

THE WORK OF PRINT

Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660–1760

LISA MARUCA

Edited by Richard T. Gray

This series investigates literary artifacts in their cultural and historical environments. Through comparative investigations and case studies across a wide array of national literatures, it highlights the interdisciplinary character of literary studies and explores how literary production extends into, influences, and refracts multiple domains of intellectual and cultural life.

W. G. Sebald: A Critical Companion edited by J. J. Long
and Anne Whitehead

Speaking Havoc: Social Suffering and South Asian Narratives
by Ramu Nagappan

The Linguistics of Lying and Other Essays by Harald Weinrich,
translated and introduced by Jane K. Brown and Marshall Brown

Missing the Breast: Gender, Fantasy, and the Body in the German Enlightenment
by Simon Richter

The Work of Print: Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660–1760
by Lisa Maruca



A ROBERT B. HEILMAN BOOK

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

Seattle and London



INTRODUCTION: PRINTING PRODUCTION VALUES

The Tears of the Press were but the Livery of its Guilt; nor is the Paper more stained, than Authors, or Readers.

—THE TEARS OF THE PRESS, 1681

We seem to live in an age when retailers of every kind of ware aspire to be the original manufacturer and particularly in literature.

—MONTHLY REVIEW, 1766

We write as cyborgs, inventing the language machines that reinvent us.

—JEFFREY MASTEN, PETER STALLYBRASS, AND NANCY J. VICKERS, 1997

In 1713 a printer from the outskirts of the British kingdom, one James Watson of Edinburgh, found it necessary to clear the name of what he saw as a debased profession. Using his proximity to the communication technology of his day, he printed, distributed, and sold *The History of the Art of Printing*, his own translation of the anonymous French “The History of the Invention and Progress of the Mysterious Art of Printing, &c.” He begins this work with a seemingly innocuous “Publisher’s Preface to the Printers in Scotland.” Under this misleading neutral, if not almost invisible title, however, is a manifesto that clarifies Watson’s intent in reviving this obscure French chronology. Claiming that a spirit of public good underlies “all the Arts and Sciences that are instructive or beneficial to Man,” Watson emphasizes that “the Invention, and vast Improvement, of the no less honourable, than useful and admirable Art of PRINTING, . . . deserves a very eminent Place.”¹ He points to the

“Character of the Men” who were the early printers and “the Marks of Honour paid them” in order to show how “those illustrious Persons were honour’d, and ranked among the best of their fellow Citizens, in those Times” (*History*, 4). No history is written without a specific agenda in the present, and Watson is explicit about his. He wishes to counter a prevailing trend: “Whereas now, we [printers] are scarcely clais’d or esteem’d above the lower Forms of Mechanicks” (*History*, 4).

Watson was not alone in using his resources to promote—and, as we will see, critique—the status of his craft. Instead, his work is representative of a proliferation of text about texts—or, more to the point, print about print—written and produced from within the trade itself. It is also symptomatic of the eighteenth-century discourse of “print anxiety,” detailed in the many tracts of the period in which publishing practices are discussed, derided, or decried. My interest, though, is in a specific subset of these texts. In the chapters that follow, I discuss others like Watson: the workers who cast letters, composed pages, and ran the presses; the retailers who sold tracts and books in stalls or shops; and the variety of figures, well known or anonymous, who wrote texts traded in the literary marketplace. Despite their long marginalization within literary history, even—perhaps most surprisingly—within many recent examples of “print culture” studies, many of them were, in fact, remarkably prolific writers. This project explores what I call their “text work.” I use this term to encapsulate, without delineating as separate spheres, the labor of their bodies, the concrete product of this work (whether a printed page or the press itself); the texts they wrote; and their representations of all this work—the work as a linguistic construction. This understanding configures writing not as purely the product of a disembodied intellect, but as always concrete and physical, mediated by technology, subject to market forces, and shaped by audience demand. It also posits “print” not just as an output—black marks on white paper—or as merely the physical process of the operation of the press. True, “type,” as Harry Carter once famously opined, “is something you can pick up and hold in your hand,”² but even those making print (or printing) in this period saw it as more: print is a site in which the book as a tangible, commercial product, subject to the mores of trade and to regulation and control, meets the meaningful text contained within its pages. Thus, I use “text work” to suggest an opposition both to the abstraction and

denial of labor usually known as a “literary work” and to descriptions of the print trade assumed by historians to provide unmediated access to real-life routines. Such an approach demands that the rhetoric of print be placed alongside the other discursive practices of the period. This allows print workers to emerge as constructing their text work—but always within a broader cultural terrain that, reciprocally, shapes their notions of their labor. By analyzing the representations they circulated, we gain a much broader and more inclusive understanding of material textuality in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century London.

MATERIAL(IZED) PRINT

N. Katherine Hayles points to the signifying function of books as physical artifacts, a process that operates to make meaning even when (and precisely at the moment that) one is least aware of it. Indeed, she argues that even for “transparent” interfaces, “this very immediacy is in itself an act of meaning-making that positions readers in a specific material relationship with the imaginative world evoked by the text.”³ My interest lies in the ways in which transparency functions to position readers to understand certain elements in a text and ignore others. Literary transparency has been a seductive mechanism, working to render the material nature of print—the business, technologies, and labor of writing—as virtually invisible for well over two hundred years. The study of literature until recently has not been the study of *books*, after all, but the study of *writing*, that is, a special sort of discourse, distinguished as such, and set apart from other forms of discourse by, as Michel Foucault noted, its affiliation with and origins in an author.⁴ This looming figure obscures other contributors. Books become merely convenient carrying cases for the author’s will and “work”—the abstract literariness—we read. In this regime of reading, the physical medium (page, typography, binding) is screened out through unconscious processes taught to us when we are introduced to the alphabet. Richard Lanham describes the procedure:

[A]n alphabet that could support a high literate culture had to be simple enough to be learned easily in childhood. Thoroughly internalized at that time, it would become a transparent window into conceptual thought. The shape of the letters, the written

surface, was not to be read aesthetically; that would only interfere with purely literate transparency. "Reading" would not, except in its learning stages, be a self-conscious, rule-governed, re-creative act but an intuitive skill, a literate compact exercised on the way to thought.⁵

While Lanham does point to a time before reading, when individual letters might be thought of as having a separate, opaque reality, he universalizes the process through which, one assumes, all members of all literate cultures forget their childish ways and get down to the task of really reading—and thinking. I suggest, however, that we interrogate this transparency, for that which is the most "internalized" or "intuitive" is that which is also the most ideological. Rather than take the invisibility of print for granted, then, one might usefully examine the text work of print for alternative configurations.

Before engaging in historical exegesis, however, it may be helpful to highlight the contingent nature of print's transparency by comparing it to the development of a more opaque medium; "commonsense" understandings of print-based communication are destabilized when contrasted to alternative technological practices of textual production and accreditation. The term *production values*, used in the title of this chapter, usually registers solely within the discourse of film. I intentionally deploy this term in this alien context, however, to highlight the confluence of meanings that inform my work and which I elaborate on throughout this study. *Production values* refers, literally, to the physical quality of a film or television show. Good production values depend on numerous variables, including set design, sound, lighting, cinematography, and editing. The production of these "values" is thus a collaborative enterprise, contributed to by many workers. The film industry is markedly different from the book industry in that it credits these workers. While a film may highlight its director or the famous actors it stars, it never fails to mention, as it closes, those who brought it materially into existence. The director may be charged with supervising, with bringing the disparate elements together, but it is dozens if not hundreds of individuals who are charged with providing a production's literal and figurative value. *Value* here suggests many meanings, all of them applicable to moviemaking: the perceived image, made up, at the most basic level, of

shades of light and dark registering chemically on film; the artistic worth of the film-as-work, sometimes perceived as being an intrinsic quality, but actually judged by specific cultural and critical standards; and the amount of money that the film-as-product returns to the studio or backers who invest in it.

The film world, except for rare cases or occasional lapses into auteurism, is usually quite frank about the multiple levels of production and reception that structure its participation in the market. Talk of grosses and rankings of summer hits are as common in the popular media as gossip about stars. Even foreign films and "independents," which self-consciously situate themselves outside the crass maneuvers of Hollywood, are judged in terms of their relative financial success (or lack thereof) and their relatively low production costs, especially if they win multiple awards. Even the most "artistic" film, the one positioned the farthest outside of the mainstream, calls attention to itself as the work of multiple hands (even if these hands are seen to be organized by an artiste-director) precisely because of its superior production values.

By contrast, the contemporary book world does not display so prominently its multiple levels of production. Even best sellers are perceived to be the work of one superior man or woman, whether that superiority is seen to be based on fine artistic sensibility or the ability to pander successfully to the base desires of the mass market. Little or no attention is ever paid to the many workers who, like film denizens from best boys to gaffers to costume designers, build the print product from the ground up. A few editors and agents might achieve moderate fame within a small literary circle if they prove their worth by discovering and supporting the unknown genius, but editorial assistants, typists, cover designers, printers, publicists, and sales staff provide invisible if nonetheless essential services, shaping both the product itself and the public's perception of it. There are few credits in a book acknowledging their work.⁶

Thus I come to another meaning suggested by the chapter title. *Production values* refers to those values—the social standards or community agreements as to what is worthy of notice and is best to uphold, and likewise what must be repressed in order to maintain those standards—that are promulgated both *through* the act of textual production and *about* textual production. I have suggested that literary studies has supplied us with a specifically ideological view of history, in which works

(not books) are produced only by authors. This study strives to disrupt that history and recover from erasure the workers who set type, ran presses, distributed pamphlets, or organized all these activities, as well as the material components they made, sold, or circulated. In doing so, I show how print technology in the hands of its workers, and in the words of its purveyors, manufactured and circulated its own system of production values. Reading has not always been a process of screening out the physicality of the print product and those who manufactured it. The research presented in the following chapters shows that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, many of those most closely allied with bookmaking assumed that their work was indeed visible. They represented themselves not merely as helpers or supporters of authors but as creative collaborators in their own right. They believed that the tangible goods they created spoke for them and that readers read in their books the signs of their contributions. I reveal these values in my analyses of their text work.

I therefore depart from Lanham when, constructing a history that starts with the creation of the alphabet and ends with electronic writing, he asserts that, after Gutenberg and the rise of transparent type, “unintermediated thought,” an “unselfconscious transparency,” became the “stylistic, one might almost say a cultural, ideal for Western civilization.”⁷ Lanham is making assumptions about early modern printing based on the logic of today’s print culture. Print did not become transparent until the real “work” was understood as existing “behind” the letters rather than inhering in them and was deemed to be the true essence of the book. For this to happen, the creator of the written work—rather than the produced book—first had to be constructed as superior to other sorts of print workers. That idea did not occur in tandem with Gutenberg’s invention, as Lanham suggests. Instead, this study shows that our “natural” view of transparency emerged only through a process of linguistic negotiation and contestation played out in the English print culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

PRINT AS TEXT

The years covered in this study thus coincide with the end of an era in England, an era in which print workers enjoyed predominant responsi-

bility for the production and circulation of texts. These years also cover, not coincidentally, a particularly active period in the formation of the print culture of London, as a brief overview will suggest. The texts I discuss in the following chapters illustrate changes in the rhetoric and representation of print that accompanied the economic and cultural transformation in the print trade as it developed from a government-regulated, yet loosely defined, enterprise, producing a chimera of texts, tracts, and tales, to a staid and efficient market-regulated business, promoting taste and genteel authorship to a large middle-class readership. The second half of the seventeenth century was marked by much turmoil in the print trade, a term I use in this study to encompass the official guild of Stationers as well as those who worked for, with, and sometimes against them, including unofficial printers, lowly street hawkers marketing cheap pamphlets—and writers. These various participants in the production of texts were the objects of much discursive scrutiny in this period. The monarchy and the public alike worried that the press had toppled one government and could do it again. Anxiety about print—who should print, who was responsible for print, what should be printed, what the effects of print were—became a frequent topic in print. As I detail later, the government moved from straightforward suppression (through the Licensing Act of 1662, for example) to a realization that the press could be used to influence political events, without wholeheartedly accepting either extreme.⁸

The first few decades of the eighteenth century, though calm politically, continued to witness great changes in the print trade. By 1700 printing had begun, as Alvin Kernan notes, “to affect the structure of social life at every level.” He details the “very ordinariness” of the everyday print products that became common in this period: “theater bills, newspapers and magazines, hand-bills, bill-headings, labels, tickets, . . . [and] marriage certificates.”⁹ Social and institutional life depended increasingly on print. Such cultural acceptance of print as an unavoidable fact of life meant booming business for those in the trade. Booksellers began to specialize as customers indicated preferences for old or new fiction, trade manuals, or scholarly material. Reading became a national leisure-time activity as well as a necessity for many middle-class professions, and the now highly commercial trade of printing and publishing reorganized and formed new trade practices to meet the

diverse needs of its customers. Networks of distribution grew within London and into the provinces, for example, and the conventions of advertising and reviewing books in newspapers were initiated to inform consumers of what was now a plethora of choices.¹⁰

While the trade was busy producing new print commodities and new ways to promote and distribute them, it was also active discursively (re)producing itself and its work. Increased business brought with it new forms of print anxiety. Wealth was consolidated into the hands of a few, and changes in economic status reconfigured the network of sociocultural positions. Printers, once a dominant force in the trade, were reclassified as lowly “mechanicks,” while booksellers used their affiliation with the rising merchant class to boost their cultural capital. I investigate the effects of this rearrangement in later chapters. Here, though, it is important to note that these new socioeconomic affiliations situated the trade within a new discursive network of manners and morals, which brought new understandings of the role of business and its relation to aesthetic concerns—and restructured the value(s) of print.

This period between the Restoration, when the Stationers lost monopolistic control of the print and publishing market, and the mid-eighteenth century, which witnessed the consolidation of large capital-intensive publishing houses, was also a time of fruitful indeterminacy within English print culture. Indeed, many of the literary categories that later emerged as rigid “natural” dichotomies—text versus book, creative thought versus manual labor, intellect versus economics—had not yet developed into commonsense inevitabilities. Certainly, many print workers, from booksellers to compositors, did not always see themselves as confined to one side of the binary. However, such freedom was not without contestation—nor was it usurped in a sudden, dramatic way. Instead, the terms deployed by text work are multivalenced and overwritten with meanings from other spheres. Foucault has written that “[a]n event . . . is not a decision, a treaty, a reign or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriating of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it.”¹¹ In these terms, the texts emerging from the print trade can be seen themselves as crucial Foucauldian “events” in a cultural shift in the understanding of this sort of labor. They reveal the complex and sometimes

contradictory processes through which a group struggles to garner and preserve enough linguistic capital to fund its version of print.¹²

Indeed, the print market itself can also be usefully understood as a Bourdieuan field. This sort of system is “not the product of a coherence-seeking intention . . . but the product and prize of a permanent conflict”; that is, “the generative, unifying principle of this system is the struggle, with all the contradictions it engenders.”¹³ The idea of the “struggle,” however, is usually employed in literary history (even by Pierre Bourdieu himself) as a way of conceptualizing *aesthetic* debates inasmuch as it accounts for the strategies writers and those attendant on them use to authorize the artistic product. This is true, for example, of Clifford Siskin’s useful study of the generic and professional reclassification of writing in the late eighteenth century. My argument is much in sympathy with his, especially in his articulations of the ways in which, “as with other kinds of work, the act of writing was subject to conflicts over who could and should use the technology, in what ways, and with what consequences.”¹⁴ Paradoxically, however, my study is both broader and narrower: instead of the technology of writing, I am more generally interested in the many technologies of bookmaking, of which I consider writing as just one; more specifically, I focus on conflicts over representations of *one* of writing’s manifestations, print.

This distinction is important. The texts by the printers and booksellers I examine—many working before the ideological veil of “disinterest” worked to obscure and defame the economic investments of authorship—do not just legitimate the value adhering to the text work of others, but they produce authorizing representations of print workers themselves, along with their technologies, whether “technology” is used broadly in the Foucauldian sense or in its literal, mechanic sense. This adaptation of the “field of cultural production” allows us to investigate the ways in which writing on print reveals a constant and vigorous negotiation of the source and flow of power within the realms of textual production and circulation. As the case studies I discuss will show, while this linguistic conflict sometimes reflected a straightforward rivalry between divergent economic interests, it more importantly represented a nexus of competing ideologies: different ways of imagining the process of textual creation as it evolved from the glimmer of an idea to the solid book in a reader’s hands.

PRINTING VALUES

A brief return to Watson's *Art of Printing* will enable us to see some of the issues that emerge in treating print as "text work." While Watson's text is of course unique to his specific time and place, the production values articulated within it usefully set up some common themes. The first I discuss is the most obvious and yet the easiest to overlook: its status as a print text on the subject of print. Stating that his purpose is to inquire into "how we came to lose that Honour and Respect due to our Profession, (since the present Age is much more learned, and I believe as just too, and discerning of Merit as their Ancestors)" (*History*, 4), Watson appeals to his audience's sense of the naturalness of historical progress. By placing his current profession in a larger and grander narrative, Watson is literally writing—in fact, printing—himself and his text into the history of print. In doing so, he creates what N. Katherine Hayles calls a "technotext"—one that "interrogates the inscription technology that produces it."¹⁵ He thus participates in what Hayles has elsewhere described as the "informational feedback loop" of "reflexivity." The works on print that I take up in this study can be seen as part of "a movement whereby that which has been used to generate a system is made, through a changed perspective, to become part of the system it generates."¹⁶ This changed perspective allows us to see processes that may have been occluded in a more straightforward reading. As Hayles suggests, "reflexivity has subversive effects because it confuses and entangles the boundaries we impose upon the world in order to make sense of that world."¹⁷ Paralleling M. C. Escher's drawing of the hand drawing a hand that Hayles sees as emblematic, representations of print in print as print problematize the art and fiction of boundary making itself, revealing not only their contingency but their instability in a state of flux, of construction and reconstruction. The machine printing the machine is not a fixed or stable essence.¹⁸ This is not to impose on writers such as Watson a postmodern metafictional intent, but to see in their texts a reflexivity engendered by their proximity to the grounds of material textual production.

Recasting boundaries allows us to see the text work of print as porous and in dynamic interaction with other discourses: This is a matter not of straightforward influence but, often, of mutual renegotiation of the lin-

guistic terrain. Watson's text itself bears traces of this struggle. He claims a moral authority by insisting he writes for "the common Benefit of these practicing the Art [of printing] in this Part of Britain; without proposing any other Advantage or Gain by it, but the Improvement of the Art. . . . And since we are, I trust, all of us honest Men, and of better spirits than to propose the Earning of our Bread as the chief and only End of our Labour" (*History*, 5). His need to at once invoke and deny the crude reality of "earning our bread" reveals this as a vexed issue. We can see rhetoric such as Watson's as symptomatic of a cultural dissonance between the competing claims of economics and "improvement" within a maturing and consolidating literary market and a struggle to reconceptualize the role of writing, work, machines, and money within the terms of the polite bourgeois public sphere. While his text is thus part of the larger eighteenth-century cultural-aesthetic project, what is notable here is its manifestation in the printing house itself: the source, the literal engine, of the textual forces that created and sustained Enlightenment values.

Although the works I study in the following chapters all originated in London, it is notable that Watson strikes his defensive pose at a distance from the metropolitan center, in Scotland. When, for example, he laments the fact that "our former Authors have been forc'd to . . . go to other Countries to publish their Writings, lest a learn'd Book should be spoil'd by an ignorant or careless Printer," and urges his brethren to "make it our Ambition, as well as our Interest and Honour, to furnish them with Printers that can serve them . . . well" (*History*, 6), he calls on notions of both ethnic and trade loyalties: Scottish writers are not well served by inferior Scottish printers. While the complex issue of Scottish independence and the thorniness of Anglo-Scottish relations in this period lie outside the scope of this brief analysis, Watson's text does serve to highlight (in its simultaneous denial of and subservience to) the dominant discourse of English print superiority that emanated from London. In doing so, it participates in a discourse of nationalism that was written by and on the print trade more broadly. As the references to both "interest" and "honour" make clear, however, national identity is just one of the many *intertwined* cultural ideologies structuring print. Thus when Watson concludes this section with a rallying cry—"Thus, Gentlemen, we shall have this Honour, which is truly more valuable

than immense Sums of Money or opulent Estates, that, for the Glory of our Country, we have retrieved the Art of PRINTING, and brought It to as great Perfection as ever It was here in former Times" (*History*, 6)—he is compressing anxieties about aesthetics and technology, commerce and class, nationalism and nostalgia that, as I show, were played out with a variety of purposes and effects, across different texts, times and cultures of print.

Watson's discourse articulates another important boundary as well. His rhetorical folding of himself into the polite category of honorable gentlemen, "us honest men," and his use of the misleadingly universal and transparent "we" foreground the *gendered* nuance of all these concerns: part of his project is constructing the appropriately gendered man and woman of print. This is most apparent in Watson's construction of an explanatory narrative showing how Scottish print has fallen from its former glory. Seeking an appropriate scapegoat, Watson castigates at some length one Mrs. Anderson, a printer's widow and a shrewd and successful businesswoman in her own right, who controlled Bible printing through her late husband's monopoly as King's Printer. His description of her as the moral decay undermining righteous print and disrupting its natural progress blends notions of religious duty with properly gendered behavior in a manner reminiscent of the period's conduct manuals:

Nothing came from the Royal Press (as Mrs. Anderson vainly term'd it) but the most illegible and uncorrect Bibles and Books that ever were printed in any one Place in the World. She regarded not the Honour of the Nation, and never minded the Duty lay upon her as the Sovereign's Servant: Prentices, instead of the best Workmen, were generally imploy'd in printing the Sacred Word of GOD. And, in fine, nothing was study'd but gaining of Money by printing Bibles at any Rate . . . that no Body could want them. (*History*, 13)

His opprobrium works by linking her unnatural neglect of the chief feminine virtues—her failure of duty, neglect of honor, resistance to subordination, and lack of veneration of the sacred—to an excess of reproduction resulting in faulty progeny, the flawed text. Paralleling the

morally righteous endings of other eighteenth-century stories of unsanctioned sexuality and reproduction, Watson uses the standard narrative of the fallen woman to chart the predicted results: "[T]hose, who formerly were her Friends . . . began to be asham'd of her Practices and turn'd their Back upon her" (*History*, 13–14).¹⁹ The metaphor of the press as a sexually reproductive machine has many precedents in early modern culture, of course, which work to express and produce congruent changes in gender and sexuality as well as authorship and technology.²⁰ Watson's invocation at this juncture, however—though certainly calling on that familiar history—is unique to his period in that it encapsulates anxieties about recent changes in the understanding of male and female identities as they were reconstituted through text work, the print market, the sexed body, and gendered language. It is these changes and these sorts of connections that I explore in the chapters that follow, in which I see gender as a social(izing) category, a performative gesture, a marker of the boundaries of acceptable behavior, and a producer of generic textual distinctions. At the same time, I use gender to discuss the real-life effects on the working bodies of women in print.

In constructing this world of gendered print(ers), Watson freely mixes history, current events, biography, personal vitriol, technical know-how, and advertisement—an odd mix to twenty-first-century readers trained in the genre categories founded in Enlightenment precepts. However, Watson's text is representative of others in this study in the way it segues seamlessly from the political to the domestic to the realms of machine, labor, and trade. For Watson, the circulation of a well-regulated and honorable, indeed, properly gendered, text is inseparable from his more material concerns: the importance of paying well "a good Press-Man, who brings Reputation to my Work" (*History*, 21); the superiority of a Dutch-made press, which worked so well for twenty years that "neither Smith nor Joiner [were] call'd for to her" (22); or the use of good, cold lye to "preserve your Letter and other Materials, or to make your Work beautiful, or to have your Servants appear neat and clean" (23). Finally, he ends his diatribe on the problems of Scottish print with a type specimen that shows off the letterforms he has available in his printing house. This explicit form of "product placement" calls attention to the economic transactions in which the text as printed book must by necessity participate, for it serves to advertise Watson's trade in book-

making and make *The Art of Printing* itself a form of self-promotion, commercially as well as ideologically. It also serves to reembody his history as a *print* narrative, that is, a manifestation of the carved letterform itself. This type of blending of what would later be positioned as incompatible discourses—objective history versus gossip, art versus economics, narrative story versus typeface—is central to my concerns throughout this study. As Paula McDowell has noted, it is when we venture “into the realm of what seems strange to us” that we begin to understand “not only our own literary values and agendas, but also . . . those values’ original sociocultural functions and consequences.”²¹ “Strangeness” can be useful, then, as long as we take care not to make it so exotic that we homogenize its Otherness. Watson’s “generic confusion” is *not* a glimpse of a monolithic pre- or early Enlightenment mode of thinking, but a register *through and against which* later dominant constructions of knowledge are being produced. My work thus calls for us to uncover that which, because it resists our common perceptions of the writing-work relationship, remains hidden from view.

AUTHOR-IZED PRINT

The template that has been applied most often to this relationship is that of proprietary authorship. The idea that an author is an individual proprietor of intrinsically original “intellectual property” that deserves protection by the laws of copyright is a relatively new one, historically. It is also culturally specific. Based in changing views on genius, individualism, property, and literary production and supported by developments in law, trade, and technology, the concept of authorship slowly gained currency throughout the eighteenth century in England. This new way of looking at literary production and property did not “naturally” evolve within literary history, however, but was contingent on the claims of certain privileged groups with definite ideological interests. Only later did authorship become the dominant and seemingly inescapable way of defining textual and other creative output. In my study, I investigate the way in which authorship, because of its eventual dominance—evidenced by its seeming naturalness—erased all evidence of alternative approaches to writing and the production of texts. I show how it develops in and is deployed against the contested terrain of print.

Watson’s text, for example, formulates a technology-based author-function at the same time as he dissolves it, epitomizing a contradiction. Through the act of publishing, the material means of which he has at his ready disposal, the printer Watson author-izes himself as one with a legitimate claim to discursive production. This also casts his topic, “the art of printing,” as one worthy of dissemination and debate. While printer and writer are perhaps two separate positions Watson can choose to occupy at distinct moments, his self-representation blurs the boundaries: he is a printer/author reflecting on print-art. At the same time, however, at the moment of his most spirited call to action—the earlier quoted passage in which he urges his fellow printers to improve their art—he subordinates his trade by casting it as one in service to Authors. Such a move seems obvious by today’s standards, for this is still our most common way of understanding writing technologies and the people who service them: they exist to be written through; their obvious and proper position is that of invisibility; their aims are subordinate to those who do the superior intellectual work of disembodied, nonmechanical *writing*. This conventional notion of the (non)medium of writing, however, is at odds with the print-on-print materialism that Watson’s text also enacts, with its emphasis on the press, pressmen, and the letter as specimen. How do we account for this contradiction?

In order to understand the textual production of this period, we must forego the logic of proprietary and original authorship that structures so much work on print. In fact, close analysis of the texts of print workers reveals, as I show in the chapters that follow, that our current regimes of creative work are often anachronistically applied to the socioeconomic relations of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century literary markets. The texts of print workers reveal hierarchies of labors, attitudes about the creative process, and approaches to the commodification of writing that are often strikingly at odds with those written by the emerging professional author and most studied by scholars today. Most importantly, in multiple ways and with divergent interests, these printers, booksellers, publishers, and distributors cast *themselves* in central roles in the production process. Thus my central thesis is that those who worked within the many professions of the print trade (from printers to publishers to writers) understood books and other print products to be the result of a *collaboration* of many hands and the process of textual pro-

duction to include not only writing but also the work—and workers—of technology. Indeed, I show that a participant in the print culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries would have understood practices of writing, technologies of printing, and even the business of planning, marketing, and selling print commodities all as productive and creative aspects of text making. This was the context in which the purveyors of the press depicted writers as equal or inferior to other print workers.²² My project thus recovers a collective alternative to anachronistic notions of creativity centered in the singular author, the sole creator of original works. It also demystifies a long-accepted trope in literary studies, that of the disinterested genius whose work transcends the base realities of economics.

However, a specter haunts the assertions of print workers: a counter-discourse that cannot help but shape their arguments. Their declarations, I assert, must also be seen as part of a struggle for textual ownership and control that ensued as a new concept, that of the solitary author as proprietor of his intrinsically original intellectual property (protected in new copyright laws), which slowly gained currency in the mid-eighteenth century. In fact, print workers, in positing themselves as significant creative contributors, were engaging in acts of linguistic self-preservation, for central to the notion of author-as-proprietor was the effacement of print workers from the imagined scene of textual creation.²³ Nonetheless, I do not wish to look back with nostalgia on a utopian pre-authorial past. Certainly, the press has been deployed politically in some manner and in someone's favor since its inception. Rather, I wish to chart how representations shifted to favor an individualized notion of disinterested authorial production while muting the importance of technology and the working body in the construction of print.

There is more at stake than giving print workers their moment of glory. This struggle was not an isolated "labor issue," with effects confined merely to title-page practices or the domain of copyright, but was shaped by and had ramifications for larger social discourses. For example, as we saw in James Watson's use of Mrs. Anderson as the fallen woman of print, many of the texts emerging from this realm use images of the sexed body and properly gendered behavior to categorize print products and make normative their particular view of print propriety. My analysis of the print trade's depiction of their work calls attention to the ways in

which they asserted their importance through a rhetoric of hierarchical and binary sexuality and gender. This articulation of authority in gendered terms in turn affected the many, often invisible, women who worked in these trades. In fact, these representations, while not excluding women from writing and the print trades, helped to limit the types of writing and work in which they were authorized to participate.

WORK ON PRINT

This book is by necessity interdisciplinary, encompassing labor and guild history; theories of class and economics; the history of science and of technology; the legal history of textual control and regulation, from licensing to copyright laws; the history of the book, publishing, and bibliography; new media theory; and eighteenth-century understandings of gender and sexuality. In my attempt to weave together these various and sometimes conflicted strands, I have been assisted by the work of numerous scholars representing several larger fields. I have discussed my debts to the theories of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu in constructing a methodological framework, but specific interpretive strategies, readings, and new histories emerging from early modern and eighteenth-century culture and literary studies have been helpful as well. A detailed analysis of my reliance on and departure from individual applications is best explored in the context of the individual chapters that follow. Nonetheless, an understanding of this project's self-placement within recent scholarship may help clarify my broader aims.

This study is, not surprisingly, indebted to earlier work on the history of print, from Elizabeth Eisenstein's groundbreaking *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979) to Alvin Kernan's *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print* (1987). Eisenstein, following Marshall McLuhan's media theory, first allowed us to see how a relatively simple machine could reshape knowledge itself. Walter Ong's work defining cultures of orality, literacy, and print served to buttress this idea. The idea of "print logic" that emerged privileged abstraction, uniformity, repeatability, visibility, standardization, linearity, and quantification.²⁴ This logic extended beyond the format of books, Kernan insists, and affected the framework of human thought and society: "Print logic began to shape mental structures, imparting a sense of the world as a set of abstract ideas rather than

immediate facts. . . . [A]s print logic changed mental structures, the social world was also changed by the increasing numbers of people whose minds were programmed by print logic. Rationalism, idealistic philosophy, consumerism, capitalism, and nationalism . . . are all . . . inevitable consequences of movable type."²⁵ A single piece of machinery, the printing press, is thus charged with nothing less than the wholesale makeover of Western culture. Though Eisenstein's work itself is more subtly nuanced, her study does sometimes imply a technological essentialism in which the duties of master printers or authors become merely inevitable effects of an always already installed technology. While I detail the problems with such a construction in chapter 2, I stress here that inevitable and monolithic effects can be avoided by focusing on print as linguistically constructed in the context of a series of arguments, debates, local material practices, and minor rhetorical adjustments.

My work also relies on the archival studies undertaken by those following Eisenstein. Originally marginalized within their disciplines of English or history, or relegated to what was then considered the obscure field of library studies, scholars within the interdisciplinary field of the "history of the book" now have become more prominently institutionalized. With its vigorous investigation of the physical aspects of print production, such as paper- and ink-making, letter founding, composing methods, work organization, distribution, circulation, consumption, and so forth, book history is a field, in short, "that, broadly defined, promise[s] to cover the whole history of the creation, diffusion, and reception of the written word."²⁶ However, much of this scholarship is still marked by a positivist bias, an empirical agenda, and an investment in narratives of natural progress, whether aesthetic or economic. A benevolent if not liberating literacy is depicted as arising to enable cultural progress, a process by which, James Raven has complained, print culture is viewed as "part nursemaid and part chronicler."²⁷ These studies are often author-centric, existing, in many cases, solely for the purpose of enabling our appreciation of Shakespeare or other canonical "greats." Larger cultural forces are ignored or taken for granted as a stable background against which business or craftsmanship proceeds independently. Lacking a theory of representation, they ignore the discursive environment in which the trade participated.

More recent projects within eighteenth-century "print culture stud-

ies" have avoided technological determinism and teleology by examining individual agency and the social construction of technology. However, much research in this sector of literary studies, despite its more sophisticated theoretical approach, is in fact also still primarily author-centric and focused on a select canon of texts.²⁸ Thus we have Alexander Pope on Edmund Curll, Laurence Sterne on typography, or Samuel Johnson on professionalization—while the workers who actually made print available are largely ignored. My analysis tries to bridge this gap by reinstalling as an essential component of the literary culture of this period the many and varied voices emerging from the trade itself. In that goal I have been enabled by Adrian Johns's groundbreaking attempt to displace a neutral, objective, and standardized print as the transparent medium through which scientific texts could be safely circulated. In almost overwhelming detail, he shows how what was later considered inherent to print was in fact propagated by those within the trade in an attempt to authorize and legitimate their businesses. By complicating these printing practices, he forces us to reevaluate almost all that we have taken for granted about the texts that emerge from this trade.²⁹ Nonetheless, as brilliant as he is in unearthing debates within the print world, he rarely places them alongside other cultural texts—so there is no context for understanding the broader *social* work of print outside its own domain. Without a sensitivity to sociolinguistic concerns, we cannot see the polyvocality of print—an aspect I believe is necessary to understand print as text work. My project thus can also be seen in relation to McDowell's call for "a new model for the study of the literary marketplace as a whole," one that "break[s] down disciplinary and conceptual boundaries which separate the study of texts' ideological content and form (literary criticism) from the study of their physical production (publishing history)."³⁰ Her work specifically calls attention to the role of unruly women printers and radical religious orality in the production of the eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere. Her study is an exemplar of how to combine literary theory with material sources in an analysis of textual production that questions print culture's hierarchy of margin and center.³¹

Most influential to my work, however, has been the now substantial body of work deconstructing authorship as a timeless and universal category.³² As groundbreaking as this work was when it emerged more

than a decade ago, however, the problem with many of the studies that have followed since is, ironically, the author-centric nature of them: seldom are other ways of imagining textual agency and creativity reconstructed. Authors and booksellers are all too often always already opposing parties; the fact that they once worked in tandem, or that the art-business hierarchy they represent was ever conceptualized differently, is rarely acknowledged. Unfortunately, this has the unintended consequence of casting the proprietary author as the natural and inevitable result of literary market forces—an issue this project hopes to address. I believe that an analysis of the text work of print supplements the scholarly work demystifying the “author function,” but with a significant difference: it shifts attention away from authors by examining other important contributors to, and alternative ways of understanding, the making of books. This is an important distinction, for focusing more attention on the “rise of the author” operates (if inadvertently) as a teleology that evacuates other types of print workers from the imagined scene of textual creativity.

Finally, my belief in the importance of studying the material technologies of writing has been influenced by recent studies in information theory and electronic writing. Lanham, for example, describes the surface play computers make possible that disrupts the seeming transparency of type:

I can enlarge the print if my eyes get tired, reduce it to check format and page layout, flow it around illustrations if I want. I can redesign the very shapes of the letters, zoom in on them until their transparency becomes an abstract pattern of separate pixels. I can alter the alphabetic/graphic ratio of conventional literacy in dozens of ways. . . .

The textual surface is now a malleable and self-conscious one. . . . The textual surface has become permanently bi-stable. We are always looking first AT it and then THROUGH it.³³

Although this sort of manipulation is now almost as natural as staid print, Lanham explains how it has nonetheless “turned a lot of commercial practices and relationships upside down along with our traditional notions of literary and cultural decorum.”³⁴ What this new

technology enables, in short, is a “turning upside down” of what Lanham in the previous passage termed Gutenberg’s “transparency” of print. For the historian of print, however, such rhetoric encourages new investigations into the supposedly stable, solid realm of early modern typography. For master printers, who ordered type to be cast according to certain specifications and monitored compositors’ use of different fonts in the creation of the print page, was type ever transparent? Despite the incorrect assumption of many electronic media critics that the destabilization of text is a recent phenomenon, studies such as theirs do call our attention to the surface features of older texts in useful ways. I discuss some of the meanings of different type styles in chapter 2, for example, and parts of my fourth chapter would be difficult if not impossible to convey if not for my word processor’s ability to mimic seventeenth-century typography. Thus new technology provides both an example and a tool with which to explore the old.

Similarly, work on postmodern information systems more broadly understood has also been helpful in allowing me to revisit older communications media. Donna Haraway’s attention to “women in the integrated circuit” in her famous “Manifesto for Cyborgs” broke new ground in theorizing the body-technology-gender nexus; her essay serves as a model for ways to think outside the Enlightenment dualism of man versus machine. Shoshana Zuboff’s prescient analysis of workers’ relationships to computerized information in factories and offices in *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power* (1988), especially her treatment of the importance of embodied as opposed to “scientific” forms of knowledge, allows me to better theorize printers’ bodies in relation to their work and their machines.³⁵ Similarly, it is N. Katherine Hayles’s immersion in cybernetics, postmodern fiction, and electronic literature that leads to her call for a “media-specific analysis” as central to literary studies, insisting that “without it we have little hope in forging a robust and nuanced account of how literature is changing under the impact of information technologies.”³⁶ Hayles’s work itself, though, centers on contemporary art-texts that foreground their own physicality, and she does not suggest that these works are part of a tradition of technotexts. In order to fully comprehend the way new media are reshaping old genres, assumptions, and practices, however, we must first understand the materiality of the past, in all its rich and varied

manifestations. We must not deny its unique complexity by projecting our own anachronistic reading practices onto its forms. We need to rethink materiality and make it central again—by tracing the history of its disappearance.

In the following chapters, I look at a wide range of textual sites from which the production values of the print trade emerge: printers' manuals, booksellers' correspondence and autobiographies, pro-censorship tracts, and court documents from seditious libel trials and pleas from prison, in addition to works of fiction, such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, and the voices of canonical authors who have grumbled about the sloppy work of printers or the exorbitant demands of booksellers. The chapters present individual case studies, each focusing on one of the variety of professions within the British print trade. I thus show that the renegotiation of the concepts of print worker—from a key contributor to the making of books to an invisible body to be written through—is not an isolated phenomenon but takes place in a number of diverse sources and reveals its effects in a variety of discrete practices. I call attention to texts and practices rarely closely examined, arguing that without understanding the role of print workers as textual agents, we cannot properly assess the workings of the eighteenth-century literary market. In uncovering these various cultural "moments," however, I am not interested in weaving a seamless narrative of influence and institutionalization of ideas, or in "proving" empirically that each individual I discuss fully grasped the implications and ramifications of these ideas on the broader culture. Similarly, I do not wish to imply that the voicing of opinions, or the textual traces of such opinions, is tantamount to their belonging to an accredited and coherent class of ideas—or even that stakeholders within a linguistic site of struggle understood themselves as such. Because I believe that discursive shifts are subtle, complex, and even contradictory, I strive to examine the *multiple* ways in which similar representations get played out across a wide spectrum of individualized interests and investments in the literary marketplace. By examining the local discourses invoked in constructing both dominant and counter discourses, I therefore disrupt the notion of an inevitable "logic" that runs through many studies of authorship and print culture.

Chapter 2, the first of the four case studies, shows that even the most basic, material unit of the trade—the print letter itself—cannot be viewed as a stable or fixed essence. Here I examine the shifting, ideologically situated and contested representations of print texts and technologies in two representative printers' manuals: Joseph Moxon's 1683–84 *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing* and John Smith's 1755 *The Printer's Grammar*.³⁷ Written more than seventy years apart, these manuals project vast differences in what constitutes the creative act of bookmaking. I also discuss the ways in which each manual reflects changing discourses of sexuality and gender support in its construction of an orderly print. To Moxon, who called his manual a "piece of typographie," books are equal parts sweat, labor, and letters. Workers' bodies are part of the construction process; indeed, they cannot be separated from the machinery they operate. His manual celebrates the heterosexual working bodies of print, the laborers whose physical production of print is as important as the text supplied by writers. In Smith's manual, however, the bodies of labor disappear into an authoritative masculine font. His naturalized gendering of a (now) invisible print privileges only the Author, who controls the text and whose disembodied intellect transcends the physical book.

Chapter 3 moves from those who worked to make print to those who sold it—and, just as often, originated ideas for products that they funded, supervised, and distributed. Booksellers—their trade's appellation itself giving short shrift to their long line of duties—have long been controversial characters. I show, however, that the various insults hurled at "Grub Street" are, in fact, indications of its status as a zone of representational conflict. In contrast to many literary histories that ignore the work of booksellers—or at best bracket them to the realm of the amusing anecdote—I analyze the discourse of the immoral bookseller as part of a larger early eighteenth-century manifestation of "print anxiety," a cultural debate about the nature of print texts and the ways in which they should be produced, controlled, and profited from. I examine traces of this contestation in the language of booksellers, focusing on three central and representative figures, Francis Kirkman, John Dunton, and Robert Dodsley, whose writing together spans the period I cover and reveals changes in the trade's understanding of the role of the proper proprietor of print. The ideology of the bookseller as revealed in the

texts of Kirkman and Dunton is one in which booksellers themselves are the creative protagonists of a commercial print. However, as Dodsley's self-construction as "the Muse's Midwife" makes apparent, the rise of the author, and the discursive removal of published writing from the realm of physical labor and material economics, led to a midcentury rhetoric that cast booksellers as secondary to the intellectual requirements of a transcendent, authored text.

Chapter 4 also takes up an alternative to proprietary authorship by examining the discourse of the regulated text circulated by those in the socioeconomic margins of the trade. This chapter focuses on those whom we might better understand in our own parlance as distributors or small retailers, termed in their own time *trade publishers*, who ran small shops and worked closely with both *mercury women*, who could have small pamphlet shops or market stalls, and *hawkers*, who cried their wares on the streets. Indeed, the author as an accountable agent, I assert, emerged in England only as an entity intrinsically connected to a variety of legally responsible agents within the trade. This chapter takes up the rhetoric of licensing, sedition, and libel, illustrating the ways in which, rather than being purely repressive, these laws were crucial in the production of certain forms of Enlightenment discourse. Thus even literature outside the usual purview of censorship, such as the ostensibly "apolitical" genre of the novel, felt the ripple effects of textual regulation. To illustrate my point, I describe in detail the resistance strategies utilized by mercury women, pamphlet distributors charged with handling political tracts and frequently shouldering the responsibility of their writing and printing. On the front lines of dangerous textuality, the mercuries deployed the rising rhetoric of middle-class femininity later taken up as a defining feature of the properly feminized eighteenth-century novel. I conclude that the regulations governing the print trade produced a form of morally authoritative discourse best represented by the woman author: the trade's positioning of women as the agents responsible for the regulated circulation of virtuous texts allowed women writers to flourish at midcentury, just as women print workers disappeared.

I explore the links between authorship and gender in more depth in chapter 5. This chapter, the final case study, completes my description of the shift from the cultural privileging of the print worker to that of the author by focusing on one individual, Samuel Richardson, who, at the

same time and in often contradictory ways, encapsulated both roles. I examine some of the ways in which his work as a printer fundamentally shaped his understanding of, indeed his construction of, his status as a writer and how his ideological concerns as a novelist writing for and about women affected his views on the appropriate circulation of the material print product. I argue that to Richardson, creator of the popular and beloved heroines in distress, Pamela and Clarissa, and the feminized hero, Sir Charles Grandison, intellectual property was always already *gendered* property, linked intimately to the rules of sexual propriety and proper feminine behavior. Through a detailed analysis of a series of public and private discursive events—letter writing, advertising, and, eventually, the writing of the continuation of *Pamela*—which took place shortly after the publication of Richardson's first novel in the fall of 1740, I show how, by midcentury, the obfuscating discourse of patriarchal authorship had trumped the more explicitly mercenary concerns of trade. Thus, I argue, intellectual property in the feminine form of the novel cannot be understood without recourse to eighteenth-century ideologies of gender.

In the end, print workers' discursive acts of self-preservation failed—the proprietary author won the battle for control. As we can see in literary studies' adoption of the discourse of "the-man-and-his-work," the dominant view of textual creation became reified and naturalized as the only possible understanding of it. The fact that alternatives ever even existed was forgotten. They were rendered invisible by the strength of the discourse that succeeded it. Thus what I am undertaking here is an almost archeological recovery, reconstructing from shards of misunderstood texts an ideology once commonplace. To do otherwise, to ignore the text work of print, is to ignore the rich material history that lies at the boundary of "text" and "book"; to view this process of production only through the eyes and ideologies of authors is to accept as "truth" a singular perspective. By recovering the texts of these print worker-writers, and by examining their shifting understanding of their domain and the representations they deployed, I hope to expand our notion of what constituted legitimate print, authorship, and creative work in this period of transition.