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## Milton and class identity: the publication of *Areopagitica* and the 1645 *Poems*

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Parturiunt madido quae nixu praela, recepta  
Sed quae scripta manu, sunt veneranda magis.  
—John Donne

In *Areopagitica*, “a Speech . . . for the Liberty of Vnlicenc’d Printing,” Milton argues that licensers be kept away not from printed books, but from manuscripts, an important distinction. As long as a book was printed and publicly acknowledged by at least its printer’s name on the title page, Milton presents himself as having no qualms about its survival. It could be burned, banned, its printer punished. Once it marched out into the open battlefield of Truth, a printed book took its chances and fought for life and dominance. But until a book was printed, that is, as long as it remained in manuscript, it was, in Milton’s psychosexual argument for freedom of speech, alive only in the dark and stifling half-life of the womb. In Milton’s richly figurative argument, the official licenser of manuscripts is a cross-legged Juno policing the womb’s privacy, so that, not yet “borne to the World,” it is forced to “undergo yet in darknesse the judgement of *Radamantb* and his Colleagues, ere it can passe the ferry backward into light.”<sup>1</sup> This disturbing metaphor of the manuscript trapped in a sexual passage between hand and print reveals powerfully the eroticism, the danger, and the repulsive otherness of the process of print. Yet print publication was for Milton a political (and psychological) state into which by 1644 he was determined to be born.

But *Areopagitica* is more than a document of Milton’s anxiety about emerging in print: it witnesses broad social tensions between public and private spheres which the distinction between manuscript and print both enacted and preserved.<sup>2</sup> To print, as the 1640s demonstrate dra-

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1. *The Complete Prose Works*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 2:505-6.

2. *Areopagitica* has recently attracted an unusual degree of attention in this regard. See, for example, Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984), 41-52; Abbe Blum, “The Author’s Authority: *Areopagitica*

matically, is to reach a large, indiscriminate audience and to make possible wide and profound persuasion and change. Throughout the seventeenth century, however, the alternative choice, the choice to remain in manuscript and therefore within a circumscribed group, was as distinctively weighted in its own terms—politically, socially, and psychologically—as emerging in print.<sup>3</sup> Turning its attention provocatively to the gap between the written and the printed statement, *Areopagitica* is working through a deep and culturally shared ambivalence.

Clearly *Areopagitica*'s ambivalence about printed books is excruciating. On the one hand, books are a symbol and a preservative of manhood, "a violl [of] the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them," "the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up." On the other hand, they have the potential to unleash spectacular social consequences, as the myth of Cadmus suggests. Milton's attitude to print shifts constantly from fear of castration and annihilation to passionate enthusiasm and immediacy, its fears equally divided between the feminized passivity of the creative cabinet of the learned and the potential destructiveness of the "living labour of publick men."<sup>4</sup>

*Areopagitica* itself dances edgily away from the anonymous public it invites on the level of argument. Even more intimate than manuscript transmission is speech, and *Areopagitica* insists, at least in its opening section, on its status as an oration and even on the nervousness of its

and the Labour of Licensing," in Mary Nyquist and Margaret Ferguson, eds., *Remembering Milton: Essays on Texts and Traditions* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 74–96; Stanley Fish, "Driving from the Letter: Truth and Indeterminacy in Milton's *Areopagitica*," in *Remembering Milton*, 234–54; Christopher Kendrick, *Milton: A Study in Ideology and Form* (New York: Methuen, 1986), 17–52; Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 111–19; and Michael Wilding, "Milton's *Areopagitica*: Liberty for the Sects," in Thomas N. Corns, ed., *The Literature of Controversy* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), 7–38.

3. On the conditions of manuscript circulation of poetry and the passage of poetry into print see the work of Arthur F. Marotti: *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); "John Donne, Author," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19 (1989): 69–82; and "Patronage, Poetry, and Print," *Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 1–26. See also Mary Hobbs, "Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies and Their Value for Textual Editors," in Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths, eds., *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 1:182–210; Harold Love, "Manuscript versus Print in the Transmission of English Literature, 1600–1700," *Bulletin of the Bibliographic Society of Australia and New Zealand* 9 (1985): 95–107; idem, "Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographic Society* 9, pt. 2 (1987): 130–54; and Edwin Wolf II, *The Textual Importance of Manuscript commonplace Books of 1620–1660* (Charlottesville: Bibliographic Society of the University of Virginia, 1949).

4. *Areopagitica*, 2:492–93.

speaker before such an august assembly. After Milton's assertion that "I now manifest by the very sound of this which I shall utter, that we are already in good part arrived at civil liberty"—what follows is mockingly silent.<sup>5</sup> Wresting his private voice out of the very medium he defends, Milton's privacy has the effect of at once ironizing and rendering more threatening the public petition he presents.

The simultaneous fear of and desire for public exposure witnessed in *Areopagitica* is a powerfully articulated instance of a dilemma that pervaded the seventeenth century. In the convulsive social and political upheaval between the closed court world of the early century and the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, the value and definition of the private and the public shifted radically. Seventeenth-century historians have cautioned that the use of the terms private and public is anachronistic since every action, no matter how intimate, was subject to community inspection and control. But it is precisely this communal watchfulness that, in literate groups, created a sense of *class* privacy.

A crucial vehicle of this linked privacy was the collection of manuscript miscellanies, mosaics of a culture created by single hands, hired hands, groups of hands, valued and valuable not only for their secrets and commonplaces but also for the uniquely gathered whole. Yet in the wildly changed print market for which *Areopagitica* is a rallying cry, such miscellanies became staple sources. With the exposure of coterie writing in print, private utterance was constituted dialectically as the opposite of public exchange. But the fashion of representing coterie writing in print was not so much a disclosure of genuine privacy as a symptom of the anxiety that privacy was being lost. *Areopagitica* is typical of its historical moment in its assumption, at once fearful and exhilarated, that the marketplace could come to pervade everything, including gender roles, intellectual life, and the growing sense of class distinctions, to the point where merchandise could be seen as the driving engine of England's political, intellectual, social, and literary life.

The critical dynamic between the privacy of the hand and the openness of print was a shaping influence not only on what has recently been called the inscription of subjectivity but also on the formation of class identities; and it was a crucial factor in the revolutionary shift literary history records from Renaissance to Restoration.<sup>6</sup> Central to

5. *Ibid.*, 487.

6. For a discussion of ideas of class identities throughout the century see "The Destabilization of Social Categories" in Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 131–75; for

this shift was the role of poetry in the aggressive marketplace of the civil war and interregnum, a marketplace in which gestures of privacy and indications of class identity were placed in an elaborate political code. These are the terms in which we need to confront the most puzzling gesture of Milton's early career: his publication, shortly after the open defiance of *Areopagitica*, of a volume of poems under official license, a volume freighted with court markers and associated in its form as a miscellany with royalist writers. Already engaged in radical polemics, Milton made what may seem the astonishing choice to publish his 1645 *Poems* with Humphrey Moseley, an important and politically explicit royalist publisher. When we examine more closely the political semiotics of manuscript gatherings in the seventeenth century and remember the overdetermined character of poetic exchange during the interregnum, Milton's elegant volume will appear more multivocal, more surprising, and less of an anomaly than we have supposed. The gorgeous tract, divided and tremulous, and the carefully arranged volume of poems stand surprisingly close, not only in time but also in their exposure of the hidden to the political and social forces of the market.

In the last decade a great deal of work has been done on publication and the construction of a modern sense of authorship.<sup>7</sup> Ben Jonson's *Workes* of 1616 has come to represent for us the declaration of au-

a discussion of the ways in which instructions in a writing hand shaped a bureaucratic class and the aristocratic class it served see Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

7. In very different ways, both Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communication and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?" in Josue V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141-60 are seminal works. See also Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); idem, "Milton Reads the King's Book: Print, Performance, and the Making of a Bourgeois Ideal," *Criticism* 29 (1987): 1-25; Joseph Loewenstein, "The Script in the Marketplace," in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *Representing the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 265-78; Richard C. Newton, "Jonson and the (Re-)Invention of the Book," in Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds., *Classic and Cavalier: Essays in Jonson and the Sons of Ben* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982), 31-55; and Mark Rose, "The Author as Proprietor: 'Donaldson v. Becket' and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship," *Representations* 23 (1988): 51-85. On the conditions of cultural nostalgia see Anne Barton, "Harking back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia," *ELH* 48 (1981): 706-31; Peter Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* (London: Mansell; New York: Bowker, 1980), vol. 1, pt. 1, 246; and J. W. Saunders, "The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Poetry," *Essays in Criticism* 1 (1951): 139-64.

thorial autonomy and the model for volumes of poetry and drama to follow. At the same time, however, the 1620s and 1630s were the peak decades of a widely and tightly interconnected manuscript culture reflecting the aristocratic and *arriviste* distaste for the print medium. If this alternative, manuscript culture was revanchist, elitist, and nostalgic, it was also corrosively cynical about the Elizabethan ideal to which it harked back. The figure of the courtier had become suspect, tainted with sexual and political corruption and closed off from the unsettling social changes in the world outside the court. Miscellaneous poetry collections remained in private hands throughout these decades in order to remain outside the scrutiny of the state. But more immediately, and more significantly, manuscript circulation formed material bonds of interest and of class. There is an extraordinary sense of group solidarity in these miscellanies, in which the identity of authors melts away and poems are collected anonymously, often retitled, and frequently altered internally through errors of transcription or intentional editing—all in the interest of a more general coherence. Unlike licensed and published texts, seventeenth-century manuscript coteries were subversive in their very existence, providing a private pleasure in mocking the institutions to which their adherents belonged.

The mechanism of state licensing and policing of print inevitably associated manuscript writing with the forbidden.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, there was increasing pressure on all manuscript publication to justify itself, with the result that, increasingly, manuscript publication became at once a more conscious act and a more suspect one. Class exclusiveness and suspicion of the open marketplace remained motivations for manuscript circulation, certainly, but during the seventeenth century it came to be possible to construe class privacy as politically abrasive, even dangerous. Not only the bonding of radical sects, but also the bonding of aristocracy and of gentry became suspect in the long silences of the 1630s and in the subsequent volatile openness after state censorship faltered. All types are defined against an antitype; with the

8. Frederick Seaton Siebert's *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776: The Rise and Decline of Government Controls* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952) has long been the authoritative work. Siebert has been questioned, augmented, and refined in important ways, however, by Philip Hamburger, "The Development of the Law of Seditious Libel and the Control of the Press," *Stanford Law Review* 37 (1985): 661-765, and by Sheila Lambert, "The Printers and the Government 1604-1637," in Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds., *Aspects of Printing from 1600* (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic Press, 1987), 1-29.

modern concept of privacy came a much more militant sense of the public. Words themselves came to rest uneasily and suspiciously on the border between the public and the private spheres.

The Elizabethan antiquarian movement fostered by such wealthy and committed collectors as Sir Robert Cotton and William Camden was built on the manuscripts they sought out and preserved. But despite their elitist motives, the achievements of the antiquaries were the basis of political debate over royal prerogative. Cotton kept his own research and the projects presented by the Society of Antiquaries scrupulously private and in manuscript. But when the Society began examining the history of Parliament and when one member, John Dodderidge, presented a paper tracing the pre-Roman existence of Parliament, proposing to probe further into "the power of it in matters hereditary and personal, the proceedings of it in causes criminal and civil, the privileges of it *sedentibus & servientibus*," then the collaborative archival project was called to a halt—in spite of its careful discretion, or, more likely, because of it.<sup>9</sup>

Cotton's manuscript collection became a focus of political controversy; it contained the scraps from which competing versions of a national identity were being constructed. Before and after his death his private collection shifted in and out of public property, as both monarch and Parliament realized the power of Cotton's collected documents and recognized the danger of allowing them to stay in private hands. A whole new sense of historiography, of time, of change and continuity, and of legitimacy rested in the physical evidence of these manuscript documents. It is not surprising that the one contemporary example of the power of openness that Milton holds up to Parliament in *Areopagitica* is the antiquary and legal historian, John Selden—"wherof what better witness"—whose *De Jure Naturali* was published in 1640.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to recall as well the extent to which the fabric of English law rested on the manuscript transcriptions and manuscript records of legal decisions. And even as ancient manuscripts became foci for a newly defined nationalism, the ongoing production of legal decisions and precedents was very consciously engaged in writing down

the central workings of English political life.<sup>11</sup> The Inns of Court supported a small industry of scribes and scriptoria, many of which also produced newsletters and manuscript poetry collections for scribal publication.<sup>12</sup> We remember now, because we have read the works of Dickens and Melville, the painfully circumscribed lives of scribes buried deep and symbolically in print. Bartleby is our present cultural image of the death of the labor economy of the written word, staring at a blank wall, "preferring not" to engage in a rounded, physical life, and starving himself to death deep in the pyramid of the Tombs. In the seventeenth century, in sharp contrast, the life of a scrivener addressed not a blank wall, but the future.

Manuscript, then, remained an intensely heightened and potentially dangerous sphere. The vital power of print to change a nation has been extensively documented and is beyond question, but the alternative medium of manuscript, intentionally more ephemeral, less public, is in its intimacy and privacy a class marker and an agent of change we should not forget. Milton is certainly right to argue that once words are out in the open they are, no matter how subversive, less frightening and treacherous than writing which is passed "privily from house to house."<sup>13</sup> In the privacy of homes, of taverns, of coterie at the universities, the Inns of Court, among the country gentry, or in St. Paul's Churchyard, anything could be said and planned with only a sporadic possibility of control.<sup>14</sup> Certainly a wide system of spies was set up to attempt control. Private homes and printers' shops were regularly searched for manuscripts. The Stationers' Company itself took major responsibility for organizing and funding the underground police system that watched over the back rooms of presses. And the private manuscript system was also inherently, internally dangerous, for it was the legal responsibility of everyone who read a seditious libel to report it or be equally guilty simply for the possession of the written words.<sup>15</sup>

11. Indeed, John Guy has argued that the origin of the Petition of Right was not Charles's arrest of the five members, but his attempt to tamper with the wording of the judges' decision as recorded in the controlment roll, an act seen as so dangerous as to unify a divided Parliament against the king: "The Origins of the Petition of Right Reconsidered," *Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 289-312.

12. See Harold Love, "Manuscript versus Print," 97-98 and especially idem, "Scribal Publication," which describes the work of seventeenth-century scriptoria.

13. *Areopagitica*, 548.

14. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press*, 82-87; Leona Rostenberg, *The Minority Press and the English Crown: A Study in Repression 1558-1625* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1971), 78-82 and passim.

15. Hamburger, "The Development of the Law of Seditious Libel," demonstrates

9. Kevin Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586-1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 30. See also J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957; reprint 1987).

10. *Areopagitica*, 513.

Nowhere is the conflict of hand and print more acutely visible than in the interception of the king's private cabinet at the Battle of Naseby, an event that gave antiroyalists the most effective weapons and the most elegant ironies in the propaganda war of the 1640s. First read aloud to Parliament, Charles's letters were then published by special parliamentary order in 1645. Within a year of Milton's plea for public inspection of printed words, Parliament acted aggressively to expose Charles's domestic intimacies and Charles's *hand* to such inspection; and his cabinet would eventually be subjected to legal inspection in his prosecution for treason. The preface of *The Kings Cabinet Opened: Or Certain Packets of Secret Letters & Papers, Written with the Kings own hand and taken in his Cabinet at Nasby-Field* presents the event as a domestic comedy, the purloined letter revealing the plot to the expectant audience, for "now by Gods good providence the traverse Curtain is drawn . . . what they must not disclose, is presented upon the stage." But the comedy modulates into apocalypse: "God grant that the drawing of this Curtain may be as fatal to Popery, and all Antichristian heresie, here now as the rending of the vaile was to the Jewish Ceremonies in Judea, at the expiration of our Saviour."<sup>16</sup>

Finally, of course, in a further twist of irony played out on a national stage, Charles succeeded at last in seizing the constantly shifting typology of the 1640s so that he himself was the Saviour crucified. In *Eikon Basilike*, the voice of the king attacked his enemies for the publication of his private letters by impugning Parliament's "honor and civility," its lack of aristocratic discretion. The "freedom and secrecy" of a king's private papers "commands a civility from all men not wholly barbarous"; indeed, it is "inhuman . . . to expose them to public view," strong words for the act of publication. Charles rightly guesses that "the taking away of my credit is but a necessary preparation to the taking away of my life and my kingdoms," but he seems more incensed at his exposure to "the vulgar."<sup>17</sup> Charles's dotting letters to his wife revealed him as a private man and shamed him by exposing this privacy to the public. More significant than Charles's horror at his exposure,

the careful distinctions. Until 1662, seditious libel was a term used exclusively for manuscript circulation; the licensing acts policed print. For an overview and reinterpretation of the power of the Stationers' Company see Joseph Loewenstein, "For a History of Literary Property: John Wolfe's Reformation," *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988): 389-412.

16. (London: Printed for Robert Bostock, 1645), sig. A4<sup>r</sup>.

17. *Eikon Basilike*, ed. Philip Knachel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 129, 131.

however, is the ferocious anger of Parliament at these letters and its triumphant pleasure in publishing them. The cabinet gave documentary evidence that what Charles was saying was not what he was writing in private. In many ways, the civil war was about the private exchange of information. The Thomason tracts show how the press fueled change, but deeper than that immediate activity was simply the fact of the press, its existence underlining more and more starkly what was *not* being printed.

When government licensing restrictions fell apart in the 1640s, the contents of miscellanies that had circulated privately for two generations moved into print. In the dialectic of public and private that we have been tracing, the rendering public, in print, of the privacy of manuscript collections had the curious and powerful effect of illuminating how intimately shared, how reflexive of a group subjectivity, was the privacy of a miscellany in manuscript. When information is fragmentary and intensely valuable, its shared exchange creates a group privacy, a cabal at once conservative and inherently subversive. When possession of the written word is incriminating evidence, every reader is a collaborator.

An instance from early in the period is revealing. Until its convener Cecily Bulstrode died in 1609, a group including John Donne, Sir Thomas Overbury, Sir Thomas Roe, and others played a game called "newes" in which they passed around among themselves satires and parodies of the court circle in which they traveled. It was a private game, with just enough danger to enhance the pleasure. A glimpse of the game slipped into print, however, in the aftermath of what is surely one of the most spectacular sex and murder scandals of all times—the Essex divorce and the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in 1613. The publisher Lawrence Lisle capitalized handsomely on the growing scandal by bringing out multiple impressions of Overbury's *Wife*, appending to it "Conceited Newes," each piece tantalizingly signed with initials.<sup>18</sup>

The game of "newes" played out in Cecily Bulstrode's "Chamber" and its momentary visibility in the print market resembles the creation and circulation of a great deal of poetry in the first half of the seventeenth century. It points up, first, how private topical writing was;

18. See *The "Conceited Newes" of Sir Thomas Overbury and His Friends*, ed. James E. Savage (Gainesville: Scholars, 1968) and Beatrice White, *Cast of Ravens: The Strange Case of Sir Thomas Overbury* (New York: George Braziller, 1965).

only in a moment of real social crisis, which the ugly Overbury disaster with its ties to James became, did the system of privacy break down. Donne, for example, would clearly not have wanted his wit for sale on the open market, where he could be exposed to wide interpretation. It was not so much what he said, as who got to see it. Stationers and courtiers were a volatile mix.

The name of the game is also revealing. Although current news was heavily in demand, it was heavily censored by the government. Until 1620 all news therefore travelled in manuscript, not print. Professional "intelligencers" wrote weekly reports on the state of affairs on the Continent and sent copies to a list of subscribers in England. After 1621, the government bowed to demand and practice and granted a monopoly for newsbooks, but still allowed only foreign news to be reported. Key documents and news from the English court and parliament continued to web out across the country in letters that then entered the miscellany channel.<sup>19</sup> The discourse of manuscript life was thick, therefore, not only with poetry, some of it doggerel, some of it very fine, but also with "news," with politics, and with libel. Any printed text would have been read—and written—against this hidden template. We have easy access now to seventeenth-century Parliamentary debates, to official correspondence, to court proceedings, and we use these documents to elucidate literature contemporary with them. In the main, however, these documents were not available to contemporaries except through a manuscript chain of eyewitness accounts, of hasty notes, or of reconstructions and interpretations after the fact. All these different forms of reportage were bound or copied into miscellanies.

Poetry in manuscript should not be regarded as distinct from this material dialectic of hand and press that so pervasively structures the political and intellectual life of the seventeenth century. Even the most politically innocuous lyric was made private and dangerous when circulated in the same circuit that was assumed to convey scurrilous or

oppositional writing. In 1644, Milton borrowed an aphorism from Francis Bacon to warn Parliament that the "punishing of wits enhaunces their authority . . . and a forbidd'n writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seeke to tread them out."<sup>20</sup> As surely as sectarian political and religious writings could be classified as "forbidden writing," so also could anything that circulated in manuscript, including poetry. If print was, in a phrase Milton again borrowed from Bacon, the licensed and thus necessarily flattened "language of the times,"<sup>21</sup> manuscript discourse was—in its mix of reportage, satire, political theory, sexually and scatologically explicit poetry, and lyric poetry—the antilanguage of the times.

Like Cecily Bulstrode's game of news, seventeenth-century poetry in manuscript is very often a group construct and largely anonymous. A manuscript now at the University of Texas at Austin can serve as an example. Typical of many compiled at the universities and the Inns of Court, it includes numerous poems found in other seventeenth-century manuscripts, including some with which we are all more or less familiar, such as Drummond's "The Senses," Herrick's "Farewell" and "Welcome to Sack," and Wotton's "On Happiness." The manuscript was sold at Sotheby's in an atmosphere of great excitement and for a large price in 1965 after P. J. Croft identified it as Robert Herrick's commonplace book.<sup>22</sup> Serious and probably permanent doubt was cast on the attribution to Herrick, however, soon after the manuscript's acquisition by Texas, and there has been little interest in the manuscript since. Tellingly, a manuscript that expands or clarifies the canon of a recognized figure is given great value, both economic and literary; a

20. *Areopagitica*, 542.

21. *Ibid.*, 534.

22. Sotheby catalogue, 29 June 1965, Lot 146. The poems in the manuscript are reproduced, with transcriptions, in Norman K. Farmer, Jr., "Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript with the Hand of Robert Herrick," *Texas Quarterly* 16, no. 4, Supplement (Winter 1973), 1-185; references will be to this facsimile and transcription. Farmer expressed his reservations in "Robert Herrick's Commonplace Book? Some Observations and Questions," *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America* 66 (1972): 31-34. Croft countered in *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America* 66 (1972): 421-26 and in "Errata in Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript," *Texas Quarterly* 19 (1976): 174. Peter Beal discusses the Texas manuscript under the Herrick entry in his *Index*, 529-31. For another manuscript compiled at Cambridge by a single hand during approximately the same years (1610-1631) see Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers, "Recovering an Important Seventeenth-Century Poetical Miscellany: Cambridge Add. MS 4138," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographic Society* 7 (1978): 156-69; for a manuscript containing many of the same poems see *The Dr. Farmer Chetham MS*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, *Remains of Lancaster and Chester*, vols. 89, 90 (Manchester: The Chetham Society, 1873).

19. See Richard Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 112 (1986): 60-90; Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper 1620-1660* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 1-18; Clive Holmes, "The County Community in Stuart Historiography," *Journal of British Studies* 19 (1980): 54-73; Hamburger's discussion of "Scandalum Magnatum," *passim*; F. J. Levy, "How Information Spread Among the Gentry, 1550-1640," *Journal of British Studies* 21 (1982): 11-34; McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, 46-50; and Arthur Parr's introduction to Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

manuscript that reveals the playful, scatological, pervasively political formation of a contemporary canon is neglected.

The Texas manuscript is the product of a group associated with Cambridge University who assembled it over a decade, from 1612 to 1623; it therefore affords a glimpse of the manuscript environment available to Milton at approximately the time he was a student there.<sup>23</sup> Tightly organized chronologically and topically, it is copied in a number of hands, although there is one controlling hand that copies whole poems and consistently makes corrections. Throughout this miscellany are pieces that would have travelled through the quasi-underground route of shared, sometimes bought intelligence. Topical poems and poems that, placed in such a context, could seem topical are grouped around the prose documents. With letters describing the Virginia colony, for example, is a long satirical ballad describing the motley crew involved in the financing and settlement; with long, accurate transcriptions of the Essex divorce and then the Overbury trial are grouped the dozens of poems collected about that crisis. Because the principle of assembly was strictly chronological, the miscellany has a gleeful sense of "found" poetry as entries are topped by events that necessitate new entries and make older entries prophetic. When the manuscript begins to record poems tracing the slow unravelling of the complicated Overbury divorce scandal, the group construct simply vibrates with disgust and manic glee at the opportunity to add entry after entry. The poems on Lady Frances Howard are particularly rabid, astonishing in their sexual explicitness.<sup>24</sup> Bound into the front of the manuscript after it had been filled are two dangerous prose satires that provide a sinister retrospective introduction to the group project: Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi*, which had been published and seized by the authorities, and *Vox spiritus, or Sir Walter Rawleighes ghoste*, which was seized by the authorities in manuscript and never published.<sup>25</sup> These two suppressed "voices" placed at the front of the

23. For a detailed discussion of the manuscript's context see Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of the War, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

24. There are, for example, two versions of the poem "From Katterin's dock there launcht a pinke, / Leake shee did often but did not sinke." The second version is longer and more polished (74-79), but the first has its boyish charms, such as:

Although shee be a Car well-built,  
And by her poepe al over guilt.  
For soe shee is, in part and whole,  
In goods and body, mynde and soule.

25. See S. L. Adams, "Captain Thomas Gainsford, the 'Vox Spiritus,' and the *Vox*

collection serve to darken the register of the decade past that the poems to follow narrate by accumulation.

The manuscript grows in spurts, compelled by social crisis, the first major nexus of news and poetry in the miscellany being the death of Cecil on 1612. One of a cluster of anti-Cecil poems begins:

Here lies Hobbinal our Shepheard whileare,  
That once a yeare duellie our fleeces did sheare

. . . . .  
For oblation to Pan his manner was thus,  
Himselfe gave a little and offred up us.  
So thus by his wisdom this politiq swaine  
Kept himselfe on the mountaine and us on the plaine.<sup>26</sup>

"Here lies Hobbinal" appears with regularity in manuscript miscellanies, often ascribed there to Raleigh. It has in this century, however, been banished to Raleigh's *dubia* on the basis of what one modern editor has called its "wretched . . . scurrility."<sup>27</sup> Yet this mock-pastoral epitaph belongs to a canon created by Raleigh's contemporaries. Its scurrility is the subtext of pastoral masques, for example, of *The History of the World*, of *The Faerie Queene*. Its suppression in our narrative of the Renaissance reveals our discomfort with that subtext and our anachronistically starchy sense of the pleasures of poetry.

Other of the Cecil poems appear to have remained within the circle of this artifact, most notably the long, bitter satire beginning "Advance, advance my ill-disposed muse." The satire's blunt level of class allegiance is revealed in its attack on Cecil for bringing

. . . a new forme of government in the state,  
Plotting our peeres for refuse of the nation,  
Forcing their vertues to contempt and hate.  
Their fortune soone was rul'd by evil fate:

*Populi*," *London University Institute of Historical Research Bulletin* 49 (1976): 141-44; Thomas Cogswell, "Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47 (1984): 273-88; P. G. Lake, "Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match," *Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 805-25; and Louis B. Wright, "Propaganda against James I's 'Appeasement' of Spain," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 6 (1942-43): 149-72.

26. "Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript," 40-41.

27. Agnes M. C. Latham, ed., *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), 196. Her rejection is the more remarkable since she cites persuasive external evidence for Raleigh's authorship. Pierre LeFrance, *Sir Walter Raleigh Ecrivain: Poeuvre et les idées* (Paris: A. Colin, 1968), 84, believes, on stylistic grounds, that the poem is probably Raleigh's.

That they which had their countries dearest places,  
Should so be cheated of their princes graces.  
The Arcane plots, and intricate desseignes  
Are now in common with the vulgar eares.<sup>28</sup>

It is the instinct of a group to preserve itself; the vulgar ears threaten the closed and conservative world that shapes this manuscript and others like it. Indeed, the binding cynicism of such manuscripts, their self-protecting collection of corruption, would be frighteningly dangerous out in public.

But the events that fill up the book to its end and incite the rawest and the best poetry in the collection are the Spanish marriage negotiations, summarized succinctly in a poem from the Texas manuscript:

Now all the newes upon th'exchange is of the golden lady,  
The pope at no hand will allow King James shal be her Daddy.  
Prince Charles can get no victuals sufficient for his traine,  
His horses and his trumpeters are al com back againe.<sup>29</sup>

The theory that the importance of manuscript transmission was simply nostalgia is belied by the palpable danger this miscellany must have carried to every hand and every reader involved. The subject of James's homosexual favorites is treated openly and lewdly, for example, although in printed discourse it is never mentioned except in the most heavily veiled form. A group of three powerful poems occasioned by the Spanish marriage negotiations demonstrates this cynical and ambivalent nostalgia. The first two poems are "prayers" by the House of Commons to "Saint" Elizabeth in heaven and the third is Elizabeth's reply. The "humble Petition of the now most miserable, the Commons of long afflicted England" lays before Elizabeth England's dilemma:

Where is the gentry? all apprest, disgrac't  
And Arrant knights above them now are plac't;  
Fidlers and fooles, with Dancers now and rymers  
Are made in England now ye greatest climbers.  
Wee had a Parliament (a salve for soares)  
A Magna Charter, all cast out of doores:  
The bold and hardye Brittaines conquered are,  
Without a drumme, a sworde, or sound of warre.<sup>30</sup>

28. "Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript," 48-49.

29. *Ibid.*, 172-73.

30. *Ibid.*, 160-61.

The dialogue between Queen Elizabeth and Commons goes beyond simple satire: while it offers a specific critique of James's failings and of the Parliament's justified anger, it also mocks the very attempt the poems dramatize of a retreat to an Elizabethan golden age. The adulation of Elizabeth in the two poems is presented as distinctly Roman Catholic, a neat twist in what is ostensibly a complaint against a possible alliance with a Catholic power. "Thy faithful Beadsmen and dayly orators," that is "the poore distressed Commons" of England, will if she saves them "make the Name of the blest Eliza / Equall all the Aves of the great Maria."<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth's heavenly answer to the Commons recognizes their justifiable unhappiness under a bad king, but scathingly enumerates their lack of gratitude when she was on the throne. In the end, Saint Elizabeth's voice rises into an uncannily accurate prophecy of the horrors that must come before the scourge of the Stuarts can be eradicated—"there must follow woes / (Ere England bee delivered) that will make / The entrails bleede, your very soules to quake."<sup>32</sup> The three poems viciously criticize James and mock the Commons for their nostalgia. Dangerous and self-excoriating, the manuscript petitions typify the form in which they were created and preserved.

In the pamphlet wars of 1642 a clumsily edited version of the dialogue was published as "The Commons Petition."<sup>33</sup> In the move from manuscript to print, however, the value and the meaning of such coterie literature changed. In a cold fury, Ben Jonson had threatened Cecily Bulstrode (her game of news, her chamber of wit, her insider circulation of poetry and upper-class censures) with exposure in print: "Do's the Court-Pucell then so censure me, / And thinkes I dare not her? let the world see."<sup>34</sup> But this is bravado; the "Court-Pucell" epigram was far too dangerous to "let the world see." Even though Cecily Bulstrode had died in 1609, Jonson chose not to include "To the Court-Pucell," an epigram of which he was very proud, in his 1616 *Workes*. By the

31. *Ibid.*, 148-49.

32. *Ibid.*, 166-69.

33. The three poems were probably written by at least two people as "answer" poems, a Renaissance form shaped and made immediate by the manuscript context of much Renaissance poetry. See E. F. Hart, "The Answer Poem in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Review of English Studies*, n.s., 7 (1956): 19-29. In 1642 they were published as *The Commons Petition . . . To the Chiefe Chancellor of Heaven, and onely Judge of Earth* (London: John Hammond).

34. *Works*, ed. C. H. Herford and P. and E. Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925-52), 8:222. Jonson read the poem to Drummond and told him the story of how "that piece of the Pucelle of the Court, was stollen out of his pocket by a Gentleman who dranke him drowsie & given Mistress Bulstrode, which brought him great displeasure" (11:87).

time "To the Court-Pucell" was published posthumously in *Underwood* in the explosive year of 1640, news and poetry were circulating freely in print and the delicious game of court wit surreptitiously exchanged had lost its original meaning and its original danger.

That the poems and the news that circulated in manuscript were privileged in every sense of the word is most clearly borne out by the avid mid-century commercial print market, a market that actively and explicitly marketed the idea of exclusiveness as a new commodity. In such miscellanies as *Witts Recreation*, first published in 1640 and then many times over in the next decades, *Parnassus Biceps* (1656), or Humphrey Moseley's very popular *Academy of Complements*, which came out in multiple and growing editions throughout the interregnum, unpublished poems from the forty years previous bubbled into print, and poems already in print were chopped and edited to fit a new, popular version of the gentleman's miscellany.<sup>35</sup> Instead of the labor economy of handwritten collections tailor-made to suit an individual or a cohesive group, the print miscellany market deliberately and gleefully exploited the notion that the contents of the cabinet could be put into mass circulation. John Cotsgrave, for example, the impresario of the 1655 *Wits interpreter, the English Parnassus. Or A sure Guide to those Admirable Accomplishments that compleat our English Gentry*, presents his volume of poems and conversation fragments as "a *Collection* of all that

for such a time could be ransackt from the private Papers of the *choicest Wits*."<sup>36</sup> These printed collections were mongrel combinations of conduct book and commonplace book, epigram book and personal miscellany. Symptoms of and contributions to a new climate of social unease and exploding opportunity, their politics do not fit a neat division of royalist and revolutionary, but they are united in the sense that they joined in a language game that everyone could play.

We recognize Humphrey Moseley as the leading purveyor of high literary culture in the seventeenth century. The publisher of (for example) Bacon, More, Howell, Milton, Waller, Crashaw, Shirley, Suckling, Beaumont and Fletcher, Cowley, Middleton, Davenant, Denham, Carew, Cartwright, Stanley, and Vaughan, Moseley brought out, often with perceptive editorial commentary, some of the best writers of his own generation, and he also bought up the lapsed copyrights to the works of the most successful writers of the generation preceding.<sup>37</sup> Unabashedly royalist in his sympathies, Moseley published leading royalist writers, prefacing these volumes with flagrantly provocative laments for the sad decline of learning and wit in an age when the rabble had driven out the king. His position as a guerilla fighter on the front line of high culture during the war and interregnum was widely recognized. Joseph Leigh, for example, in a commendatory verse to Cartwright's 1651 *Poems*, praises Moseley and his political agenda:

I that have undergone the common Fate  
 In making shift to lose my own Estate  
 Have felt that which did Thousands more befall  
 . . . . .  
 Am now just strong enough to make a Rime:  
 Not to write Wit, which I pretend not to,  
 But to admire those Noble Souls that do:  
 Whose high Atchievements thou hast brought to light,  
 Setting forth Wits who best know how to write.<sup>38</sup>

Leigh goes on at length to enumerate the "wits" Moseley has published, "wits" serving here and elsewhere as a code word not only for

35. *Witts Recreation* went through at least ten editions between 1640 and 1683.

There are extant fifteen editions of *The Academy of Complements* between 1639 and 1685, but there were apparently other editions which have not survived. Any discussion of a widening audience for poetry must take into account the level of literacy in mid-seventeenth-century England. David Cressy's *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) argues for a high level of illiteracy. Cressy bases his argument on people who could sign their names. His valuable study must be balanced, therefore, by the fact that instruction in reading and writing was separate and sequential, so that the ability to read preceded the ability to write. Many people acquired the skill of reading only.

The work of Jerome McGann and D. F. McKenzie has directed our attention to such texts, which, in traditional bibliographic procedures, would have been discounted as useless because of their distance from an authorial archetype. See McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); idem, "The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works," in *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 69-89; idem, *Social Values and Poetic Acts: The Historical Judgment of Literary Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); and McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, The Panizzi Lectures (London: The British Library, 1986). For a discussion of the work of McGann, McKenzie, and Robert Darnton see John Sutherland, "Publishing History: A Hole at the Centre of Literary Sociology," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (1988): 574-89.

36. *Wits interpreter*, sig. A4<sup>r</sup>.  
 37. Moseley's business is detailed and all his prefaces reprinted by John Curtis Reed, "Humphrey Moseley, Publisher," *Oxford Bibliographic Society, Proceedings and Papers*, 2 (1927-30): 57-142. See also Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 19-22.  
 38. Cited by Reed, "Humphrey Moseley," 65-66.

the talent but also for the royalist bent of Moseley's authors. Leigh closes with the injunction: "Give us all these, and all omitted here / For times approach wherein Wit will be dear." The most notable writer "omitted here" is John Milton, whose collected *Poems* were published by Moseley in 1645. The only surprising thing about this is that Milton would ever have published with Moseley.

Leigh's warning to Moseley, "Times approach wherein Wit will be dear," provides an insight into the social and political stakes of poetry in the twenty years from 1640 to 1660, a time that literary historians have seen largely as an empty space in the history of English poetry. Leigh clearly means in these closing lines to imply that English culture has been degraded to the point where any learning and finesse will be rare and valuable. Actually, however, Moseley played out Leigh's prediction in immediate and literal ways. His publishing practices can serve to complicate our rather straightened sense of the complex interplay of what we can only crudely call high and low culture in the English civil war.

There is no doubt that royalists regarded Moseley as the champion of noble and abused wit against the forces of vile ignobility, his edition of Beaumont and Fletcher a grand statement of high culture, scholarly, celebratory of a beleaguered class and cause, and expensive. But Moseley's motives were more complicated than party loyalty; there was money to be made in this changing world. It was not the political correctness of the two dramatists, but the authenticity and uniqueness of the Beaumont and Fletcher manuscripts that made Moseley so sure that the volume would do well. These were not after all the complete works of Beaumont and Fletcher, but only those "never before published."<sup>39</sup> Anybody could have those previously published pieces; why spend good money twice? But manuscript copies, which, he makes clear, cost Moseley so much effort and expense to acquire, these had never before

been for everyone, but only for those of "Birth & Quality." Only in an unusual social crisis could such privileged material be made so freely available. James Shirley in his opening address "To the Reader" remarks with considerable unease that "this optick, . . . the Presse" was "thought too pregnant before," but "shall be now look'd on as greatest benefactor to Englishmen."<sup>40</sup>

It is crucial to any sense of poetry as a social act, and to an assessment of the function of literature during a moment of social and political revolution, to look hard as well at Moseley's simultaneous publication of miscellanies and commonplace books for exactly the population *against* which the readership—and in most cases the authors—of his single-author editions defined themselves. In 1646, Moseley published Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple* with a preface by "the Author's Friend," viciously attacking "those under-headed poets, Retainers to seven shares and a halfe; Madrigall fellowes, whose onely businesse in verse, is to rime a poore six-penny soule a Subburb sinner into hell."<sup>41</sup> But that same year Moseley was publishing the seventh edition of the *Academy of Complements* for the leveling of sixpenny "Subburb sinners" and high royalist poets into one "adulterate" mass.

Volumes like *The Academy of Complements* did not come to Moseley's hand as completed manuscripts that he could simply buy and set in type. Moseley commissioned these miscellanies, seeking out compilers and renewing the commission year after year as the miscellanies were constantly expanded and contracted, so that a third or a tenth edition of *The Academy of Complements* could bring in repeat business from loyal *Academy* purchasers.

In fact, Moseley became the acknowledged master of the self-help miscellany form, feeding the needs of a seemingly inexhaustible middle-class market for the tools of gentrification. In 1639, he published the first edition of *The Academy of Complements*. *Wherein Ladyes, Gentlewomen, Schollers and Strangers may accomodate their Courtly Practice with most Curious Ceremonies, Complementall, Amourours, High expressions, and formes of speaking, or writing*. This *Academy* supplied, among its riches, elegant phrases for many occasions, sample dialogues of luridly high politeness, beginnings and endings of letters, and terms of address, but, in this first edition, as yet no poems. Physically, the book was made to look as much as possible like a manuscript

40. *Ibid.*, sig A1<sup>v</sup>.

41. Quoted in Lily Campbell, "The Christian Muse," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 8 (1935): 8.

39. *Comedies and Tragedies . . . Never printed before And now published by the Authours original Copies* (London: Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647). Moseley also points out that if all the plays had been published the book would have been too large for women to handle easily. One unpublished play, *The Wild-goose Chase*, was lost, making the volume, Moseley scrupulously admits, incomplete. His preface puts his readership on the alert for the manuscript: "a Person of quality borrowed it from the Actours many yeares since, and (by the negligence of a Servant) it was never return'd; therefore now, I put us this *si quis*, that whosoever hereafter meetes with it, shall be thankfully satisfied if he send it home" (79). Moseley's description of the manuscript's disappearance into the upper classes and the lucrative reward offered for its betrayal into print typify the publishing procedures of the interregnum. The manuscript was found, and Moseley printed it.

commonplace book, with hand-ruled edges and divisions, a secret book openly bought.

The pseudonymous compiler of *The Academy of Complements*, Philomusus, has a strikingly strong persona, and his elaborately elegant voice makes clear at the beginning of each *Academy* the class and the gender of the people to whom he is appealing.<sup>42</sup> Even if it were not the custom to begin books with a dedication, Philomusus proclaims:

yet this Booke would desire to insinuate into the affection of Ladies & Gentlewomen, since it can arrive at no greater perfection of happiness then your favour, which is most earnestly desired. Let other works covet their Patrons and Maecenasses, to derive from them a golden sprinkling of their bounty, whilst this shall express an ingenuity beyond such vulgar intents, and in a brave and free manner sacrifice it selfe to your acceptance and service, desiring onely that you would grace it with the influence of your propitious smiles which carry in them a secret power, not only to cherish & advance the object whereon they reflect, but also to endear it into others opinions, & make it precious in their estimations.<sup>43</sup>

In the very act of elegantly avoiding the question of purchase price, Philomusus thus mimics the class markers of dedicatory and commendatory poems, the patrons and Maecenases who make the issue of selling books seem the least of a volume's concern. It would be possible to read the master of the *Academy's* florid style as a mocking parodist of the lesson he will teach, mockery perhaps tinged with contempt for the readers who will buy this book and be flattered by its ornate populist appeal. But it is closer to the truth to see mockery in every direction here. In the heart of Moseley's publishing industry there is operating a commodification factory, making useful and profitable for everyone the enervated court codes that had once been a class marker, spinning

42. Philomusus has not been certainly identified, although the *Academy* has sometimes been attributed to John Gough. Philomusus himself hints grandly that although "thou seest not the name of the Author, if thou knowest the gravity of his person, thou mightest well have him excused" ("The Authors Preface to the Reader," *The Academy of Complements* [London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1650], sig. A2<sup>v</sup>). I cite throughout the 1650 edition, noting those pieces which had been published in earlier volumes and retained. The *Academy* is a syncretic volume, like the manuscript form it imitates, each layer complicating both the past accumulation and the present.

43. "To the Ladies and Gentlewomen of England," sig. A1<sup>r</sup>-A2<sup>r</sup> (first published in 1639).

language into a honeyed confection that finally leaves us all mystified. In his silky way, Philomusus insinuates the use of such a volume:

it shall be alwaies ready to furnish you with the best expressions of choyce complementall language; for though by nature and custome you can deliver your mindes in a smooth, and gracefull manner; yet from hence, without study, or premeditation, you may command necessary Ceremonies. Besides, your Ladyships Chambermaids and waiting Gentlewomen are to be pitied, who having by their good carriage compassed Suitors, are often constrained to blush, in ignorance, for want of a Complement, wherewith to answer them. Let therefore this one instance, instead of more which might be inserted, persuade your intelligible, generous dispositions, to receive this book now exactly perfected as your devoted servant.<sup>44</sup>

The advertising strategy is indeed worthy of a master: seeming to address upper-class ladies, he offers them one compelling example of his book's usefulness: their poor servants may lose a chance at a gentleman suitor for want of a suitable phrase. The serving woman, to whom, of course, the preface is actually aimed, is pleased to be reading a book pointedly addressed to her social superiors and can feel even surer that it was money well spent to acquire this "servant" of her own who will supply her with the coded language of upward mobility.

That Moseley was including women in his targeted audience is remarkable, especially when we remember how loathing for women was, with class identity, the bond that held the Texas manuscript miscellany together. Indeed, Moseley's competitors in the print miscellany market of the war and interregnum created their projects out of a wedding of class solidarity and misogyny. A constant staple in the many editions of *Witts Recreation*, for example, conveys succinctly the attitude of such volumes toward women and toward miscellany collection itself:

Women are books and men the readers be,  
In whom oft times they great Errata's see;  
Here sometimes wee a blot, there we espy  
A leafe misplac'd, at least a line awry;

44. *Ibid.*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup> (first published in 1639).

If they are books, I wish that my wife were  
An Almanack to change her every year.<sup>45</sup>

Trivial, expendable, useful but interchangeable—the old equation of women and books takes on an added shrug of contempt as books themselves become cheaper, more responsive to the market, and, like almanacs, annual appearances that are soon outdated. The *Academy*, almost a protonovel in its fictional dialogues and its substantial narrative frame, is, in its turn to a female and urban working class audience, clearly a startling variation on the private, aristocratic manuscript form it imitates.

As Moseley released edition after edition of the *Academy*, it became heavy with poems by, for example, Jonson, Donne, Herrick, and King, all gathered without attribution, and most decidedly Cavalier or court-oriented. The 1650 *Academy* goes so far as to print an old “Song on Prince Charles” celebrating his birth in 1630. A poem such as this would have been common coin in the 1630s; in 1650, however, it looks brave but also beside the point. Its function here is certainly not political, but exemplary—a natal compliment suitable for an elegant recipient. Out in the freest print market England had yet experienced, these collections reflect, pander to, and help to shape not the aristocratic audience among whom poetry in manuscript had circulated, nor the established gentry and aristocratic audience to which publications such as Moseley’s single-author volumes were aimed. Instead, the *Academy* is aimed exactly at a class of readers whose number and influence were forcefully brought home by the collapse of royal authority and of the political and poetical discourse of hiddenness it had sustained.

Yoked to the nostalgia for the court in these volumes is a fascination with the voices from beneath. The *Academy*, like the manuscript volumes gathered by accretion which it imitates, arranges poems in associative groupings. “The Court of Venus. Songs of Love and Mirth,” a fifty-page section of poetry in the 1650 volume, opens with a series of poems either by Jonson or Jonsonian in theme or structure.<sup>46</sup> But there

45. *Witts Recreation. Selected from the finest Fancies of Moderne Muses* (London: Humphrey Blunden, 1640), epigram 116. This epigram appeared in all subsequent editions (in 1645 the collection’s title was changed to *Recreation for Ingenious Headpieces*) and was pirated by other miscellany collections. For decades the miscellany has been attributed to Sir John Mennes and James Smith. Tim Raylor has shown this attribution to be a simple misunderstanding; see *Notes and Queries*, n.s., 32 (1985): 2–3.

46. “The Court of Venus” includes, for example, “The Song to Prince Charles,” “A song on the Faery Queen” (widely circulated in manuscript and appearing here in

follows a sequence of poems that is distinctly different—and indeed set up in opposition to the Cavalier sequence. “A song in praise of Ale” invokes the long winter of retreat and discontent that is so characteristic of Cavalier verse. But instead of using alcohol to retreat into the pleasures of a closed group of like-minded friends, this drink opens up a discussion of politics and change (exactly, in fact, what the authorities had feared would happen in beer-swilling taverns):<sup>47</sup>

Ale that the absent battel fights,  
And scorns the march of Sweedish drum,  
Disputes of Princes, Laws and rights,  
What’s done and past, tells mortal wights,  
And what’s to come.

Ale that the Plowmans heart upkeepes.  
And equals it to Tyrants thrones,  
That wipes the eye that fain would weep,  
And lulls in sweet and dainty sleep,  
The o’re-wearied bones.

Ale stands here in the same relationship to wine that the chambermaid reader stands to her employing lady, the *Academy*’s purported reader:

Grandchilde of Ceres, barlyes daughter,  
Wines emulous neighbor if but stale,  
Ennobling all the Nymphs of the water,  
And filling each mans mouth with laughter,  
Oh give me Ale.<sup>48</sup>

Emulous, stale, ennobling, amusing, democratic, political in its very escapism—the “Song to Ale” describes the inspiration and the project of its framing collection, a collection that sets out to emulate a class both despised and envied, to take its stale phrases and pass the crusts out to

print for the first time), Herrick’s “Gather ye rosebuds,” and two close imitations of Jonson and Herrick, “Oh what a show / From the top to the toe” and “It is not feature nor a face / That doth my free election grace.” The classic description of Cavalier themes is Earl Miner’s *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). See also Raymond Anselment, *Loyalist Resolve: Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988).

47. See Theodore B. Leinwand, “Spongy Plebs, Mighty Lords, and the Dynamics of the Alehouse,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19 (1989): 159–84.

48. *Academy*, 241.

everyone, to dispense ennobling grace notes to all who want them, and in the process to demonstrate how ridiculous such superficial grace notes could be.

In a section of the *Academy* devoted to "Fancies, Devices, and flourishing Expressions on Love-Tokens" is an epigram spoken by a "Country-Clown." Perhaps the Country Clown was meant to throw into relief the saccharine elegance of the surrounding little poems. Instead it is a powerfully present, authentic voice that makes silly the simpering pretensions of its companion compliments:

I send thee here a Ribbon, a whole yard,  
I had sent thee Garters, but the world's so hard;  
If Ribbon will not please thee, then let she  
Hang in her old Garters, shall have no new from me.<sup>49</sup>

Moseley's *Academy* is, like all miscellanies, inherently unstable. It takes poems and breaks them into phrases; it renders previously published poems anonymous. Moseley and his Philomusus saw the war and the interregnum as a time of unprecedented possibility, when language became a group possession and literally therefore a political weapon in the intellectual and social explosion of the mid-seventeenth century. In his epistle to the tenth edition in 1650 Philomusus remarks with an amused frankness that he has pulled off rather a coup:

I might very well suppose that thou shouldest not onely be amazed but transported, (if not lost with wonder) so unexpectedly in these angry times to meet with such Novellae from the Academy, or the Court; but recollect thy minde, and then smile upon my book, which hath endeavored the more to enlighten thy Genius, and shew my selfe to thee in consideration of our late losses, which these sullen dislaureating times have occasioned, by bereaving us of so many excellent Poets.<sup>50</sup>

Philomusus's complicated double impulse of liberating generosity and sneering contempt toward his readers is clear in his concluding gesture of release and command: "Receive it with washed hands, and without a prejudicate opinion."

This same prefatory letter to the *Academy*'s tenth edition includes an amused retrospective of the flurry the *Academy* had caused. Among

Philomusus's critics is "my public enemy, but my private friend," who would be ashamed ever to be seen with the *Academy*, but "in his study" he reads it "more privately than his Prayer-book and perhaps with more devotion, though he will not let the world know so much, for feare his phrases should grow common: it is his Diary." At the other extreme, there is the gentleman whose private study has been ransacked to produce this "common" phrase book. Having "rob[bed] him of his Commonplace Book . . . to write seriously, tis a plain case, this Gallant is utterly undone, and sequestered of all," the "set forms" in which he had been able to woo a mistress or praise his betters all released into common possession.<sup>51</sup> Philomusus strips away the privacy of both studies—the embarrassed religious man revealed with his new catechism, the gentleman's manuscript miscellany stolen.

Now a year after the king's execution, the edge of class tension that had defined the collections from the beginning becomes an explicit manifesto:

So be it known to thee, intelligent Reader, those of this silken Tribe must now of necessity be silent. . . . For my part, I took this task in hand, not only to benefit the Lay people, that never met with these collections; but is my revenge ever lookt a squint upon these ingrosers of Wit, that would cringe, talke, and sing for the whole company a weeke together . . . whereas now there may be good use made of what they cast away upon every slight occasion; howsoever, let them now look quickly to it, for they are to begin the world again, and in these times Wit is a rare commodity.<sup>52</sup>

There is here none of the florid silliness of the address to the "Ladies and Gentlewomen of England" (although each of the succeeding introductory epistles is retained, edition after edition, forming an archaeology of "this quaint edifice"). Instead, there is a threatening frankness about the class that could have reduced language to such decorative interchangeability and a warning to those who purchase that they have acquired a dangerous drug. The tenth *Academy* begins with a warning: "Open the leaves, therefore, so as to cast a serious eye upon them, and then deliberate of what thou redest in thy mind, for I tell thee thou mayest else soon surfeit with delight. Be advised. Farewell."<sup>53</sup>

49. *Ibid.*, 246.

50. "The Authors Epistle to this new Edition," sig. A<sub>3</sub><sup>r</sup>.

51. *Ibid.*, sig A<sub>4</sub><sup>v</sup>.

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*

In 1645 wit was for sale in St. Paul's Churchyard, or at least the material evidence of wit, stolen papers from a gentleman's cabinet. This commerce throws into question the nature of talent, of class position, of gender roles, and of poetry. If we remember the tight class anger and fear that knits the Texas manuscript together, its hatred of the "Fidlers and fooles" placed above the true "gentry," its hatred of Cecil for reducing princely counsel to the "common [level of] vulgar eares," we can see more clearly how shocking an exposure these private papers were. It was in this environment that Milton chose to publish his private papers, his *Poems*, under license, with Humphrey Moseley.

The traces of manuscript life are everywhere in the 1645 *Poems*: the title page proclaims in large, set-off italics "*Printed by his true Copies*"; in his prefatory "Stationer to the Reader" Humphrey Moseley asserts that Milton's prowess was "too well known to conceal his Papers" from Moseley's publishing project; the supporting material for *Comus* is retained, including "the *Copy of a Letter Writt'n By Sir Henry Wootton, To the Author*" and Henry Lawes's claim that he arranged the masque's publication because "the often Copying of it hath tir'd my Pen to give my severall friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the publicke view."<sup>54</sup>

In the context of Milton's polemical writings, *Poems* is disturbingly anomalous, with its addresses to and entertainments for major royalist and prelatical figures.<sup>55</sup> If we look at the *Poems* behind the scrim of their pointedly proclaimed manuscript life, however, their move into print in 1645 looks exactly like the busy popularizing of a world falling apart that Moseley himself, along with many others, was exploiting in the rush to print poetic miscellanies. We see in Milton's *Poems* glimpses of the Lives of the Rich and Famous—Cambridge, Wotton, the king's musician, the powerful Egerton connections, religious controversy,

54. References to the *Poems* of 1645 are to John Milton, *Complete Poetical Works Reproduced in Photographic Facsimile*, ed. Harris Francis Fletcher, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943), 1:149–259.

55. On this anomaly see Thomas N. Corns, "Ideology in the *Poemata* (1645)," *Milton Studies* 19 (1984): 195–203; idem, "Milton's Quest for Respectability," *Modern Language Review* 77 (1982): 769–79; Michael Wilding's opposing argument in "Milton's *Areopagitica*: Liberty for the Sects," and Corns's further elaboration, "Some rousing motions: The Plurality of Miltonic Ideology," in Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, eds., *Literature and the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 110–26. See also Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*, 252–73; Ian Jack, "A Choice of Orders: The Arrangement of 'The Political Works,'" in Jerome McGann, ed., *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 127–43 and 224–27; and Louis Martz, *Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 3–59.

sexual scandal. Even the splendidly beautiful "On the morning of CHRIST'S Nativity. Compos'd 1629," the first poem in the collection, could easily have appeared a proleptic, Virgilian gesture of court praise for the birth of the Prince of Wales. Publication is the final step in the evolution the volume traces from a Cambridge student making inside jokes and trying to impress his teachers, to a lover, to a court poet sniffing around the patronage trough. By publication, Milton appears to be severing ties with the circuit of manuscript coterie writing, although actually, in spite of the presentational stance, his poems do not appear to have had an active manuscript life. Milton placed himself in Moseley's hands, thereby joining a company that included, for example, Edmund Waller, whose *Poems* were selling very well for Moseley after Waller's spectacular Royalist plot and escape. In the stationer's preface to the 1645 *Poems* Moseley makes the connection explicit, hoping that since Waller's poems had done so well, Milton's poems, which to Moseley seemed similar, would receive the same "encouragement" from his clients. After all, Milton was himself scandalous since the divorce tracts and his open defiance of the Stationers' Company the year before. Clearly, Milton had, by joining with Moseley, implicated himself in the "*Sophisms and Elenchs of marchandize*."<sup>56</sup>

Arranged as a miscellany with carefully dated poems, topical poems, poems like "Lycidas" made topical in retrospect, the Hobson poems (which originated as part of a coterie manuscript game), with scandals and downfalls hanging in the interstices between the dated poems, Milton's *Poems* may be considered the publication and demystification of an inside game, no longer a royalist code, but a middle-class commodity.<sup>57</sup> The licensing mark remains disturbing, however. We could call it Milton's deliberate irony, a standard move of literary criticism in the face of authorial inconsistency. More disturbing, we could wonder whether Milton believed that poetry was different from contro-

56. *Areopagitica*, 570.

57. See William R. Parker, "Milton's Hobson Poems," *Modern Language Review* 31 (1936): 395–402; G. Blakemore Evans, "Milton and the Hobson Poems," *Modern Language Quarterly* 4 (1943): 281; Willa McClung Evans, "Hobson Appears in Comic Song," *Philological Quarterly* 26 (1947): 321–27; G. B. Evans, "Some More Hobson Verses," *Modern Language Quarterly* 9 (1948): 10; and idem, "A Correction to Some More Hobson Verses," *Modern Language Quarterly* 9 (1948): 184. At the beginning of his career, Moseley was in partnership with Nicholas Fussell, who during this time entered in the Stationers' Register "A Portrature of master Hobson the Carryer of Cambridge and verses underwritten" (17 February 1630/1). It was apparently never published.

versial writings in that it should be subject to state licensing because it was more dangerous; or, most disturbing of all, because poetry was less dangerous, simply the "language of the times." Finally, though, it had not been danger that obsessed Milton in *Areopagitica* so much as money. The tract is an attempt to counter the Stationers' Company and its lobbying to have its monopoly over print reinstated (for that is what *Areopagitica* is actually about): "Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopoliz'd and traded in by tickets and statutes, and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the Land, to mark and licence it like our broad cloath, and our wooll packs."<sup>58</sup> In the strange dialectic of denial and affirmation that makes *Areopagitica* such a riven text, money is both denied as an ugly contaminant and seen with frank clarity as the agent of power and change: "More then if som enemy at sea should stop up all our hav'ns and ports, and creeks, [this plot of licensing] hinders and retards the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth."<sup>59</sup> The Stationers won in 1644; *Areopagitica* was ignored. In 1645 Milton entered the marketplace on their terms.

Like Moseley, Milton was intensely aware of the radical shift his poems performed in moving from the private realm of the educated few to a public realm controlled by demand. Milton never made his commonplace book public, but he did make public with determined frankness other very private documents from the contents of his cabinet. Milton's publication of *Poems* in 1645 and again in 1673, and the publication of his *Prologues* in 1674, have commonly been attributed to the sense of poetic destiny that made all his writings, even the earliest and most negligible, seem worth preserving for posterity. I would argue, rather, that public exposure of the private cabinet was, for Milton, a political act, one still further complicated by money and the marketplace—forces that politically, socially, and intellectually defined the public. In 1642 Milton had shamed himself into publication by remembering all his privileged years beholding the countenance of Truth while supported by and aloof from "the sweat of other men."<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, in *The Reason of Church Government* he admits to being willing to publish only polemical writings; he still "covenant[s] with any knowing reader, that for some few yeers yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being

58. *Areopagitica*, 535–36.

59. *Ibid.*, 548.

60. *The Reason of Church Government*, in *Complete Prose Works* 1:804.

a work not to be rays'd from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at wast from the pen of some vulgar Amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite."<sup>61</sup> He joins his contemptuous voice with the London Petition of 1640, which condemned "the swarming of lascivious, idle, and unprofitable Books and Pamphlets, Play-bookes, and Ballads, as namely, *Ovids* fits of love, the Parliament of Women came out at the dissolving of the last Parliament."<sup>62</sup> But by 1644 Milton is writing with an almost erotic caress of "the airs and madrigalls, that whisper softnes in chambers" which exist in the same category with manuscripts, which must be free.<sup>63</sup> Between the publication of *Areopagitica* in November 1644 and *Poems* late in 1645 Milton published his vitriolic pamphlet *Colasterion*. There, with calculated cruelty, he derides the social pretensions of serving men and chambermaids who would dare to assume they could imitate John Milton or match wits with him.<sup>64</sup> *Colasterion* demonstrates what it is about print publication that worries Milton: in the "carelesse and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times," everyone can listen, and the hidden codes of class-identified languages are being revealed to Philomusus's intelligent and imitative readers.<sup>65</sup> Yet in 1645 he released his beautiful, courtly poems into the marketplace. The political act that the *Poems* of 1645 performs is the choice, at last, to let go of class privacy and turn to openness, and so to petition the parliament of women and other vulgar sorts. He was to lay claim, rather wistfully, to a "fit audience . . . though few," but he is manifestly the most public of poets.

He had once "thought it better to preferre a blamelesse silence before the sacred office of speaking bought." But he consented to be a worker in the laborious marketplace "of noises and hoars disputes," to offer speaking *sold*.<sup>66</sup> Packaged to sell, his *Poems* went forth into St. Paul's Churchyard with Waller and Howell and Crashaw—but also with Moseley's *Academy* for chambermaids.

61. *Ibid.*, 820.

62. *The First and Large Petition of the City of London*, in *Complete Prose Works* 1:979.

63. *Areopagitica*, 524.

64. See Corns's discussion of this rarely read pamphlet ("Some rousing motions"). He takes Milton's amused disdain to be simply a polemic strategy.

65. *Reason of Church Government*, 807.

66. *Ibid.*, 823, 821.