



## The Social Author

*Manuscript Culture,  
Writers, and Readers*

I absolutely prohibite and discharge any of my Posterity from lending [this manuscript] or dispersing them abroad. They are to remain in the House of Pennicuik. SIR JOHN CLERK, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*

The prime lesson one learns from studying these manuscripts in depth is that in [the early seventeenth century], from which so much remains unprinted, one never dares make too confident an assertion about poets, poems or poetry: a new manuscript may turn up tomorrow which radically alters the picture.

MARY HOBBS, "Early Seventeenth-Century Verse Miscellanies and Their Value for Textual Editors."

In her studies of manuscript miscellanies from the first part of the seventeenth century, Mary Hobbs declares that "the proper use of manuscript miscellanies is, in short, the way to a fuller, more accurate, study of early seventeenth-century poetry."<sup>1</sup> One of the first issues to consider when discussing later-seventeenth-century manuscript authorship in comparison with print publication practices in early modern England, Scotland, and Wales is the simple pragmatic matter of getting into print, and whether or not conditions of authorship had universally changed from that suggested by Hobbs' remarks. Was print a more desirable technology for writers, in particular literary authors, living in the latter part of the seventeenth century? At its most elemental level, assuming that the author desired to be in print (which, as we shall see in this essay, cannot automatically be assumed to be the case, even in the early eighteenth century),<sup>2</sup> the whole issue of the re-

relationship between writers and print technology in early modern Britain comes down to considering the following questions. Suppose an author, living in a small village in the 1650s or even as late as the 1690s, wrote a poem: What were his or her options to secure readers? What are the terms and models we have available to describe the experience of authorship in this period? How have the terms that have been used to narrate the process of authorship and progress of print shaped our perspectives on past experiences and our expectations about early modern literary culture?

Before tackling the pragmatics of print, we must gain a clearer sense of what manuscript authorship entailed, of what the expectations of both its authors and its readers were. At this stage, the latter part of the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth century still lack a clear description of the nature of manuscript literary activity, much less a theory of nonprint literary culture, of the sort that critics working with late medieval and Renaissance texts have been constructing.<sup>3</sup> In this study, I am not dealing with the phenomenon described by Harold Love as "scribal publication," whereby professional scribes reproduced the appearance of print texts, but instead I am concerned with that group of writers and readers who used script as an alternative or in addition to purchased printed texts.

Love's study, important as it is for understanding the texture of Restoration literary life, demonstrates one of the problems of discussing the culture of authorship during this period. Even though the subject of Love's study is manuscript texts, the focus of the analysis is largely in the context of print and its norms. For example, we see the privileging of print in his choice to analyze the social function of script texts as vehicles "by which ideologically charged texts could be distributed through the governing class, or various interest-groups within that class, without their coming to the knowledge of the governed" (177). In the same way, in Love's view, women writers chose scribal texts because "the stigma of print bore particularly hard on women writers" (i.e., they would have chosen print if they dared) (54). Love also believes that women's "literary writings circulated in this way were quantitatively of minor significance beside the texts by women writers dealing with the practical conduct of the household, the preparation of food and clothing and the treatment of illness. Personal collections on these subjects were regarded with great pride by their compilers" (58).

Unlike Love, I believe that we have little or no sense of the actual scale of women's literary participation in manuscript culture apart from a few cel-

ebred examples. Until quite recently little effort has been made to catalogue and reconstruct patterns in women's manuscript texts to provide an inclusive overview of literary activities rather than isolated, individual authors.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, given our current state of knowledge, we have little or no sense of the pride (or lack thereof) felt by women authors who used manuscript circulation for literary materials in comparison to domestic ones.

This perception of the author's motive for choosing manuscript text over print—that it was for political reasons—is also the view of manuscript authorship in the Restoration espoused by Woudhuysen. Looking at the practice over the course of the seventeenth century, Woudhuysen, along with Marotti, sees the trajectory of the practice as follows: "By about 1640 scribal publication seems to have begun to decline. . . . [It] faltered in the 1640s and the 1650s, but gained new life with the Restoration, playing a leading role in the dissemination of satirical writings" (391). The point made by Love, and Woudhuysen, about writers using script to circumvent censorship is perfectly correct, but the implication behind the terms of analysis is that we seek to understand the manuscript text by analyzing it for what it is *not*, that is, it is "not print" because of the structures of power. The investigative starting point appears to be "why didn't this author use print?" rather than "what is this author attempting to do?"

As in earlier studies involving manuscripts from this period, such as David Vieth's *Attribution in Restoration Verse*, which attempts to bring editorial order to the chaotic world of Restoration coterie verse exchanges, the critical focus also tends to be on the *problems* manuscripts and coterie groups create for print editors; part 3 of Love's study is concerned with editing scribally published texts. Who wrote which lines? Which of the multiple manuscript copies is "authentic" and which of the multiple manuscript versions will best serve as the copy text for a print edition? All of these legitimate editorial questions divert our attention, however, from the manuscript culture that creates such confusion in its refusal to conform to the linear chronology of the modern print text: a rough draft leads to a final draft or copy text, which leads to print. Instead of seeking to describe the activities of the author and his or her manuscripts before they are forever fixed in print, current studies of manuscripts from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries have instead focused on their relationship to print culture and how best to convert them to print volumes.

As part of this focus on the printed text, studies such as those by Vieth

and Love, and even studies of specific individuals involved in manuscript circulation, are primarily interested in the links between a scribal text and a printed one. We see, for example, in Brice Harris's early study of Robert Julian—a professional scribe who collected and distributed manuscript lampoons and satires by Dorset, Buckingham, Rochester, and their friends—one of the first studies of the way in which manuscripts were exchanged at a central London location, in this case Will's Coffee House. For Harris, however, the point of the investigation is Julian's commercialization of these texts, a literary career that "forms an important, though lurid, chapter in the early annals of Grub Street, in the distribution of scatological literature, and in the bizarre attempts of the low and unliterary to make a living by their pens."<sup>5</sup> The manuscript texts themselves disappear except as they provide commercial materials for the professional scribe: "Julian's so furnish'd by these scribbling Sparks / That he pays off old Scores and keeps two Clarkes" (304). Although Harris's study provides a fascinating glimpse into the economics of manuscript transcription and the legal penalties for libel, we easily lose sight of the authors who provided the original material, the circumstances of its composition, and the circulation of the different versions in addition to Julian's commercial copies. We do not see any aspects of the world of the manuscript author who did not care to see his or her works in print or derive an income from them or, indeed, of the manuscript author's readers.

What has been left out of existing literary histories of the Restoration and early eighteenth century is a sense of authorship and readers that existed independently from the conventions and the restrictions of print and commercial texts. While we are quite content to accept the fact that the quality of John Donne's secular verse or Sir Philip Sidney's was not compromised because they were "amateur" authors writing for a coterie readership, when we study the latter part of the seventeenth century, we seem to impose Samuel Johnson's later-eighteenth-century pronouncement that only blockheads write for anything except money. There exists an imaginative gap in our thinking about writers during this transition period that led traditional histories into awkward and anachronistic configurations in the attempt to see them as prototype "modern" authors.

We see this configuration, for example, in traditional literary histories that tend to be organized around Dryden and Pope, two of the most successful commercial poets of their generations, or around the evolution of particular commercial literary genres. As we shall see in the next essay, the

treatment of Pope in particular has focused on his commercial writings and his relationship with the paid hack writers of Grub Street. The standard literary histories extol the rise of the novel or commercial fiction during this period; likewise, the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries have assumed crucial importance in women's literary histories because of the ability of women to earn money through writing at this time. What has gotten lost in the focus on the professional author and the increasing popularity of commercial genres is any sense of a thriving amateur, social literary culture, such as we have seen explored for the early part of the seventeenth century by Mary Hobbs, Katherine Duncan-Jones, Arthur F. Marotti, and H. R. Woudhuysen. Although we have excellent studies of individual writers' manuscripts and their relationship to print production during this period, we have no sense of the patterns or practices of authorship as part of a group. We certainly have little sense of authorship for those writers residing outside London or the university cities, male or female. Unlike studies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, traditional literary histories of the end of the seventeenth and the start of the eighteenth centuries have not yet developed a concept of an author's "public" that does not involve "publication" because of our fascination with the new possibilities for the commercial author and commodity-consuming reader.



To fill in some of the missing gaps in our perception of early modern manuscript authorship, we must begin with some very basic, practical questions. In simple terms of production, obviously, script texts could be produced at home, or even during travel, as long as the author was able to write or dictate to someone else. Several types of manuscript texts were produced, which have traditionally been classified as follows: single sheets, often showing folds where they were included as part of a letter; "common place books," which Vieth described as showing signs of being compiled over a period of time, with changes of ink, handwriting, and presentation, with heterogeneous contents; and "manuscript miscellanies," which he characterizes as "typically . . . a homogeneous collections [*sic*] of poems with perhaps some related prose pieces, likely to reflect careful selection and arrangement" and to have been copied over a short period of time.<sup>6</sup>

We can see all of these types of literary production in action in the mid-seventeenth-century collection called the Tixall Papers, which comprise the

papers of the Aston family and include verses exchanged in letters, commonplace books, and several manuscript volumes of verse, compiled and arranged as volumes by members of the family. This collection, which was first edited by a family descendant in 1813, offers a partial presentation of long-past literary lives of men and women for whom reading, writing, and poetry were a passion and lifelong occupation.

The Aston and Thimelby families, along with their friends and relatives, lived relatively near one another in Lincolnshire and Staffordshire, linked by marriage and by their Catholic faith. As their nineteenth-century editor, Arthur Clifford, characterized the group,

they were individuals of five distinct families, inhabiting a line of country in the very center of England, and none at a very great distance from the others. The Priory at St. Thomas [Constance Aston Fowler's home], is three miles from Tixall [the family home], which is five from Ballamore; and from that to Canwell is fifteen, which places are all in Staffordshire. From Canwell to Irnham [Gertrude Aston and Edward Thimelby's home] in Lincolnshire is about five and thirty miles.<sup>7</sup>

In the preface to *Tixall Poetry*, Clifford describes how, on a search for documents relating to Sir Ralph Sadler, the housekeeper at Tixall gave him a "great trunk" filled with papers, so many that he declares it took him ten days to sort through them. "It was a bumper, brimful, and overflowing," he recalls; "the enormous mass appeared to consist of papers of every sort, and size: the surface of which was most respectably defended, by a deep and venerable layer of literary dust" (viii).

After separating out what he considered to be the "literary" manuscripts, Clifford divided the materials into four groups, which forms the organization for his edition. The first section consists of the contents of a small quarto volume, with no cover but with "Her. Aston, 1658," on the outer leaf; the second section is from another small quarto, with no cover, whose first poem is "Mrs. Thimelby on the Death of her only child"; the third section of Clifford's volume is from a folio covered in parchment with "William Turner his booke 1662" inscribed on the outside and on the inside cover, "Catherin Gages booke," which Clifford decided were poems collected by Catherine Gage, Lady Aston; and the fourth section was composed of "a large quantity of loose scraps of paper, sheets, half-sheets, backs of letters, and the like, scribbled over with verses" (x).

The first three texts, the volumes Clifford lists as being by Herbert Aston, Gertrude Thimelby, and Catherine Gage, have not been recovered, but two other manuscript volumes apparently not described here by him have been found, one by Herbert Aston and the other by Constance Aston Fowler.<sup>8</sup> Between the two existing manuscript volumes and Clifford's nineteenth-century edition of the missing ones and the family correspondence, we have an extended example of the dynamics of manuscript authors and readers, in addition to information about how manuscript texts were produced, disseminated, and preserved in provincial areas.

The fourth section of *Tixall Poetry* was assembled from single-sheet texts, poems found on what Clifford describes as "backs of letters, or other scraps of paper" (xiii). In addition to poems by members of the Aston family—Sir Walter Aston, the head of the family; his third son, Herbert Aston, and his wife, Katherine Thimelby; his daughter Gertrude Aston Thimelby and her husband, Edward Thimelby; and his youngest child, Constance Aston Fowler—these "scraps" and letters record poems by Sir Richard Fanshawe, Sidney Godolphin, Edmund Waller, and John Dryden, which Clifford believed he was publishing for the first time (xiii). The "backs" of the letters not only served as scratch paper, as Clifford suggests, but clearly also were a means of transmission and of preservation of these single pieces. Clearly, too, the network of families not only exchanged their own verses in letters but also transmitted single copies of poems they read by others in manuscript form.

From such scraps of paper, several manuscript volumes were created. While her brother Herbert was serving with his father and with Sir Richard Fanshawe on a diplomatic mission in Spain, Constance Aston Fowler repeatedly wrote to him to send her some verses—"I want some good ones to put in my booke."<sup>9</sup> Constance Aston Fowler constructed her own private anthology, in which she mingled the poems of her family with ones by Ben Jonson, Henry King, and John Donne. It is important to note of this text that Fowler was not simply collecting edifying sayings or transcriptions from printed sources; rather, she was compiling her "book" through selecting "good" verses.<sup>10</sup> It is also of interest that in addition to her father's and her brother's poetic contributions, her sister Gertrude was a contributor, too, as was their friend Lady Dorothy Shirley; thus both men and women actively participated in this literary compilation.

At a later date, Herbert Aston's wife created another volume of her hus-

band's verse. Concerning the construction of this volume, Herbert Aston wrote to his sister, "My Mrs. havinge nothings else to doe this winter, hath made a slight collection of all my workes. Wherefore you must make an inquiry into all your papers, and if you find any of mine that beginn not as in this note, you must send them her by the first opportunity" (*Tixall Poetry*, xxii). He then includes a list of first lines of the poems his wife has already assembled. This example raises several interesting general points concerning manuscript authorship and readership. It is clear that manuscript verse existed in several formats: the initial one, obviously, transmitted through letter and forming part of a collection of loose papers or "scraps." The recipient of such script texts then frequently contributed a verse reply to the originating text, also on a loose sheet. It is the collection and arrangement of these loose materials that form the sequences in the later manuscript volume.

It is also interesting to note that Herbert Aston is not certain who has which of his texts. He requests his sister to go through her collected papers to see if she can find any poems with first lines not on the list he sends her, that is, poems of which he, the author, has no copies. Neither of these manuscript volumes was compiled with the intent to secure a printer; both were literary compilations, however, involving the talents and editorial skills of several individuals, using a range of manuscript texts in various forms compiled into a "book."

As we continue looking at examples from later on in the century, from the 1650s and 1660s, we find similar patterns for compilation volumes involving the labors either of family members or of nearby friends and community. Around 1651, Patrick Cary, the brother of the Cavalier hero Lucius Cary, created a small manuscript volume, which was eventually published as *Poems from a manuscript written in the Time of Oliver Cromwell* (1771) and then edited and reduced by Sir Walter Scott (who also encouraged Arthur Clifford's efforts) in 1819. His modern editor, Sister Veronica Delany, describes the creation of this manuscript volume of thirty poems as a compilation of social verses and religious meditations written while the young Patrick Cary was staying in a small Hampshire village, Wickham, with his sister, Lady Victoria Uvedale. The manuscript, in Cary's hand in a small notebook with a black leather cover, is divided into two sections; Delany notes that the pages containing songs show evidence of candle grease and wine stains, suggesting that the volume enjoyed an extended, if messy, literary life with generations of readers.



The first section is entitled "Triviall Ballades" and dated "1651 August 20th," with the declaration that the pieces are "writt here in obedience to Mrs Tomkins commands"; the second section, composed of religious and meditative verse, has on its opening page an inscription, "I will sing unto the LORD (Ps xiii.6)," with a coat of arms, a Tudor rose, and "Warneford, 1651."<sup>11</sup> This section also features an interesting set of carefully drawn emblems. The result is a volume demonstrating not only the range of the young author's literary tastes but also that of his readership:

A varied flow of verse now came from the young man's pen. Political satires pelted Cromwell with high-spirited abuse; pastoral poems reflected the pleasures of the exile returned; love poetry paid debonair tribute to the ladies of the Uvedale circle, an appreciative audience, while witty occasional verse captured the atmosphere of Wickham and the friendly maisons of the neighborhood. (lii)

Cary's sister Victoria had been a maid of honor at the court of Henrietta Maria and had appeared in Walter Montagu's *The Shepherds Paradise* and Davenant's masques *The Temple of Love* and *Salamacida Spolia* in the mid- and late 1630s; in 1640, she married Sir William Uvedale, the treasurer of the Chamber (l-li). In the autumn of 1650, she welcomed her younger brother to Wickham after his "brief inglorious effort" at becoming a monk at the Benedictine cloister of St. Gregory's Priory, Douai (xlv-xlvii). Back in England, he clearly enjoyed a social community of like-minded Royalist readers, whom he portrayed along with their servants and children in his occasional verse.<sup>12</sup> The manuscript text he created not only was read by family members and friends residing nearby during the author's lifetime but eventually found its way into print a century after his death.

Nor was brother Patrick the only productive manuscript poet living at Wickham and inspired by Lady Victoria Uvedale. Some twenty years after Patrick Cary had written his collection there, Wickham was again the subject for an anonymous young man, who prepared a small collection of miscellaneous verse including "On the departure of the Lady Victoria Uvedall from Wickham 1672/3."<sup>13</sup> In this piece, the poet displays an extensive range of pathetic fallacies, where the natural surroundings decline with the departure of Lady Victoria Uvedale: "The sympathising Grove begins to fade / And all its beauties languish in a shade" (14). This poem is followed by "On the Grove at Wickham," which draws equally enthusiastic praise: "That

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

fame impos'd on *Asia*, 'tis clear / In placing *Paradise* and *Eden* there, / The sacred relicks of that hallowed ground / Are no where but in Wickham to be found" (15).

Like the Tixall volumes prepared by Herbert Aston's wife, Katherine, this volume is also a compilation of a single author's works. Although it is attractively copied, with red-ruled margins and calligraphic flourishes at the ends of some of the poems, it appears to have been a "working" text rather than a final presentation copy. Some pieces show corrections while others show minor revisions.<sup>14</sup> Finally, some of the poems are completely marked out by large Xs drawn over them; the poem on the author's depressing twentieth birthday is completely crossed over, while in other poems large sections are crossed through or heavily revised, as in his poem "The Chamber": "A Poem, To his timorous Countrymen complaining of his goeing Forth, forst him to keepe his Chamber after his recovery from the small pox" (20). The other poem completely crossed through concerns the poet's erotic dream of embracing a sleeping "Lorinda" (a female who had spurned him in other verses), whose bosom is temptingly exposed; this poem, however, opens with the disconcerting title "A dreame after Lorinda's death Poisoned by Thirsistes" and has the speaker "lying senseless on my bed / With wreathes of poppy coyl'd about my head" (60).

The author remains unidentified, although he offers some biographical clues in his verse, such as in one poem, "Upon his Birthday," in which he morosely announces that "I've been twice ten years extant, yet ther's none / Of them which I dare call, or vouch to be mine own" (33). The opening poem is "A Poem upon Blindness upon Bartholomew Price Esq Justice of the Peace," which, in addition to the two poems specifically addressing the Uvedal family, suggests that in addition to them (and the disdainful Lorinda) his verses had a local readership, and perhaps, like Cary, the volume was compiled at the request of his readers. As with Cary's decision to provide attractive emblems to illustrate his religious verse, this author also attempts to produce an attractive volume, with page numbers, marginal glosses, and calligraphic ornaments. On the whole, it leads one to the impression that Patrick Cary was certainly not alone in providing reading material for the families in the small community of Wickham or in his concern for creating his own "book," a manuscript compilation presented in an attractive volume. Neither gentleman gives any indication that he would like his volume to be published, and indeed, with the crossed-out sections

of the volume, either the author or a later reader took pains to edit the two most personal pieces.

In another compilation volume, whose contents appear to have been composed between 1670 and 1690, we can see traces of this process whereby the provincial manuscript writer participated in a network of verse exchange, collected his own works, and finally compiled them into a volume in order to revise and edit it. John Chatwin matriculated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1682, apparently when he was only fifteen.<sup>15</sup> Chatwin, who also appears on the college books as "Chattins," was a contemporary of Matthew Prior's, who matriculated at St. John's College, Cambridge, the same year. Chatwin took a B.A. degree in 1685 and simply vanished from record. During his years at Cambridge, he produced quite a sizeable manuscript text of 280 pages of verse—complete with the title page "POEMS" and "A TABLE" of titles at the end of the volume; Chatwin left the last 80 pages blank, providing an opportunity for him to continue adding pieces.<sup>16</sup> From these references to particular events and people, it would appear that the pieces were composed when the poet was between sixteen and eighteen years of age: as Peter Giles, the only other commentator on his text, observed in 1897, the young poet had "no mean command of the rhyming couplet"; Giles added, "They are certainly as good as the effusions of Prior which can be traced to his undergraduate days, and Prior was considerably older when he entered College" (12, 22).

In this volume, believed by Giles to be a compilation volume arranged by the author rather than a chronological accumulation, there are poems referring to his time as a student at Emmanuel College, Cambridge ("To His Tutor, who punish'd Him for going to the Tavern"), some pieces that are strictly occasional, and some that commemorate national political and literary events. In addition to several poems on drinking and gout (the latter of which seems contrived for so young a poet), Chatwin preserved his poem "Made in the Tunns on a chamber-pot," referring to the "Three Tunns" inn on Castle Hill in Cambridge, which has the memorable opening "Hail serviceable Utensil!" (116). Other poems are concerned with more public social events and are addressed to friends who lived in Leicestershire, such as his godfather, William Cole, of Lutterworth, a justice of the peace; Chatwin wrote an elegy for Cole's first wife, Barbara, who died in the early 1680s, and an epithalamium for his second marriage to "Emm," the daughter of "Major Warner."<sup>17</sup> The Leicestershire origins of the volume are reinforced

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

by other poems specifically concerned with a group of friends in the area: Chatwin laments the death of John Burroughs, rector of Stoneby, and includes a poem apparently composed in a friend's garden at the nearby village of Ashby Magna, "A Cobby of Verses made under the Yew Tree in the Honourable Mr. Finch's Orchard in Ashby Magna."<sup>18</sup>

In addition to his poems addressing family and local Leicestershire occasions, Chatwin was engaged by national events. The volume includes a poem on the anniversary of the death of Charles I, an elegy on the death of Charles II, and an epithalamium for the marriage of Princess Ann to Prince George of Denmark (1683). The last was Chatwin's only printed poem, appearing in the Cambridge University collection celebrating the marriage, *Hymenaus Cantabrigiensis*, published by John Hayes (1683), whose other contributors included William Fleetwood (future bishop of Ely), Charles Montagu (Trinity; afterwards earl of Halifax), and Matthew Prior. The poem on the death of Charles II is immediately followed in the manuscript volume by "Congratulations" to James II; he also wrote on the death of Buckingham, the duke of Ormond.

Chatwin's volume demonstrates his precocious skill in creating suitable verses not only for national occasions but also for events of note in the literary world. His poem "To the Pious Memory of Mrs. Ann Killigrew" demonstrates his enthusiasm both for her verse (which has him declaring, "Till she appear'd all Poetry lay dead / O'recharg'd and stifled in Its Infant-bed") and for Dryden's famous ode on the same occasion (149-50). He also writes on the death of Nell Gwynn, which suggests that even a young man raised in Leicester and in a strongly Puritan college in Cambridge could follow the royal scandals and London theater life. It is also worth noting that several of his poems are written in response to reading the poetry of others. In addition to the commemorative verse on Anne Killigrew's writings, Chatwin addresses one poem "To Astrea on her Poems" (50), which, given the reference to her praise of "Daphnis" (Creech), is clearly Aphra Behn.

It is not clear where or in what format Chatwin read Killigrew or Behn, but it is obvious from the contents of his volume that he was reading the manuscripts of other provincial poets. One such trace of Chatwin's reading found in his own manuscript verse is "On Mr. Wanley's most ingenious Poem the Witch of Endor" (115). Born in 1634 in Leicester, Nathaniel Wanley was the rector of Trinity Church in Coventry, having received his B.A. degree from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1653 and his M.A. degree in

1657. In 1658, he was the minister at "Beeby" in Leicester; he married Ellen Bunton and had five children, one of whom was Humphrey Wanley, the future librarian for Harley. The poem praised by Chatwin, Wanley's "The Witch of Endor," exists in two manuscripts but was not printed until L. C. Martin "recovered" Wanley's verse in 1925.<sup>19</sup>

As with the anonymous young man in Hampshire, Chatwin (or a later reader, perhaps Rawlinson) also went through and x-ed through several poems, although, in the same manner as the previous volume, none of the strikeouts actually hinders the poem from being read. Like the strikeouts marking the verse of the young man from Wickham, these poems tended to be his more erotic fantasies, such as "Lying on the Bed with Her," which concludes, "For the soft Raptures wee so well did prove, / I'de scorn, nay hate the petty joyes above" (48), and "The Fatigue," which opens, "When in my Armes charming Sylvia lay" (108). Chatwin published only one of the poems in this volume, although several are of very good style and polish. As this volume documents, he did circulate his manuscript verse, using it to respond to what he read and to comment on the significant public events of his day, both locally and nationally. Chatwin did save his texts, revise them, and finally, too, create a volume with a title page, whose contents he also continued to revise and edit, and quite clearly he and his readers considered his activity to be that of an "author" even though publication was never a feature.

A more elusive example can be found in the manuscript volume of John Hooper, a small vellum-bound paper volume whose contents appear to have been composed in the 1660s and perhaps early 1670s.<sup>20</sup> There are two possible candidates among Oxford students at this time for the poet, the most likely being John Hooper, the son of "Hieron" of Hatherly, Devon; he was admitted to Exeter College as a "Pauper Puer," matriculating 29 November 1667 at age nineteen.<sup>21</sup> It has a title page with "Verses" on it, and the author identifies himself at the end of a poem "uppon ye deathes of my Father and Brother who dyed in the yeare 1665." The title page also states the location to be "Devon," and in "To my Mother / Mis Mary Hooper" there is a notation in the side margin "A New Yeares Gift" (4r, 3r). On the verso side of this last poem is "Abraham Ivory" in a different hand. In addition to the poems about or to family members, the little volume contains meditations on Luke and Hosea and poems celebrating significant events in his friends' lives: "Epithilamium In celebration of the happie Nuptual of

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

the much honored Master Hine and [?] endeared consort." Hooper also responds to the poetry of others, as seen in "A poem of Mr: Gosnalls who made it uppon the death of Miss Sarah Hawes." This volume appears to fall within the realm of Vieth's manuscript miscellanies, giving the appearance of having been a compilation of the author's works made during a comparatively short period of time; the titles of the poems suggest that Hooper had been a practicing poet in Devon, as well as a reader of the manuscript verse of others, for some years before the volume was assembled.

Another example of a family literary collection from the opposite end of the social scale is found in the texts of Dudley, 4th Lord North (1602–77). Like Patrick Cary's verses, some of Lord North's writings were printed after his death, but only after they had enjoyed several decades of literary life in script form. His verse and prose works, of which at least three compilation copies were made, were created over 1666 and 1667 by North's wife, Ann, with his knowledge and approval. North's twentieth-century editor, Dale Randall, dates one version, the Perkins manuscripts, as being made in the 1670s, just prior to the author's death in 1677; a shorter version had been sent to his son John early in 1667—on the volume's arrival, John wrote to thank his mother and to express the hope that his father would do likewise with his prose writings.<sup>22</sup> The last dated poem in the Perkins manuscripts is 1663, the last prose piece 1666. As Randall notes, it is a substantial volume of work with 148 pages of writing (all on the rectos of the leaves); the other volume, which was sent to son John, is calculated by Randall to consist of 118 recto and verso leaves of text.

Like Herbert Aston's wife, Lady North was responsible for turning her husband's scattered literary productions into long compilation volumes. Her son Roger said of her, "She not only wrote over whatever her lord had for the entertainment of his solitude composed into books, but kept strict accounts of all the household affairs and dealings whatsoever" (quoted in Randall, 165). In the opening declaration, North thanks his wife and offers a context for the pieces that follow in the volume. "Since freely of your selfe you have taken a resolution, to cobby out these imperfect essays of myne in the way of poetry, and soe to give them a fayrer character, than otherwise they can deserve," North begins,

it now becomes fitt that I should give you some accompt of theyr condition, least those few besydes your selfe (for they were never designed to bee made

publike) whoe shall come to have a view of them should to the reading bring an expectation too much to theyr disadvantage. . . . The truth is that a rapsody, or masse of things, soe different in nature, and composed at tymes of lyfe, and coniunctures soe abhorrent one from the other, can very hardly appeare good, and the rather because theyre Author, as hee was noe wayes by nature designed to Appollo his lawrell, soe hee never affected the honor to attayne it; and where there is noe ambition, there can hardly arise perfection. (128)

In describing his literary career, North notes that some of the early poems really should not survive to see the light of day without correction by some "lesse partiall penn then myne, if not to bee quite obliterated." Other more serious poems, written later in his life, were "born" upon some "sadd occasion, or else upon a burden of perplexed thoughts, the very being delivered (a terme well known to you Ladyes) could not but bring with it, much ease and satisfaction to mee the Parent." Still other poems, "light and slight enough for recreation," explore imaginary "obiects of Love," while some of them are "not without a reall obiect, nor were it iniurious to any, if you should assume it to your selfe, to bee the person intended."

In describing the collection of his lifelong works, North continues the metaphor of childbirth by extending the application to the subsequent construction of volumes by his wife.

But for the collection it selfe, such as it is, you may take it to you as your own, if you please, and peradventure with lesse censure (at least from some) then hath fallen upon those Ladyes, whoe out of an abundant affection, have called home theyre husbands spurious chyldren; for though this may bee taxed for levity in some parts, yett I hope, it will not bee found guilty of impurity, eyther in the conception, or exspression, and the chyld is as motherless, as Minerva her selfe. You may safely there, do it the honor to own it, and not unfittly as I thinke, for in a true sence all may been termed yours, that properly belongs to him, whoe is and delights to bee

Entirely and constantly yours. (128-29)

The nature of the compilation—placing his work in a fairer "character," the nurturing of his "spurious" poetic offspring in the production of a "domestic" volume—is wittily enriched by the metaphor. There is no indication that Lady North contributed her own poems to the collection or exercised editorial prerogative in the ordering or altering of his verse.

Although North states that the poems were not “designed” to be made public, the three volumes became public objects. Randall speculates that one of the volumes, the Perkins manuscripts, served as the base text for the posthumous publication of North’s essay *Light in the Way to Paradise* (1682), the verse sections of the volume being sealed closed by strips of paper and sealing wax and the prose sections being soiled and marked by black printer’s ink (103–4). North’s oldest son, Charles, to whom two of the volumes are addressed (the Rougham Hall and Perkins manuscripts), published some of his father’s prose pieces (as North had done for his father); Charles’ brother Roger recorded in a manuscript preface to his *Life* that their father wrote

divers slight Essays, and some verses, wch he tituled Light in the way to Paradise. These 2 last, his eldest son caused to be published with his name to it, viz. Dudley the 2d (misprinted for the 2d Dudley) Lord North. These were at first designed to remain with his family in MSS, and not to be published, but there is no harm done.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to speculate, first, how he could know the intention of the author that the multiple manuscripts remain in the family, especially given the family history of posthumous publications, and, second, what “harm” he envisioned might arise from family literature being made public property.

These issues—of whether a text was “designed” to be “Publicke” and what “harm” could be anticipated by a script author appearing in print—are only a few of the challenges facing the literary historian attempting to understand literary culture in the later seventeenth century. When confronted by assertions such as North’s concerning his lack of intention to make his text “publicke,” we have traditionally felt that (1) such statements are classic examples of private or closet writing, “aristocratic,” dilettante literature, insignificant in terms of literary history because the texts formed no school, or (2) by preserving his manuscripts and by permitting several compilations of them, North had already imagined a more general readership, even if it is not, as in Habermas’s model of a public sphere, where access is guaranteed to all citizens.

If we accept the first interpretation, we must then dismiss the literary activities and contributions of most of the writers of the early and mid-seventeenth century. We would have to reconfigure our perceptions of canonical authors including Cowley, Waller, Suckling, and Lovelace, all of whom



participated in this type of manuscript literary culture before printing their texts. We would likewise have to rethink where we place in our notion of authorship writers such as Anne Bradstreet and Katherine Philips, whose texts appeared without their authorization, or Thomas Traherne and Anne Killigrew, whose texts were published after their death.

Although the 1620s and 1630s may be described by several critics as the "golden age of MS verse compilation," the practice obviously by no means vanished in the 1650s and well up through the early 1700s, even for authors not engaged in exchanging satires and lampoons.<sup>24</sup> As Marotti observes, the Restoration significantly changed the sociopolitical context of manuscript transmission and compilation (69), and, indeed, parts of the Cary manuscript volume compiled in the 1650s with its anti-Cromwell satires might have had a more difficult time being printed at that time; however, if its author had sought a printer, we do find anti-Cromwell pieces making their way from manuscript volumes into print during that same period, so politics may not have been the only factor influencing the mode of transmission.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, there are a host of practical advantages for the provincial writer of using script rather than print to circulate his or her writings, whether the topic was controversial or banal.

Obviously, this type of manuscript text, whether a volume of verse or a single poem, could be created by a single individual in his or her home. For an example of a single author's use of scribal literary practices, we find that in 1699 Marie Burghope, the vicar's daughter living in Ashridge, Buckinghamshire, sent to the Lady Mary Egerton a manuscript fair copy of "The Vision: Or A Poeticall View of the Ashridge in the County of Bucks., The Ancient Seat of the Right Honorable John Earl of Bridgewater. Together with the History & Characters of the most considerable Members of that Noble Family."<sup>26</sup> In her opening epistle to Lady Mary (in which she spiritedly defends women's need to be educated in the same fashion as men), she gives some information about her own practice of authorship. "I love to recreate my selfe at leasure Hours with [the Muses'] Company. Tis sure as lawfull & laudable as our ordinary Chatt, telling of news & Backbiteing . . . putting our Selves into a Posture of Talkeing Nonsense in the Mode & other the admir'd Qualifications of our Sex." Burghope describes the twenty-five-page-long country house poem as being the product of "my Spare Hours . . . [on] a noble subject, & deserv[ing] the most judicious Pen." The subject matter filled her mind with inspiring thoughts, an-

nounced the author: "While I wrote, I swam with the tide of Fancy and the Waters under me were Boyant, I felt an unusuall Power to carry on the Description and to bring it to that Perfection you see it now before you."

She concludes her dedication to Lady Mary by saying that she is sure Lady Mary will excuse and appreciate this excursion into authorship, which "I plead it has been always my darling Talent," because of Lady Mary's qualifications as a judicious reader, "knowing that you, as well as all other, much admire and delight in Poesie, (tho their Genius Inclines them not to make it their Business)." For Marie Burghope, living in her father's house in a provincial town, her "business" was poetry, although her mode of authorship does not correspond to our current assumptions about either women's literary lives or the supposedly natural dominance of new technology over the old "business" of literary production.

This attractive text remains in its original fair copy manuscript form, now in the Huntington Library. Its author never experienced—nor, it seems, desired to experiment with—the new technology of print and in no way designed her text as a *publication*, scribal or otherwise. Burghope's text was, however, written and reproduced to be read by a learned and critical audience outside her own family circle. The physical characteristics of the piece and also its contents are a manifestation not only of the existence of a provincial literary community that delighted in poetry but also of the way in which a woman's "leisure hours" could be devoted to composing verse and to a dedicated reading of it.

One obvious conclusion that can be drawn from even these limited examples of scribal authorship and the manuscript text in its social context is that our definitions of "public" and "private" sit awkwardly with the particulars of the readership of manuscript texts. We traditionally have used "public" in the sense of meaning "published" and "private" in the sense of "personal." Here, we have texts whose readership was controlled through physical access to them rather than censorship imposed from an external agency and which was limited by the author's design, no matter (as we shall see in the discussion of literary piracy) how imperfect the control mechanisms actually were. On the other hand, they were not "private" in the sense that their readership was restricted only to God and the author, or even to the author's immediate family. What we tend to see is a "private" mode that, by its very nature, is permeated by "public" moments of readership, when the text is circulated and copied. The text, although not univer-

sally available to any purchasing reader, nevertheless engages in a "social" function.

An example of the intertwined nature of the private/public/social spheres can be seen in a manuscript volume compiled by Elizabeth Brackley and Jane Cavendish, the daughters of William Cavendish, the duke of Newcastle, by his first wife.<sup>27</sup> I have previously used that text to interrogate the then popular critical terms to describe women's writings as *closet texts*, which were viewed as "entirely private forms of writing not destined for publication and dealing with what limited experience might come within the circumference of a lady's life."<sup>28</sup> What the contents of this so-called closet manuscript volume demonstrated, however, was that the text was clearly a "social" one: a collaborative production, designed to please a reasonably extensive audience. Instead of being a defiant or subversive act, these pieces serve as a formal effort to confirm threatened social values and relationships.

By collapsing "public" into "publication," we seriously misconstrue the literary practices of such women and overlook the importance of the social function of literature for women as well as men writing in the so-called Cavalier tradition. In Earl Miner's analysis of male verse written in the Civil War years, in particular the poetry of friendship, poetry "sustains and continues the little society of the good few, and it demonstrates as well powers of mind and feeling"; this is also the model of social verse found in this "closet" volume.<sup>29</sup> Although Miner does not in his discussion consider either the practice of circulating verse in manuscript or the participation of women other than as subjects of such verse, his analysis of the choice of subject and genre underlines the central importance of being an author and of being a "good" reader during the mid-seventeenth century. This type of social function goes far beyond what Love calls "bonding" through the formation of a literary clique through exclusion (*Scribal Publication*, 180) and looks instead at the extent to which intellectual and literary life, as well as politics, was created, invigorated, and sustained through the writing and reading of script texts.

Kathryn R. King has more recently used this concept of the "social text" to analyze Jane Barker's *Poetical Recreations* (1688) and to reconstruct the young woman's circle of readers.<sup>30</sup> King finds that "far from being alienated, eccentric, tormented, or—in another version of the romantic narrative—a lonely voice from the periphery, Barker was engaged in literary exchange

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

with a number of fellow poets, including at least three Cambridge students and (probably) a London bookseller" before the poems were published without her consent in 1687 (563). King concludes that for Barker, a "youngish unmarried woman," writing poetry and exchanging it "was a social as well as an intellectual act, an opportunity to exercise the mind, talents, and personality in acts of textual sociability" (563). The cases of Burghope, Cavendish, Brackley, and Barker, from quite different social backgrounds and under quite different circumstances of composition, show a similar pattern: the manuscript text operates as a medium of social exchange, often between the sexes, neither private nor public in the conventional sense of the terms, and a site at which women could and did comment on public issues concerning social and political matters.

It is important to note here (in contrast to Love's suggestion) that manuscript culture was not the province of women, in opposition to print culture as being the domain of men. In the examples of the university student John Chatwin and the almost monk Patrick Cary, and from Lord North to Mr. Hooper of Devon, it becomes clear that this type of authorship was equally attractive to both sexes and to a range of social classes. The dynamic network of writer and reader that in my view characterizes manuscript literary culture and social authorship is created by the process of being an author rather than by the production of a single text, in Eisenstein's terms, one capable of being fixed, attributed, and catalogued. Likewise, a reader in a manuscript culture, with a fluid text constantly subject to change, is responsible for participating in literary production as well as consumption; it is interesting to note here, too, how often the role of the reader of manuscript text becomes conflated with the roles of editing, correcting, or copying the text and extending its circulation of readers.

This is a type of authorship quite far removed from the characterization of it given by Kernan as aristocratic and authoritarian. Indeed, script authorship permitted a middle-class woman living in a small village, such as Marie Burghope, to have a cultivated audience, allowed Jane Barker to have literary connections with Cambridge and London, and created a means through which the teenage student John Chatwin was in literary exchange with the older, established author Nathaniel Wanley. One reason we associate manuscript author practices with "aristocrats" is because there was, pragmatically, a higher chance of these texts surviving for several generations and thus of being recovered. Manuscript texts have a much better

chance of being preserved and passed down if their authors had established family homes or residences.<sup>31</sup>

Scottish memoirist Sir John Clerk, in preparing his manuscript, recognized this significance of the family library as the appropriate repository of scribal texts. On the cover of the manuscript volume chronicling his life from 1676 to 1755 he placed the blunt admonition, "I absolutely prohibite and discharge any of my Posterity from lending [these memoirs] or dispersing them abroad. They are to remain in the House of Pennicuik"—a condition for reading them he felt so strongly about that he also placed it on the title page of the manuscript volume.<sup>32</sup> This does not mean that only those with family libraries and family seats practiced manuscript authorship, but the examples of Burghope and Clerk do suggest that one must look in different places, and in different ways, to recover manuscript activities among middle- and lower-middle-class writers.

For example, posthumous editions can also reveal the prior existence of the material's manuscript circulation. The Quaker Mary Mollineux circulated her verses in manuscript for several years before her death.<sup>33</sup> She wrote poetry that dealt with a mixture of religious topics and contemporary poetic themes; several poems recall Katherine Philips' characteristic handling of the bonds of human friendship and the pain of parting. Mollineux also explores the notion of the retreat from a hostile, unjust society into the company of believers:

Ah, let thy tender Care preserve and keep  
Us, with an Eye that is not part to sleep,  
But always guard thy little Heritage,  
From all their Adversaries, in this Age.  
("The Retreat, a Meditation," 46)

Mary Mollineux met her husband, Henry Mollineux, when they were both imprisoned at Lancaster Castle; the volume opens with the testimony of the events of her life and sufferings as a Quaker by her cousin Frances Owen and her friend Tryall Ryder, which places her use of the Neoplatonic themes seen in Philips in a different social context.

In the prefatory materials of the posthumous edition, we get a glimpse of the nature of her practice of authorship. In Ryder's account, Mollineux is clearly a conscious, practicing author, but one not interested in taking advantage of the new print technology, even though the Quaker women as a

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

group were prolific publishers.<sup>34</sup> Ryder, whose acquaintance with Mollineux preceded her marriage in 1685, recalls:

Several Years ago, when she was a single Woman, upon the Perusal of some Copies of her Verses, which she gave me, I felt such Unity of Spirit with them, that I said, I thought they might be of Service, if made Publick in Print; but she was not then free, that her Name should be exposed; she not seeking Praise amongst Men, but to communicate the exercise of peculiar Gifts amongst her near Friends and Acquaintance. (sig. A7v)

Ryder's use of the phrase "near Friends and Acquaintance" to encompass Mollineux's readership is interesting, drawing attention to the way in which one's "acquaintance," although distinct from those related by blood or marriage and from "near Friends," nevertheless is not considered "public." In Mollineux's particular situation, she would have had perhaps even a better access to having her works printed than Marie Burghope, given the activity of the Quaker printers and also the large number of women involved in Quaker printing. However, like Burghope, Mollineux chose a form of authorship and audience in which she controlled the production and circulation of the text and, like the earlier example of the aristocratic Cavendish sisters, used her writings to cohere social bonds among like-minded readers.

In conclusion, these examples suggest several adjustments we must make in our understanding of literary culture at large in the latter part of the seventeenth century. First, we must reconsider our assumptions about who participated in manuscript writing and reading: manuscript circulation was not confined to "aristocrats" and courtiers, although obviously practiced by them, and it was not identified as being primarily female activity, either, even at the end of the seventeenth century after the increased availability of cheap print and publishers. As we have seen in the examples of the Aston, Cary, and North families, male authors participated with enthusiasm in the creation of social texts for their circles of family and friends. Nor, indeed, was manuscript literary circulation restricted to poetry or short pieces. In this essay, we saw the posthumous publication of Dudley North's essays by his son, and in the following essay, we will find similar patterns of authorship in the example of Ralph Thoresby, for whom, for most of his life, manuscript transmission was the preferred mode of transmittal for a variety of scientific, antiquarian, and political treatises.

One of the problems with our existing literary histories is that our cur-

rent modes of analyzing authorship do not deal with this type of author who had no desire to publish or to “go public,” except to form theories to explain the motivation behind what *we* see as authorial self-destruction. In our existing formulas for talking about the author, such an individual who wrote but did not intend to publish must have either been prevented from considering publishing by various social powers (whether national politics or domestic), as in J. W. Sanders’ thesis concerning male Tudor courtier poets, or was so unskilled that no printer could be found to meet the author’s unfulfilled need.

Even more telling, despite the excellent studies of the practice in the earlier seventeenth century and the recognition of the continued existence of the practice in the latter part of it, we still evaluate whole generations of early modern authors on the basis of their publication records. Students are introduced to the early seventeenth century with a description of literary activity and authorship that is clearly based on print as the marker of evaluation. One standard textbook depicts the literary climate for seventeenth-century women as bleak: “not even fine ladies were always sure of their spelling and punctuation,” and except for letters and diaries, women writers’ “contributions to belles-lettres were not many.”<sup>35</sup> Here, examples such as Margaret Cavendish, who because of her “great wealth and social privilege” was “less inhibited from writing and publishing,” are immediately contrasted by “Lady Mary Wroth, [who,] after one rash act of publication, was silenced for the rest of her life.” The final observation before a student finally encounters the poems is that “though women struggled (and with only partial success) to find voices of their own, the age to come would speak more assuredly because of them” (1:1079).

In this 1993 example of literary history’s treatment of gender and authorship, several important points should be noted. First, there is no indication in the account that fine gentlemen also had problems with spelling and punctuation according to modern standards because there was no standardized scheme of either spelling or punctuation. There is no indication that men who were contemporaries of the women cited also did not publish all of their texts. Finally, having a “voice” is equated with being in print, with the obvious implication that “work” is equated with print texts and anything else, manuscript copy in particular, is only “silence.” The sole criterion of the success of these generations of women writers is the amount they *published*, with no mention of the amount they actually *wrote*. Inten-

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

tionally or not, we thus train our students to classify literary activity with print as the superior mode and to employ false gender dichotomies when interpreting early modern texts.

As suggested by the examples of the Aston, Cary, and North families, along with the studies of individuals such as Mollineux and Burghope, manuscript authorship was still a flourishing feature of literary life in the later seventeenth century well into the early eighteenth. In these examples, we can find suggestions for further investigation; although the odds of a manuscript text's or volume's survival increased if it became part of a significant family's library, prefaces and printer's notes found in posthumous editions also indicate texts with more humble social origins. Suffice it to say, at this preliminary stage of the process of description, that literary life in late-seventeenth-century Britain included for both readers and writers the presence of scribal copies in competition with printed texts, texts their authors had no desire to have printed and for which we as critics have yet to create an accurate vocabulary, much less a complete description. What the literary history of the so-called Restoration and early Augustan periods still needs is an investigation of the ways in which earlier modes of literary transmission still shaped authors' practices and readers' perceptions and a more flexible definition of the nature of "public," "private," and "social" modes of authorship.