenient for him, but in his best Paper and Character. He must correct the Press himself, and print it without any interval between the Stanza's, because the Sense is in some Places continued beyond them; and the Title must be, *Elegy, wrote in a Country Church-yard*. If he would add a Line or two to say it came into his Hands by Accident, I should like it better... If you behold the Magazine of Magazines in the Light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this Trouble on my Account. . . (*Correspondence* 2: 104-5)

Gray's letter to Walpole containing his demands for Dodsley's publication illustrates Gray's authorial duality. Gray attempts to craft his persona with the options available to him at such short notice, to create distance between the *Magazine*'s unauthorized version and the one that Dodsley was preparing for the press. In addition to Gray's manipulation of print and the material form of publication as strategies for self-fashioning, Gray also constructs his persona as at a distance from the activities of book production. He presents the poem's appearance in print as an event which he was not directly responsible for or really involved in. Gray's use of "honour" in this letter reveals his sense of the obligation—imposed by the threat of unauthorized publication—to turn professional. The letter is an example of the difficulty of separating Gray's discourse from his performance as a poet who shies away from commercial publication. His written correspondence contains rhetorical strategies that disguise a desire for publication and for the recognition of his authorship.

When discussing unauthorized and forced forms authorship, Gray invokes the metaphor of a bastard, a mistake, or an accident to remove himself further from the publication. This form of complex self-fashioning has been responsible for the misinterpretations of Gray's attitude toward print. To Walpole, Gray presents the

bastard publication as being taken care of or dealt with by "Nurse Dodsley" (Mack 424).[5] Dodsley plays a healing role in the matter by attempting to purify Gray's tarnished image with the 1751 edition. Notwithstanding Dodsley's efforts, Gray expresses some dissatisfaction with the final literary product's imperfection; he seems to accept Dodsley's material realization of the poem because it reflects the "accidental" status of the work's publication: "Nurse Dodsley has given it a pinch or two in the cradle, that (I doubt) it will bear the marks of as a long it lives. But no matter: we have ourselves suffered under her hands before now; and besides, it will only look the more careless, and by *accident* as it were" (*Correspondence* 2: 105). Gray holds Walpole accountable by casting Walpole, with his careful attention to Gray's predicament and needs, as the father and author of Gray's illegitimate offspring, his poem. The active hand that Dodsley and Walpole had in producing the poem's publication and their effect on Gray's authorial persona also functions as an example of multiple, collaborative authorship.

Illustrated Poetry

Formal makeup is often employed as a marketing strategy, since the physical and visual form of printed matter is a useful indication of the textual product's intended audience. Textual production in the medium of print used the formal package of books to commercial advantage. Illustrations do not just enhance the reading experience; more importantly, for the 1753 collection of Gray's poems, Bentley's images and their meanings should not be considered as equal to the typographical text and the imagery that the poems evoke. On the contrary, illustrations depicting specific scenes of a narrative or poem assist the reader's efforts toward interpretation. As a result, the appearance of illustrated editions might be regarded as broadening the audience for otherwise seemingly inaccessible works. A large range of illustrated books could be marketed toward an audience not necessarily purely interested in literature, but intent on collecting exceptional, beautifully illustrated objects. The beauty of the material product and the fine quality of the illustrations would also give the work the

[5] Gray's letter to Walpole from 20 Feb 1751 reads thusly: "You have indeed conducted with great decency my little *misfortune*: you have taken a paternal care of it, and expressed much more kindness than could have been expected from so near a relation. But we are all frail; and I hope to do as much for you another time. Nurse Dodsley has given it a pinch or two in the cradle, that (I doubt) it will bear the marks of as a long it lives. But no matter: we have ourselves suffered under her hands before now; and besides, it will only look the more careless, and by *accident* as it were. I thank you for advertisement, which saves my honour and in a manner *bien flatteuse pour moi*, who should be put to it even to make myself a compliment in good English" (*Correspondence* 2: 105-6).

characteristic of being an item worth collecting, as it could also come to symbolize the purchaser's aesthetic taste and social standing or wealth. However, the expensive Bentley edition, which sold for half a guinea, presents a conflict between Gray's universal popularity in society, based on the "Elegy"'s success and the limited audience the book was marketed toward with its unique packaging.

The illustrations complementing the poems do not necessarily assist the reader's textual interpretation. Rather, the images should be perceived as laden with multi-layered meaning, which bring new dimensions to the textual poems. As Loftus Jestin remarks in his valuable and comprehensive study of the Bentley edition: "The interplay of text and design does not result merely in the reflection of images from the verbal to the visual art" (*Answer* 85). The illustrations accompanying a poem do not necessarily open up the meaning of the complete work to a wider audience. In addition, despite Gray's active role in this book's production, the illustrations may have helped to consolidate the melancholy persona of the sentimental poet initiated by the "Elegy."[6] Bentley's designs "were enriched with pictorial analogues recognizable at least to the members of Walpole's set" (Jestin *Answer* 105). Both Bentley's illustrations and Gray's text contain a plurality of references, by allusion or imitation, to literature, art, and their personal lives, enriching and complicating reading experience.

[6] Jestin explains how Bentley intentionally created his designs to illustrate both themes of Gray's poetry and biographical elements. "Walpole and Bentley wanted to make the volume thematically and pictorially coherent, not just a miscellany of odes with attached illustrations. . . . *One strategy, to work on the melancholy and self-effacement that generally underlie the poetry, led to a biographical emphasis*. . . . A second, more subtle strategy was to mention in picture the poet's ironic use of sources and analogues in verse" (85, my italics).

Interplay of the visual and the textual: Joint authorship?

One element of the 1753 edition that differs from the commercialized form of the 1751 Dodsley edition is that the Strawberry Hill publications were so elegant, giving the purchasing reader a sense of belonging to a privileged social group, while also working to validate the author's influential reputation as a higher class poet. The quarto volume's pages were gilded with Moroccan red, an expensive process and the book was bound in red leather. The manipulation of the book's form in order to ensure an elite readership is not the entire story behind the 1753 edition of Gray's poems illustrated by Bentley. The degree of authorial agency that Gray exercised in the production of the Bentley edition is also relevant for an interpretation of Bentley's illustrations that complement the "Elegy" and "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat." These two poems will be read in light of Gray's proactive self-fashioning. The interaction between the text and illustrations exemplify how the book and other external forces affected Gray's persona by revealing his struggle to retain control of his agency. My interpretation also suggests that the authority attached to the edition was conflicted and shared, due to its being created by Gray, Bentley, and Walpole.

Gray was initially hesitant about Walpole's enterprise to produce a small collection of the poet's productions embellished with engravings of Bentley's designs. Once Bentley submitted his drawings to the engraver, Johann Sebastian Miller in 1752 and production of the work got under way, however, Gray showed more enthusiasm about the project and communicated his vision on the presentation of his poems. Walpole became well-acquainted with Bentley after meeting him in 1750 and served as patron to the artist whose imaginative skill in painting, drawing, and architecture spoke to Walpole's unique taste and fascination with the English Gothic. Bentley had created drawings for Walpole's personal poems and memoirs and Walpole used many of the artist's architectural designs for the construction of Strawberry Hill, Walpole's pseudo-medieval home in Twickenham (Jestin "Bentley"). Bentley's illustrations for the 1753 edition of Gray's poetry must be viewed in the context of "the developing aesthetics at Strawberry Hill" realized by the so-called Committee on Taste. Walpole, Bentley and John Chute made up the core of this group whose main purpose was the design of Strawberry Hill (Jestin *Answer* 84, 104). Bentley's drawings were thus not merely grown from his own imagination or Gray's textual imagery, but were the products also of Walpole's advice and aesthetic taste and inspired by architectural engravings.

Gray's vision on the publication included a form of authorial self-effacement. For instance, he disliked visually displaying himself as the author, which threatened his authorial persona. Gray risked a loss of agency with regard to Dodsley's intention of including an engraving of Gray's portrait by John Giles Eckhardt from 1747-88 as the

volume's frontispiece. In a letter to Walpole, his anxiety is palpable. He did not want his authorial identity to be fixed into any particular shape.

> Sure you are not out of your Wits! . . . [I]f you suffer my Head to be printed, you infallibly will put me out of mine. I conjure you to put a stop immediately to any such design. . . . The thing, as it was, I know will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper Person at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen Ballads in 30 pages, would be worse than the Pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a Book with such a frontispiece without any warning, I believe, it would have given me a Palsy. Therefore I rejoice to have received this Notice; and shall not be easy, till you tell me all thoughts of it are laid aside. I am extremely in earnest, and can't bear even the Idea![7]

The idea of flaunting his authorship in such a way brought on feelings of embarrassment and shame. The prospect of being advertised in the frontispiece like a commodity would have reminded Gray as well of the frontispiece to Dodsley's 1748 *Collection*. Gray had found it appalling in its extravagance, particularly since it contrasted starkly with the poor quality of the material publication. Dodsley had invested everything in the advertising frontispiece featuring the poets, "at the expense of the paper and the appearance of the actual poems" (Thomson 168).

[7] Gray to Walpole, 13 February 1753 (*Correspondence* 2: 127-28).



AN

ELEGY

WROTE IN A

Country Church Yard.



LONDON:

Printed for R. DODSLEY in *Pall-mall*;

And sold by M. COOPER in *Pater-noſter-Row*. 1751.

[Price Six-pence.]

Figure 4 Title page of *Elegy* (1751)

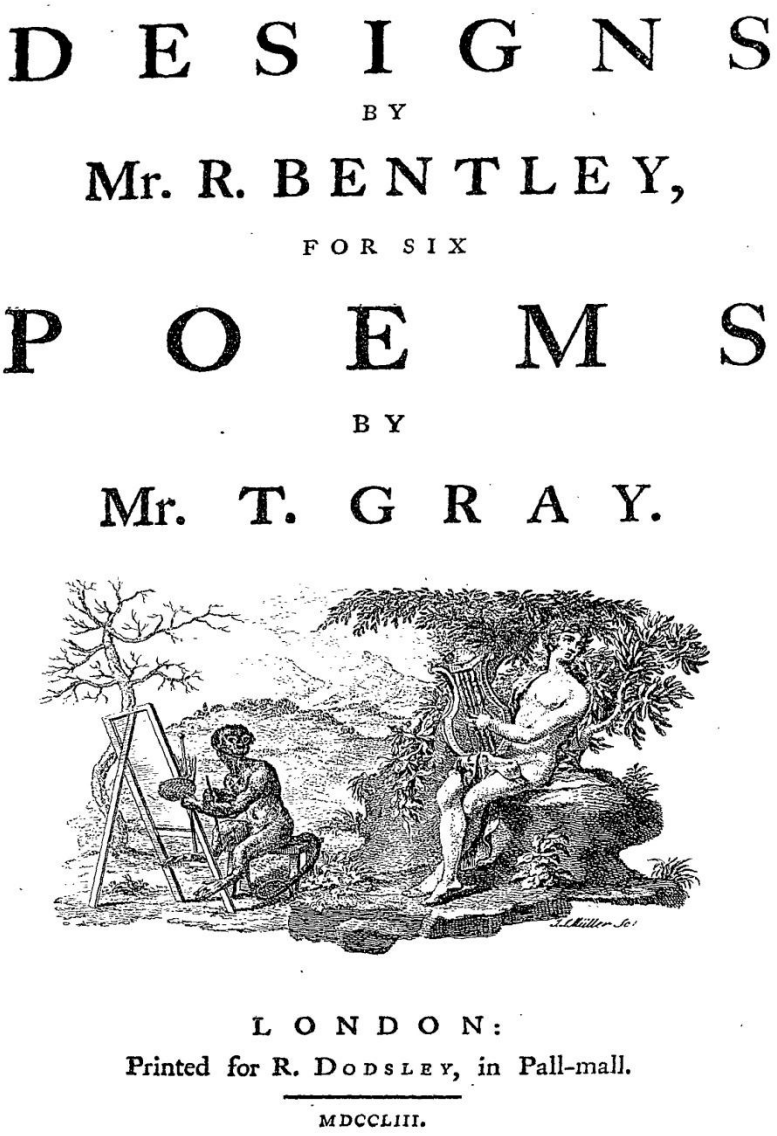

DESIGNS
BY
Mr. R. BENTLEY,
FOR SIX
POEMS
BY
Mr. T. GRAY.
LONDON:
Printed for R. DODSLEY, in Pall-mall.
MDCCLIII.

Figure 5 Title Page of *Designs by Mr. R. Bentley, For Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray* (1753)



Figure 6 Fleuron from title page of 1753 edition

Comparison of Title Pages of the 1751 and 1753 Editions

The paratextual elements which are included, or excluded, as the case may be, also contribute to validating one's reputation. The 1751 edition was "printed in handsome type on good paper" and included printing ornaments "emblematic of mortality on the title-page and first page of the text—skulls and bones, hourglasses, a pickaxe and a spade" (Ketton-Cremer 108).[8] These images symbolize the poem's themes of destiny, death, transience, obscurity, ambition (see figure 4). Considering the pirated version that appeared in the *Magazine* blatantly named Gray as author, the fact that the 1751 edition was published anonymously has relevance for Gray's resistance to claiming authorship in print. With this strategy, Gray distances himself from the period and professional authorship. Regarding the title page of the 1753 edition, "Gray insisted that the title give primacy to Bentley" (Baird)' his reasoning being that the text was "only subordinate and explanatory to the drawings" (see figure 5).[9] Here, he is continuing to perform the role of the humble, polite poet. He is perhaps also satirizing some cultural views of him as a difficult poet. For example, he later self-mockingly wrote of the poem "A Long Story," included in the Bentley edition, that it "was never meant for the publick, and only suffer'd to appear in that pompous edition because of Mr Bentley's designs which were not intelligible without it" (Ketton-Cremer 221). The title already marks the interactive authorship behind the illustrated volume.

The edition did not include a portrait of the author as frontispiece. The illustration on the title page functions as an alternative for such a glorification of the author, as Bentley renders both the artist and the poet as author in this image. Gray's and Bentley's collaborative construction of meaning is reflected once again in the combination of printed text and image. Bentley portrayed himself as a monkey in the fleuron to show his modesty and to express, in a light manner, an artistic self-parody (see figure 6). He might have felt that he was not skilled enough for the task of illuminating Gray's poems. And yet, Walpole had encouraged Bentley's work by commissioning him for various projects, thus stimulating further his study of art history. Walpole particularly emphasized that Bentley focus on the integration of word and image in illustrated texts. Bentley's appearance as a grotesque animal also forms a connection with the artistic tradition in which self-mockery is represented by monkeys. Particularly Jean-Baptiste Siméon's "Le Singe Peintré" (1739-40) could have been a source of inspiration. The tradition of monkeys being depicted in art dates back to the Middle Ages, but David Teniers, the Younger, developed his own comical genre in the

[8] See also Mack, although he wrongly calls them woodcuts (423).

[9] Gray to Dodsley, 12 Feb 1753 (qtd. in Ketton-Cremer 113).

seventeenth-century, by humanizing them. “Irene Tyler has observed that Bentley used the classical topoi of the artist as ape of God and the poet as Arcadian singer, or more particularly Apollo with his laurel crown and lyre . . .” (“Two Eighteenth-Century Illustrators” 125-26, qtd. in Jestin *Answer* 132). The element of copying forms a link with the intertextual and imitative character of the drawings and poems. At the same time, Bentley’s illustration suggests that the painter is also mocking the poet, who appears to be rendered as a god-like figure (Jestin *Answer* 135-6). However, “the artist reveals a mortal ape. . . . [H]e shows that the lyre held by the bard has become an instrument of Apollonian delusions.” (136). Gray was perhaps sensitive to this mockery and opposed to the title page’s introductory panel’s interpretation which he may have read as effectively stripping away his carefully tailored persona of the classical poet. Bentley’s unmasking of the poet reveals the performativity behind Gray’s authorship, which helps explain Gray’s opposition to future suggestions of illustrating his poetry after this edition. The duality inherent in Gray’s authorship should be linked to the central theme of “the contrast between idealism and reality” (137) which is present throughout Bentley’s illustrations. The depiction of Gray in the fleuron does not merely fixate the poet, as text or a portrait might, but exposes his proactive self-fashioning. The paradoxical engagement between text and image, sometimes complementing, sometimes opposing, is clearly part of the work’s appeal. The interaction creates new, multiple meanings including conflicted and ambiguous ones. Indeed, creation and imitation are key themes in the illustrations.



Figure 7 Frontispiece to “Elegy” (1753)



Figure 8 Headpiece of “Elegy” (1753)



Figure 9 Tailpiece of “Elegy” (1753)

"Elegy"

An understanding of Gray's authorial techniques of self-fashioning and his negotiation of professional obstacles can be gained through further analysis of the interaction of Bentley's designs and Gray's poetry. Gray, for instance, expressed modesty toward his popularity as an author in his wish that the illustrated publication should present his poems as if they were mere illustrations of Bentley's designs. The collaboration produced a material object showcasing an artistic form that was relatively new in England. A significant characteristic of Bentley's illustrations is an expression of dualities, such as high and low culture, the elegant and the grotesque. These tensions contribute to the unique manner in which the pictures and the text engage with each other and the poems, and should also be connected the tensions between commercialized and idealized-sentimental elements in the fashioning of Gray's authorship. The "contrast[ing] of neoclassical and rococo elegance on one hand and gargoylish inelegance on the other, an opposition Bentley uses to good satirical effect" (Jestin *Answer* 112) recalls Gray's struggle to reconcile the unattractive, inelegant aspects of professional authorship and popularity with the ideal poet he aspired to embody. Bentley also incorporated biographical elements in his illustrations, which made the poems more personal and would bridge the gap between author and reader. The poetical figure of the title page resembles Gray, and also returns as the speaker of the poems "Spring" and "Elegy," the first and last poem in the volume.[10] The circular structure suits the progression of the poem's themes from life to death, emphasizing the life cycle.

However, the illustrations of Gray's richly complex and evocative poems made concrete emotions that upset his gendered sensibility and encouraged worries regarding the dissemination of the poems to a wider audience.[11] Gray was aware of how one image representing several lines of poetry might come to stand in its place and replace visual imagination, which reading and writing practices stimulated. A prime example is the frontispiece engraving depicting the events of the "Elegy," which shows a man casting a shadow over a grave (see figure 7). The iconotextual realization of the poem brings the epitaph down to this single image

[10] Jestin explains that "Gray's large nose, unmistakable in the original drawing, was changed to anonymity by Miller for the engraving" (114).

[11] See Baird's *ODNB* entry. Gray made it clear that he no longer wished to have his poems illustrated.

Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

The Epitaph

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown. (115-18)

In the text, the coming-of-age metaphor marks the "Elegy"'s moment of transitioning from manuscript to print publication as Gray's entering authorial manhood. The youth, unfamiliar with success in the commercial world, becomes catapulted into the spotlight. Bentley's illustration strengthens the metaphor. With its focus on the poem's speaker, the image reinforces the equation of the speaker with Gray, the poet and recalls the fame that the poem's popularity thrust onto Gray. F. W. Bateson perceives Gray's later addition of the Epitaph during the "Elegy"'s composition as a strategy to "depersonalize" and generalize the speaker of the poem, so that he would not resemble Gray, but "a conventional figure, the Melancholy Man, who could not possibly be identified with anybody" (131). Despite the poem's general character, the equation between Gray and the speaker in criticism still perpetuated a persona of Gray as that "Melancholy Man."

The graveyard setting depicted in the frontispiece and the funeral procession presented in the tailpieces both contributed to Gray's celebrity status and perceptions of Gray as the melancholic poet (see figure 8). Some scholars interpret the poem's Epitaph, especially when juxtaposed with Bentley's theatrical design for the frontispiece, as the poet imagining his own death and memorial (Newey 19-20). The link would be with mankind's desire to be remembered after death. Gray's authorship is also shaped by his desire for recognition, despite his strategies that seem to present the contrary. Newey, for example, notes that he "cannot rest content with any surmise that consigns him to invisibility, but wishes to be seen as an exemplary and 'serviceable' figure" (20). The association with Gray's struggle to reconcile his desired cultural reputation as the bard with his social popularity suggests that Gray is imagining the death, or an evolution, of his celebrity persona. He wished to sever his relationship with an audience who revered him as a poet of the people. He preferred to be more in control of his relationship to his audience, by maintaining distance on a personal level, while achieving interaction through the performance of poetry.

Gray had written about his difficulty reconciling his private self with a public persona in 1740 to Richard West: "to me there hardly appears to be any medium between a public life and private one" (*Correspondence* 1: 322). His skeptical view toward society and professional authorship was influenced by commercialized marketing and the growth of public opinion, which he felt undermined the author's authority. The theme of death in this poem becomes more palpable in the visual interpretation offered by Bentley's

imagery. For instance, Gray does not mention winter in the "Elegy," but the final tailpiece contains a winter scene of a funeral procession, symbolizing death (see figure 8). Even the smaller designs illustrating the initial letters of the poems play a role in assisting the reader's active construction of meaning. The owl drawn above the "T" of the "Elegy" also symbolizes death and "opposes the scene of vigorous rustic life in the headpiece" (Jestin *Answer* 127). Bentley's use of an enormous gate as a framing device in the frontispiece invites the viewer to look upon the scene, but not to participate. The gate separates the viewer and the reader from the event, thus furthering an interpretation of Gray as wishing to establish distance between himself and his audience, which fails to understand the poet's activities and intention. "Nobody understands me and I am perfectly satisfied," Gray wrote (qtd. in Zionkowski "Bridging the Gulf Between" 341). Jestin concludes that "the artist wanted to capture something of the poet's annoyance over the popular and sentimental reaction to the high art of his *Elegy . . .*" (*Answer* 200). The function of doorways as frames in Bentley's illustrations for the "Elegy" also "stress the theme of passages, all of which 'lead but to the grave,' or to the vault of the tailpiece toward which the Stranger's staff in the frontispiece seems to point" (Jestin *Answer* 203). They also represent the evolution of Gray's career as a poet and the various changes his persona undergoes as a result of his publication choices. Even the composition itself underwent several changes, as Gray added to the "Elegy" and revised the conclusion. Newey's suggestion that Gray "was driven to a different 'selving,' in which both his uncertainty about the concomitant claims of worldly status were emphatically acknowledged" (18). Newey's argument that Gray's poems contributed to the creation of the self, the discovery and shaping of his identity, is in line with my claim that Gray's compositions are acts of self-fashioning. Bentley was skilled at matching the duality characterizing Gray's authorial personae in his contrasting, multifaceted imagery, like the juxtaposition of elegance and satire and their references to biographical details and other artists: "Bentley's strategy corresponds to Gray's in the poems, the ironic effect of which is often based on echoes and imitations" (Jestin *Answer* 120). Despite the fact that the actors involved in this collaboration endeavor insisted on the designs' originality, Bentley was inspired by different European artistic styles.[12] Surely references to other artists or works were one strategy through which Bentley could share a private joke with Walpole, Gray and their circle. In the frontispiece there is even a reference to the title page of the 1751 edition of

[12] Some influences are: "John Summerson has proposed that they 'derive . . . from Jean Berain,' and Irene Tayler has agreed that 'one can see parallels in certain of the details, . . . the comic grotesques, or the interlaced strapwork' of the borders . . . But much of the detail and general architecture or framing of Bentley's designs seems closer in spirit to Watteau, especially engravings taken from his *singers*, decorations, and pictures . . ." (Jestin *Answer* 106-7).

Gray's poem. On top of the grave, one can see a skull and crossbones, an image which draws a line to the stranger's head and staff, and the helmet positioned to the left of the scene, in the arch. Jestin suggests the elaborately complex display reveals the "paradoxical vitality in decay" (*Answer* 204). The interconnection of life and death is relevant for a perspective of authorship, considering the way in which Gray's posthumous persona lives on, although in a revised form.

ODE

On the Death of a Favourite CAT,

Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes.

'TWAS on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dy'd
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclin'd,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declar'd;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still

Figure 10 Frontispiece and headpiece of "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat" (1753)



Figure 11 Frontispiece of “Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat” (1753)



Figure 12 Tailpiece “Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat” (1753)

"Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes"

A central and original characteristic of Bentley's designs are the gateways, which, as shown in the analysis of the "Elegy," function as frames for the illustrations. They not only work as part of the spatial constructions; they also have guiding functions. They draw the viewer's gaze into the image to focus on a central point. Bentley's designs function as active guides for the reader to interpret Gray's text. Jestin identifies a close representational relationship between Bentley's innovative framing technique and the conventions of theater design (*Answer* 126). The illustrations complementing the poem are a visual performance: "scenes appear framed by proscenium arches with the curtains drawn to reveal dramatic frontispieces . . ." (Jestin *Answer* 126). The gateways invite the reader not only into the visual, imaginary world of the poem, but also into the (inter-)personal field that the textual poem references. The framed illustrations act as invitations into moments of personal experience, such as the one that inspired the writing of "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat."

Gray composed the ode upon Walpole's personal request at the end of February 1747. It was first published in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, vol. 2, in 1748, along with "Ode on Spring" and "Ode on the distant Prospect of Eton." The ode deals with the intimate subject of one of Walpole's cats, Selima, who happened to drown accidentally. Written in a mock-heroic style, Gray's satiric memorialization of Selima is also a criticism of Walpole's exaggerated performance of grief upon the death of a cat that foolishly caused her own demise. Selima's imprudence is made absurd not only by Gray's humanization of the pet, but also by casting her in heroic roles from literature, like John Milton's representation of Eve gazing into a lake in *Paradise Lost* (Lonsdale *Poems* 82). Bentley's images effectively match the literary allusions in Gray's piece with their own references. For instance, the frontispiece was inspired by one of John Gay's *Fables*, specifically John Wootton's headpiece illustrating "The Old Hen and the Cock" (see figures 10 and 11). The fable tells the story of a rooster who drowns after being mesmerized by his reflection in a well. The reference to Gay informs the viewer of the poem's genre and subject. It should be interpreted as a beast fable, and Bentley mixes both high and popular cultural references in his visual illustrations, extend[ing] and intensif[ying] Gray's own satire on a tabby with delusions of grandeur" (Jestin *Answer* 112). The frontispiece's reference to Gay suggests that Selima is narcissistic and suffers the same fate as the rooster. The themes of desire and temptation are at the heart of Gray's "Ode." Gray criticizes a weakness of humanity in Selima's failure "to distinguish the true from the false [and] attempt[s] artificially to rise above [her] natural sel[f] and must suffer for [her] presumption" (152).

Bentley's framing technique in this example brings the viewer's gaze to focus on the moment of Selima's mistake: her giving in to temptation, while she teeters on the edge of the bowl. The size of the bowl that Selima is delicately dipping her paw into is

massive compared to her feline body. Temptation makes her unaware of fragility; her desire causes her to forget her mortality. The suggestion of her imminent accident is made more powerful by the headpiece depicting the next moment when she would fall into the tub and struggle for escape. "The frame encloses Selima like a mouse trap and separates her from the reader. Her predicament is encapsulated . . ." (Jestin *Answer* 155). In contrast to Gray's literary references, Bentley's illustrations do not personify Selima, although she is placed in a human environment. The depictions of the other cats, like the fisherman cats adorning the upper border of the frontispiece, contrast with the visual representation of Selima as an ordinary housecat (154-55). The one standing passively in the upper left corner, meditatively holding a fishing rod, is personified in an Oriental manner, which can be seen in the details of the cat's facial features and its Oriental costume and accessories. Neither cat is watching Selima's mistake. The one in the upper right corner is active, and appears to be playing with a fishing net, although the outstretched paw might suggest the creature intends to help Selima. The act of fishing ties all of the cats together, though Selima is sidetracked from her initial intent by her reflection. The banner that forms the bottom of the frontispiece's frame quotes Gray's line "A Fav'rite has no Friend,'" which criticizes jealousy. The richly detailed frontispiece contains many personal references to Walpole, thus revealing Bentley's close relationship with him and his skill of invention. Many of the symbols do not reflect the text of Gray's poem.[13] The illustrated letter shows a sleeping, content cat (see figure 10). It suggests that a cat should stick to this behavior. Perhaps it resembles Selima, oblivious to her fate. It contrasts strikingly with the activity depicted in the frontispiece and headpiece, which shows Selima submerged in the water, yowling for release. Bentley's tailpiece invokes a nightmarish scene: Selima has been condemned to hell for her impulsive act of succumbing to temptation (see figure 11). She is shown riding on Charon's boat on the River Styx, about to enter Hades. Her arched back and fat, fluffy tail signal her terror. Upon inspection of the detailed grimace on her face, her fear at Cerberus standing on land, guarding the Underworld, is evident. The hellhound's three heads are thought to symbolize both the past, present, and future as well as one's life stages of birth, prime youth, and old age (Boyce 56-59). I suggest they also echo scenes of Selima sleeping in the illustrated letter, Selima's foolish mistake in the frontispiece, and her fateful drowning in the headpiece. Selima's loneliness also harks back to her narcissism, referenced in the frontispiece. Bentley skillfully links the illustrations together: "Selima's tail and back reflect the mouth of the cave, and it reflects the shape

[13] For instance, the elaborate interior references Walpole's Strawberry Hill and the Oriental inspired symbols, like the pagodas, recall Walpole's desire to have a Chinese house at his estate (Jestin *Answer* 155).

of the tubs in the earlier scenes" (158), which brings the "Ode" and Selima to life for the reader

Bentley's illustrations of Selima do not reflect the beauty and grace of felines that Gray depicts in his poetic imagery:

> The fair round face, the snowy beard,
> The velvet of her paws,
> Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
> Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
> She saw; and purr'd applause. (7-12)

I argue that the poem can be interpreted as an expression of Gray's views on authorship and the potential risk that publication could lead to universal popularity. Success might blind the author and cause an inability to compose work of the same or better quality. For instance, the cat's fascination with her own reflection could be a warning for an author's aspirations for success:

> The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
> A whisker first, and then a claw,
> With many an ardent wish,
> She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize. (19-22)

Gray was aware of the paralyzing effect that publication could bring, especially given the static manner in which it seems to reduce the dynamic performance of poetry. Gray could also be referring to the loneliness that the spotlight brings when explaining how no one comes to poor Selima's rescue: "A Fav'rite has no friend!" (36). The public constructs their own ideas of the author, something which Gray struggled with due to the growth of the general public's power to influence the formation mad consumption of taste, but which also prompted him to compose difficult poetry without explanatory notes. The final stanza perhaps expresses wariness toward publication, or at the very least a criticism of blatant commercial authorship:

> Know, one false step is ne'er retriev'd,
> And be with caution bold.
> Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
> And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
> Nor all that glisters is gold. (38-42)

Gray had shown enthusiasm about publishing his work, although he preferred to place authorial responsibility on other figures. Yet, the final products often disappointed him, as did society's misunderstanding of his poetic aims. Gray disdained the popular marketing of literature, but even the lavish Bentley edition brought him frustration as it undermined his authority. In his "Ode," Gray could be satirically

sympathizing with Selima and expressing his problematic performance, at the same time trying to reconcile commercial aspects of authorship with a desire for recognition and his idealized version of the poet. Gray ultimately doubts he can successfully negotiate the public sphere and remain unharmed or keep his authorial persona intact.

A comparison of the illustrations of these two poems reveals a contrast between a private domestic scene occurring indoors ("Ode to a Cat"), and an external, shared landscape scene ("Elegy"). The "Elegy" recalls a theatrical performance. Both reveal active and intimate performances. The "Ode to a Cat"'s frontispiece reveals movement and urgency while the "Elegy" evokes stillness and solemnity. The illustrations represent the forces that affect Gray's persona and show Gray's fleeting authority, as the additional meanings that Bentley's designs construct alter interpretations of the poetry.

The Reception of Gray's Publications

Gray's troubled relationship toward his public audience influenced his poetry. A brief analysis of the cultural reception, expressed in printed reviews and other references to the *Elegy* (1751) and the 1753 Bentley edition, illustrates the facets of Gray's career at this stage. These function as gateways to a conclusion on the evolution of Gray's status as a poet and the characteristics of the two main authorship roles under consideration, the (forced) professional one and the reasserted, proactive self-fashioning one.

The critical practice of equating Gray with the melancholy speaker of the "Elegy" begins in print with a review that appeared in the *London Advertiser* on 5 March 1751.[14] The anonymous reviewer lauded the "Elegy" as an "excellent Performance." "The Author introduces himself walking over the Graves of the deceased humble Villagers, in a melancholy and contemplative Humour ." Another passage reads:

> It is not too much to say, that this Piece comes nearer the Manner of Milton than any thing that has been published since the Time of that Poet: Whoever will look into the Lycidas of that Author, will not fail to see a striking Likeness, and to own that this Elegy does not suffer in the Comparison. The Poem is full of imagination, and as full of Sentiment; the Imagery is striking, and just; the Descriptive Part

[14] See Newey for a discussion of some of the interpretations of Gray's poetry as personal and autobiographical, such as from scholars Lonsdale and F. W. Bateson (14-16).

> elegantly simple; the Expression concise yet clear, nervous yet smooth, and majestic without Pomp. (5 March 1751)

The commercial aspect is the least conspicuous in this review, although the aim of this piece is not to criticize, but to praise in order to sell a product. However, already at this stage we witness the raising of the author status in the writer's comparison to distinguished authors such as Milton. This is both a selling point—if the reader enjoys Milton, he must read Gray—and a strategy that distinguishes Gray's poetic talent. The puff that appeared in February 1751 in the *Monthly Review* has a purely a market-driven aim: "The excellence of this little piece amply compensates for its want of quantity" (309).

Gray actually did not publish that much poetry, about a thousand lines altogether. Regarding the *Designs* (1753), a letter from Miss Anstey, sister of the poet Christopher Anstey, to Elizabeth Montagu is worth mentioning because of the links to various author functions and its demonstration of the influence of "word of mouth" within small elite literary circles. Anstey's letter, dated 18 January 18, 1753, contains evidence of Gray's transition from the professional author of the 1751 edition to his reassertion of his genuine author persona. This evolution was marked by the offering of his poems to a particular public, who could afford and appreciate their poetical value, in an attractive package. Gray, however, is still relying on commercial strategies to refine and validate his image.

> Have you heard that Gray is going to publish his whole stock of poetry, which, though it will consist of only one volume, and contains but few things which have not been already printed, the price will be half a guinea; but what seems most extraordinary, it is expected there will be a great demand for them, and I am told there is already a great number bespoke, for they are to be embellished and illustrated in the most curious and ingenious manner with copper plates drawn and imagined by Mr. Bentley. (qtd. in Emily J. Climenson 2:23)

In June 1753, the *Monthly Review* ran a contribution by its proprietor, Ralph Griffiths, editor and bookseller, in which he praises the publication's beauty and elegance, addressing the well-to-do readers for whom the edition, as a collectible, was produced. In his commentary on the product itself, the commercial function of authorship is most prominent:

> the beauty of the printing, the genius that appears in the designs for the cuts, or the masterly execution of most of the engravings. Nor will the connoisseur in prints, we are persuaded, think the price of this volume too high: whatever may be the judgment of the mere poetical purchaser, to whom it may appear somewhat rare to pay half a guinea for thirty-six pages of verse; which are all that

> this book contains besides the explanation of the designs, (which make four pages more) and the copper plates.[15] (477)

Griffiths applauds the "ingenious author" merely by referring to his universal popularity as the poet of the "church-yard elegy [that] is in everyone's hands" (477). Griffiths's treatment of Gray is a way of capitalizing on the poet's celebrity status. He justifies the purchasing of the valuable volume by focusing on the general public's admiration of Gray's "Elegy." There is a peculiar contrast here between the general public and the elite minority that could afford the book. Illustrations could potentially broaden an author's audience by making certain poems more accessible, but the cost of this edition defined its audience. Due to his popularity, Gray needs no introduction, which also makes the volume a sought-after commodity.

Conclusion: Reconciling Admiration with the Unattainable Ideal

In this chapter, I have explored the diverse forms of authorship that characterize the early period of Gray's career as a published poet. The four types of authorship, manuscript, unauthorized, forced-commercial authorship, and reasserted self-fashioning, demonstrate that authorship is both a process connected to the mode and form of publication and also essentially multifarious. After its circulation in manuscript form, Gray chose to publish his "Elegy" with Walpole and Dodsley because this publication would reduce the damage to his authorial personae and constructed authority brought on by the *Magazine of Magazine*'s unauthorized version of the poem. Gray was actively involved in the production of both the 1751 publication and the Bentley edition. Paradoxically, his demands and requests represented him as not in control of his own publication activities. This construction of the author as not in control of his work's dissemination or interpretation is not that far off the mark. In fact, it recalls the loss of authority that Gray may have felt in the face of the "Elegy's" popularity. The threat of unauthorized publication would have encouraged Gray to manipulate publication practices so as to produce a seemingly "unauthorized" version of the poem, which had "accidentally" fallen into Dodsley's hands. Gray continuously performed as an author; his persona was continuously revised and changed by his

[15] *Monthly Review* 8 (June 1753) 477.

compositions, the form of his publications, and external forces such as reception processes.

My investigation of Gray's authorial personae reveals the conflicts that marked Gray's authorship with its focus on the forms of publication he chose for his "Elegy." Particularly his struggles with his audience were reinforced by the popularity he achieved with his poetry, despite his conscious efforts to avoid commercial publication, or to mask his agency in professional decisions. He struggled to reconcile his sense of masculine decorum. For instance, his refusal of the Poet Laureateship in December 1757 should be viewed as a strategy to distance himself from the general public, whose popular taste he did not want to affect his poetry.[16] Gray's ideal author was inspired by the leisurely gentleman authors of the past, who wrote for a small, specialist group, but who were not in search of fortune in the form of social popularity that drove professional authors.

The romanticized portraits painted by David Cecil and Ketton-Cremer, for instance, reveal a figure uncomfortable and anxious at social engagements, plagued by health problems and hypochondria. He preferred solitude and experienced much of life through his studies and his friends' adventures. Gray's days at Eton College are sometimes overemphasized and regarded as having been central in the formation of his poetic identity. It was there he met West and Walpole, his closest friends, who exerted lasting influence on his poetic practices. West's early death was one of the most significant events in Gray's life, but many scholars and biographers, such as Cecil, regard Gray's emotional grief as the driving force behind the completion of several of his poems.

Gray spent much of his time on scholarly pursuits. His interest in the past informed his authorial persona and his poetic practices, like his Pindaric Odes, which created Gray's later reputation as a difficult, inaccessible poet. A satire even appeared in the summer of 1760 directed at criticizing Gray's style, entitled *Ode to Obscurity*, written by George Colman and Robert Lloyd. Gray did not seem to take offence, however: "'I believe his Odes sell no more than mine did,' he wrote a little later, 'for I saw a heap of them in a Bookseller's window, who recommended them to me as a very pretty thing'" (qtd. in Ketton-Cremer 177). At this point, Gray's reputation as inaccessible did mean he had a more select audience of readers who admired and understood his difficult poems, but the popularity of his earlier poetry marked his career. Nevertheless, Gray refused to

[16] See Ketton-Cremer: "He was attracted neither by the emoluments—one hundred pounds a year and the traditional butt of canary or sack—nor by the reputation of the office, which had been lowered by a succession of inferior and sometimes ludicrous appointments. Still less would he, of all people, have found it possible to write poems to order, even though there seems to have been some suggestion that in his case the usual conditions might be modified or waived" (159).

cater to the general public's demands by including explanatory notes with the publication of his Pindaric Odes. On this Walpole wrote "'I could not persuade him to add more notes . . . he says whatever wants to be explained, don't deserve to be'" (qtd. in Mack 449). Gray's elite form of authorship, reaching back to the past of "refined," classical authors like Homer and Virgil emphasized a culture of sophistication that stood in stark contrast with more popular forms such as the novel. For example, Benedict writes

> For most of the century to this point, Homer was the model of untutored genius who interwove personal and public themes and tales to portray an ideal picture of the individual in public life. Contemporary critics considered that his characters acted and spoke with decorum and probability, while his plots conveyed a morality both lofty and logical. (155)

The neoclassicist notion of authorship, characterized by refined taste, education, and knowledge of the canon may have inspired Gray's ideal, but he was also interested in the history of oral poetic traditions. The illustrated Bentley edition brings vital aspects of visual art and fine book printing into the analysis of authorship, as the textual imagery of poetry mingles with visual illustrations. This chapter's case study documents a change in how readers interacted with poetry in the eighteenth century, and the illustrated edition of Gray's verse also demonstrates some of the authorial distresses that Gray battled in his will to master his social reputation and authorial role. By investigating the publication and paratextual (including the iconotextual) histories of the 1751 and the 1753 editions, I have shown that book production potentially functions as a tool for constructing and modifying the individual author. Gray's transition across various types of authorship (manuscript, exploited, professional, and self-fashioned poet) proves its multiplicity and reveals its mutability. External influences, for example, eighteenth-century print culture, readers, friends, and associates can transform the author function, but are also capable of being manipulated by the author.

Chapter 4 The Critic's Role in Defining the Author: Revisiting Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781)

Introduction

Critic versus Author

This final chapter explores Samuel Johnson's critical practice as illustrated by his evaluation of poetry in the *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81). In revisiting the critical biographies of the poets featured in this work, I attend to Johnson's constructions of authorship. Johnson's form of criticism includes a literary-historiographical construction of a canon and a subjective-morally informed assessment of both author and individual. Most importantly, these two elements combine to underpin an economic canon, informed by professional issues rather than aesthetic ones, that was to be Johnson's edition. The background informing Johnson's criticism is essential for understanding his interpretation of the particular types of authorship represented by the poets. Johnson's critical constructions of the poets in turn influenced cultural conceptions of these authors and of authorship in general. According to Helen Deutsch the author's "identity, or 'life,' is not natural but created by language" ("'The Name of an Author'" 330). Johnson's reinvention of the individuals' authorial selves left its mark on literary history and criticism. The assessments authored by Johnson have also influenced general definitions of professional authorship. However, one cannot easily neglect the evolution of Johnson's own authorial image when investigating his essential role in the definition of authorship and the evaluation its many forms. In researching

Johnson's *Lives*, I explore the ways in which criticism always entails a rewriting of the author's own critical persona and relationship with his subject. Johnson's constructions of the poets create textual afterlives which can be contrasted with the creation of a cult of the author. The contemporary construction of the "great Dr. Johnson" is an obvious example of such revisionary devotion to cult. To accommodate an assessment of Johnson's highly complex and multi-layered authorial reputation, this chapter thus incorporates a two-pronged approach to investigate the forms of authorship revealed by the *Lives*. It is nearly impossible to discuss the formation of (notions of) "modern" authorship without mentioning Johnson's multifaceted career and his trajectory from Grub Street hack to later critics' conceptualizations of Dr. Johnson as the authoritative figure exemplifying eighteenth-century authorship as the autonomous genius. The multiple "Johnsons" that biographers and scholars have constructed over the centuries in their various commemorations and studies of Johnson reveal similarities with Johnson's recasting of the poets in terms of their textual afterlife. However, the degree of commemoration, memorialization, and idealization differs where the Johnsonian constructions are concerned. Johnson's focus on specific aspects or characteristics that certain authors demonstrate or lack contributes to the invention of an ideal author that is informed by Johnson's views. Johnson's textual versions of the poets illustrate the construction of various, even conflicting, images of an author through biography or criticism in print. These constructed figures continue to live on while the *Lives* continue to be read.

Johnsonian Personae

Johnson hardly needs introduction as one of the key literary figures of the eighteenth century, or "Age of Authors," as he himself termed it. The meaning of the phrase goes deeper than merely reflecting the primacy of the author, given the period's lack of a concrete, encompassing definition of the profession. Rather, it reflects the numerous authorial practices and discursive constructions of the author. Johnson functions as a connecting figure between eighteenth-century authorship, a subject on which he explicitly wrote in the *Lives*, and forms of academic writing that revive and revise the author. A plenitude of scholarship, criticism, and biographies on this complex figure has appeared, starting during Johnson's own life with biographies, as well as the reactionary criticism sparked by some of his more controversial "lives," such as his "Life of Gray." The multiple Johnsonian personae that scholarship creates recalls the various forms of authorship coexisting in the eighteenth century.

It is also nearly impossible to mention Johnson without reference to James Boswell's biography, *Life of Johnson* (1791), which in fact resulted in subsuming, or at least reshaping, Johnson's actual personality. I shall not be using Boswell's work to study Johnson's constructions of the poets and the construction of Johnson, because I am operating by means of specific case studies that reveal how Johnson's authorial self is altered by the *Lives*. Still, Boswell's vivid Johnson has come to replace the "real" Johnson because of its widespread and the fact that it presented such a detailed biographical portrayal of Dr. Johnson. In *Loving Dr. Johnson*, Deutsch discusses Boswell's biography as a symbol or manifestation of the man. Deutsch refers to H. J. Jackson's work on marginalia and she concludes that Boswell's text "has been taken for a man."[1] When engaging with Boswell's *Life*, the reader enters into a type of dialogue with the textual construction of Johnson: "So effectively does Boswell animate Johnson, speaking in published writing, private letters, and dramatic scenes of conversation, that readers are compelled in their own notes to talk back" (130). Readers are able to converse with the dead man, who is given new life through the printed text. Boswell's Johnson was, in all actuality, just one of many Johnsons constructed by others (Deutsch *Loving Dr. Johnson*). An interaction with the text compels readers to create their own version of the subject, Johnson. The diversity of Johnsons represents the multiple facets of the authorial figure. This mirrors the effect the author Johnson had on the image of the poets he wrote about. Johnson's critical authority could influence the dominant version of the author, as did Boswell's version with respect to Johnson.

Although Johnson contributed to defining the author in a singular fashion, I argue that this in fact reveals the author to be multiple. My contribution has some connections with other views presented by Johnsonian scholars. Hugo M. Reichard claims that "the life of Boswell's majestic protagonist is largely decided by others, by persons in his shadow" (225). Reichard's presentation of Johnson as highly dependent on other figures reads as slightly negative. For instance, Johnson "is subject to the manipulation of other characters" (227). The role that others play in assisting Johnson by co-creating or publishing his works, for example, should not be viewed as manipulation or dependence. Rather, collaboration is revealed to be an essential element of authorship, and one that is also accepted and highly valued by Johnson.[2]

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[1] H. J. Jackson *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. 165: qtd. in Deutsch: "Frustrated by her inability to find an intellectual pattern of response to the *Life*, Jackson concludes: 'Boswell's readers were looking for help with their own lives and were most struck by those places in which there was something at stake for them personally' (178)."

[2] "The part that others play in the primary routines of Johnson's life is in one sense far less than collaboration and in another sense far more. . . . Johnson's associates are more than collaborators in that they exercise power over him, the elemental power involved in moving another to get things done. . . . For they control

Reichard's argument is valuable, because he offers a deconstruction of the conceptualization of Johnson as the author-god epitomizing the "Age of Authors." Reichard's Johnson presents a counterexample to the Romantic construct of the autonomous genius. Shirley White Johnston makes a significant distinction between what Johnson said in passing, in his conversations about particular authors and their works, and his critical statements published in the *Lives* and his book reviews. Johnston argues that this division between oral commentary and written criticism should be respected and that scholars should focus only on Johnson's publications. She supports the view of Johnson as critic and writer who, at least theoretically, attached much significance to the critic's objectivity and politeness. Her point has much relevance for my study's focus on the construction of authority in the field of eighteenth-century authorship, since utterances in different contexts have various degrees of manipulating power. However, the question arises whether such a distinction between Johnson's intended publications and his conversational utterances is worthwhile, considering the seminal role of Boswell's biography in Johnson studies and in the construction of this monolithic author. I argue that Johnson's conversational comments on authors' work still have the potential to cast authors in a specific light, as they have for so long appeared in print and been attached to Johnson's name and associated with his authority. Regarding Johnsonian scholarship's representation of Johnson, Mark E. Wildermuth compares the two traditions of conceptualizing Johnson: the conservative, Tory defender of social tradition versus what we would now term the post-structuralist or deconstructionist Johnson. Although a traditional Johnsonian, Bertrand Bronson also recognized Johnson's characteristic dualism. Bronson noted that, despite his political convictions regarding the maintenance of hierarchy, Johnson was concerned with showing charity toward the less fortunate, whose rights he strongly supported. Raman Selden remarks that Bronson really enabled the postmodern tradition with his emphasis on the dualistic nature of Johnson's writing: "radical energy went hand in hand with a concern for order and authority" (280). However, Wildermuth warns that "to read Johnson deconstructively problematizes Johnson's double focus on order and disorder" which leads to "reinforc[ing] the image of Johnson the dogmatist that Bronson and others . . . have challenged" (136). Inspired by Wildermuth's study of the order within disorder but heeding his caveats regarding deconstructive readings of Johnson's duality, I argue that the paradoxes perceived in Johnson's criticism are a result of the numerous Johnsonian personae that make up the multiplicity of his authorship. These "Johnsons" include the author's own self-constructions and the images formed by others, outside of

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most of what he considers or might consider. . . . Though he often balks or veers, others by and large run his life for him, and they are the making of him" (Reichard 228).

his control. The multitude of Johnsons is contrasted with the growing urge in the eighteenth century to define abstract concepts and control knowledge, an urge that is reflected in Johnson's career. There are similar tensions in Johnson studies with one-dimensional constructs of the complex author, critic, biographer, and the variety of interpretations of his criticism. Roger Lonsdale's edition of the *Lives*, published in 2006, has influenced several recent additions to the mix of Johnsonian constructions.[3] Particularly the reviews of Lonsdale's editorial work on Johnson raise the issue of reinvention so relevant to my study. More specifically, Smallwood examines Lonsdale's reconstruction of Johnson's reinvention of the poets in the *Lives* and investigates the continuous adaptation of previous authorial constructions, the process of merging a large number of reading traditions with one another to create an ever new and ever relevant Johnson.

Since Johnson attempted to systematize the English language in his *Dictionary* (1755), it is useful to consider his entries for some terms which have significance for a study of the *Lives* centered on authorship. Johnson gave the following four definitions to the term "author":

(1) The first beginner or mover of any thing; he to whom any thing owes its original.
(2) The efficient; he that effects or produces any thing.
(3) The first writer of any thing; distinct from the translator or compiler.
(4) A writer in general.

He emphasizes production and originality, but hack writing and translation would also fit into the fourth, more general definition. The proactive form of authorship that Johnson subscribes to, as revealed by his critical assessments in the *Lives*, is visible, especially in the second and third definitions. The *Dictionary*'s definition of "biographer" pinpoints the individual as the writer's subject: "A writer of lives; a relator not of the history of nations, but of the actions of particular persons. *Our Grubstreet biographers watch for the death of a great man, like so many undertakers, on purpose to make a penny of him.* Addison, *Freeholder*, N° 35."

[3] See some of the recent articles on Johnson's Lives: Robert Folkenflik, "'Little Lives, and Little Prefaces'?" Lonsdale's Edition of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*" (2009), H. J. Jackson, "A General Theory of Fame in the Lives of the Poets" (2009), Alan McKenzie, "Johnson's 'Life of Foucault': A Pastirody" (2004), Christopher Vilmar, "Johnson's Criticism of Satire and the Problem of the Scriblerians" (2009), Fred Parker, "*Johnson and the Lives of Poets*" (2000), and Philip Smallwood, "Annotated Immortality: Lonsdale's Johnson" (2007).

I propose to read Johnson's *Lives* to assess Johnson's definition of authorship. Deliberately selective in its scope, the project does not require an investigation of every single one of the "lives," as this would risk turning this chapter into a superficial survey of Johnson's critical biographies. Rather, I opt for a sustained analysis of a selection of "lives" that together form such a project, which can then be studied from the two-pronged approach to be applied to authorship: Johnson's transformation and growth as critical authority, on the one hand, and his definition of ideal authorship based on his evaluation of these poets, on the other. A study of these texts will also allow me to enter into dialogue with the extensive body of existing scholarship. A comparison of a set of the "lives" enables me to assess Johnson's role in defining professional authorship and literary criticism by attending to his taste, poetics, and the various themes that characterize forms of authorial practices.

In revisiting Johnson's criticism in the *Lives*, I aim to uncover a central tension between authorial agency and critical authority. The author's freedom and power in writing and professional performances and the resulting self-constructions conflict with prospective limitations enforced by the emergent, eighteenth-century field of criticism, which increasingly influences the author's potential audience. The individual critic, while practicing criticism, can exercise power by creating, or altering, views on writers or authorship. Critics assert power and authority by performing the role of guide to readers. An additional tension is that between the humanization of the author and the growth of authorial exceptionalism. Johnson's focus on mundane anecdotes contributes to this humanizing practice. The authorial profession is viewed as equal to other ways of making a living. With the term *exceptionalism*, I attempt to encompass the changing conceptualizations of authorship where the author is perceived as singular, as different from his fellow human beings. Johnson's ideas in the *Lives* contain a form of this exceptionalism, given his emphasis on proactive authorship and the poet's social responsibility. His ideas develop into an inherent form of original genius which sets the author apart from, and above, the rest of society. However, this ideal form of authorial exceptionalism appears to have existed only rhetorically in the ideological notion of the autonomous author. In the eighteenth century, both literary criticism and the genre of biography contributed to a singular, fixed definition of the author. Although I do not focus extensively on the genre of biography, it is worth noting that society's increased attention to the private details of the individual's life contributed to the growth of the notion of the author as an exemplary hero, and this type of personal anecdotes can be found in Johnson's *Lives*.

Following Sandro Jung's example, I will go further than just analyzing Johnson's *Lives* as biographical literary criticism, but place the spotlight on the "various discourses such as societal utility, piety, and universality" ("Idleness Censured and Morality Vindicated" 80) that shape Johnson's convictions regarding ideal authorship. Analyzing a selection of Johnson's critical "Lives" illustrates the conflicts in Johnson's critical and moral

judgments that lend the illusion of order to his construction of the author. I consider, for example, the conflicts between the author's performance and presentation of agency, on the one hand, and the critic's evaluating role in shaping cultural notions of the ideal author, on the other. The interaction of these forces contributes to a growth or shift in the nature of authority in general.

Author's Guide

This analysis also explores how Johnson's task in composing the "Prefaces" was transformed into something larger and more critical, which defined authorship and reinvented constructions of the poets. My interpretation of the *Lives* as a practical didactic guide for aspiring writers informs my analysis of Johnson's definition of the author. This guide can assist the author's realization of the social and moral responsibilities, which, according to Johnson's assessments, mark the profession. Authorial genius or the ability to write skillfully in different genres is revealed in Johnson's critical evaluations not to be something inherent, but rather, an achievement based on the cultural and literary practices sanctioned by society. Because of my extensive focus on authorship, I shall not be considering the role that Johnson's Tory politics plays in informing his judgments of the poets in the *Lives*.[4]

Selection of "Lives"

Each of the selected "Lives" contributes to the construction of authorship. My selection includes contemporaries and equals of Johnson, which further complicates his inventing versions of their authorship. The "life" of Richard Savage (1744)[5] illustrates Johnson's critical bias, some paradoxes of criticism, including the way the theme of friendship can give rise to his critical inconsistencies. As a didactic guide (narrative of the tragic author), it is also an exploration of the hack's working conditions and environment, and Johnson's former world. This paradigmatic "life" is in many ways an odd construction, since it was written and published long before the *Lives* were commissioned. The "Life of Thomas Gray" (vol. x, 1781) offers an example of one of the

[4] For a brief overview of Johnson's politics, see, e.g., Robert Folkenflik's "Johnson's Politics" in Greg Clingham, 102-113.

[5] This "life" was first published in the *Daily Advertiser* on 11 Feb. 11 1744, and reprinted for the *Lives* (vol. ix) in May 1781.

most contentious critical works by Johnson. Johnson's harsh evaluation of Gray's poetry, the result of both his generic taste, and notions of proactive and economic authorship spurred critical controversy. This led to the immediate production of essays vindicating Gray, for example, those by Robert Potter and Percival Stockdale. Johnson's preferences (and inconsistencies) with regard to poetic form are explored further in the "life" of James Thomson (vol. ix, 1781). Johnson admired Thomson's use of the Georgic and pastoral, while belittling these genres in the poetry of David Mallet and John Dyer.[6] Similarly, while generally commending Thomson as a poet of great descriptive power, he objected to his dramatic performances which are overtly in favor of the Whig opposition to Sir Robert Walpole.

The Genesis and Publication of a New Economic Venture

The publication of Johnson's critical project was originally titled *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical to the Works of the English Poets*. This title reveals the purpose and structure of the endeavor: Johnson's professional role was to write short biographies with critical commentary and these "prefaces" would introduce the poetry in the multivolume collection *The Works of the English Poets*. This new economic venture was devised and realized very close to Johnson's death on 13 December 1784.[7] Johnson was nearly seventy when he signed the contract with the booksellers on 28 March 1777. From then until 1781, he devoted much of his time to composing the critical biographies of the poets who had been selected by his commissioners. Johnson's original task in composing the prefaces proved to be daunting, however, and did not immediately imply the larger project that he transformed the *Lives* into in the end. In 1778, Johnson adjusted his

[6] Johnson disliked Dyer's Georgic poem in blank verse *The Fleece*, although it is didactic. In Dyer's "life," Johnson writes that the poem "never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recall it to attention. . . . Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, 'That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer's *Fleece*; for, if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence" (4: 125).

[7] Folkenflik has commented on the theme of death in the Lives. The individual 52 "Lives" were also chronologically ordered according to the poet's date of death (*Samuel Johnson* 34).

vision of the final product, thus increasing his workload for the project.[8] "Instead of the 'little Lives' commissioned by the booksellers, he was now concentrating on a series of 'great' lives . . . and envisaging extended 'critical examination' of at least the major poets" (Lonsdale 1: 27-28). This decision may have been finalized after the completion of his "Life of Dryden" and "Life of Cowley." Johnson's interest in understanding authorship influenced the alteration of his task to include, by way of evaluation, an attempt to define the essence of authorship. During the writing process, the "lives" escaped the original enforced structure of biographical sketches, and became much more critical with the additions of Johnson's literary evaluations. Johnson's concern for (constructing) authorship led to his inverting the "Prefaces" and deviating from the plan which his contract had originally stipulated.

The critical pieces were so substantial they could even stand alone: after volumes I-IV appeared in 1779 and V-X in 1781, the publishers reprinted them, and the collected "Lives" were sold separately from the poetry, under the title *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets: with Critical Observations on their works*.[9] Some readers actually preferred this handier format, because they already possessed the poetry and were chiefly interested in what Johnson had to say. According to Rogers in the *ODNB*, this undertaking "proved to be the ultimate success in [Johnson's] career." At this point, he had professionally established himself with his *Dictionary*, so the publishers felt they could capitalize on the author's name: "For its publishers the mere association of Johnson's eminent name with the English Poets in fact mattered more than any biographical research or original criticism he might contribute, since it was in itself a crucial marketing device, the literary 'brand name' *par excellence* which would in itself confirm the edition's superiority. . ." (Lonsdale 1: 12). This illustrates an economic strategy that contributed to the growth of the author. The power connected to the name, including its economic function in linking to and advertising previous publications strengthened the individual author's authority as well. Johnson's own authorship was transformed by this project.

[8] In the advertisement to the first volume, Johnson explains how he went beyond what the commissioners, and he himself, had intended for each poet's introduction. In fact, he was only supposed to briefly sketch the author's life for the reader: "My purpose was only to have allotted to every Poet an Advertisement, like those which we find in the French Miscellanies, containing a few dates and a general character; but I have been led beyond my intention, I hope, by the honest desire of giving useful pleasure" (1: 189).

[9] What sparked this project was a collection of lives of English poets, with two-page biographical sketches supplied by John Bell, published in Edinburgh in 1773. A consortium of London booksellers wishing to produce something comparable, or more valuable, was formed by Tom Davies, William Strahan, and Thomas Cadell. They commissioned Johnson to write the biographical sketches accompanying the poems for 200 guineas. Johnson himself requested the amount of compensation, but could have demanded a higher price. "[H]e eventually received twice this amount" (Pat Rogers "Johnson"). See also Lonsdale's introduction to the *Lives* and Thomas F. Bonnell, especially chapters four and five.

Johnson's authorial identity evolved during the composition, as Johnson revised his task, and the performance of economic authorship contributes to the increase of a writer's authority.

Johnson's *Lives* is part of the overall narrative about the printing of literature, especially the recent changes in copyright law which facilitated the free reprinting of works hitherto controlled by copyright owners. The product was intended to enter into competition with other collections combining literary lives with poetry. There had been English predecessors to this project, such as Theophilus Cibber's *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753). However, these collections had become outdated, most of the poets featured in Cibber's work having died by the time Johnson commenced his project, and their scope was no longer limited due to the ruling of *Donaldson v. Beckett*. This decision had brought an end to perpetual copyright in 1774 and made various works available for reprinting. Under these new conditions, Johnson's edition could fill a gap in the book market. The economically driven publication became central to scholars studying and writing about literature.[10] The selection for the series offers a cohesive group of poets. The series is thus an attempt to create a format of uniformity that interlinks all writers featured in the canon of the edition. Due to this cohesive narrative enforced by this type of collection, these diverse poets are presented as similar and as part of a fictitious, decontextualized literary history supposedly based on the same criteria of production and assessment. And yet, the work also stimulated interest in the personal lives and individuality of writers, as reflected by their behavior and choices. Johnson's expansion of the project into a more critical direction helped to distinguish writing practices as something more than an economic profession. By writing about individual authors, Johnson contributed to the formation of the cult of the author and notions of authorial exceptionalism, despite or perhaps because of his candid focus on and revelation of mundane or indecorous details.

[10] George Sainstbury was probably the first to discuss the aesthetic choices Johnson made in the *Lives*, although it should be noted that the selection of poets was made by the booksellers. For more on canon formation, see also Jonathan Brody Kramnick.

Percival Stockdale (1736-1811)[11]

Despite an increase in Johnson's authority after the publication of the *Lives*, he did not embody the untouchable, respected image that later Johnsonian scholars enforced on him. On the contrary, some of Johnson's critical evaluations were quite contentious and the appearance of the *Lives* encouraged further criticism from those who felt the need to defend the poets against Johnson's judgments. A significant case in the history of the *Lives* is the way in which Percival Stockdale, poet and literary critic, attempted to discredit Johnson's authority. He was also dissatisfied with the portrait of Gray Johnson had sketched. With this aside, I offer some insight into a reader's negative construction of Johnson. The two men of letters had initially been friends. Stockdale publicly claimed after Johnson's death in his printed memoirs that Johnson had ruthlessly stolen from him the task of composing the *Lives*. He explained that the bookseller consortium had first offered him the opportunity to work on the project (Weinbrot "Samuel Johnson" 107, 114). Stockdale shrewdly wrote in his *Memoirs* that "'the preponderating, and imperious weight of JOHNSON'S name'" made the booksellers forget him (2: 195-96, qtd. in Weinbrot 114).[12] However, the fact that Stockdale was two years off in his dating of the consortium's offer and retraction thereof in 1779 or 1780 rather than 1777 lessens Stockdale's reliability (Sherbo). His dissatisfaction with Johnson is further revealed after Johnson's death in a letter from 22 Jan 1785: "'Dr. Johnson is no more. As I was a friend of his glory, I wish he had died ten years ago, before he wrote his *Lives* . . . and his political pamphlets. But he was a great and good man; and his death has made a large melancholy, and irreparable chasm in Society'" (qtd. in Weinbrot 115). Stockdale's conciliatory statement recalls Johnson's personal style with its combination of negative criticism and pleasant praise.

Stockdale met Johnson in 1770 (Weinbrot 107). His admiration for the man was commemorated in his 1764 poem "An Elegy on the Death of Dr. Johnson's Favorite Cat" included in the second volume of *The Poetical Works of Percival Stockdale* (1810) (255-7). This was surely inspired by Gray's humorous ode to Walpole's cat. Ironically enough, Johnson's "Life of Gray" formed one of the publication's main points of contention for Stockdale. Previously, Stockdale's attack on Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of*

[11] It is remarkable that, as both Arthur Sherbo and Howard D. Weinbrot note, there are few secondary studies on Stockdale and no biography.

[12] "Stockdale's protests evoked Conant's insulting proposal that he 'make an index to the new edition' (*Memoirs* 2: 195-96). When Stockdale later related this tale to Johnson, 'The man who used to be so open, and declamatory; and often so warm, and violent, in his defence, or censure, even of actions of inferiour consequences, when they were related to him; on this occasion, made me no reply; he was perfectly silent' (*Memoirs* 2: 197)" (qtd. in Weinbrot "Samuel Johnson" 114).

Pope (1756) in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Genuine Laws of Poetry* (1778) had garnered "some both friendly and uncertain praise from Johnson" (Weinbrot 107). After this, his friendship with Johnson became precarious, as can be seen by his bitterness with respect to Johnson's work on the *Lives*.

Stockdale felt deep disappointment regarding Johnson's involvement in the project of the *Lives*. However, he dealt with this by pursuing his own project, comparable to the *Lives*, published as *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets* (1808). Weinbrot's article "Samuel Johnson, Percival Stockdale, and Brick-Bats from Grubstreet" details Stockdale's sharp critical response to Johnson's *Lives*. He started this collection of lectures in 1795, and it was published at Stockdale's own expense in 1808. In its preface, confident that he can do better and should have been in Johnson's place, he explains his use of "truly" in the title: "for amongst the Poets of Dr. Johnson there are names which have not the least pretensions to eminence" (ix). His title emphasizes straightaway that his work is based on aesthetic considerations, rather than the economic criteria involved in the *Lives*. It should be noted, however, that unlike Stockdale, Johnson did not have complete aesthetic freedom with regard to the selection of poets.

Stockdale lashed out at many friends or acquaintances that had initially supported him or his career in some way; he did not want to admit his dependence on networks. Instead of cherishing his friend, Johnson, and making use of this ally to improve his authorial and critical reputation, Stockdale ended up destroying their friendship: "Stockdale, who did not always understand the importance of such protection, and who resented needing it and failed to find it with equal frequency, ended his career giving Johnson and himself grief" (Weinbrot 113). His actions reflect his bitterness about the project, but also his awareness of Johnson's increasing authority in society as a literary critic. This awareness prompted his destruction of his network with Johnson. In his essay on Stockdale's response, Weinbrot includes a key letter Stockdale wrote to Edward Jerningham on March 30, 1793, in which he repeats that Johnson's *Lives* will be remembered as "a Disgrace to English Literature." The work reveals Johnson's "'Faculties [to be] extremely on the Decline, his arrogance has arisen to an insufferable pitch'" (qtd. in Weinbrot 127, 128).

Authorship and Criticism

Various Authorial Images

The key points I make in my analysis of Johnson's *Lives* are also those of the dissertation as a whole: the multiple forms of authorship and the author's performance of authoriality, the battle for agency, authority, the link of authorship with the multiplicity and diversity of printed matter, and the construction of a modern understanding of authorship. With the eighteenth-century media explosion, there is the aspect of competition presented by a variety of texts and multiple versions of a single one, such as Johnson's *Lives*. The project's publication was economically driven, and catered to a specific audience that could afford and was attracted to collecting multi-volume works. When the project of the *Lives* was being realized, interested readers could only purchase the entire set, a marketing strategy that was very unusual: "no potential customer could decline to buy this or that poet because of a harsh Johnsonian opinion" (Bonnell 177).[13] According to the advertisement in the *London Chronicle*, "Such Gentlemen as have already purchased Sixty Volumes of this Edition of the Poets, may now purchase the Eight Volumes of LIVES and INDEX to complete their sets." [14] When completed in 1781, the complete set of 68 volumes sold for ten guineas (Bonnell 163).[15] Unlike Bell's edition, the proprietors of the Johnson edition did not cater to a lower-class clientele

[13] J. D. Fleeman notes under the entry for 1779 that the first four volumes of the *Prefaces* were not sold separately (2: 1356).

[14] 1-3 April 1779 and 14-16 June 1781, qtd. in Bonnell 177. See also 176-78: "Whereas Bell could ill afford to incorporate many poets whose works did not appeal individually to the buying public, the proprietors were less concerned about this for two reasons: first, the thirty-six partners and firms stood on solid financial footing, with pooled resources adequate to publish all their poetry at once; second, their sales policy required the set to be purchased in its entirety. If an early advertising notice, stating 'Price 2s. 6d. each sewed' as the cost per volume, implied that volumes would be available for separate purchase, they either changed their minds or merely offered the information to demonstrate that the octavos were, in relative terms, as good a bargain as Bell's 1s. 6d. octodecimo imprints. In any case, when their sixty volumes went on sale in 1779, *Monthly Review*, *Critical Review*, and *Gentleman's Magazine* quoted only the full price of £7 10s. After a two-volume index had been printed (1780) and Johnson had finished his *Prefaces* in six additional volumes (1781), the only persons initially eligible to purchase them were those who owned the other volumes, or anyone ready to buy the complete set" (176-7).

[15] See also Lonsdale's introduction to the *Lives* for more details on pricing, especially the comparison with John Bell's edition: "Although Johnson's friends had been reading at least some of the biographies since the summer of 1778, the published *Prefaces* were normally available only to purchasers of the fifty-six volumes of the complete *English Poets*, as a cost of £7 10s. (Individual volumes of Bell's *Poets of Great Britain* had always been available at 1s. 6d., the full set of 109 volumes eventually costing £8 8s.)" (35).

who could only afford purchasing a volume occasionally (Bonnell 178-9). Both Johnson and his readership were discouraged by the purchasing regulations the booksellers had enforced on the collection. "Until they cashed in on Johnson's work as a separate publication, the partners were committed to a partially self-defeating marketing ploy, drawing people to their collection through the power of Johnson's name and yet causing many to balk at their all-or-nothing purchase condition" (180). However, the second installment (six vols., V-X) was published in 1781 at £1, along with the two vols. of the index (Fleeman 2: 1366).[16] Finally, in 1781, the booksellers agreed to reprint Johnson's "lives" as *Lives of the Poets* and selling them separately, in four octavo volumes (Lonsdale 1: 47).[17] Johnson's project, like no other project at the time, was concerned with a holistic assessment of authorship and its conceptualization. Johnson's publication differs from Bell's edition with its biographical half pages and the fact that Bell's edition offered the reader the potential to construct his/her own collection by purchasing separate volumes. The *Lives* created a singular authorship ideal which parallels the tension between a single author's various personae (lives) and Johnson's singular reinvention of the poet in question.

In this dissertation, issues of control and authority are central, with regard to both authors and critics. My analysis in this chapter takes its cue from Wildermuth's nuanced revision of Alvin B. Kernan's static theory on print logic. Kernan's theory includes three central aspects: multiplicity, which refers to both the variety of books available and the multiple copies of a single work; systematization, which means the textual ordering of information in the structure of publications; and fixity, which points to a book's coming to represent true, objective knowledge after a certain period of time, due to its formal durability. I weigh Johnson's use and understanding of the seemingly "ordered" mediated culture and its inherent chaos and consider it by assessing his contribution to defining notions of authorship. "Mediated culture" is the term Wildermuth uses, borrowed from Andreas Huyssen, to refer neutrally to "'culture industry,' 'mass culture,' or 'mass mediated culture'" (27). This includes the culture affected by the invention of the printing press "which establishes an information-based society where various technological agencies of communication . . . create a kind of cultural network of information that is shared by individuals of the culture who do not necessarily need to interact with each other directly to participate in the dissemination and assimilation of information texts" (28). The construction of identity and authority through language

[16] The first installment of Johnson's "Prefaces" in four volumes appeared in 1779. As these volumes were not sold separately, it is difficult to estimate the price of purchasing all ten volumes of Johnson's "lives."

[17] It was for the separate edition that the sequence of the "lives" was rearranged chronologically by the poets' date of death (Lonsdale 1: 48). Fleeman states that "The four vols. were published in June 1781 (shortly in *Public Advertiser*, 5 June 1781), at £1 1s. in boards . . ." (2: 1371).

and text is explored from two angles. Johnson establishes the poets' authorial identity through the composition and publication of the *Lives*, which in turn constitutes an act of self-establishment by Johnson as an author.

Literary Criticism: The Author's Social Role

This chapter's focus on criticism and the tensions between authorial agency and the critic's authority links with the preface of my dissertation where I briefly sketch some textual practices of the seventeenth century that contributed to changing views of the writer's profession. This change is illustrated by Gerard Langbaine's play catalogs, which contained elements drawing attention to the author's individuality, such as biographical details, alphabetization by the playwright's names, and a selection of portraits. Such catalogs were arguably a precursor to both Romantic conceptions of authors, hero worship, and the genre of biography, in which Johnson also engages in. Johnson's *Lives* marks a shift in the cultural authority of the literary critic in being able to bestow value on certain works and authors, especially considering the weight given to Johnson's critiques in later years and his role in influencing canon formation. At the same time, the text's publication sparked a critical debate because of readers,' authors,' critics' dissatisfaction with what was perceived as Johnson's unfair treatment of certain poets. And yet, his written criticism and the history of the *Lives* represent a key characteristic of criticism in the eighteenth century. The practice of criticism was also not necessarily "objective" or "fair," since both the rules of the book trade and the professional author's contacts and networks could have an impact on the evaluations of published work. Economic factors and social relationships should not be underestimated in influencing positive evaluations and creating tensions which are then tacitly expressed in negative reviews.

Johnson and Other Critics – Thomas (1728-1790) and Joseph Warton (1722-1800)

Since collaboration, friendship, and networks form such a key theme in Johnson's authorial trajectory as well as in his texts for the Lives, it is worth mentioning some of the contemporary critics with whom Johnson worked. An exploration of diverse critical positions that informed the construction of the modern author reveals that the forms of authorship and criticism in the eighteenth century were more nuanced. I have already mentioned Stockdale as an example of one of Johnson's contemporaries whose criticism conflicted with Johnson's methods. The brothers Thomas and Joseph Warton

encouraged the re-assessment of English poetry, as did Johnson's critical work that aimed to guide readers through the processes of interpretation and evaluation. As poets and scholars, the Wartons also influenced critical practices of literary scholarship and historiography. Their literary taste and critical views differed from Johnson's conceptual criticism with its realist tendencies. A brief investigation of the central ideas behind the Wartons' critical texts contributes to a further understanding of Johnson's self-construction and the development of the critic's authority. Their professional career choices, especially the case of the posthumous publication of their father's poems, can also contribute to a reassessment of the complexity of authorial agency.

Thomas Warton and his elder brother Joseph were both active in the literary sphere, showing an interest in composing and studying the history of poetry. The brothers also collaborated and even included each other's poems in their own publications. For example, Joseph's *Odes on Various Subjects* (1746) showcased two of Thomas's poems. "This borrowing early illustrated the brothers' practice of helping each other with their work, a practice which culminated in 1748 when Thomas Warton the elder's *Poems on Several Occasions* was published" (Hugh Reid "Warton, Thomas"). Their father had died in 1745 and they collected his poetry, desiring publication to pay off some of his debts. The brothers inserted some of their own poems to increase the size of the volume and reworked their father's poetry more in line with their own personal, romantic taste. (David Fairer explains that Joseph had the greatest hand in editing his father's work).[18] According to Reid, the publication of the brothers' collaborative endeavor "established a reputation for Thomas Warton the elder which was undeserved. All the forward-reaching were poems by the brothers" ("Thomas"). However, Fairer has argued that there are two distinct poetic voices in this work, "the social, witty style of early eighteenth-century occasional verse, and the 'romantic,' Miltonic poetry of personification and fancy which characterizes the verse of the younger poets of the 1740s" which can be attributed to the father and his sons, respectively ("Postscript" 62). The father's role or presentation as author makes this a fascinating example of anonymous collaboration illustrating the complex forces of (multiple) authorship. The brothers are not purely concerned with economic authorship, which Reid's biographical sketch seems to imply with its emphasis on the economic function. The Warton brothers were not merely driven by financial motives and the settling of their father's debts, but were in fact interested in furthering, and memorializing, their father's reputation. Publishing the three-authored volume was motivated by their desire to advocate a parent's talent, and its appearance also helped to launch them onto the

[18] See "The Poems of Thomas Warton the Elder?" for more explicit details explaining who was responsible for writing what in this publication.

scene as poets. The time and energy spent on improving some of their father's poems also shows their concern for high literary standards, thus promoting their roles as literary critics.[19]

Thomas's first critical work was on Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (published by Dodsley in 1754), and already showed an interest in a historical study of literature.[20] Despite the fact that Johnson's form of criticism was not as historically-centered, he praised Thomas's achievement in a letter: "You have shown to all who shall hereafter attempt the study of our ancient authours the way to success, by directing them to the perusal of the books which those authours had read" (qtd. in Reid "Thomas"). This combination of praise and practical advice should be read as directed not only at critics, but authors as well. Johnson supported thorough research as a significant step in writing practices.

The relationship between Johnson and the Warton brothers was marked by ups and downs, culminating in conflict about Johnson's *Lives*. Thomas met Johnson through Joseph between 1750 and 1754: "The friendship stayed relatively strong until Johnson's death; there were however periods of coolness . . ." (Reid "Thomas"). Thomas's criticism of Johnson's *Dictionary* surely increased tensions. Like Johnson, Thomas also explored the genre of biography: he wrote about the men of Trinity College such as Ralph Bathurst and Sir Thomas Pope. Thomas also offered assistance to Johnson by, for example, supplying Johnson with material for his critical work on Shakespeare.

The field of textual criticism that was being developed in the eighteenth century is characterized by a diversity of form and method that reflects the variety of writing practices of the period. Fairer has even referred to the eighteenth century as being the "Age of Warton [rather] than the Age of Johnson" because Warton's historical criticism better described the literary trends and critical views defining the period (*Correspondence*, xix). The placement of Johnson as the central critic of the eighteenth century is an outdated construction reflecting nineteenth-century views on his supposedly monolithic position, and this tradition has partially hidden from view Thomas Warton's contribution to the formation of literary history and criticism. The fact that Thomas has been ignored by so many scholarly accounts is just as unwarranted

[19] See Joseph's "Advertisement" to his *Odes on Various Subjects* (1746): "The Public has been so much accustom'd of late to didactic Poetry alone, and Essays on moral Subjects, that any work where the imagination is much indulged, will perhaps not be relished or regarded. The author therefore of these pieces is in some pain least certain austere critics should think them too fanciful and descriptive. But as he is convinced that the fashion of moralizing in verse has been carried too far, and as he looks upon Invention and Imagination to be the chief faculties of a Poet, so he will be happy if the following Odes may be look'd upon as an attempt to bring back Poetry into its right channel."

[20] See Fairer "Historical Criticism." Warton even revised this work later in his career, which earned long-lasting admiration: "The quality and influence of the work was such that a critic in 1911 called it 'the best book ever written about Spenser'" (H.E. Cory, *The Critics of Spenser*, 1911, qtd. in Reid "Thomas")

as is Johnson's neglecting to discuss Shenstone's poetry in detail in his "life." Selection is what scholarship does, but when it forms a tradition, this recreates historical perspectives. However, eighteenth-century criticism is marked by multiple, communicating, sometimes disagreeing, voices, which later become streamlined into one definitive judgment, under the influence of the increased power of the critic's authority. It is significant to view this authority as constructed, at least partially, by other forms of scholarship.

Thomas produced critical work fundamentally different from Johnson's *Lives* with the historical project, titled *The history of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the eighteenth Century* (three vols. published in 1774, 1778, and 1781). Unfortunately, Thomas did not complete this endeavor and only reached the medieval period, which disappointed his readership. Nevertheless, this work was as significant as Johnson's for literary scholars and writers, and influential in changing conceptualizations of authorship. Despite the work's historical inconsistencies, it was of crucial value because "many of [its] quotations provided readers with the only accessible text of the poems and as such . . . creat[ed] an interest in the poetry of the past" (Reid "Thomas"). There is a tension between the critical positions of Johnson and Thomas, particularly on the level of genre. "Warton was unhappy with Johnson's *Lives* where Johnson criticized Milton and Gray and the tradition of historical criticism which Warton stood for" (Reid "Thomas").[21] Indeed, Warton belonged to a critical tradition informed by historical scholarship, and Johnson's conceptual tradition, inspired by realism, did not take into account historical principles. Thomas's *History* focused primarily on romance, a form which Johnson neglected to explore any further, for it was devoid of realism. The Wartons, in contrast, were advocates of this genre. This type of critical conflict sheds more light on Johnson's harsh treatment of poets like Gray, who was also a historical scholar.

Similarly to Thomas, Joseph's critical stance also conflicted with that of Johnson. Joseph's "major contribution to scholarship was *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1756; second volume, 1782; in subsequent editions the title was *Genius and Writings*). As Pope had died only twelve years earlier, it was anticipated that the work might arouse some controversy so it was published anonymously and Dodsley's name did not appear on the title-page until the second edition . . ." (Reid "Joseph"). Joseph was not officially named as author in this work until its posthumous publication in 1806. Joseph's critical text explores much more systematically Pope's writing practices and authorship than Johnson's "life" does. Joseph offers a more holistic image of Pope's career. He also

[21] Reid notes further: "in a letter to Richard Hurd after Johnson's death, Warton says that Milton 'has been depreciated by Dr. Johnson, a specious and popular writer, without taste' (6 April 1785 qtd. in Reid)."

delineates four main types of authorship amongst poets.[22] Pope is placed into the second group of poets who enjoyed "true poetical genius, in a more moderate degree, but had noble talents for moral and ethical poesy" (xi). Joseph is more formalist and less subjective in his account. Johnson's criticism was much more personality driven, with its focus on the poet's personal life. Johnson initially praised Joseph's essay, but later in the *Lives* he included explicit critiques of Warton's work. However, he was less critical of Pope in general than in the past. Still, Joseph later criticized the "Life of Pope." Johnson had called Warton's work a "'book which teaches how the brow of Criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight'" (Reid "Joseph").

My exploration of the Warton brothers' work shows the fundamental generic differences between these two "schools" of criticism: Johnson's ideational, personal type and the Wartons' historical, chronological, formal type.[23] The contrasts and interactions in the professional criticism between Johnson and the Warton brothers reveal it to be an example of the dialogic use criticism. Particularly David Wheeler's study examines Johnson's *Lives* in this way. Wheeler interprets Johnson's evaluations of the poets as also implicitly commenting on other critical points of view, such as Joseph Warton's more historically driven criticism. He concludes that Johnson's and Warton's respective positions are representative of two opposed critical positions influencing literary taste, composition, and study. Although they had been close acquaintances and Joseph had even helped Johnson by supplying material for his biographies of the poets, their literary taste and critical methods differed. However, "if we examine the cumulative effect of the *Lives*, particularly the major ones—the Cowley, the Milton, the Dryden, the Pope, the Gray—we can see that Johnson undermines (and I think deliberately and purposefully) Warton's critical position" (Wheeler 29). Johnson's reason for purposely using the *Lives* as a vehicle for attacking Warton's position might have been a strategy to heal his wounded pride, caused by Warton's declaration in his *Essay* that Johnson's *Dictionary* had not really contributed to the standardization of the English language.[24]

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[22] Joseph's four types of authorship include: "those who are 'sublime and pathetic,' he placed Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. . . In the second class were poets who possessed the true poetical genius, in a more moderate degree, but had noble talents for moral and ethical poesy.' The third class were 'men of wit, of elegant taste and some fancy in describing familiar life.' The fourth class were 'mere versifiers, however smooth and mellifluous some of them may be though (pp. xi-xii)" (qtd. in Reid "Joseph")/

[23] See Fairer's "'Sweet Native Stream!'" and "Thomas Warton, Thomas Gray, and the Recovery of the Past" for more information on Warton's belonging to the romantic "school."

[24] "[Roscommon] had laid a design of forming the standard of our language: in which project, his intimate friend Dryden was a principal assistant. This was the first attempt of that sort; and, I fear we shall never see

In either case, Johnson aimed to present his critical position to his audience as the appropriate manner of approaching and evaluating literature as conform to his notion of societal utility. What Johnson advocates in his approach is an emphasis on the appropriateness of morally informed biographical criticism that can play with historical data (including genre traditions). The two forms of authorship implied by the two contrasted views are the imaginative, romantic artist, inspired by the past and tradition, which was advocated by Warton, and the genius, or wit, concerned with creating a clear tradition and maintaining order, which was idealized by Johnson (compare Wheeler 34, 37). The image of the universal, proactive poet is the ideal author that Johnson valued in the *Lives*. Johnson's view was surely influenced by his own experience as a hack, professional writer and his didactic convictions that poetry should focus on reality and communicate truth and morality. Johnson's realist stance explains why he despised Gray and other more elite, imaginative writers.

Authorial Agency versus the Critic's Authority: Johnson's Critical Methodology

In Johnson's criticism, the three key ideas of reading, authorship, and didacticism are closely linked. The practice of reading forms the first step in becoming a successful author. For Johnson, processing knowledge during the reading process and actively reproducing, or reusing, that knowledge is significant for writing practices: "When a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly. The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book" (Boswell 1: 476). Johnson implicitly links reading with acts of absorption, criticism, and critical synthesis. Boswell's quote emphasizes the author's swiftness in producing texts, influenced by the effective processing of knowledge. This view of an enthusiastic outburst of creative energy contrasts strikingly with forms of organic criticism, such as Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), focusing on originality. Young's idea of composition is related to the slow growth of a plant, since he likens the writing process to a scripting or revisiting of the attentive (and slow) reading process.

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another set forth in our days: even though Mr. Johnson has lately given us so excellent a dictionary." (Warton, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* 1: 199- 200.)

A key feature connected to Johnson's didacticism is the instructive role he assigned not only to the literary author, but also to the critic. Jung insightfully notes that Johnson's "Life of Shenstone" is more than an informative biography: it is also a "warning" ("Idleness" 81). Johnson's didactic vision included how a text's genre and the reading process itself could be used not only to morally and critically instruct readers, but also to shape one's social behavior. Johnson's didacticism is expressed in his views on fictional literature and is also present in his critical texts, like the *Lives*. I argue that Johnson's criticism is not just intended as a guide for readers to acquire skills to judge and value literature. Rather, the collection of critical lives also presents a guide for writers. In Johnson's evaluations, he reveals how authors can best construct their authorial personae without losing their individuality in the chaos of literary culture. Johnson's morally-driven criticism can serve to guide and improve the writer. Johnson's views are inspired by the Enlightenment idea of improvement. Within Enlightenment thought, the individual's improvement is closely linked to the state of humanity in general, and would be seen to contribute to national and cultural progress. Moreover, improvement always needs to be personal and societal.[25] Improvement was a key characteristic of writing: learning improved one as a person, but for Johnson, it was best if the individual could do something useful with the knowledge gained. For instance, in Johnson's evaluations which clearly contrast with Renaissance poetics, a writer who could impart values to his readers via his poem would be valued higher than a scholarly, isolated poet who composes cryptic poems filled with allusions.[26]

With the *Lives*, Johnson attempted to present the reader with an exercise in judgment and to contribute to English culture's definition of the ideal author, but his work in fact reveals the dynamism of authorship and the mutability of individual writers. For example, each subjective critic and reader will alter the authorial image via processes of interpretation. Johnson is also ultimately reinventing each writer using his subjective notions of authorship which are subject to personal taste, predilections, and ideological position. He attempts to reveal the definitive version of each poet in his reinvention of their "lives," careers, or authorship, which seems paradoxical. The collection of "lives" thus reveals the limitations of the author's control and agency. As seen elsewhere in this dissertation, limitations to the author's agency can stem from various forces connected to print culture, such as printers, editors, publishers, patrons, booksellers, and other decision-makers, as well as the passage of time since a work's publication and, for

[25] For more information on Enlightenment thought, see Richard Sher and James Van Horn Melton.

[26] Renaissance theoreticians such as George Puttenham insisted that only certain genres (those associated with tragedy and high lyric) could affect readers sufficiently to condition particular responses. Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1588) is also viewed as a guide for practicing authors (Lawrence Lipking "Literary Criticism," 472). See Heinrich F. Plett and Brian Vickers for more on Puttenham and Renaissance poetics.

example, a culture's shifting poetics. The case of Gray's "forced" publication of the "Elegy" upon the threat of an unauthorized appearance in a periodical, demonstrates these authorial limitations. However, Gray's response is also an example of an author's manipulation of such restrictions, as the result is a reassertion of his agency and benefits his authority. There is thus a positive side to Johnson's strict authorial definitions: Johnson aims to provide writers with the skills for actively engaging in this milieu while maintaining a degree of authorial control. Johnson's ideas about the rules of writing biography and criticizing or judging other authors contain ambiguities. As Deutsch maintains, Johnson saw identification with his subject author as essential, for instance. This idea of identification includes the partaking of an identity, particularly when Johnson's authoritative role in constructing the poet's authorial image is taken into account. Through his writing, Johnson also leaves his personal mark on the poets. However, identification was a double-edged sword since such personal identification threatened "the narrator's own 'integrity,'" which Deutsch explicitly defines as "the distance from his subject that guarantees fair judgment and his own authorial survival" ("Name" 335-6). This is also connected to my own term of authorial agency, which also refers to the threats to authorial liberty and authority. Identification, or the sharing of an identity, and understanding put both authorial survival and any form of objectivity at risk.

Johnson's criticism in the *Lives* reveals "an astute critic's conservative views of these writers which, though not always justified, have left a mark of depreciation on these poets. Furthermore, the 'lives' exemplify values that Johnson considered ideal, a fact substantiated by his own life" (Jung "Idleness" 90). Johnson's notions of authorship and positive and negative evaluations were directed at both the poet's ability to master a particular form (generically associated with a specific ideational context, mode, and meaning) and the poet's personal character to advocate Johnson's personal moral stance. The influence of the *Lives* on literary culture particularly shows the author's growing esteem in society, the power of Johnson's name as man of letters, as well as the increasing authority of the critic. The booksellers who had commissioned Johnson did so in the hope that his name on the publication would function as a marketing strategy. Some early reviews, though not all positive toward Johnson, can shed light on the growing significance of the writer's name. Before Johnson had even completed all the "lives," a piece in the *Critical Review* appeared in June 1779, praising the project's significance and Johnson's performance.[27] This reviewer praised Johnson's biographical

[27] The reviewer continues: "As the general character of every polished nation depends in a great measure on its poetical productions, too much care cannot be taken, in works of this nature to impress on foreigners a proper idea of their merit. This task was perhaps never so well executed as in the performance before us."

skill in "draw[ing] out from little circumstances such remarks as these on men and manners," while criticizing the inclusion of those who "are not poets of sufficient note or estimation to deserve the pen of a Johnson to transmit their lives to posterity" (450-53, qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 521). The *Gentleman's Magazine* also published a favorable review in June of 1779, possibly written by John Duncombe. The reviewer claims that Johnson's performance had met its readers' expectations, and "though he cannot give us much new information as an historian, that deficiency is compensated by his sagacity as a moralist and critic" (qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 521). Edmund Cartwright's piece in the *Monthly Review* from July 1779 is of particular interest as he comments on the proprietors using "Dr. Johnson's *name* merely as a lure" as well as the project's original design which would "have conferred not much reputation upon the Writer, nor have communicated much information to his readers" (qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 522).[28] Especially after the publication of Johnson's "Life of Gray," many reviews became more critical of Johnson's taste and political views. A reviewer in *The London Magazine* from Dec 1799 seems to be accusing Johnson of misusing his authority:

> Dr. Johnson, like his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, occasionally feels too much his established superiority in his profession, and condemns the very faults in others, which are the most conspicuous blemishes in his own character. Independent of dictatorial arrogance, his remarks and criticisms are the strongest proofs that can be given, that he has no equal in the science of polite literature (qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 535).

By giving some examples of both positive and negative reviews of the *Lives*, I have demonstrated not only how Johnson's name and reputation influenced the authority attached to both professions of author and critic, but also in which ways Johnson was constructed by other writers and reviewers. In his authorial trajectory, Johnson, hack, transformed into Dr. Johnson, author of the *Dictionary* and a critical authority.

Johnson "has proved, indeed, that a man of genius, penetration, and sagacity, can always, even from old and worn-out materials, strike out something new and entertaining" (qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 521).

[28]"In the walk of biography and criticism, Dr. Johnson has long been without a rival. It is barely justice to acknowledge that he still maintains his superiority. The present work is no way inferior to the best of his very celebrated productions of the same class" (qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 522.)

There exist several inconsistencies between Johnson's critical theory and practice, which contribute to the paradoxical nature of the textual Johnson. In the *Lives*, Johnson argued for separate considerations of the individual author and his works.[29] Johnson theorized that poetry is not necessarily a reflection of the author's personal character. Still, in certain cases, Johnson's evaluative focus on the poets' personalities does influence his judgment of their poetry. That his judgments of character come to infect his literary criticism also reveals the form of proactive authorship Johnson idealizes: the poet must accept individual responsibility as well as contribute to the bettering of society. The "Life of Shenstone" is a prime example of Johnson's judging the poet's value based on the individual's behavior. As Jung notes, Johnson criticizes the fact that "Shenstone had the leisure and the financial means to do good and to improve society, but that he concentrated his energies on improving the Leasowes [his landscape garden near Birmingham] instead, completely neglecting his societal responsibility as well as his responsibilities as a citizen" ("Idleness" 82). An additional inconsistency between Johnson's theory and practice is that he "believed that because no man can evaluate objectively the time in which he lives he should not as critic assess the literary work of contemporaries" (Johnston 21). Johnson, however, did just that in the *Lives*. Although the poets included were no longer living, some had only just recently died.[30] Johnston appears to apply the term "contemporaries" too strictly, referring only to those poets who were still alive during Johnson's composition of the "lives." I understand "contemporaries" in its broader sense, to also include authors who were no longer living at the time of the *Lives*'s publication, but who had been active earlier in the century, as was Johnson. Nevertheless, in the *Lives*, Johnson expresses his unease toward evaluating the careers of his recently deceased contemporaries by comparing it to "walking upon ashes under which the fire is not extinguished" (qtd. in Johnston 24). It appears that Johnson is less concerned with criticizing his contemporaries in a partial manner if it allowed him to express his ideas regarding didacticism and the promotion of society.

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[29] "It is not difficult to conceive, however, that for many reasons a man writes much better than he lives. For without entering into refined speculations, it may be shown much easier to design than to perform. A man proposes his schemes of life in a state of abstraction and disengagement, exempt from the enticements of hope, the solicitations of affection, the importunities of appetite, or the depressions of fear; and is in the same state with him that teaches upon land the art of navigation, to whom the sea is always smooth, and the wind always prosperous" (Johnson *Rambler* 14 [5 May 1750]).

[30] The last two poets, e.g., Gray and George Lyttelton died in 1770 and 1773, respectively. Johnston quotes Johnson regarding the critic's objectivity toward his subject author when he is not a contemporary: "Only against those who 'can no longer suffer by reproach, and of whom nothing now remains but their writings and their names' should the critic feel 'at full liberty to exercise the strictest severity, since he endangers only his own fame'" (24).

The paradoxes in Johnson's critical method give rise to the visible tension in the *Lives* between the humanized author and the autonomous genius. "Johnson's anecdotes humanize. They help to make his biographies meaningful by making them real" (Folkenflik *Johnson* 53). At this point in eighteenth-century culture (1770s), the author is gaining a special status and, despite there being an excess of writers or would-be authors, the author's persona is starting to distinguish him from the common man. Johnson's biographical work, his attention to personal details, contributes to the tradition of overemphasizing the author's individuality, and using genius and authority as markers to distinguish them from fellow professionals. Johnson's contribution to the notion of the autonomous author, and even later forms of author cults, is contradictory: "If Johnson was wary of the biographer who 'endeavours to hide the man that he may produce a hero,' he nevertheless frequently enough dignified and elevated his subjects by comparing them to traditional heroes. In the *Lives* he refers to the 'heroes in literature' as discoverers and conquerors" (Folkenflik 63).[31] With "discoverers and conquerors," Folkenflik refers to Johnson's statement about the author's drive for a literary reputation, or ideal authorship, and personal improvement, which would also contribute to the intellectual improvement of society. Folkenflik means the poets' contribution to English literature and the manner through which authorial genius is achieved, as perceived by Johnson. I adopt his interpretation to offer my own suggestion that "discoverers" could also refer to poets using originality and imagination, while "conquerors" could refer to poets with such great imitative skill that their performance matches or surpasses the original poet.

As critic and biographer, Johnson was occupied with critical evaluations and the construction of truth. I understand Johnson's "truth" in a static, one-dimensional sense, but, most importantly, I view it as the result of producing, ordering, and defining knowledge, all processes intended to eliminate uncertainty. With his *Lives*, Johnson wished to produce knowledge to help readers develop their critical skills in judging poetry in an appropriate fashion. Wildermuth also discusses the ambiguity of the concepts "truth" and "virtue," which are so significant in Johnson's critical views (see 57). Johnson attempts to stabilize these ideas and notions of authorship in the *Lives*. Despite the uncertainty that print culture can cause because of its chaotic, ephemeral state, Johnson remarkably employs the medium of print as an authorial strategy to assuage doubt and define knowledge. Martin Maner attributes the contradictions in

[31] Johnson's quote reads thus: "It is the proper ambition of the heroes in literature to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge by discovering and conquering new regions of the intellectual world" (*Rambler* 137, qtd. in *Johnson* 61).

Johnson's critical methodology and dialectic style to the issue of doubt,[32] which clearly stimulated the drive behind achieving control of knowledge and truth. The urge to define concepts like authorship, or to regulate practices of writing, reading, and criticism develops out of feelings of uncertainty.

> Biographical writing required Johnson to shape and manipulate doubtful material in the service of moral truth, and it challenged him by placing him behind the judgment bench. Thus he held his anxiety in check by alternately playing the roles of prosecuting and defending attorneys. Perhaps partly to assuage his deep-rooted terror of being judged harshly, he tried to write lives scrupulously and fairly. (Maner 31)[33]

Indeed, Johnson was clearly driven by an anxiety of idleness and potential stagnation, for him, was considered a form of madness or a step on the way to insanity. And yet, Johnson's critical methodology can hardly be categorized as fair, as it was deeply informed by his notion of authorship as proactive. Johnson frequently wants to resolve ambiguity and impose a definitive interpretation of a particular poet or work to preempt the possibility of re-interpretation or the production of a different reading.

Collaborative versus Autonomous Authorship: Sources

Johnson's use of sources in composing the *Lives* is worth mentioning briefly, as collaboration forms a recurring theme in several of the "lives." Johnson's assistance and reliance on other scholars' work illustrates his support of collaborative authorship and the individual's reliance on support networks and reveals the collaborative quality of the composition.[34] Johnson's writing career shows his awareness of the true dynamics of authorship. Johnson valued collaborative practices and assisted writers in various ways. For instance, Johnson was actively involved in Charlotte Lennox's authorial career. He composed dedications for her and convinced Andrew Millar to publish *The Female Quixote* (1752). Another collaborative venture worth mentioning is Johnson's *Dictionary*,

[32] On Johnson's critical style and doubt, see Maner, e.g.: "a method of thinking about human experience that begins with, and constantly returns to, doubt—about how to feel, about how to interpret, and about how to value" (3). For Johnson, judgment entails the weighing of the relative likelihood of two juxtaposed possibilities (11).

[33] However, it should be added that Maner's conclusion is motivated by a deep awe and respect for his beloved Dr. Johnson.

[34] On Johnson's bibliographical sources and his methodology, see Rogers, "Johnson's Lives of the Poets and the Biographic Dictionaries." In Lonsdale's introduction to the *Lives*, he includes a section on those who had assisted Johnson the most, giving attention to John Nichols, Isaac Reed, and George Steevens (1: 52-80).

which reveals much more clearly the fleeting nature of authority.[35] Yet, Johnson also praises the poetic genius of an individual author, and this view has been fixated on and overemphasized by Johnsonians. Johnson's views also shed light on his own forms of writing: he practices a form of collaborative authorship which contrasts with the autonomy that is bestowed on him by later scholarly traditions. In his *Lives*, Johnson is responsible for the way he reinvents the poet's life and how he emphasizes certain details. However, the sources available to him would influence the information selected. The sources may curb his authority; they do not obscure his evaluations.

Johnson's Notions of Authorship: the Poets and Themes of the *Lives*

A key feature of Johnson's ideal form of authorship is the individual writer's acceptance of both an active social responsibility and the mantle of authority as authors. Authors must make themselves useful by being productive, rather than idle, in order to fulfill their social function as role models. In addition to authorship, Johnson also perceived education as ideally proactive; the student should not be spoiled and nor should he specialize to satisfy his specific interests.[36] Knowledge is not something to collect, according to Johnson, but a tool that should be used appropriately and shared with others to instruct or shape others' views. For example, Thomas Tickell receives praise in his "life" for not wasting his time studying or writing merely to please himself. Johnson's view here recalls the accusations of idleness and undeserved fame he directed towards poets like Gray: "Tickell was not one of those scholars who wear away their lives in closets; he entered early into the world, and was long busy in publick affairs; in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addison . . . " (3: 112). His statement commending Tickell demonstrates Johnson's view on the importance of public service, also in political terms.

[35] See Allen Reddick for more on collaboration in the *Dictionary* and the status of Johnson's authorship: "Is Johnson simply a compiler, a booksellers' man?—or is he an author?—if so, in what sense?—and is he the only author?" (212).

[36] Shenstone's "Life" supports this point, especially the story relating to the book. See Jung "Idleness."

The Manufactured Author: Johnson's "Life of Savage"

Johnson's "Life of Savage" provides a personally biased view in favor of Savage, motivated by the close friendship that Johnson entertained with Savage. The "mystery" behind this unlikely friendship stumped Johnson's contemporary biographers as well as twentieth-century scholars, like Richard Holmes, who explored the subject of their relationship in *Dr. Johnson and Mr. Savage* (1993). For instance, Boswell had difficulty understanding the friendly rapport between these two very different men. From his perspective, Savage was "a man, of whom it is difficult to speak impartially, without wondering that he was for some time the intimate companion of Johnson; for his character was marked by profligacy, insolence, and ingratitude . . . '"(1: 87).[37] Johnson, by contrast, praised not only his acquisition and synthesis of knowledge, but also the singularity of Savage's life and work:[38]

> though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critic, . . . his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air, which has no resemblance of any foregoing work, that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success because what was nature in Savage, would in another be affectation. (3: 188)

Lonsdale notes that after Johnson's biography appeared, "poets increasingly depicted S[avage] as a 'victim,' emphasizing his 'woes,' 'afflictions,' and unfulfilled 'genius' . . ." (3: 385). They were surely following Johnson's construction, as he paints a pitiable portrait of his friend, emphasizing Savage's failed authorship and missed chances, which are attributed to the misfortunes out of Savage's control.

I consider the "Life of Savage" as an illustration of a Johnsonian authorial guide, which assisted the aspiring writer. For Johnson, the social utility of an author's work was central to his assessment of their poetry. The issue of the close friendship between the two men illuminates Johnson's partiality and contradictory critical approach in his account of Savage. The contradictions are particularly noteworthy when Johnson's

[37] On Savage's professional career, Boswell adds that "Savage's misfortunes and misconduct had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness as a writer for bread . . ." (1: 87).

[38] On the knowledge Savage gained from experience, Johnson writes: "He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadiness of attention as others apply to a lecture; and, amidst the appearance of thoughtless gaiety, lost no new idea that was started, nor any hint that could be improved. . . . [I]t is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education and little reading have an air of learning scarcely to be found in any other performances, but which perhaps as often obscures as embellishes them" (3: 186).

treatment of Savage is compared to that of the other poets. This "life" differs from the others in the *Lives* given its content, publication history, and Johnson's bias, as I will show.[39] It therefore makes an interesting case study. In this "life" Johnson's criticism of the poetry is muted while his judgments of the poet's less-than virtuous behavior or "disreputable practices" are softened (3: 166).[40] Johnson had in fact befriended the writer toward the end of the 1730s and Johnson composed the poet's biography *Life of Mr. Richard Savage* (1744), just after Savage's death in 1743. Johnson's composition was reprinted in the *Lives* in 1781. There has been much scholarly work already done on this "life," "Johnson's best study of character, and one of the best ever written by anyone" (Tracy vi). However, this example showcases well Johnson's definitive reinvention of the author, because Johnson's version of Savage still holds up amongst the multiple constructions made by other scholars.[41] Additionally, Johnson's favorable bias colors his biographical account of Savage and in this textual version of the "bastard," a portrait of Johnson's ideal author appears.[42] The "Life of Savage" is a significant performance in the shaping of Johnson's authorship, and this on several levels.[43] In the composition of the text, Johnson must have been mourning his friend, recalling memories shared together, while also getting to know his friend more intimately through the sources used. At the same time, Johnson's authorial voice heard throughout the text constructs a type of relative distance, as he only rarely refers to himself or his friendship with Savage. Johnson's authorial persona constructed in the text, combined with the text's positive reception, contribute to Johnson's authority.[44] An analysis identifying the various stages of Savage's career and his various positions as illustrated in the "Life of Savage" would enrich scholarship on Savage, but this lies outside the scope of this chapter.

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[39] See Timothy Erwin's discussion of Johnson's Life *of Savage* as a different type of biography.

[40] Sarah R. Morrison offers an analysis of Johnson's narrative strategies used in this biography to "entrap[] his readers," force identification with his subject, and stimulate "critical self-examination" (146, 150).

[41] Some examples are Lionel Basney "Prudence in the *Life of Savage*" and "Narrative and Judgment in the *Life of Savage*," Michael Bundock, John Dussinger, Erwin, Deutsch "Name," Benjamin Boyce, Tracy, and Kernan.

[42] I use the word "bastard" to refer to the critical tradition that cast Savage as such.

[43] See Deutsch "Name": "particulars of one writer's life afford the anonymous Johnson the narrative resources for his own tenuously achieved objectivity, a rhetorically universal authority that shapes both his own literary career and the subjects of future literary lives" (329).

[44] Lonsdale mentions that, upon its initial publication, sales left something to desire, so Edward Cave actively advertised it "stressing some of its more sensational elements" (3: 384). He also quotes an early review praising the author's skill, which Boswell attributed to James Ralph in his *Life*: "'as just and well written a Piece, as, of its Kind, I ever saw. . . . [A] more just or pleasant, a more engaging or more improving Treatise on the Excellencies and Defects of human Nature, is scarce to be found in our own, or perhaps in any other language'" (*Gentleman's Magazine* [Feb. 1744]: 78, qtd. 3: 383). Lonsdale also retells some of Boswell's anecdotes, such as the one involving Joshua Reynolds's reading the book in one standing, as it were, while "'leaning against a chimney-piece'" and experiencing the numbness of an arm that had fallen asleep (qtd. 3: 384).

Before investigating Savage's "Life" as a guide, Savage's self-construction as a bastard, based on his dubious parentage, and some traditional views regarding Savage (and Johnson) should be explained. Savage assumed that he was the illegitimate child, born in 1697, from an adulterous relationship between Lady Anne Macclesfield, *née* Mason (who, after a divorce from Charles Gerard, 2nd Earl of Macclesfield, married Colonel Henry Brett, becoming Mrs. Brett) and Richard Savage, the 4th Earl of Rivers.[45] Savage manipulates his bastard status as an authorial strategy, using it to gain patronage, financial support, and to further his reputation. For example, he explicitly invokes the figure of the bastard in the poem *The Bastard* (1728), inviting pity with this self-construction. Johnson wholeheartedly believes him, and Savage's illegitimacy plays a central role in Johnson's textual construction.[46] The uncertainty of his parentage explains to a certain degree why Savage was befriended by Johnson (who will have seen him, at least in their early period of acquaintance, as a victim). In his biography of Savage, *The Artificial Bastard*, Tracy rectifies some of Johnson's inconsistencies, but on the uncertain point of Savage's parentage, he follows both Johnson and Savage, since there is no firm evidence to disprove Savage's claim. Also, many figures in both Savage's and the Earl's circles believed it to be true (vi-viii). According to Tracy, Johnson's biography "is an object lesson on the dangers of self-delusion, or what he elsewhere aptly called 'cant,' and he missed no opportunity of showing that Savage had repeatedly brought his miseries down on his own head. Johnson was strong precisely where Savage was weak: in prudence, common sense, and manly independence" (134). However, I argue that Johnson softens his judgments of Savage and is more inclined to blame Savage's situation. Additionally, Johnson's "manly independence" is Tracy's creation—one of the many mythical versions of Johnson. Tracy's favorable construction of Johnson continues: he notices little bias in Johnson's treatment of Savage: "Today we may find his enthusiasm difficult to justify and explain it away as partiality, but Johnson was not often biased in his judgment of poetry by personal feeling" (135). Johnson's personal attachment to Savage influences his benevolent account of the author's career, which is clearly not impartial. Johnson's early professional career was spent, like Savage's, in financial dire straits, but one should be careful not to exaggerate their prominence in Grub Street.[47] Savage was not always a Grub Street hack but entertained

[45] On Savage's assertion of his bastard identity, Tracy writes: "The answer to the mystery of Richard Savage lies buried somewhere in the years between 1697, when Richard Smith disappeared into the mists . . . , and 1715, when a young man appeared out of nowhere and gave his name to a police magistrate, before whom he has been haled on a serious charge, as 'Mr. Savage, natural son to the late Earl Rivers'" (13).

[46] Johnson reinforces this point even in the text itself, as the biography's title page refers to Savage as the "Son of Earl Rivers" (3: 390).

[47] Johnson's construction does, however, show that Savage was well-acquainted with Grub Street, but does not mention his own presence: "He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in

high hopes regarding his long poem *The Wanderer: A Vision* (1729). The poem is definitely not a hack's production for it is fundamentally different from anything Savage produced and was not composed or published for financial gain. Savage advertised the poem as an experiment and with this composition, he aligned himself with the grotesque, sublime movement dealing with John Dennis's ideas regarding superstition, enthusiasm, and visions. Savage formed a coterie with David Mallet, Aaron Hill, and James Thomson, all of whom created poetry in a similar vein. Thomson's masterpiece, *The Seasons* (1730), was also a product of the movement.[48]

In Savage's "life," the theme of the writer's agency and self-formation is rendered visible. At the same time, Johnson constructs Savage's agency as subject to forces beyond his control, such as his bastard condition. His reputation is defined by sensationalism, as his readership would be aware of his self-proclaimed status as Lady Macclesfield's bastard-child. Johnson connects Savage's initiation into authorship to his unfortunate origin. After he was basically, and futilely, stalking his "mother," he turned to writing to make a living. His poetry expresses his frustration with her rejection and stigmatizes her. In *The Wanderer*, Savage fictionalizes his "mother" as the monstrous figure of the Hag.[49] However, Johnson romanticizes Savage's motivations, writing that Savage "was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavoring to awaken the affection of a mother: He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support; and, having no profession, became by necessity an author" (3: 124). Here Johnson's view emphasizes the economic function of Savage's authorship. This might appear contradictory when juxtaposed with his romanticized narrative of Savage. And yet, Savage's financial motivations are ultimately linked with his unfortunate condition, as he used his bastard status to secure patronage and to advance recognition as an

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mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars, among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expences of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house " (3: 165). Boswell reveals how Johnson both suffered and benefitted from Savage's company: "It is melancholy to reflect, that Johnson and Savage were sometimes in such extreme indigence, that they could not pay for a lodging; so that they have wandered together whole nights in the streets. Yet in these almost incredible scenes of distress, we may suppose that Savage mentioned many of the anecdotes with which Johnson afterwards enriched the life of his unhappy companion, and those of other Poets. . . . I am afraid, however, that by associating with Savage, who was habituated to the dissipation and licentiousness of the town, Johnson, though his good principles remained steady, did not entirely preserve [his] conduct . . . ; but was imperceptibly led into some indulgencies which occasioned much distress to his virtuous mind" (1:88).

[48] See Jung "Epic, Ode, or Something New" and the next section of this chapter for more on Thomson's work and the (idealistic) circle of gentlemen that both Thomson and Savage belonged to.

[49] For an analysis of *The Wanderer*, see Jung "The Visuality of Personification in Richard Savage's *The Wanderer: A Vision* (1729)."

author. In his authorial persona and compositions Savage manipulates his status as a victim and a bastard with the intent of achieving financial compensation and a social reputation to alleviate the suffering he experienced from his parents' rejection. For instance, Johnson writes that in Savage's "Preface" to the subscription proposal of *Miscellaneous Poems* (1726) "he gives an account of his mother's cruelty [her refusal to recognize Savage as her offspring] in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the success of his subscription probably produced" (3: 132).[50] However, Johnson also presents Savage as poetically inspired, a perfectionist, enslaved to his (artistic) passion; his authorship is not entirely driven by financial difficulties. While mentioning the paltry sum of eight guineas that Savage received for the copyright of *The Wanderer*, a price which did not do justice to the work's value, Johnson is lamenting the unfortunate condition of professional authorship. Yet, he also gives a detailed account of Savage's "superstitious regard to the correction of his sheets" and Savage's anxiety which drove him to perfect his poetry for publication.[51]

> That he sold so valuable a performance for so small a price, was not to be imputed either to necessity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to submit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress that genius by which they are supported; but to that intemperate desire of pleasure, and habitual slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities. (3: 145)

Savage's passionate character had a positive effect on his poetry, according to Johnson, who this type of personality, combined with Savage's characteristic impulsiveness and rash decision-making, as detrimental to a professional career. Savage used his potential relation to the Countess "to expose [her] cruelty," to ruin her reputation, and to further his career with his autobiographical poem *The Bastard* (3:152).[52] Johnson comments on the work's positive reception, and, this time, he blames

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[50] Lonsdale explains that the "Preface" "appeared, together with *Plain Dealers* 28, 73, in only one of two issues of *Miscellaneous Poems*. Although the book was ready for publication in Feb. 1726, S[avage] withheld it until the following Sept" (3: 397). The risqué autobiographical text was not included in this publication and a mention of Mrs. Brett in the dedication was omitted.

[51] Savage described his experience while proofreading as if he had "'a spell upon him'" (3: 145).

[52] On the publication's title page, the poem is "inscribed with all due reverence to Mrs. Bret, once Countess of Macclesfield" and Savage declares himself "son of the late Earl Rivers," explicit textual strategies meant to stigmatize his "mother."

This publication appeared just after Savage had been put on trial in 1727 for murdering Mr. Sinclair in a tavern, an event that marked him and his reputation for life. He was found guilty on December 7, 1727. The conviction caused many people to come to his aid and encourage the queen to grant him a royal pardon. Johnson focuses mainly on Frances Seymour, Countess of Hertford's role in securing his pardon in 1728, but Lonsdale notes that several other figures were involved, such as Lord Tyrconnel and Anne Oldfield (3: 133-7,

the bookseller, Thomas Worrall, for capitalizing on Savage's success: "it was sold for a very trivial sum to a bookseller, who, though the success was so uncommon that five impressions were sold, . . . had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit" (3: 153). In his reference to the bookseller, Johnson expresses empathic identification with Savage. Such identification is a rare moment in Johnson, but is clearly caused by his personal experience with booksellers in Grub Street. He contradicts his usual construction of the professional author while recalling the financial struggles of his career.[53] Johnson's statement is historically inaccurate, since a bookseller purchased the copyright of a work and then had complete control over its publication, until the copyright reverted back to the author. In practice, in the early part of the century, there was a widely accepted view of perpetual copyright. Johnson's statement misrepresents historical reality and is colored by his perspective as an author who would have liked to partake of the financial success of a work, but who was not entitled by copyright law to do so.

Johnson's aim to create definitive portraits of authors and Savage's attempt at self-fashioning himself as the "bastard" clash with external forces threatening authorial agency and the artificial stability of textual constructions. As Deutsch insightfully comments:

> [f]rom Savage's view of himself as fixed amid a changing world, the narrator shifts to a perception of the author as changeable, subject to the watchful eye of a critical audience whom change threatens. To be a creditable author, Johnson concludes, one must above all think and live rhetorically; one must be conscious of oneself as circumstantially bound, dependent on one's audience for economic and moral support. To convey absolute truth one must, in Johnson's paradoxical formulation, be aware of one's own contingency. ("Name" 343)

Johnson does not express the idea that the author possesses an inherent, special quality, which would distinguish him from his fellow man. He does not subscribe to some form of "authorial fate." Deutsch states that "throughout his career Johnson defensively attempts to differentiate the author as common man (and hence one as deserving of literary attention as any other) from the author made exceptional by

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399). Hill was also instrumental in obtaining the pardon, and he added his own voice to Savage's self-construction as the bastard by publishing letters in the *Plain Dealer* on Savage's supposed parentage. For more on the friendship between Savage and Hill, see Christine Gerrard.

[53] See Holmes, who discusses how Johnson's biography of Savage revealed other characteristics of Johnson's personality, which seem to clash with Boswell's mythical Johnson, such as "his stubborn loyalty, his strange credulity, his hunger for justice, his youthful political anger, his naïve romanticism. . . . Through the vivid but fragmented mirror of Savage's life we have glimpsed the reflections of a personality as anguished and unstable as Savage's own. The biographer has unconsciously written something of his own biography . . ." (173).

authorship" (330). All men have the potential to write, to perform authorship, but the achievement of authorial genius is also subject to many forces external to textual composition, such as the author's reception, lifestyle, and social reputation. Such forces shaping the authorial image can distinguish the man from his common fellows by emphasizing singularity. Johnson reveals the author's dependent and precarious state; authorial exceptionalism comes only partially from the writer's skill.[54] And yet, the conceptualization of authorship being developed in part by criticism in the mid-1770s was moving toward notions of autonomy and original genius.

The "Life of Savage" functions well within the framework of viewing the critical lives as authorial guides. Johnson states: "if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another" (3:154). This case presents a writer gone wrong; an individual presented with tough choices, and making the wrong ones.[55] Johnson narrates the author's sufferings and records how Savage stoically bore it.[56] "Johnson presents his subject as a man victimized, yet still accountable for his failure" (Parke 37), because of the choices he made and his refusal to take responsibility: "Address, or industry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any person other than the author" (3:153). Although Johnson shows much sympathy toward Savage, he presents Savage's life and mistakes in such a way that the text becomes a lesson to be learned.[57] For instance, he criticizes his lack of drive and discipline, and finds fault with his attraction to novelty.

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[54] Regarding Johnson's textual reinvention of Savage, see also Wildermuth: "Savage demonstrates for Johnson the importance of authorial presence and rhetorical stance as stabilizing agencies of ethical and epistemological action instantiated in the conflicted yet dynamic milieu of print. . . Savage's life, first of all, at least in Johnson's eyes, demonstrates literally the power of the media to destroy or resuscitate a writer's career or reputation by marshaling the opinion of the many via its persuasive force and its capacity to shape perceptions of people linked primarily by the medium of print" (54).

[55] Compare Catherine Neal Parke who describes it as a "case study in factors contributing to blighted talent and a wasted life" (36). See also Deutsch, "Name": "According to Paul Fussell . . . this presentation of the writer as self-made martyr makes Savage a paradigm for Johnson's later literary lives" (338). Leo Braudy also comments on Johnson's didacticism and his strategy of using biographical evaluations to warn readers: "Johnson considers the work of criticism to be a work of repression or at best pruning, a way to stop the reader from doing things he would certainly do if Johnson were not around to wag a cautionary finger. . . . [T]he ultimate end of personalizing the author and touching the reader with his story is to make the author in some way a model for the reader's own self-exploration" (35).

[56] "Surely the fortitude of this man deserved, at least, to be mentioned with applause; and, whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of suffering well cannot be denied him. The two powers which, in the opinion of Epictetus, constituted a wise man, are those of bearing and forbearing , which cannot indeed be affirmed to have been equally possessed by Savage, and indeed the want of one obliged him very frequently to practise the other." (3: 182)

[57] See Erwin: "Johnson is clearly more interested in the usefulness of his subject than in any scandal he caused. When [Johnson] inquires into the subjectivity of Savage to note a degree of self-delusion, the question is asked

Johnson argues for active performance, revealing one's moral virtues. Savage had moral knowledge and recognized "good," but failed to put his insight into practice:

> The reigning error of his life was, that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man, as the friend of goodness. . . . [H]e always preserved a strong sense of the dignity, the beauty, and the necessity of virtue, and . . . he never contributed deliberately to spread corruption amongst mankind. His actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of study, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety. These writings may improve mankind, when his failings shall be forgotten; and therefore he must be considered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world; nor can his personal example do any hurt, since, whoever hears of his faults, will hear of the miseries which they brought upon him, and which would deserve less pity, had not his condition been such as made his faults pardonable. (3: 154)

The fact that Savage's misfortunes distracted or prevented him from acting virtuously helps Johnson to present Savage's understanding of virtue as sufficient. His miserable condition and experiences excuse his less-than-honorable behavior. Johnson believes that only Savage's authorial persona developed in his compositions will be remembered. This assumption is incorrect, given the manner in which his obsession with his birth-right shaped his professional career and influenced the writing of his poetry. Johnson views Savage as hardly in control of his fate, as highly dependent on the tides of life, like a helpless, inexperienced child. Because he was cruelly rejected by the person he believed to be his mother, he desperately seeks out support and recognition from others, but has difficulty forming genuine, stable friendships with people. For instance, he gained the reputation of a hypocrite, partially because of his friendship with Pope: Savage was suspected of acting as Pope's informant; he was thought to have supplied Pope with the fuel to attack personally the various authors featured in his *Dunciad* (1728) (3: 142).[58] Johnson either defends or justifies Savage's behavior, often by presenting him as a victim, thus minimizing Savage's responsibility: "his faults were very often the reflects of his misfortunes" (143). Yet, he includes didactic advice in his criticism. For example, Johnson does not condone Savage's fickleness and inconstant behavior toward his acquaintances.

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not so much for consciousness' sake as to produce an ethical gain shared with a reader also asked to look inward" (101).

[58] See Erwin for a closer look at Savage's connection to Pope's *Dunciad.*

Lady Macclesfield's rejection of Savage and his life-long hopes to be elevated to a higher class and recognized as the heir to Lord Rivers kindled a delusionary obsession with his birth and birthright that incapacitated him from being a proactive moral poet. Instead, he turned into an author producing vitriolic attacks on his supposed parents. He was driven by a necessity to secure patronage, which Johnson expresses in terms of the author's enslavement to patronage.[59] Johnson idealizes some aspects of Savage's personality while constructing an image of the poet as a victim struggling with his environment. Although Johnson forgives Savage's "immoral" behavior, attributing some of his immoral or inconstant characteristics to his dependent lifestyle and his experiences at the hands of his cruel parents, he transforms Savage's misfortunes and inappropriate choices into an object lesson. Johnson attaches a particular value to the author's reputation. Johnson's performative revaluation is central in this "life." Although Johnson's construction of Savage is presented as if it were the only authoritative one of the author, Johnson's version is subjective, infused with personal identification. Remarkably, Johnson's revaluation has largely been accepted by scholarship. According to Holmes, one must attend to the dialogic relation in authorial constructions: "A life like Savage's is mysterious in itself, but also mysterious in the way it came to be told and reinterpreted, one version layered upon another, like a piece of complex geology. Its stratified truth was not ready to emerge immediately on his own death, or even in his own century. It depends on the series of its tellers or excavators . ." (4). Holmes's quote illuminates my dissertation's aim to uncover the mysteries of the amorphous, fleeting essence of authorship.

Johnson's Controversial "Life of Gray" and Robert Potter's Revision

Johnson's *Lives* sparked critical debate on the merits of certain poets, such as Gray, Pope, and Milton, which also encouraged discussion of specific genres of poetry and definitions of authorship. The critical backlash came from the public's desire to vindicate the poets they admired who they felt had been unjustly treated by Johnson. What is most significant for my analysis of Johnson's textual constructions is that his critiques of the poets, particularly his "Life of Gray," stirred his contemporaries to

[59] "To this unhappy state it is just to impute much of the inconstancy of his conduct; for though a readiness to comply with the inclination of others was no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes obliged to relax his obstinacy, and submit his own judgment, and even his virtue, to the government of those by whom he was supported: so that, if his miseries were sometimes the consequences of his faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from compassion, because his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes" (3: 143).

engage dialogically in criticism. Johnson stimulated the reader's ability to evaluate literature in personal terms. However, there are limitations: Johnson's critical practice is morally-regulated and his assessments in the "lives" were written with the intent of presenting the authoritative version of the poet that would exclude all other possible versions. In his critical observations, Johnson fosters a sense of formalism. However, this is secondary to the main issues expressed in his criticism: politics and a utilitarian view on writing. The case of Johnson's "Life of Gray" and the numerous vindications that appeared upon its publication reveal the multiplicity characteristic of authorship and shows that personal identification and taste can come to dominate forms of evaluative criticism. The immediate response and critical controversy also contributed to the popularity of the *Lives* and Johnson's reputation and authority. My analysis of the criticism unleashed by the "Life of Gray" is limited to Robert Potter's defense of Gray, *An inquiry into some passages in Dr. Johnson's Lives of the poets: particularly his observations on lyric poetry, and the odes of Gray* (1783). I emphasize the complex contrast between Johnson and Gray, stemming from their valuation of the particular genre of lyric poetry.

In the previous chapter, I explored Gray's versions of the authorial self and his role in constructing these personae. Johnson understands the fundamental function of authorship as an active role, both in society and in shaping his own authorial construction, through performances of composition and publication. Inactivity means failed authorship, for Johnson. His view on authorial self-construction extends further than the printed text, into the social sphere. The author must assume responsibility for what he shared with his readers in his construction as a social individual. Yet, Johnson understands the unsettling mechanisms of print culture on the individual's sense of a stable authorial self. Criticism is one area of print that can affect the author, and the perceptive author knows the potential hazard to his authorial construction when he publishes his work. Johnson recognized that the "onset of a furious critic" could upset a writer's carefully crafted authorial self.[60] Self-construction is imperative for the survival of authorial integrity, and, for Johnson, the ideal way of practicing authorship hinges on a form of self-fashioning for the purpose of individual and social improvement.

The "Life of Gray" infuriated and disappointed many of Johnson's contemporaries who were partial to Gray's poetry, but Johnson's negative critique significantly contributed to fashioning Gray's authorial image. The contrast between Gray's admirers and Johnson's dislike of the poet is central. As discussed in the previous chapter, Gray had achieved a high degree of popular success with his "Elegy" and, after Colly Cibber's

[60] *Rambler* 176, qtd. in Johnston, who also notes that although the reader made the final judgment call, "Johnson took seriously the pain and harm that such criticism can inflict on the writer, who in the act of publishing 'comes voluntarily to the stake'" (24). See also Brian Hanley for more on Johnson's role as book reviewer.

death, had even been offered the poet laureateship in 1757, which he declined. The musicality and performative aspect of Gray's poetry contributed to the positive reception of his work throughout the century. Some of Gray's poetry, like his *Odes* (1757), was found to be difficult by a number of readers, but also became highly popular amongst others, as the frequent public performances prove.[61] In 1776, John Murray, bookseller and publisher, capitalized on the popularity of the "Elegy" and contributed to sustaining and increasing the poet's elevated reputation by bringing his poetry to a new generation of readers with an illustrated, posthumous edition, which also included criticism.[62] In contrast, Johnson vocally despised Gray, saying such things as "'I think we have had enough of Gray' [and] 'I hate Gray and Mason, though I do not know them'" (4: 478). Johnson's reinvention of Gray not only bred controversy, but also critical revision of the author. William Powell Jones addresses this issue in his work on the active, textual responses of contemporary readers.[63] In reference to the dominant reaction that the literary public had toward this "life," Jones mentions a letter appearing in the January 1782 issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine:*

> "H" remarks that readers of Johnson's *Lives* have been transformed into critics, especially in the case of Gray: "Shall the superlative merit of Gray himself be overlooked and forgot, because the jealousy of Johnson would not suffer him to see such merit in his contemporaries?" (246)

[61] See James Mulholland, who argues that Gray "turns to oral cultures as a way to construct a poetic voice that speaks powerfully to particular audiences, as he felt bards once did . . ." (110-11). "Although Gray had hoped to make bardic voice present and audible to his readers, many of his contemporaries took issue with what they felt was the poem's obscurity, a difficulty that they often figured as Gray's inarticulacy or unintelligibility" (121). Despite this, Gray's odes were widely read and, among his admirers, were learned men like Mason. See also Jules Smith.

[62] Murray's edition, *Poems by Mr. Gray*, was made possible by the change in perpetual copyright, made by the House of Lords in 1774. The decision encouraged Murray to also issue an edition of Thomson's poetry, with illustrations and criticism, in 1778. He was also involved in the economic venture of Johnson's *Lives* (see Zach et al.). Mason, Gray's literary executor, sued Murray in 1777 because three poems in the 1776 edition of Gray's poetry violated copyright. Murray publicly defended himself against these claims by publishing *A Letter to W. Mason . . . Concerning [Murray's] Edition of Mr. Gray's Poems and the Practices of Booksellers* (see *Lives* 4: 478).

[63] He also summarizes Potter's essay as clearly "a defense of Gray against Johnson's criticism of both the person and the poems; his admiration for Gray appeared on every page, from the frontispiece—a new portrait of Gray engraved from an original drawing in the author's possession—to the careful analysis and high praise of *The Bard*. In spite of his resentment at Johnson's contemptuous treatment of him, Potter was careful to explain that he believed Johnson to be a fine critic and person, who had only occasional weaknesses. To him the basic difficulty lay in Johnson's inability to understand the imaginative quality of Gray's poetry . . ." (247).

The subject of Johnson's struggle and failure to remain impartial while evaluating the work of his contemporaries is once again raised. The boundary separating the author's work from the individual himself becomes blurred, both in Johnson's text and in the public's critical responses to Johnson's "Life of Gray." The quote illustrates this well in its reference to Johnson's personal feelings of jealousy being a cause for his negative assessment of Gray.[64]

Johnson's own experience as a professional author influenced his evaluation of Gray. Linda Zionkowski argues that Johnson and Gray reasserted their masculinity to improve their cultural status as writers with the hope of improving the author's authority. However, they attempted this in different ways. Johnson went the practical, commercial route and entered the print market in an active demonstration of his desired form of professional authorship, while Gray strove "to reclaim a cultural position for poets that would render them not marginal but central, not mercantile but heroic. And in so doing, he defined resistance to commerce, not participation in it, as the truly masculine stance for writers" (147). That Johnson personally struggled to develop his authority and reputation as an author perhaps awakened feelings of jealousy when he was confronted with Gray's career choices and the seeming ease with which he achieved social recognition as a genuine poet. Johnson's contempt infects his portrait of Gray. He adds other facets to Gray's authorial construct, such as a sense of general superiority, for instance, when Johnson writes that Gray and Mason "seem to have attained that which themselves consider as the summit of Excellencey and Man can do no more" (Lonsdale 4: 479). He detests what he perceives as Gray and Mason's arrogant belief that no one could surpass their literary achievements, a perception that cannot easily be documented. Johnson's comment again underpins his highly subjective criticism.

Johnson's financial dependence on his publications demanded he labor industriously and efficiently, which perhaps intensified his frustrations toward Gray. Lonsdale mentions R. DeMaria's suggestion that Johnson was envious of Gray's "ability to devote himself to methodical reading of a kind his own circumstances and temperament prevented" (4: 490), although Johnson is also known to have criticized specialized forms

[64] Potter praises Gray as a person in response to Johnson's vitriolic attacks on Gray's behavior: "If there is a writer who, more than others, has a claim to be exempted from this pelting petulance, Mr. Gray has that claim: his polished manners restrained him from ever giving offence to any good man . . . " (16). For example, he also refutes Johnson's negative view that Gray was the isolated, antisocial type: "he was perhaps the most learned man of the age, but his mind never contracted the rust of pedantry; he had too good an understanding to neglect the urbanity which renders society pleasing; his conversation was instructing, elegant, and agreeable; superior knowledge, an exquisite taste in the fine arts, and above all purity of morals and unaffected reverence for religion made this excellent person an ornament to society and an honour to human nature" (16).

of study. Gray's lack of societal engagement was problematic for Johnson. He regarded (scholarly) seclusion as dangerous and not conducive to individual improvement. One must actively serve society to be valuable: "'Retreat from the world is flight rather than conquest, and in those who have any power of benefiting others, may be consider[ed] as a kind of *moral suicide*'" (*Letters* 4: 177-8, qtd. in Lonsdale 4: 485).[65] Jung explains that Johnson "had to write all his life . . . to make a living" (86) and his professional career must have contributed to his notion of the ideal author as not only cultivating poetic genius, but an enlightened professional with social and moral responsibilities.

Although they never met, Lonsdale explains that Johnson had spent 30 years shaping this "Life" before actually putting pen to paper, completing it in 1780. As for Gray, he appreciated Johnson's poetry, but according to Norton Nicholls, disliked him personally (4: 479). Johnson took issue with Gray's individualistic form of authorship and his study practices. Johnson's author did not simply write; rather his scholarly activities and compositions contributed to both educating and improving readers and the progress of the nation. This didactic role included such responsibilities as the dissemination of universal knowledge and inculcating virtuous behavior and social utility. However, Johnson did remark on Gray's strengths in the "Elegy," writing that it "abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo" (4: 184). What he appreciated about the poem reflects Johnson's neoclassical stance favoring generality rather than particularity, which attracted Gray. The fact that everyone could identify with Gray (through his poem) is arguably the kind of universal reputation Johnson strove for. This kind of general identification is also a factor in the critical backlash to Johnson's "life." Gray's apparent dislike of the popular success of the "Elegy" stimulated Johnson's dislike, because Johnson had worked conscientiously to achieve that type of universal recognition.

With the authority based on his long professional career, Johnson masks his personal motives behind his critique of Gray. However, Lipking suggests that Johnson "resigns his authority—and also asserts it, by merging the public judgment into his own" (*Johnson* 263). Indeed, the public refused to agree with Johnson's view. Potter's vindication of Gray was just "one of the chorus of pamphlets attacking Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* published during 1783, although it was the most thoughtful and well argued of these" (David Stoker). A clergyman, poet, and translator, Potter also published pieces on religion, including one sermon that invited controversy, *On the Pretended Inspiration of*

[65] The influence of sociability on individual development and authorship remains significant in the nineteenth century. For instance, William Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818) also offers a critique of Gray's refusal to engage with society, what Jung aptly calls Gray's "social indifference" (85): "What a happiness never to lose or gain anything in the game of human life, by being never any thing more than a looker-on!" (qtd. in Snyder 131 n11).

the Methodists (1758).[66] Potter expresses insight into the degree of authority that a literary critic could achieve, and authority's fleeting nature, due to a writer's dependence on public taste. Specifically on Johnson's authority, he argues that "this truly respectable writer was early and deservedly distinguished by his great abilities, and the public has so long been habituated to receive and submit to his decisions, that they are now by many considered as infallible" (1-2). Potter means that critics should be taking public opinion into account and not abusing their authorial power, which could easily be lost if critics refused to acknowledge their dependence on that same group.

For the most part, Potter is very critical of Johnson's manner of judging the poet's writings in the *Lives*, especially his practice of criticizing lyric poetry. He strongly disagrees with allowing politics to inform one's evaluation of a writer, and criticizes Johnson's taking the poets' political and religious views into account. He emphasizes this critique by reminding the reader of Johnson's statement that he will allow the individual's personal convictions to influence his assessment of the poetry. For instance, Potter insists that critical practice such as this "is often disagreeable, but in the Life of Milton it is disgusting . . ." (3). Johnson's critiques were the result of his opposition to Milton's views on censorship in *Areopagitica* (1644), an essay defending the rights associated with freedom of speech.

A further point of contention that Potter has with Johnson's critical observations is linked to the growing notion of authorial exceptionalism. Potter takes issue with the attention Johnson devotes to relating mundane details about the poets' personal lives. Johnson may have felt that this would have improved the narrative quality to his "lives," while at the same time humanizing the poets. However, Potter believes that such anecdotes are detrimental to the poets' reputations, as they do not distinguish them in any worthwhile fashion and should not be part of professional criticism:

> In reading the life of any eminent person we wish to be informed of the qualities which gave him the superiority over other men . . . Can it be of any importance to us to be told how many pair of stockings the author of the Essay on Man wore? . . . Who does not blush when he finds recorded that idle story of a nameless critic, who said of the author of the Fleece, *He will be buried in woolen?* (4)

[66] See Stoker for more on Potter's career: "Potter gained a literary reputation among the Norfolk gentry and their patronage to publish his poetry, including *Retirement: an Epistle* (1748), *A Farewell Hymne to the Country* (1749 and 1750), *Holkham* (1758), *Kymber* (1759), and his *Collected Poems* (1773)."

Potter's text is also a defense of lyric poetry, motivated by Johnson's severe criticism of Gray's *Odes*. Johnson did not find this poetic genre appealing; he observed that Gray's "admired *Odes* (1757) had had a malign influence on English poetry" (4: 479).[67] Gray's poetry emphasized musicality, a factor that is visible in the multiple musical productions of his "Elegy." The conflict between Potter and Johnson can be attributed to Johnson and Gray's affiliation with the particular genre of lyric poetry: Johnson was suspicious of the author's individual performance that Potter favored. By writing lyric poetry, the individual author is presenting his work as a performative practice, rather than a textual one. The oral aspect is what Johnson disliked about lyric poetry. Johnson preferred didactic poetry, where the author's performance is social and valued for its usefulness. He was oblivious to lyric poetry's social potential: the oral performance could bring the author closer to his audience.[68] Johnson was suspicious of the personal and emotional element and the speaker's subjective celebration in odes. Earlier in the century, "odes were thought to be effective in celebrating major political and cultural occasions . . ." (Hunter 200). For instance, on Johnson's criticism of *The Bard*, Potter writes "the misfortune is, this Critic is for regulating poetic imagination by the standard of methodical argumentation and philosophical truth; as if the excursions of Shakespear's fancy were to be measured by the theorems of Euclid" (31), which shows the tension between neoclassical ideas limiting imagination and the traditional inspiration informing a new idealistic generation of imaginative poets. Potter also defends the use of mythology in poetry, a practice that Johnson disdained because he condoned realism and truth. However, myths could have the didactic function of expressing and emphasizing the morals portrayed in well-known stories.

Potter questions Johnson's authority further by offering a close reading of Johnson's justifications of his harsh attacks in the *Lives*. Potter delves deeply into Johnson's "Life of Gray" to identify the subtle tricks Johnson used in criticizing Gray. He notes a manipulation of others' authority, a strategy Johnson may have employed to soften the blow of his critiques of Gray, while qualifying them: "But it is not for nothing that this opinion of Dryden is held out to us: Mr. Gray's Elegy is written in this metre; it had been too desperate to have hazarded an open attack on that poem; the Critic therefore shelters himself behind the authority of Dryden, and seems to direct his censure against

[67] See also Anne McDermott "The 'Wonderful Wonder of Wonders': Gray's Odes and Johnson's Criticism."

[68] See Mulholland, who mentions Johnson's suspicion of Gray's return to historical literary traditions in his *Odes*. On "The Bard," he writes: "Johnson, whose skepticism about oral traditions is well known, overlooks the fact that Gray's metrical experiments are part of an effort to recall aural forms and to facilitate a sense of connection like the one that exists between performer and listener. In a print culture that Gray perceived to be increasingly dominated by authors vulnerable to being misread, the intimacy made possible by textualizing a methodical yet presumably artless verse form structured through oral mnemonics must have appeared as an enticing alternative to the alienation of printed poetry." (117)

Hammond, whilst the shaft is aimed at Gray" (7). According to Potter, Johnson's critical strategies, intended to strengthen his authority, in fact undo it: "Criticism of this nature breathes a frigid air, which chills all the faculties of genius" (19). Readers normally did not question Johnson, even when he used someone's authority who had never met Gray to support his personal view. The public's acceptance of Johnson's judgments was an effect of the wide dissemination of the *Lives* and its frequent reprinting, as well as the absence of immediate competitors for approximately 20 years after its initial appearance (Stockdale's *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets* from 1807 was an exception). Johnson's "lives" were recycled for other publications, such as John Bell's edition of English poets (Bonnell 153). These factors contributed to Johnson's work gradually being standardized.

James Thomson (1700-1748)

The "Life of Thomson" illustrates Johnson's critical instability with regard to the genre of lyric poetry. In Johnson's evaluation of Thomson, he commends Thomson as a poet of great descriptive power. Politics also plays a role in Johnson's assessment: he objects to Thomson's dramatic performances which are overtly in favor in the Whig opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. I focus on Johnson's critical inconsistency with regard to genre and argue that his appreciation of Thomson has to do with the degree of social utility that could be attached to Thomson's poems. Both Thomson's search for the right environment in which to practice his ideal authorship, as professional writing was not an option in his native Scotland, and his social networks are significant in his establishing himself as a poet. Authors experienced limited options in the small literary locale of Scotland, where poets published anonymously in the miscellany format.[69] In London, a writer had more opportunity, but needed to stand out considering the amount of aspiring writers was increasing. In the city, the commercial aspect of authorship was connected to the author's societal relevance. I argue that Thomson's move to London, which was motivated by high hopes to become a socially recognized and financially successful poet, and collaborative writing practices form another point with which Johnson could identify. Thomson's success in the literary metropolis is very much appreciated by Johnson, who valued professionalism.

[69] The authorship of Thomson's contributions to miscellanies, for instance, was only attributed to him around 30 years after his death.

Johnson identified with the type of professional authorship that Thomson wished to practice. Due to the lack of a professional writing culture in Scotland, Johnson also expresses his view that Scottish people were not equipped to judge poetry (4: 96) and so Thomson followed his desire to become a poet by moving to the metropolis in 1725; Thomson "came to seek in London patronage and fame" (4: 97). Edinburgh lacked a developed literary market that could sustain professional, full-time forms of authorship, which is what Thomson was looking for. Allan Ramsay (1686-1758) was one of the few exceptions of a successful, professional author in Edinburgh at the beginning of the century. However, Ramsay still had to combine his extensive writing activities with his wig-making business and book-selling. "Notwithstanding his networking and success in business, in 1722 he also pressed the duke of Roxburghe to help him secure a pension," Pittock explains, showing that Ramsay could not entirely devote himself to authorship for financial reasons. Thus Thomson joined many of the other early eighteenth-century Scots, like Mallet, John Armstrong, John Arbuthnot, who sought their fortunes as professional writers in London.[70] It should be noted that a common misconception of aspiring poets was that they could easily make a comfortable living as professional writers in London. Johnson identified with Thomson's preconceptions and his initial disappointment regarding an author's potential success in London when he relays some anecdotes about Thomson's unfortunate experiences upon first arriving in the city.[71] However, Thomson found support and assistance in London from the likes of Mallet and Hill (a successful dramatist).[72] Johnson focuses on both the growth of Thomson's reputation as a successful poet and his literary networks. Friendship and collaboration form a significant theme of this "life." After *Winter*'s publication in 1726, "Thomson's

[70] Johnson describes Thomson's decision to leave his native Scotland for the literary metropolis thus: "He easily discovered that the only stage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance or assistance, which at last he never received; however, he justified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to seek in London patronage and fame" (4: 96-97).

[71] Johnson relates how Thomson was robbed of some references to people for assistance he had in his pocket when first arriving in London. Johnson also notes that he needed new shoes and struggled to sell the copyright to *Winter*: "At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the sons of the duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several person of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him" (4:97).

[72] In Edinburgh, Thomson had also enjoyed assistance from a close-knit coterie of aspiring writers, the "Athenian Society." Jung explains that the members of this Society often collaborated together, publishing in miscellanies, of which their most significant was the *Edinburgh Miscellany* (1720) (*David Mallet* 31). Both Thomson and Mallet contributed to the publication (3: 365).

credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends . . ." (4: 97). Additionally, Johnson notes that Hill and Mallet contributed prefaces and dedications to the many editions of his poetry (4: 98). Johnson also uncovers a possible collaboration with Pope and Mallet when discussing Thomson's dramatic writing: "I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to [the tragedy of] *Sophonisba* the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it, and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet" (4: 99).

The group to which Thomson belonged was characterized by a particular context and developed notoriety in London. Thomson joined sometime in 1726, following a first meeting with Hill in April 1726, an arrangement that was made after Mallet had shared a prepublication version of Thomson's *Winter* with Hill (Holmes 85). In October 1726, the *British Journal* gave the collective the name "The Brotherhood of Sublime-Obscure" when it actually printed some satire attacking its members (Holmes 87-88). When the poets got together in person, they met at Hill's house at Petty France. The writers belonging to the group sought advice from each other and stimulated an active engagement in poetry. The correspondence between Savage, Mallet, and Thomson for instance, proves this form of collaboration, as the subject matter of their letters often includes discussion of their works-in-progress (see Holmes 86-88). Around 1728, the Hillarian circle reached its prime when its membership of poets reached 32, many of whom are now forgotten (Gerrard "Aaron Hill").

Thomson's poetry and collaborative authorship both form a link with Savage's early career. Savage's idealistic poem *The Wanderer* (1729) deals with the similar theme of night visions. In Savage's poem, "[c]ontemplation, and consequently the imagination, thus fulfil a moral purpose by helping the speaker to let his vision come true" (Jung "Visuality" 295). Thomson's poetry and Savage's *Wanderer* offer fragments and images, as perceived by a subjective speaker. Jung discusses the parallels in the poets' taste and suggests that Savage's poem very likely influenced Thomson's masterpiece ("Visuality" 293). There is, according to Jung, a further link between Savage's 1729 poem and the imaginative poetry of the mid-eighteenth century, connected to the poets Mark Akenside, William Collins, etc.

Johnson commends Thomson's moral vision as illustrated by *The Seasons*. There is a religious or devotional element in Thomson's poetry that spoke to Johnson's preference for didacticism, which may have been what encouraged Johnson to convince the booksellers to include Thomson in their collection. That Johnson also candidly refers to himself often in this "life," a rather rare practice in the *Lives*, suggests his appreciation of and identification with the poet. "Johnson seems to have regarded Thomson as one of the most poetic of poets" (Thomas Gilmore 265). Johnson's admiration for Thomson's work would have started with his first London publication, *Winter* (1726), the first poem of his *Seasons*. Johnson comments on the poem's reception, explaining that because of the poem's "being of a new kind, few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained

upon the publick; and one edition was very speedily succeeded by another" (4: 97). Emphasizing what I argue Johnson found attractive in *Winter*, Jung describes the work as

> a devotional poem using the mode of the religious sublime popularized at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a notion of the sublime that was diffused—through the revision process—in the *Seasons*. . . . *Winter* is more coherent in its ideational program than *The Seasons* in that it limits its scope to the engagement with and praise of the sublimity of Nature and its creator. ("Thomson's *Winter*" 61)

The poem's devotional aspect stimulated Johnson's high regard of the poet. Additionally, what Johnson found striking about *Winter* was the ideal combination of entertainment and utility, which Thomson achieved through the poem's form. These two characteristics were, for Johnson, the most significant in distinguishing the finest literature. The specific structure of *Winter* shows a mix of genres: diverse component parts in various forms of lyric poetry, such as the elegiac, comprise the poem. The poem shows indebtedness to the ode, but it is written in blank verse. The sections of lyric poetry are embedded in the Georgic-pastoral mode, and despite Thomson's use of blank verse and the lyric, Johnson could not resist the poem's blend of pleasure and didacticism. Georgic poetry, a form of didactic poetry, instructs and lauds a natural, rural life style and can be linked to the social utility Johnson honored. Pastoral poetry, a Classical form, idealizes rural life and offers a representation of an uncorrupt and/or prelapsarian world. The leisure attached to this type of poetry spoke to Johnson's appreciation of entertaining literature.

Johnson generally disliked lyric poetry, because of its association "with personal urgency rather than civic declamation" (Sitter 310). Indeed, this type of poetry focused on the speaker's personal experiences and visions. In his discussion of the lyric, Hunter explains that "there are few [lyric] poems that offer a clear, uncluttered, direct, untroubled and simple view of human interrelationships" (198), and this troubled, uncertain quality might have discouraged Johnson, given his moral vision on society. Hunter continues that "there was . . . a disjunction between the modal understanding of how knowledge of experience was shareable and poetic consciousness of subjective insecurity . . ." (198). Johnson usually did not express a favorable attitude toward imaginative poetry. The *Lives* reveal his contradictory views in that he both praised and criticized the force of the imagination: "he was wont to call the imagination 'licentious and vagrant,' wild, unrestrained, vehement, and rapid, and to associate it with youth and inexperience, with lyric and with pastoral verse, to which he was either hostile or indifferent" (Hagstrum 90). Nevertheless, in the "Life of Thomson" he expresses a high admiration of Thomson's capacities as an imaginative, original poet:

> he is entitled to one praise of the highest kind: his mode of thinking, and of expressing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet . . . His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius . . .” (4: 103)

Johnson approves highly of Thomson’s originality, and, although he criticizes his method, he argues that “blank verse is properly used” (104).[73] Blank verse was generally regarded as a pure and natural form of expression. In *Conjectures on Original Composition*, Young described the form as “verse unfallen, uncurst; verse reclaim’d, reinthron’d in the true *Language of the Gods*; who never thunder’d, nor suffer’d their *Homer* to thunder, in Rhime . . .” (60). He attributes a religious quality to the blank verse form, while rhyme, by contrast, is considered to be negative because of its artificiality. Johnson’s criticism often expresses a preference for Augustan poetry expressing the ideals of order and connection. Johnson wished to evaluate the writer’s genius, not necessarily a specific text, “to credit the mind of the author and not the genre with the power of evoking response” (Hagstrum 42). It seems rather that a positive evaluation of a poet’s genius often had to do with that author’s generic technique. Johnson seemed to appreciate poetry that offered more security and logic, qualities associated with didactic poetry. And yet, “Johnson gave considerable thought to the relations between subject matter and organization, between ultimate literary ends and literary form. Although he accepted both descriptive and didactic poetry as pleasurable and instructive, he felt that neither, by its very nature, could provide a satisfactory form of organization” (Hagstrum 122). Johnson praises Thomson’s poetic skill in *The Seasons* for its content is reflected in its form; the theme of devotion and the religious blank verse are interrelated: “The reader . . . wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shews him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomson impresses” (4: 103). Johnson reads Thomson’s long poem as a work promoting faith in God and celebrating religious devotion and not as an example of descriptive verse.

Thomson’s achievement in the London literary marketplace may have also stimulated Johnson’s respect for him as a genuine professional poet. Thomson was one

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[73] Johnson’s criticism reads thus: “The great defect of the *Seasons* is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances subsisting all at once, no rule can be given why one should be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curiosity is not excited by suspense or expectation” (4:104). On the difficulty of defining the generic heterogeneity of Thomson’s *Seasons*, see Jung “Epic, Ode, or Something New: The Blending of Genres in Thomson’s *Spring.*” Jung identifies Johnson’s critique of methodical irregularity in Mallet, Savage, and Pope. “[Johnson] suggests that in a didactic production structure is less important since ‘by long circumduction from any one truth, all truth may be inferred’ (2: 151). It therefore follows that imaginative writing is in need of a structure that philosophical writings such as Shaftesbury’s do not possess” (148).

of the first writers to produce a poem that was initially supported by patronage and political support but then managed to revise it in such a way as to respond to a large readership interested in descriptive verse. In this context, he was the first poet writing in the (Latinized) vernacular who successfully made a living by writing.[74] Thomson also relied on his generic and technical versatility as a writer to respond to the market for literature more generally. Lonsdale states that Thomson was "the earliest poet whose entire career [Johnson] had been able to follow at first hand" (4: 337), a factor that partially influenced Johnson's identification with him. Despite Thomson's dramatic work and his politics, for example, in *Liberty* (1735-1736), Johnson found little to criticize in the poet's career. Johnson's favorable judgment was influenced by Thomson's originality, poetic skill, and social success both in securing assistance from patrons and his literary circles and in responding to readers and the literary market.

Conclusion

Johnson described his ideal author as "a mind, active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imaging something greater than it knows, always endeavouring something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do." ("Life of Pope" 217 qtd. in Hagstrum 52-3). For Johnson, the most significant goal of the author was individual and social improvement. Johnson's criticism in the *Lives* gives primacy to the social utility of knowledge and thought, and is less informed by formalistic elements, such as an author's skill at handling particular styles and meters of poetry, than by Tory politics, which influenced his assessments of the poets. I argue that the *Lives*, with Johnson's ideal author embedded in his criticism, also functioned as a guide for aspiring poets. Johnson's critical method conflicted with other forms of criticism at the time, for instance, the more historically oriented form of

[74] Sambrook's *ODNB* article on Thomson reveals Thomson's success: "By the middle of 1730, five years after leaving Scotland, Thomson had achieved a measure of fame and fortune. He had received royal notice as playwright and poet, he enjoyed the friendship and respect of men of wit, and the support of some discriminating patrons; his *Seasons* had attracted 457 subscriptions at 1 guinea or more each, and he had profited from three author's benefit nights in the theatre and the sale of copyrights to booksellers: *Spring* and *Sophonisba* for £137 10s. to Millar in January 1730 and all the other long blank-verse poems for £105 to Millan in July 1729."

the Warton brothers. Due to its frequent reprinting and the lack of competition for this type of publication, Johnson's *Lives* gradually became standardized, and would later influence aesthetic-ideologically informed canon formation, despite the fact that the chosen canon underpinning Johnson's edition was based on the booksellers' economic decisions.

Johnson's authority and constructed authorial self, to which his *Lives* contributed greatly, reinforced the conceptualization and development of the authorial discourse of the autonomous, original genius. This was partially due to the manner in which he attended to the individual lives of the poets, drawing attention to psychological details and biographical anecdotes; he contributed to the elevation of poets, what I have termed "authorial exceptionalism." Paradoxically, he also humanized the author by including anecdotes about the poets' personal lives or misfortunes. In contrast to singular notions of authorship, he accepted and appreciated various forms of collaborative and professional authorship. Johnson's criticism was a practical and didactic one, as I have shown with the inconsistencies in his assessment of lyric poetry. Johnson attempted to put his proactive authorial ideals into practice in his own career. And yet, the edition's wide dissemination and the consolidation of Johnson's authority, partly affected by Boswell's myth-making of Dr. Johnson, contributed to fixed conceptualizations of authorship and constructions of Johnson. These two factors helped cast Johnson as the "mythical" critical authority towering over his "Age of Authors." The *Lives* created cohesion and uniformity amongst the diverse poets featured in this publication, which also helped shape static definitions of authorship. Johnson's constructions of the poets slowly became the standard version of the poet, along with the dilation of Johnson's authority. Later scholarship, informed by the Johnsonian myths, erased aspects of Johnson's career, such as his struggles with the economic conditions of print culture, while aspiring to succeed as a professional author.

Johnson's critical constructions of specific authors in his "lives" show how the complexity and nuance of Johnson's accounts are wiped away and his notions of professional authorship are often still misunderstood. Although Johnson claimed to practice a candid and impartial form of criticism in the *Lives*, his judgments are also influenced by his personal experiences and professional relations with his contemporaries. For instance, Johnson's method contains some inconsistencies as a result of his empathic identification with the poets Savage and Thomson. The various forms of authorship connected to the authorial practices of Johnson, Savage, Gray, and Thomson, and Johnson's textual versions of the poets that I have analyzed, illustrate the complex nature of authorship. Johnson, the professional, market-minded author perceived the ideal author as someone who achieves a high level of respect and authority based on his social role and textual activities. Savage's trajectory as an author included the hack, the (failed) professional, and was largely dominated by a dependence on patronage. His main strategy for constructing authority was his self-creation as the

"bastard." Gray, inspired by the poetic traditions of the past, was seemingly against the commerce characterizing the literary sphere. He masked the professional side of his authorship by emphasizing the author's exceptionalism through poetic skill, specialized knowledge, and historical study. Gray's self-construction, combined with his popular success, helped create notions of the heroic author. Thomson's form of authorship encapsulates both the heroic and economic functions. His collaborative, imaginative poetry was financially very successful and it appealed to a broad readership as well as a new generation of poets.

Conclusion: Hack, Genius, or Proteus?

The changing state of eighteenth-century society was marked by professionalization and a craving for order and knowledge. These characteristics of a modern society with a chaotic political past where polarized factions continued to reign stimulated the commercialization of print and publication and created a fertile ground for a variety of alternative writing cultures. The lapse of censorship and the introduction of copyright law encouraged writing practices even further because it encouraged authorship as a viable profession rooted in the nation's project of socio-culture improvement, although the actual motivations behind the implementation of copyright was misleading. The necessity of introducing such legislation also fed debates about conceptualizations of (professional) authorship that raged within writing and economic culture. The creation of a political propaganda machine encouraged writers to view their activities as a viable career-option and had an impact on the progression of professionalization in other areas of writing outside politics, which would develop into literary culture (see Downie). Those writers already invested in more literary, or elitist, forms of authorship resisted this professionalization, as they considered the ties with politics and commerce a degradation of their realm. All the subjects of my case studies reveal different ways in which authors negotiated the developing literary sphere. There were various options available in the print market for a writer to make a name for himself, including writing in specific genres, forming relationships with other authors via networks and with the dominant figures involved in print culture, like booksellers and printers, and finding support from political or aristocratic patrons. Authorial strategies facilitated the generation of another version of the author. However, the practices showcased in each chapter also contributed to the (one-dimensional) definition of the modern (professional) author. A hidden aim behind authorial discourse and writing and publications practices centered on meta-authorship is a desire to discover, or construct, the essence of the author, which is then revealed in textual compositions and criticism.

To fashion order out of chaos, writers relied on a variety of discourses such as those in dedications that constructed the author as either humble, disinterested, unconcerned with fame, or as the victimized scribbler in financial dire straits, who is apologetic for his performance and subordinating himself to his patron. Other examples of discourse expressed in prefaces and essays formed a direct intimate link with the reader in order to fixate the meaning of their texts by guiding the reader through it, to justify their publication activities, and to explain their aims. Satire was more complex with its characteristic subversion, flexibility, and duality. In the playful realm of authorial satire, stereotypes of the hack and the evil bookseller were created, which contributed to society's notions of authorship. Through this mode of mythmaking, authors could safely criticize the current state of the developing literary culture, the dependent status of the author, or unjust market regulations. Satire often presented the problems of the writing culture by relying on a repertoire of monstrosity, so as to relegate otherness, purify culture, and elevate one's own view as in Pope's *Dunciad.* These textual forms are all repertoires of authority. While explaining their practices and producing authority in this way, authors, critics, and cultural thinkers simultaneously reveal the complexity of authorship and the constructedness of the notion of the author. The author consists of diverse facets that shape and alter his identity, such as his engagement with publication methods, the manipulation of the material package of his work, and the variety of writing forms open to him, and is susceptible to revisionary interpretation from readers and other commercial, political, or cultural forces, for example, the possibility of a pension or changing cultural tastes. Authorship is more of a mutable process than a static construct. The author resists superficial, constrictive definitions aimed at controlling the profession by reducing authorship's multiplicity. Authorship is essentially fluid, and an author's personae and agency are always susceptible to change, due to an author's own activities and external forces connected to publication, politics and social issues, and the audience's reception, all of which contribute to the evolution of the author's career.

One of the main tensions that fuelled the project of defining the author in a singular fashion is the clash between modern conceptualizations of the profession and conservative views based on traditional notions of authorship. The modern vision accepts professionalization and acknowledges the determining role of commerce, but aims for increased financial independence on the part of the author. Conservatives wished to retain the author as an elevated member of a privileged class, who was defined by imaginative forms of writing, such as poetry, and not interested in wide-reaching social popularity or financial compensation for practicing his talents. In fact, the commercial side was regarded as degrading the author's esteem. The modern view struggled for social recognition of the profession and battled for authority to counteract the author's dependent status affected by the patronage system, copyright law, and print market regulations. Asserting one's agency was partly dependent on commercial

and social success. The traditional author exercised authority he received from his social position and the cultural value attached to the type of work he created. The conflict between these views contributed to many strategies of authorship, some which emphasized the author's poor, dependent condition and others which manipulated one's active involvement in securing lucrative publications. The polarized views hide the various facets of authorship, and informed attempts to define authorship, for instance in satire, which contributed to the development of the profession into the direction of having a singular purpose. Even the self-constructed personae of individual authors are shown to lean in a certain direction that either embraces commercial professionalization or not. Authors battled against each other, and against the booksellers, to achieve more rights and cultural authority, while at the same time lamenting their dependence. In some cases, the expression of views on authorship involved the construction of a stratified hierarchy within the realm of authorship, where specific genres and the degree of learning of the authors were valued more highly than others. These discursive strategies can be seen to precede practices of canon formation that systematized a culture's literary productions based on their (high) aesthetic quality. The conferral of high status to the privileged authors who belonged contributed to the elevation of literary authorship, which influenced the narrowing of the notion to a singular purpose. This type of social recognition for one's literary endeavors was one aim of authors who relied on the trope of victimization. Based on their unfortunate status and lack of property, it emphasized authors' poor living conditions and financial struggles, while exaggerating the author's morals, disinterestedness, and contribution to society (Gallagher 155). Presenting the author as a dignified victim of social and commercial ills because of their lack of property elevated his cultural status. Significantly, this strategy represents an opposite movement to the one that satire used in symbolically placing the monstrous and lowly hack in the elevated space of the Grub Street garret.

Authority is the product of discursive processes defining, satirizing, and criticizing the author and of an individual's writing practices. My investigation of authorship in each of the case studies and forms of authorship reveals that, although fleeting, authority must be the key that unlocks the ramifications of authorship. The continuous construction of authority is crucial for an individual author's self-fashioning and also for the dissemination of discourses that will influence society's conceptualization of what an author ideally should be. Each chapter showcases a selection of practices that assert authority and—through the production of the written and printed word—create an authorial identity. For example, biography reveals the biographer's authority to offer a proto-definitive version of his subject, for whom the writer may also be constructing authority. A writer of criticism claims to possess a degree of (cultural) knowledge necessary to evaluate textual productions, so that the reader will trust his judgment. Political propaganda, despite its negative connotation, relies on authority gained from

writing on a specific issue so as to strengthen public opinion in favor of the side of the faction he is writing for. Successfully negotiating the print market and forming good relations with a well-known bookseller or securing a sufficient number of subscriptions for a lucrative publication also lends an author cultural esteem. In a similar fashion, other strategic forms of behavior can influence the author's cultural position, such as expressing one's view against commercialized publication, associating oneself with polite culture, and emphasizing the didactic value of one's work. Aligning oneself with a network of authors or a social circle will lend that group's authority to the writer by association. Satirizing society or other authors and writing culture can potentially contribute to the elevation of the author. By analyzing satire and the two polarized views on authorship (conservative versus professional) exemplified by Pope and Ralph in chapter one, Ralph's career, as well as the satires on authors "A Genuine Sketch of Modern Authorship" and "The Brain-sucker," shows that professional writing in the eighteenth century incorporated many different writing forms that demanded generic and ideological versatility on the part of the author in order to be successful. Ralph's career trajectory functions as an example of the eighteenth-century author who should be regarded as protean. In the second chapter, the construction of the author was explored in the context of the Society's creation of authority for a specific subset of authors, namely academic, intellectual ones writing on philosophy, science, and history, who gained privilege and authority via their association with this supposedly altruistic Society. The Society's programmatic discourse, fuelled by cultural values of politeness, and members' actual practices regarding their publishing agreements with booksellers, further emphasized the author's subordinate position in the commercial market, the economics of which negatively determined and soured the profession. In the third chapter, I demonstrated that Gray actively manipulated publication practices and struggled to retain control of his authorial agency. His aversion to print was also influenced by his views of author-reader relations and the overwhelming popularity of his "Elegy." Gray struggled to reconcile his celebrity status with his authorial intentions and his ideal persona as the bard. The duality behind Gray's practices of self-fashioning informs the interplay of text and image of the illustrated Bentley edition. The form of this book appears to answer his ideal vision of a gentlemen poet, but the shared authorship with Bentley and the interpretation of Gray's poetry influenced by the illustrations complementing the text construct new, more complex meanings, causing Gray to lose control again of his poetically constructed authorial persona. My final chapter presented an account of Johnson's attempts to offer definitive versions of a selection of poets, while at the same time constructing a singular, yet ideal, definition of authorship, both of which affect future criticism and the conceptualization of authorship. Johnson reveals the role of economic factors in the creation of authority and the author. His own career trajectory, with his transition from a struggling hack writer to the learned Dr. Johnson, and his criticism in the *Lives* paradoxically dispel any

notion of the author as singular. Johnson's "Age of Authors" must be interpreted not as the age of *the* author, but as a period in which the author's diffuse multiplicity, symbolized by Proteus, was still palpable.

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