

The Battle of the Books

Textual Introduction

The fortunes of *The Battle of the Books* are securely linked to those of *A Tale of a Tub*, notwithstanding the fact that both are independent works in origin and conception.¹ Appearing on 10 May 1704 within the same covers,² they shared the full title page, as they had already done in the pre-publication newspaper advertisement of the day before;³ all factors that have established a dependent status for *The Battle of the Books* that has endured. Of course, this relationship does not rule out that the *Battle* continues the *Tale*'s metaphors and motifs, its themes and issues, its textual strategies and modes of narration.⁴ Early during his sojourn at Moor Park, Swift had, in his own hand, prepared for the press Sir William Temple's second octavo collection of essays, *Miscellanea: The Second Part* (1690), and a decade later its posthumous continuation, *Miscellanea: The Third Part* (1701), a book of 368 octavo pages.⁵ To make a comparable debut on his own account in the same format, he added a substantial makeweight to the completed *Tale of a Tub*, "a very considerable Addition to the Bulk of the Volume, a Circumstance by no means to be neglected by a skilful Writer," as he called it (p. □□). In round figures, he lengthened his book by half as much again in

¹ We endorse the position taken by Phillip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of "A Tale of a Tub"* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 1-2. See also Miriam Kosh Starkman, *Swift's Satire on Learning in "A Tale of a Tub"* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. xiii-xix.

² *The Daily Courant*, 10 May 1704.

³ *The Post-Man*, 9 May 1704.

⁴ Thomas E. Maresca, *Epic to Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1974), pp. 160-67.

⁵ *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 270 and n6; Preface to *Miscellanea: The Third Part*, pp. □□.

order to produce a four-shilling volume⁶: in the octavo editions of 1704 and 1705, *A Tale of a Tub* occupies 220 pages, to which *The Battle of the Books* and *A Discourse concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* combined add a further 100 pages.

Enough of Swift's spelling preferences survive in the text of the first edition to suggest that it was set from his holograph, although in the course of reprinting they were modernized. In one instance, Swift seems to have objected to a respelling in the first edition, and restored his preference in the second. In "The Bookseller to the Reader," the editor of Phalaris is named as "Mr. *Boyle*" (p. 31, l. 10), but in "The Episode of Bentley and Wotton" at the end of the work, he appears repeatedly as "*Boyl*" (p. 51, ll. 25, 27, 37, 39; p. 52, ll. 10, 15), to which the earlier references were then changed in the second edition of 1704. "*Boyl*" is Swift's spelling of the verb in the *Journal to Stella*, and of the proper name in "Toland's Invitation to Dismal."⁷ The only later texts to show systematic authorial correction and revision are the second and fifth editions, and two which followed posthumously, in 1755, and in Dublin in 1756, deriving from a corrected copy presented to Mrs Whiteway on 29 May 1735.⁸ The overall incidence of alteration is characteristically slight. The first edition, then, is bound to be the copy text.⁹

⁶ See Robert Clavell's list of titles published in Easter Term 1704, *A Catalogue of Books* (London, 1704), no 34; *The Term Catalogues*, III, 401.

⁷ *Journal to Stella*, ed. Williams, II, 610; *Poems*, ed. Williams, I, 165, l. 33.

⁸ *A Tale of a Tub*, pp. □□.

⁹ The present text is taken from a copy of the first edition in Lambeth Palace Library (SR3724). It has been internally collated with another copy of the first edition, now at the Ehrenpreis Centre (EC 525; TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 217), with all editions published during Swift's lifetime (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 218, 219, 220, 222, 230, 233, 234, 236), the 10th (1743, 1751), 11th (1747), and 12th editions (1751) published posthumously (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 68, 69, 82, 238, 239A), as well as the three Dublin editions of 1705, 1741, and 1756 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 221, 237, 242) and Hawkesworth's *Works* (I, 241-98), in large octavo format (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 88). The Editors have omitted the small 12mo edition of 1711, in four independent settings and possibly put out by Edmund Curll, which was used by Thomas Johnson, English bookseller at The

In the present edition, actual *corrections* have been admitted to the text, with Swift's *revisions* appearing in the apparatus, along with some of the many unauthorized changes which evaded detection and have passed, by default, into the received text for over two centuries. In the few cases requiring substantive emendation, the earliest occurrence of correction has been sought, and the source recorded in the apparatus. At several points, punctuation has been silently corrected, from editions printed in Swift's lifetime. The seven explanatory notes provided for the fifth edition of 1710 (*A Tale of a Tub*, pp. □□), which were also printed separately in a pamphlet supplement dated 1711 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 223), have been added below the textual apparatus.

In the vexed matter of Thomas Swift's claim to have written parts of the volume,¹⁰ *The Battle of the Books* escapes, being allowed to Jonathan with this reservation: "I do remember y^t I ranged y^e Armies of y^e Antients & Moderns in y^e Battle of y^e Bookes, assigning w^{ch} should be y^e Horse & w^{ch} y^e Foot, but it being seven years agoe [1697] I do remember y^e less of y^e particulars."¹¹ Indeed, internal evidence, such as the chronology of the

Hague, in his Dutch-printed edition of Swift's *Miscellaneous Works, Comical & Diverting* in 1720 and which was reprinted, probably again in Holland, in 1734 (TEERINK SCOUTEN 17, 235). All these are outside the authorized series (see the Stemma of Editions, *A Tale of a Tub*, pp. □□).

¹⁰ See Robert M. Adams, "Jonathan Swift, Thomas Swift, and the Authorship of *A Tale of a Tub*," *Modern Philology*, 64 (1967), 198-232; Dipak Nandy, "Jonathan Swift, Thomas Swift, and the Authorship of *A Tale of a Tub*," *Modern Philology*, 66 (1969), 333-37, and the review by Maurice Johnson in *Philological Quarterly*, 47 (1968), 427-29; Denis Donoghue, *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 222-25; David Woolley, "Joint Authorship and *A Tale of a Tub*: Further Thoughts," *Monash Swift Papers*, no 1 (Clayton, Victoria, 1988), pp. 1-25; Martin Maner, "The Authorship of Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub* - Once More," *Swift Studies*, 21 (2006), 27-38.

¹¹ Thomas Swift's holograph annotation in a first-edition copy of *A Tale of a Tub*, sig. T4v (Cornell University Library). For a facsimile reproduction of a sample page, see Mrs Tommie Bryant, "Who Wrote *A Tale of a Tub*?" *Cornell Alumni News* (July 1967), pp. 11-13.

treatises and pamphlets embroiled in the controversy,¹² *does* assign the *Battle's* composition to 1697/8,¹³ more precisely between 15 July 1697, when the second edition of Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, supplemented by Bentley's first *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, was published,¹⁴ and presumably the spring of 1698/9 after Bentley's second, enlarged *Dissertation* had come out on 23 February, in response to the joint production from Christ Church, *Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examin'd. By the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq.*¹⁵ Throughout that time, Jonathan was at Moor Park and Thomas in nearby Puttenham,¹⁶ and it is likely enough that they discussed these topics.

¹² A. T. Bartholomew and J. W. Clark, *Richard Bentley, D.D.: A Bibliography of his Works and of All the Literature Called Forth by his Acts or his Writings* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1908), pp. 26-41; GUTHKELCH, pp. 297-308.

¹³ GUTHKELCH AND NICHOL SMITH, pp. xlvii-xlviii; ROSS AND WOOLLEY, pp. xii-xv.

¹⁴ This, and all later dates are drawn from single, not repeated advertisements in the government news organ, *The London Gazette*. See also *The Battle of the Books*, p. 31, ll. 5-6.

¹⁵ Published on 17 March 1697/8; Bartholomew and Clark, *Richard Bentley*, p. 29 (*97). In what follows, it will become clear that Bentley responded to this first edition, losing no time until the second and third editions, also published in 1698, had appeared (with 1699 on the title page of the third).

¹⁶ Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 169-79; Ruth Dugmore, *Puttenham under the Hog's Back: A Social Study of a Surrey Village* (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1972), pp. 76-87; Elias, *Swift at Moor Park*, pp. 50-54, 59-66, 226-27, 257-58.

Historical Introduction

I

The Battle of the Books is firmly rooted in the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, better known perhaps as the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*.¹⁷ This controversy about the comparative merits of Antiquity and

¹⁷ The bibliography of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, its history throughout the ages, its various stages, in all major European countries, and antagonists, is vast, and what follows here is but a selection of titles, not mentioned elsewhere and in chronological order, which we have found valuable and to which we are indebted one way or another.

General Surveys: Hippolyte Rigault, *Oeuvres complètes, I: Histoire de la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (Paris: Hachette, 1859); Hubert Gillot, *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes en France* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne, 1914); Anne Elizabeth Burlingame, *The Battle of the Books in its Historical Setting* (New York: Biblio and Tannen, 1969 [1920]); Werner Kohlund, *Kultur- und Fortschrittsbewusstsein in England um 1700* (Quackenbrück: C. Trute, 1934), pp. 19-48; Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967 [1949]), pp. 261-88; August Buck, "Aus der Vorgeschichte der *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* in Mittelalter und Renaissance," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 20 (1958), 527-41; Hans Baron, "The *Querelle* of the Ancients and the Moderns as a Problem for Renaissance Scholarship," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20 (1959), 3-22; Ronald S. Crane, "The Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns and its Consequences," *The Idea of the Humanities*, 2 vols (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), I, 72-89; Joseph M. Levine, "Ancients and Moderns Reconsidered," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 15 (1981-82), 72-89; Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 13-84; Achim Hölder, *Die Bücherschlacht: ein satirisches Konzept in der europäischen Literatur* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1995).

Particular Accounts (which tend to overlap):

Boileau, Perrault and Fontenelle:

Hans Robert Jauß, "Ästhetische Normen und geschichtliche Reflexion in der *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*," in Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, ed. and introd. Hans Robert Jauß (München: Eidos, 1964), pp. 8-64; Hans Kortum, *Charles Perrault und Nicolas Boileau: der Antike-Streit im Zeitalter der klassischen französischen Literatur* (Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1966).

Modernity originated in Augustan Rome as early as the first century AD but rapidly grew into a recurrent, indeed “perennial,” phenomenon of numerous national literatures of Europe.¹⁸ In regular intervals, men seem to feel that the best has been; that the past has seen fulfilment, which the present cannot match and which the future may destroy. At the same time, an equally powerful human impulse exults in present achievement. In England, this sentiment erupted with some vehemence at the beginning of the seventeenth century when ‘the theory of linear decay,’ a fashionable worldview, according to which the Moderns were morally and intellectually inferior to the Ancients and which was widely disseminated and mostly propounded by theologians,

Sir William Temple:

Homer E. Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple: The Man and his Work* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, and London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 303-19; Pierre Marambaud, *Sir William Temple: sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Minard, 1968), pp. 199-221; Robert C. Steensma, *Sir William Temple*, TEAS, no 109 (New York: Twayne, 1970), pp. 103-15.

Wotton, Bentley, and Atterbury:

R. C. Jebb, *Bentley* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1889), pp. 33-85; H. C. Beeching, *Francis Atterbury* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman, 1909), pp. 14-30; R. J. White, *Dr Bentley: A Study in Academic Scarlet* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), pp. 92-108; G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688-1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 38-43; Kristine Louise Haugen, “Death of an Author: Constructions of Pseudonymity in the Battle of the Books,” *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert J. Griffin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 39-62.

¹⁸ Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa: vom 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, 5th ed., 2 vols (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1958 [1909]), I, 251-300, 355-92, and *passim*; Hans Gerd Rötzer, *Traditionalität und Modernität in der europäischen Literatur: ein Überblick vom Attizismus-Asianismus-Streit bis zur “Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes”* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), pp. 7-25. The characterization of the *Querelle* as ‘perennial,’ as “a constant phenomenon of literary history and literary sociology” is by CURTIUS, p. 251.

such as the Bishop of Gloucester, Godfrey Goodman (1583-1656),¹⁹ came to be questioned by two alternative philosophical models.²⁰ The first was chiefly propagated by George Hakewill, later in life Dean of Exeter College, Oxford, whose massively thorough *Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World ... Touching Nature's Perpetual and Universal Decay* of 1627 went into a third, enlarged edition in 1635. Rebutting Goodman's belief in Nature's necessary decay, Hakewill favoured a philosophy of *cyclical*, or circular, progress: "Arts suffer periodical declines, but reappear in full strength sooner or later; so too civilizations, science and religion."²¹ The second alternative model, 'the theory of *linear* progress,' was proposed by no less a figure than the *Artium Instaurator* himself, Francis Bacon, who, in the *Advancement of Learning* of 1605, proclaimed not only the possibility of progress in all the 'sciences' but also its potential infinity. In the Lord Chancellor's view, the study of Nature was as boundless as the created universe: "Nothing parcell of the world, is denied to Mans enquire and inuention," and "there is no daunger at all in the proportion or quantitie of knowledge howe large soeuer."²² The

¹⁹ Geoffrey Ingle Soden, *Godfrey Goodman, Bishop of Gloucester, 1583-1656* (London: S. P. C. K., 1953), pp. 79-91.

²⁰ For this, and some of what follows, see Richard Foster Jones, "The Background of *The Battle of the Books*," *Washington University Studies*, VII, Humanistic Series, II (1920), 99-162 (reprinted in *The Seventeenth Century: Studies in the History of English Thought and Literature from Bacon to Pope* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, and London: Oxford University Press, 1951], pp. 10-40 [11-15]); Richard Foster Jones, *Ancients and Moderns: A Study of the Rise of the Scientific Movement in Seventeenth Century England*, 2nd ed. (St Louis: Washington University Press, 1961), pp. 29-37, and *passim*; Victor Harris, *All Coherence Gone: A Study of the Seventeenth-Century Controversy over Disorder and Decay in the Universe* (London: Frank Cass, 1966 [1949]), pp. 8-85.

²¹ Ronald W. Hepburn, "George Hakewill: The Virility of Nature," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 16 (1955), 135-50 (p. 143).

²² *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 7. See also Hermann J. Real, "'Beyond the Pillars of Hercules': The Role of Curiosity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Science and Philosophy," *Expanding Boundaries/Repousser les frontieres*, eds Allan Ingram

assumption in which both models were grounded, explicitly or implicitly, is the belief that Nature's 'virility' was invariable throughout the ages: *Natura est semper eadem*, her creative resources remaining always the same, as constant as inviolate. In fact, if it was correct to posit, as Samuel Daniel thought it was in *A Defence of Rhyme* (c.1603), that the Moderns "were the children of nature as well as [the Ancients]" and that, consequently, "the distribution of giftes [was] vniversall," the conclusion was ineluctable that "[it can] be but a touch of arrogant ignorance to hold this or that nation Barbarous, these or those times grosse, considering how this manifold creature man, wheresoeuer hee stand in the world, hath alwayes some disposition of worth ... and is eminent in some one thing or other that fits his humour and the times."²³

In the course of the seventeenth century, *Natura est semper eadem* was to become a sacred formula of the Moderns,²⁴ and it is no surprise therefore that the slogan resurfaced in French modernist manifestos such as Le Bovier de Fontenelle's *Nouveaux Dialogues des Morts* of 1683,²⁵ and, more particularly, his *Digression sur les Anciens & les Modernes*, published at Paris in 1688: "La Nature a entre les mains une certaine pâte qui est toujours

and Elisabeth Détiis, *Le Spectateur européen/The European Spectator*, no 6 (Montpellier, 2004), 25-52 (pp. 41-44).

²³ Samuel Daniel, "A Defence of Rhyme," *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964 [1904]), II, 366-67, 370-71.

²⁴ See, for example, Ben Jonson, *Timber: or, Discoveries*, in *Ben Jonson*, eds C. H. Herford, and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, VIII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 567; Sir Thomas Pope Blount, *Essays on Several Subjects* (London: Richard Bently, 1691), pp. 94-95; William Wotton, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (London: by J. Leake for Peter Buck, 1694), sig. a3r-v.

²⁵ For the bibliography of editions, see *Nouveaux Dialogues des Morts*, ed. Jean Dagen (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1971), pp. 86-95. References are to one of the many Paris editions of *Nouveaux dialogues des morts* (Paris: Gabriel Quinet, 1683), pp. 110-11.

la mesme, qu'elle tourne & retourne sans cesse en mille façons.”²⁶ For some reason or other, the *Digression* shortly after publication attracted the attention of Sir William Temple,²⁷ the English diplomat and statesman, who was living in the retirement of his country estate, Moor Park in Surrey.²⁸ In some respects, Sir William was a representative of the Moderns. Not only did he endorse a cyclical view of history and believe in the invariability of humankind’s creative talents,²⁹ he also advocated a comparative approach to the history of culture(s), a thoroughly modern feature figuring prominently in the origins of historical consciousness.³⁰ Nevertheless, in his response to Fontenelle, “An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning” of October 1690,³¹ Temple reacted with anger and indignation at Fontenelle’s “[gross] censure of the Old Poetry, and preference of the New.”³² His justification

²⁶ The *Digression* was published as a part of *Poésies pastorales* (Paris: Michel Guerout, 1688), pp. 226-27, 266-67. Both the *Digression* and the *Nouveaux Dialogues des Morts* were in Swift’s library (PASSMANN AND VIENKEN II, 1055-58).

²⁷ Pierre Marambaud speculates that Temple’s son John, who happened to be in Paris in January 1688 when the *Digression* was published (*Martha Lady Giffard: Her Life and Correspondence, 1664-1722*, ed. Julia G. Longe [London: George Allen, 1911], pp. 54-55), may have alerted his father to it (*Sir William Temple: sa vie, son œuvre* [Paris: Minard, 1968], p. 107n15).

²⁸ Homer E. Woodbridge, *Sir William Temple: The Man and his Work* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, and London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 210-18.

²⁹ Clara Marburg, *Sir William Temple: A Seventeenth-Century “Libertin”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, London: Humphrey Milford, 1932), pp. 26-71.

³⁰ *Sir William Temples Essays “Upon Ancient and Modern Learning” und “Of Poetry”*: eine historisch-kritische Ausgabe mit Einleitung und Kommentar, ed. Martin Kämper (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 19, 171 (*ad* 19.669-70); 72-73, 316-17 (*ad* 72.1149-57). See also Preface to Temple’s *Miscellanea: The Third Part*, pp. □□.

³¹ First published in *Miscellanea: The Second Part* (London: by T. M. for Ri. and Ra. Simpson, 1690), pp. 1-72, on 2 October 1690. The second edition came out on 17 November 1690, and the third, described as “Corrected and Augmented by the Author,” two years later, on 3 November 1692.

³² *Sir William Temples Essays “Upon Ancient and Modern Learning” und “Of Poetry”*, ed. Kämper, pp. 2, 129-30 (*ad* 2.29-30).

was moralistic. As he explained at some length in retrospect many years later, “one great Difference ... between the Antient and Modern Learning” was ethical stature. While their learning led the Ancients “to a Sense and Acknowledgment of their own Ignorance, the Imbecility of Human Understanding,” he argued, the Moderns were led “to Presumption, and vain Ostentation of the little [they had] learned.”³³ Besides, in Sir William’s view, the identity of human creative *potential* throughout the ages did not automatically entail equality of achievement, let alone guarantee factuality of superiority. “THE Nature of Man seems to be the same in all times and places,” he grumpily admitted in “An Essay upon the Original and Nature of Government,” but then, weight had to be given to the impact of varying historical contexts. Due to the numerous factors that played a part in the realization of potential, Nature varied in appearance, “by the force and influence of the several Climates ... by a different mixture of the humours and operation of the Air, a different and unequal course of Imaginations and Passions, and consequently of Discourses and Actions.”³⁴

In casting around for ‘proof by instances,’ Sir William chanced upon two ‘arguments’ both of which were to boomerang. For one, he was unable to resist a leading question that for the adherents of the Baconian New Science amounted to a disparagement of their celebrated institutional symbol, the Royal Society: “Have the Studies, the Writings, the Productions of *Gresham* Colledge,” he sneered, “out-shined or ecclipsed the Lycæum of *Plato*, the Academy of *Aristotle*, the Stoa of *Zeno*, the Garden of *Epicurus*?”³⁵ For another, in presenting ‘evidence’ for his contention that “the oldest Books we have, are still in their kind the best,” Temple hit upon

³³ “Some Thoughts upon Reviewing the Essay of Antient and Modern Learning,” *Miscellanea: The Third Part* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1701), pp. 283-84. For Temple as moral philosopher, see Marburg, *Sir William Temple: A Seventeenth-Century “Libertin”*, pp. 1-25.

³⁴ *Miscellanea* (London: by A. M. and R. R. for Edward Gellibrand, 1680), pp. 45-46. See also Ricardo Quintana, *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (London: Methuen, 1953), pp. 76-81.

³⁵ *Sir William Temples Essays “Upon Ancient and Modern Learning” und “Of Poetry”*, ed. Kämper, pp. 30-31, 205 (ad 30.1094-95).

the Epistles of the Sicilian tyrant Phalaris, which he took “to have more Race, more Spirit, more Force and Genius than any others [he had] ever seen, either antient and modern,” as well as the Fables of Aesop, who had been “agreed by all Ages ... for the greatest Master in his kind.”³⁶ Both Aesop and Phalaris were rather mythical figures, vaguely located in the sixth century BC, and since next to nothing was known about them, their status as witnesses for the supremacy of Antiquity was doubtful from the start.³⁷

In fact, less than four years were enough to raise the public awareness that the distinguished diplomat had seriously compromised himself. The first to call Sir William’s good taste and judgement in doubt was a young country clergyman, William Wotton (1666-1727), chaplain of the Tory politician Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham.³⁸ Contemporaries would marvel at his proficiency in a wide variety of languages as well as his encyclopedic erudition.³⁹ There is no evidence that the Royal Society commissioned its defence,⁴⁰ it is true, but Wotton, who had been a member since December 1687,⁴¹ seemed ideally suited for a treatise which was intended to survey

³⁶ *Sir William Temples Essays “Upon Ancient and Modern Learning” und “Of Poetry”*, ed. Kämper, pp. 32-33, 212-13 (ad 32.1168-71, 33.1172-73).

³⁷ *The Battle of the Books*, p. 50, ll. 14-16.

³⁸ The best account of Wotton’s life and work is by Marie-Luise Spieckermann, *William Wottons “Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning” im Kontext der englischen “Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes”* (Frankfurt am Main and Bern: Peter Lang, 1981). For his patron Nottingham, to whom the *Reflections* is dedicated, see Henry Horwitz, *Revolution Politicks: The Career of Daniel Finch, Second Earl of Nottingham, 1647-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

³⁹ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), IV, 172-73; *Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys, 1679-1703*, ed. J. R. Tanner, 2 vols (London: George Bell, 1926), I, 95-98. See also the *testimonia* in John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 6 vols (New York: AMS Press, 1966 [1812-15]), IV, 253-63.

⁴⁰ A careful consideration of the available facts is provided by Spieckermann, *William Wottons “Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning”*, pp. 18-21.

⁴¹ Michael Hunter, *The Royal Society and its Fellows, 1660-1700: The Morphology of an Early Scientific Institution*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: British Society for the Society of Science, 1994), p. 214 (F 436).

almost the whole spectrum of arts and sciences, *and* the various achievements in them, before arriving at a decision whether the Ancients or the Moderns were to be declared victorious.

Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* duly appeared on 2 July 1694.⁴² The young scholar proved well mannered and discriminating in tone, not only emphasizing his endeavour "to act the Part of a Mediator, and to give to every Side its just due," but also conceding that in some arts, such as eloquence and poetry, "the Ancients may have out-done the Moderns." His overall conclusion, however, with its distinct invocation of Bacon's 'linear progress,' was a crushing repudiation of Temple and everything he stood for: "The World has gone on, from Age to Age, improving; and ... it is at present much more knowing that it ever was since the earliest Times to which History can carry us."⁴³ While Wotton does not seem to have scored a sensational success with this argument,⁴⁴ some of his readers were impressed; the reviewer for *Miscellaneous Letters*, for example, went as far as to recommend the *Reflections* as "so valuable and

⁴² The Preface is dated 11 June 1694 (sig. a7r). Less than a month later, on 7 July, Evelyn told his friend Pepys that he had received a complimentary copy (*Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers*, ed. Tanner, I, 95). By contrast, Abel Boyer assumes that publication still occurred in June (*Memoirs of the Life and Negotiations of Sir W. Temple, Bar.* [London: W. Taylor, 1714], p. 389).

⁴³ *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, sigs A7v, a7r, pp. 20-45, 61-77. Even his antagonists would later acknowledge that Wotton's tone was "modest and decent," and that he spoke "generally with respect of those he differ[ed] from" (*Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examin'd*, 3rd ed. [London: Tho. Bennet, 1699], p. 24; future references are to this edition).

⁴⁴ The explanation probably is that Wotton's belief in Baconian linear progress was the standard conviction of the time, being in line with the "dominant Anglican theological bias [which] favoured the idea of progress - towards Chistianity's theological and moral improvements, as well as the improvements in science and art consequent upon Christian enlightenment" (Howard D. Weinbrot, "He Will Kill Me Over and Over Again': Intellectual Contexts of the Battle of the Books," *Reading Swift* [2003], pp. 231-33).

comprehensive ... that it justly deserves a room in every Gentleman's Closet."⁴⁵

Meanwhile, events were set in motion in Oxford that caused considerable academic and social brouhaha. The Dean of Christ Church, Dr Henry Aldrich, had felt sufficiently inspired by Sir William's praise of the Epistles of Phalaris as to encourage a young nobleman, Charles Boyle, son of the Earl of Orrery and one of his favourite students,⁴⁶ to venture on a new edition.⁴⁷ This was published as a New Year's gift on 1 January 1695 under the title *Phalaridis Agrigentinarum Tyranni Epistolae*,⁴⁸ and ushered into the world with handsome compliments to both Aldrich and Temple.⁴⁹ At the time, Boyle was but a young B.A., and it is doubtful whether he was up to this job yet. The least one can hold against him is that, in his inexperience, he allowed himself to become dependent upon the assistance of others. Instead of travelling to London in order to collate a manuscript in the Royal Library, where the haughty and imperious Richard Bentley was librarian, Boyle commissioned a local bookseller, Thomas Bennet (1664/5-1706), who had rather a strong "Christ Church connexion,"⁵⁰ to do the work for him, but

⁴⁵ *Miscellaneous Letters, Giving an Account of the Works of the Learned*, no 3 (London, 1694), p. 52; see also no 2, pp. 29-35.

⁴⁶ Aldrich's *Artis logicæ compendium* (Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1691) was dedicated to Boyle. The young student reciprocated by dedicating his edition of the Phalaris letters to Aldrich.

⁴⁷ For this, and parts of what follows, the Editors are indebted to James Henry Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley, D.D.* (London: C. J. G. and F. Rivington, *et al.*, 1830), pp. 45-107, and W. G. Hiscock, *Henry Aldrich of Christ Church, 1648-1710* (Oxford: Holywell Press, 1960), pp. 50-56. A very good recent account, with a full bibliography of further studies, may be found in Weinbrot, "'He Will Kill Me Over and Over Again': Intellectual Contexts of the Battle of the Books," pp. 234-47.

⁴⁸ Harry Carter, *A History of the Oxford University Press*, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 147, 261.

⁴⁹ *Phalaridis Agrigentinarum Tyranni Epistolae*, ed. Charles Boyle (Oxford: Johannes Crooke, 1695), sigs a1r, a3r.

⁵⁰ Norma Hodgson and Cyprian Blagden, *The Notebook of Thomas Bennet and Henry Clements, 1686-1719*, Oxford Bibliographical Society Publications, new ser., 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 3-5.

who, in turn, commissioned a ‘collator.’ What exactly happened is not entirely clear due to the bias and partisanship of the sources,⁵¹ but it seems that a combination of circumstances conspired in young Boyle’s (and his tutors’) embarrassment. It is possible that Bentley, who was upset about the deplorable state of the library,⁵² thought it unfit for use and that, as a result, he proved uncooperative; it seems equally possible that Bennet was incompetent or dilatory or both. Whichever the case, on his agent’s confession that he, or rather the ‘collator’ on whom he had offloaded the work, had been unable to finish his task, Boyle felt snubbed, and he decided to make Bentley’s discourtesy public, complaining in the Preface about the “singular humanity” for which the librarian was so justly known: “[*Epistolas collatas etiam curavi usque ad Epist. 40 cum MS in Bibliothecâ Regiâ, cuius mihi copiam ulteriorem Bibliothecarius pro singulari suâ humanitate negavit.*”⁵³

Friends close to Bentley, and familiar with his formidable scholarship, knew that he would not let the matter rest there. According to his own account, he immediately wrote to Boyle and demanded that the offensive statement be withdrawn. The young nobleman unapologetically replied that the bookseller had represented the matter quite otherwise, and that he preferred to believe this alternative version.⁵⁴ Bentley thereupon decided on a new course for ‘revenge.’

⁵¹ The most important of these are the accounts of the leading antagonists themselves; see, in addition to the bibliographical data listed in note 53, F. B., *A Free but Modest Censure on the Late Controversial Writings and Debates ... the Hon. Charles Boyle, Esq. and Dr Bentley* (London: A. Baldwin, 1698), pp. 16-21; *Biographia Britannica*, ed. Andrew Kippis, 2nd ed., 5 vols (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1974 [1778-93]), II, 224-47 (pp. 226-28).

⁵² *The Battle of the Books*, p. 37, ll. 13-15.

⁵³ *Phalaridis Agrigentinarum Tyranni epistolæ*, sig. a4v. For the public impact of this remark, see *The Battle of the Books*, p. 36, ll. 35-36; p. 40, ll. 33-34.

⁵⁴ *A Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris: With an Answer to the Objections of the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esquire* (London: by J. H. for Henry Mortlock and John Hartley, 1699), pp. v-vi. By contrast, Boyle’s version of the events is in *Dr Bentley’s Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examin’d*, pp. 2-10. A

As early as 1693, shortly after the third corrected edition of Temple's *Miscellanea: The Second Part* had come out, Bentley had confided to fellow scholars that in his view the Epistles of Phalaris, as well as the Fables of Aesop, "could not be genuine."⁵⁵ Somewhat later, he told a German correspondent, Johann Georg Graevius, the eminent classical scholar and critic at the University of Utrecht (1632-1703), that "he accidentally mentioned" this conviction to his "old friend William Wotton" when the young clergyman was "at work refuting [Sir William Temple's *Essay*]" in his *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*. On hearing this, Wotton "implored Bentley to write about the matter in a dissertation, to be published together with the truly learned [*Reflections*]" : "Hunc librum refutandum suscepit Gulielmus Wottonus amicus noster; qui cum forte ex me audierat Phalaridis Epistolas esse commentitias, Fabulasque, ut nunc quidem extant, Æsopi non esse; per veterem, quæ sibi mecum intercedit, amicitiam obsecrans impetravit, ut Dissertationem ea de re scriberem una cum libro suo erudito sane et bono publicandam."⁵⁶ While Bentley was glad to oblige, he did not manage to complete his *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris* in time to come out with the first edition of the *Reflections* in July 1694, no doubt because he was busy writing his Boyle lectures in 1692 and 1693.⁵⁷ But Bentley nonetheless lived up to his promise. In January 1696/7, he told John

third, seemingly more impartial one, with 'depositions' by Bennet, his 'collator' George Gibson, and the eyewitness King was published in the Appendix of *A Short Account of Dr Bentley's Humanity and Justice* (London: Thomas Bennet, 1699), pp. 97-139.

⁵⁵ Letter to Joshua Barnes, 22 February 1692/3, *The Correspondence of Richard Bentley, D.D.*, ed. Christopher Wordsworth, 2 vols (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1977 [1842]), I, 64-69 (p. 64).

⁵⁶ Letter to Johann Georg Graevius, 15 February 1698, *The Correspondence of Richard Bentley, D.D.*, ed. Wordsworth, I, 159-65 (p. 164).

⁵⁷ Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, p. 43; Richard Bentley, *The Works*, ed. Alexander Dyce, 3 vols (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1971 [1836-38]), III, v-vi.

Evelyn: “I am now upon a Job for our friend Mr. Wotton.”⁵⁸ The job was finished, apparently in some haste, by July 1697 when the *Dissertation* finally appeared as an appendix to the second edition of Wotton’s *Reflections*,⁵⁹ supplying linguistic, chronological, and numismatic evidence that the works attributed to those shady figures Phalaris and Aesop were forgeries of far more recent ages, and concluding that, therefore, Sir William Temple’s argument about the supremacy of the Ancients was null and void.⁶⁰ However, unlike Wotton, Bentley was not prepared to exercise verbal restraint. Not only did he demonstrate with surgical precision the shoddiness of Boyle’s edition, he also made no bones about his conviction that the “young Gentleman of great Hopes, whose Name is set to the Edition” was less to blame than the members of the College hierarchy who had sent him on a fool’s errand. His *Dissertation* is permeated with caustic and ironical comments highlighting not so much the editor’s errors as those of the editor’s collective,⁶¹ and “occasion[ing] his adversaries all the mortification which he thought they deserved.”⁶²

At Christ Church, Boyle’s tutors were stung to the quick by Bentley’s criticism, and together they set up a ‘defence committee,’ consisting of various distinguished members of the College. At this stage, young Charles apparently volunteered, or was asked, to step into the background, allegedly because he had to attend to his parliamentary duties in Ireland.⁶³ For face-

⁵⁸ Letter to John Evelyn, 12 January 1696/7, *The Correspondence of Richard Bentley, D.D.*, ed. Wordsworth, I, 132-34 (p. 134).

⁵⁹ See the individual lemmata in THE BOOKSELLER TO THE READER, p. 31, ll. 5-6; ll. 11-12.

⁶⁰ *A Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, pp. 5-6.

⁶¹ *A Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, pp. 68 and 22 (“late learned Editors”), 29 (“our late Editors”), 44 (“our late industrious Editors”), 58 (“our diligent Editors”).

⁶² Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, p. 65.

⁶³ *Dr Bentley’s Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examined*, sig. A2r. It is not known with any degree of certainty, first, who the various members of the group were, and, second, who was responsible for what parts of what in the subsequent public debate was referred to as ‘Boyle’s’ *Examination*. Half a century later, Bishop William Warburton claimed that Pope, “who had been let into the

saving purposes, though, the group decided to keep his name on the title page of their rejoinder, *Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Aesop Examined*, the first three editions of which were all published in 1698.⁶⁴ The main burden of the work was carried by Boyle's tutor, Dr Francis Atterbury, who was to succeed Aldrich as Dean of Christ Church, presumably supported by his intimate associate Dr Robert Friend, later Headmaster of Westminster School.⁶⁵ In a letter Atterbury wrote to Boyle shortly afterwards, he complained about the "time and trouble this matter cost" him: "In laying the design of the book, in writing above half of it, in reviewing a good part of the rest, in transcribing the whole, and attending the press, half a year of my life went away."⁶⁶ There is a marked note of irritation in Atterbury's voice, and this may account for the fact that the rumour of 'Boyle's' *Examination* having been authored by a group of Christ Church wits was disseminated soon after its appearance,⁶⁷ possibly by the frustrated Atterbury himself.⁶⁸

secret, concerning the Oxford performance," had told him that "Boyle wrote only the narrative of what passed between him and the Bookseller, which too was corrected for him" (*Letters from a Late Eminent Prelate to One of his Friends*, 2nd ed. [London: Cadell, 1809], p. 11). See also on the contested issue of attribution, Colin J. Horne, "The Phalaris Controversy: King *versus* Bentley," *Review of English Studies*, 22 (1946), 289-303.

⁶⁴ The precise bibliographical data are listed in note 15.

⁶⁵ *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 378 and n1; II, 146 and n4; *Letters from a Late Eminent Prelate to One of his Friends*, p. 11.

⁶⁶ Francis Atterbury, *The Epistolary Correspondence, Visitation Charges, Speeches, and Miscellanies*, ed. John Nichols, 2 vols (London: J. Nichols, 1783), II, 21-22. In addition to Aldrich, other sources also name George Smalridge, the later Bishop of Bristol (*Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 531n) as a collaborator (*The Original Works of William King*, 3 vols [London, 1776], I, xiiin°; Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, p. 68).

⁶⁷ *The Battle of the Books*, p. 51, ll. 27-28.

⁶⁸ See, in addition to *The Epistolary Correspondence*, ed. Nichols, II, 22-23, Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and Collections*, eds C. E. Doble, *et al.*, 11 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885-1923), II, 78.

Even so, all contributors laboured hard in coming to their young scholar's rescue. Not only did they seriously endeavour to foil the daunting Bentley "upon his own *Dunghil*," as Tom Brown vigorously put it,⁶⁹ they also ridiculed his method in the spoof, attributed to another Christ Church graduate, Dr William King,⁷⁰ that Bentley could not conceivably be the author of his own *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*.⁷¹ Finally, they stigmatized Bentley on a ground on which he was most vulnerable, that of character and class. In fact, the whole of the *Examination* is studded with denunciations of Bentley's moral and social 'eminence,'⁷² and what was originally a controversy about a question of historical facticity, the spuriousness of the epistles of Phalaris, was turned into an issue of ethics and origins. Regrettably, for Bentley, 'Boyle's' *Examination* took the town by storm,⁷³ and, as a result, it was this aspect, rather than the impressive

⁶⁹ *Familiar and Courtly Letters*, 3rd ed. (London, 1701), p. 134.

⁷⁰ *Correspondence*, ed. Woolley, I, 241n7.

⁷¹ *Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examin'd*, pp. 184-201. For King's authorship of this "droll argument," see, in addition to Warburton, *Letters from a Late Eminent Prelate to One of his Friends*, p. 11, Horne, "The Phalaris Controversy: King versus Bentley," pp. 290-93.

⁷² *Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examin'd*, pp. 11, 17, 24, 50, 91-92, 127-28, 202, 222-27. Modern critics have gone so far as to argue that "Dr. Bentley's only subject in *Phalaris* was really himself" (Robert Adams Day, "Richard Bentley and John Dunton: Brothers under the Skin," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 16 [1986], 125-38 [p. 128]). For the 'class' factor in the Christ Church wits' response, see Weinbrot, "'He Will Kill Me Over and Over Again': Intellectual Contexts of the Battle of the Books," pp. 239.

⁷³ Solomon Whately, "An Answer to a Late Book Written against the Learned and Reverend Dr Bentley (1699)," *Classical Journal*, 9 (1814), 174; "Dr Charlett's Letter to the Honourable Mr Charles Boyle concerning the Answer to Dr Bentley," *The Orrery Papers*, ed. [Emily Charlotte {De Burgh-Canning} Boyle], Countess of Cork and Orrery, 2 vols (London: Duckworth, 1903), I, 19-20; Samuel Garth, *The Dispensary*, in *Poems on Affairs of State*, ed. Ellis, VI, 108 (ll. 73-74); *A Short Account of Dr Bentley's Humanity and Justice*, pp. 2-3, 78; William King, *Dialogues of the Dead* (London: A. Baldwin, 1699), p. 45; Abel Boyer, *Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality* (London: J. Hartley, 1701), pp. 218-19; [Thomas Newcomb], *Bibliotheca: A Poem, Occasion'd by the Sight of a Modern Library* (London: Printed in the Year, 1712), p. 5; Richard C. Boys, *Sir*

scholarship, which lasted in the public awareness and which proved to be most influential.⁷⁴ Not least, it may have goaded the young Jonathan Swift, then Sir William Temple's secretary at Moor Park,⁷⁵ into joining the fray, being among the many who resented "*a certain great Man ... universally revered for every good Quality*" unfairly treated.⁷⁶ Ostensibly, it was not considered to be in accordance with good manners to contradict, let alone refute, a social superior, no matter how wrong that superior's views were, the "Itch of opposing Great Names upon very slight or no Grounds [being] a Chief and Distinguishing Mark of Pedantry."⁷⁷

In retrospect, however, as Macaulay has emphasized, "[Boyle's *Examination*] really deserves the praise, whatever that praise may be worth, of being the best book ever written by any man on the wrong side of a question of which he was profoundly ignorant."⁷⁸ Unimpressed, Bentley drew

Richard Blackmore and the Wits: A Study of "Commendatory Verses on the Author of the Two Arthurs and the Satyr against Wit" (1700) (New York: Octagon, 1969 [1949]), pp. 21-24; Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age*, pp. 65-71.

⁷⁴ Hiscock, in *Henry Aldrich of Christ Church*, puts the case nicely: "The college put manners before scholarship" (p. 55).

⁷⁵ Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 169-79.

⁷⁶ *A Tale of a Tub*, p. □. See also *The Battle of the Books*, p. 31, ll. 12-13.

⁷⁷ *Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris ... Examin'd*, pp. 157 and 97. Three rather representative examples of this attitude are George Smalridge's reaction as recorded by John Nichols: "This at least I am confident of, that all persons of quality and good breeding will declare against [Bentley], when it shall appear how clownishly, and unlike either a gentleman or a scholar, he has treated Mr. Boyle and Sir William Temple, who have something at least of both" (*Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols [New York: AMS Press, 1969 {1817-58}], III, 268-69); William King's 'deposition' sent to Bennet, the bookseller (*A Short Account of Dr Bentley's Humanity and Justice*, pp. 134-35), and Atterbury's *A Short Review of the Controversy between Mr Boyle and Dr Bentley* (London: A. Baldwin, 1701), pp. 36-37.

⁷⁸ *Works*, 8 vols (New York, London, Bombay: Longmans, 1897), VI, 321. Earlier, the German philosopher and poet, Johann Gottfried von Herder, had come to a

strength from the public scorn, losing no time over his response. As early as April 1698, only a month after the publication of ‘Boyle’s’ *Examination*, he was at work on it. In a letter to Evelyn, he assured his friend that “the Book [was] not so formidable as the Authors of it believed it.” But, he continued with enviable self-confidence, he was “desirous, to have it pass for an unanswerable piece; for it will be the more surprising and glorious to confute it; which ... I shall do with that clearness and fullness in every particular, great and little, both points of Learning and points of Fact, that the Authors will be ashamed, if any shame can be expected in them, after this present specimen.”⁷⁹ Meanwhile, at Christ Church, the wits were unfazed, too. They had information that Bentley was preparing a rejoinder to ‘Boyle’s’ *Examination* but were perfectly happy to joke about it.⁸⁰ Even if they expected that this second *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, when it finally appeared in February 1699,⁸¹ would triumphantly clinch the case in Bentley’s favour, they seem to have felt no need to worry. And indeed, “immortal” though the second *Dissertation* may be in the eyes of posterity

similar conclusion (*Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, 33 vols [Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1886], XXIV, 184).

⁷⁹ *The Correspondence of Richard Bentley, D.D.*, ed. Wordsworth, I, 167. Although Bentley expected to go to press at the end of the month, he had not yet finished in July, as a letter by Wotton to a correspondent in Holland, Jean Le Clerc, reveals: “Famoso huic libello responsionem parat Bentlejus, et ... non dubitat quin omnes adversariorum calumnias ita repellat, ut et innocentia sua, et eruditio qualis qualis sit, multo quam antea illustrior prodibit” (Abraham des Amorie van der Hoeven, *De Joanne Clerico et Philippo a Limborch dissertationes duae* [Amsterdam: Frederick Muller, 1843], p. 84).

⁸⁰ In his *Journey to London*, William King quipped: “I would have seen a very Famous Library, near St. James’s Park, but I was told, that the Learned Library Keeper was so busy in answering a Book which has been lately wrote against him, concerning *Phalaris*, that it would be rudeness any ways to interrupt him” ([London: A. Baldwin, 1698], p. 23). A few years later, King’s contributions to the quarrel were conveniently assembled in *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (London: Bernard Lintott and Henry Clements, [1709] [PASSMANN AND VIENKEN II, 1009-10]).

⁸¹ *The Term Catalogues*, III, 110.

on account of its plethora of information on ancient history and chronology, philology and criticism,⁸² it hardly affected the contemporary verdict on the issue as this had crystallized after the publication of ‘Boyle’s’ “unanswerable piece”:⁸³ the point at issue was no longer a problem of scholarship but one of character. Resuming the quarrel for a lost cause in 1701 and forcing a personal issue, Atterbury, in his unsavoury *A Short Review of the Controversy between Mr Boyle and Dr Bentley*, did his best to harp on this very feature. Like the spate of pamphleteers who climbed upon the bandwagon after 1699,⁸⁴ he held forth against Bentley’s “Lying, Stealing, and Prevaricating,” his “rudeness and abuses,” his “indecent and irreverence,” as well as his “impudence and want of sense.”⁸⁵ The upshot was only too clear. Never had the wit of a young illustrious gentleman, or so the general tenor went, triumphed as gloriously over a stiff, haughty, and ill-bred pedant.⁸⁶

The question remains why it took Swift some six to seven years after composition to publish the *Battle*. Three explanations, all of which reinforce each other, suggest themselves.

The first is that his patron discouraged Swift. Sir William had been instrumental in instigating the conflict in 1690, and he may have felt by 1699

⁸² Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, p. 93; Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1959 [1927]), p. 36; Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 143-58 (146-52).

⁸³ Whately, “An Answer to a Late Book Written against the Learned and Reverend Dr Bentley,” p. 174.

⁸⁴ See the full bibliography in Bartholomew and Clark, *Richard Bentley*, pp. 28-38; GUTHKELCH, pp. 297-305.

⁸⁵ London: A. Baldwin, 1701, pp. 12-13, 18, 28, 45, 68-72, and *passim* (Bartholomew and Clark, *Richard Bentley*, p. 38 [*129]).

⁸⁶ Tom Brown, *Familiar and Courtly Letters*, pp. 133-34. Some of the pamphlets contributed to the fray after 1699 reveal the focus on ‘character’ in their very titles; see, for example, *A Short Account of Dr Bentley’s Humanity and Justice* (London: Thomas Bennet, 1699); *A Short Review of the Controversy between Mr Boyle and Dr Bentley: With Suitable Reflections upon it, and the Dr’s Advantageous Character of Himself* (London: A. Baldwin, 1701).

that almost a decade of paper-warring, some of it hurtful, scathing, and bitter, was enough. In “Of Poetry,” he had gone to some lengths to condemn a “Vein which [had] entered and helpt to Corrupt” modern poetry, that of ridicule and raillery, which in his view made no distinction between “the Good [and] the Ill, the Guilty and the Innocent.”⁸⁷ This assumption is corroborated by the fact that Temple resisted publishing his own rejoinder to Wotton, “Some Thoughts upon Reviewing the Essay of Antient and Modern Learning,” during his lifetime.⁸⁸

The second explanation takes additional account of the ‘class’ factor. In a letter written in March 1698, shortly after ‘Boyle’s’ *Examination* had come out, Temple justified his refusal to continue his engagement in the controversy with the seigneurial ‘argument’ that Bentley did not have enough merit to be ‘honoured’ with his contempt. He had “no mind,” he assured his anonymous correspondent, “to *Enter the List, with such a Mean, Dull, Unmannerly PEDANT.*”⁸⁹ In other words, Bentley, and his ‘ilk,’ was beneath Sir William’s dignity.

The third explanation may be more pragmatically humdrum but is perhaps the most plausible. After Sir William’s death in January 1699,⁹⁰ his secretary had quite a number of chores on his hands. By mid-1699, Swift had returned to Ireland as the Earl of Berkeley’s chaplain, and on each of

⁸⁷ *Sir William Temples Essays “Upon Ancient and Modern Learning” und “Of Poetry”*, ed. Kämper, pp. 69-71, 307-9 (ad 69.1038-71.1100, 69.1048-52). The explanation that Swift was prevented from publishing the *Battle* in 1698 because Temple resented its tone of ‘ridicule’ is favoured by, among others, Ricardo Quintana, *Swift: An Introduction* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 45, and Herbert Davis, *Jonathan Swift: Essays on his Satire and Other Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 106.

⁸⁸ A draft, written out by Swift, still exists among Temple’s papers. This material was subsequently worked up and published posthumously in *Miscellanea: The Third Part* of 1701 under the title “Some Thoughts upon Reviewing the Essay of Antient and Modern Learning” (Preface to Temple’s *Miscellanea: The Third Part*, pp. □□).

⁸⁹ *A Short Account of Dr Bentley’s Humanity and Justice*, p. 140.

⁹⁰ Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 256-57.

his visits to England in the summers of 1701 and 1702,⁹¹ he, in discharge of his trust, had been obliged to prepare lengthy works of Sir William Temple's for the press, *Miscellanea: The Third Part* and *Letters to the King*.⁹² The subsequent journey, in the winter of 1703/4, was a resolute move to attend to his own concerns at last, and with the manuscripts of *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books* in his luggage, it was no doubt a well calculated one, too.

II

Scholarly debate about the *Battle's* sources, or 'sources,' has been marred from the beginning by a careless, if not malicious, remark Wotton made in his *Defense of the Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* of 1705: "And I have been assured," he scoffed, "that the *Battel in St. James's Library* is *Mutatis Mutandis* taken out of a *French Book*, entituled, *Combat des Livres*, if I misremember not."⁹³ Wotton was referring to the prose *Histoire poétique de la guerre nouvellement déclarée entre les Anciens et les Modernes* by a French diplomat, François de Callières (1645-1717), which had been published anonymously in Paris and Amsterdam a few years earlier (1687-88).⁹⁴ Although he admitted never to have seen, let alone read,

⁹¹ Preface to Temple's *Letters*, pp. □□.

⁹² See Preface to Temple's *Miscellanea: The Third Part*, pp. , and Preface to Temple's *Letters to the King*, pp. .

⁹³ *The Defense* appeared not only as an appendix to the third edition of Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* in June 1705 ([London: Tim. Goodwin, 1705], pp. 471-541 [540]), but also as a separate issue (p. 68 [TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 223]; *The Term Catalogues*, III, 473; Bartholomew and Clark, *Richard Bentley*, p. 40 [*133]).

⁹⁴ Although contemporaries already knew that de Callières was the author (see, for example, Pierre des Maizeaux, *La Vie de Monsieur Boileau Despréaux* [Amsterdam: Schelte, 1712], pp. 166-67), Craik claimed as late as 1882 to have been the first to identify him (*The Life of Jonathan Swift* [London: John Murray, 1882], pp. 70-73). For his biography and bibliography, see K. W. Schweizer,

the *Histoire poétique*, Wotton was rash, and brash, enough to base a verdict of plagiarism on the ‘evidence’ of hearsay, the vague recollection of somebody else’s memory (“*Mutatis Mutandis*”), and unreliable reminiscences of his own (“if I misremember not”). This is the stuff controversies are made of. Predictably, Swift reacted with indignation and anger, rejecting Wotton’s insinuation in the Apology of 1710 out of hand: “*I know nothing more contemptible in a Writer than the Character of a Plagiary ... The Author is as much in the dark about this as the Answerer; and will imitate him by an Affirmation at Random; that if there be a word of Truth in this Reflection, he is a poultry, imitating Pedant, and the Answerer is a Person of Wit, Manners, and Truth*” (pp. □□). But posterity has chosen not to believe Swift, at least not for a long while. A considerable number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critics continued to reiterate Wotton’s condemnation, among them, eminent biographers like Samuel Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, and Sir Henry Craik.⁹⁵ If this flat-footed squib *did* stir Swift’s imagination, it is, rather than the text, the unsigned panoramic engraving of the celestial field of battle, which was folded into the preliminaries of the duodecimo volume.⁹⁶ Measuring 16 by 20 inches, it is a splendid specimen

François de Callières, Diplomat and Man of Letters, 1645-1717 (Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995).

⁹⁵ See, in addition to *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 40 (1770), 159, Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), III, 189-214 [pp. 193, 435]; Donald M. Berwick, *The Reputation of Jonathan Swift, 1781-1882* (Philadelphia, 1941), pp. 35 and n2, 69-70; SCOTT I, 45; Richard Gosche, “Jonathan Swift,” *Jahrbuch für Literaturgeschichte*, 1 (1865), 138-74 (p. 151); Craik, *The Life of Jonathan Swift*, p. 71; Otto Diede, *Der Streit der Alten und Modernen in der englischen Literaturgeschichte des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Greifswald: Hans Adler, 1912), pp. 133-134; PONS, pp. 271-73; Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, and London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 109, 262-64n49; and, most recently, Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age*, pp. 111n79, 129-31.

⁹⁶ This panorama is present in the British Library copy (shelfmark 1088.d.19).

of the French art of copper engraving. At the foot of a range of high mountains, among which Mont Parnasse and Mont Helicon are designated, and at a lower level “Hippocrene fontaine,” is a tree-clad plain upon which the opposing armies are deployed in order of battle. Each squadron is represented by an oblong outline labelled by literary genre and with the names of writers or their books.⁹⁷

However, there were other contenders from the start, the majority of them also French and many of them also proposed by speakers of French. In 1705, Jacques Bernard, the editor of the (Continental) *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*, suggested two prose tracts by Gabriel Guéret (1641-88), *La Guerre des auteurs anciens et modernes* of 1671, and *Le Parnasse réformé*, originally published in Paris in 1669 and reprinted in 1671 and 1674.⁹⁸ Shortly after, the francophone refugee and journalist Abel Boyer (c.1677-1729) supplemented this proposal with one of his own, the *Nouvelle allégorique ou histoire des derniers troubles arrivés au Royaume d'Éloquence*, by the noted satirist and lexicographer, Antoine Furetière (1619-88).⁹⁹ In the nineteenth century, finally, the list was augmented by

⁹⁷ Unsurprisingly, in 1705, within a year of publishing *The Battle of the Books*, an English translation of this work, entitled *Characters and Criticisms upon the Ancient and Modern Orators*, complete with an inferior smaller re-engraving of the plate as frontispiece (see the facsimile in Levine, *The Battle of the Books*, p. 130) was published in London by John Nutt. The same sheets were reissued with a cancel title in 1714 (A. C. Guthkelch, “The Tale of a Tub, Revers’d’ and ‘Characters and Criticisms upon the Ancient and Modern Orators, etc.,” *The Library*, 3rd ser., 4 [1913], 270-84; GUTHKELCH AND NICHOL SMITH, p. xlix and n4).

⁹⁸ *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*, 4 (1705), 343.

⁹⁹ Abel Boyer, *Memoirs of the Life and Negotiations of Sir W. Temple*, Bar. (London: W. Taylor, 1714), pp. 405-6. See also PONS, p. 273; William Henry Irving, “Boccalini and Swift,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 7 (1973-74), 143-60 (pp. 145-46).

The *Nouvelle allégorique* is most easily available in the modern edition by Eva van Ginneken (Genf: Librairie Droz, 1967).

Boileau's *Le Lutrin*,¹⁰⁰ and in the twentieth by Boccacini's *Ragguagli di Parnasso*,¹⁰¹ to which Swift refers in *A Tale of a Tub* (p. □□) and of which he may have seen the English translation by Henry Earl of Monmouth.¹⁰²

For a variety of reasons, none of these 'models' may be regarded as a serious source of inspiration for *The Battle of the Books*.¹⁰³ For one, with the exception of Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, none was in Swift's library.¹⁰⁴ For another,

¹⁰⁰ W. H. Davenport Adams, "Dean Swift," *Good Queen Anne*, 2 vols (London: 1886), II, 15; endorsed by Karlernst Schmidt, *Vorstudien zu einer Geschichte des komischen Epos* (Halle, Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1953), pp. 97-98; and Hight, *Anatomy of Satire*, pp. 263-64.

¹⁰¹ Richard Thomas, "Trajano Boccacini's *Ragguagli di Parnaso* and its Influence upon English Literature," *Aberystwyth Studies*, 3 (1922), 73-102 (p. 89); Irving, "Boccacini and Swift," pp. 143-45.

¹⁰² *Ragguagli di Parnasso: or, Advertisements from Parnassus*, 3rd ed. (London: Peter Parker, 1674).

¹⁰³ Two were already rejected as possible sources by earlier critics: de Callières's *Histoire poétique* by, among others, William Monck Mason, *The History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St Patrick* (Dublin, 1819), pp. 239-40n; *English Letters and Letter Writers of the Eighteenth Century, First Series: Swift and Pope*, ed. Howard Williams (Plainview, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1973 [1886]), p. 15; John Churton Collins, *Jonathan Swift* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1893), p. 42; PRESCOTT, pp. xxv-xxvi; GUTHKELCH, p. xlv; and Harold Williams, "Swift's Early Biographers," *Pope and his Contemporaries: Essays Presented to George Sherburn*, eds James L. Clifford and Louis A. Landa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), pp. 114-128 (124-25); Furetière's *Nouvelle allégorique* by GUTHKELCH, pp. xlv-xlvi, and GUTHKELCH AND NICHOL SMITH, pp. l-li. As regards Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, there are incidental parallels with the *Battle* (see the notes on p. 35, ll. 26-31; p. 42, l. 28; p. 43, l. 39 – p. 44, l. 1; p. 44, ll. 5-6, 34-35), but these are rooted in their common mock-epic ancestry, not to mention the fact that Boileau describes a battle *with* books rather than one *of* books in his Fifth Canto (*Œuvres diverses* [Amsterdam: Abraham Wolfgang, 1692], pp. 179-85). And, finally, as for Boccacini's *Ragguagli di Parnasso*, essentially nothing but a narrative sequence of quarrels, disputes, and petitions submitted to Apollo, the ruler of Parnassus, and awaiting his decision, the evidence submitted so far suggests that the *Ragguagli* did not contribute to the genealogy of the 'battle-poem' but to that of the 'session poem' (pp. 149-50), something very different from *The Battle of the Books*.

¹⁰⁴ PASSMANN AND VIENKEN I, 254-55.

there is no evidence that Swift read any of them at any stage before 1697/8, the years of composition. Finally, there is not a single ‘parallel,’ no matter whether an image or motif, a theme or episode, which is *unique* to both the *Battle* and its ‘source’ and which thus argues for a dependency on Swift’s part. Indeed, given the fact that the general idea of a battle seems somehow ‘natural,’ that it is implanted in countless mock-epic poems in many European literatures, and that it would be easy to increase the number of proposals,¹⁰⁵ it would be remarkable if *no* points of similarity were to be discovered between Swift and these ‘sources.’¹⁰⁶ For the *Battle*’s meaning, they are all inconsequential.

However, weightier reasons suggest themselves. These have to do with the *Battle*’s complex lattice of generic and modal layers, its network of satirical, allegorical, and mock-epic features, which interpenetrate one another. The *Battle* proceeds to its conclusion, one critic has perceptively noted, “through an explanation of the origins of the quarrel, the steps preliminary to actual hostilities, the encounter of the spider and the bee and its exposition and application by Aesop, the catalogues of the armies, the council in heaven, the visit to, and visit of, the goddess Criticism (a kind of descent to the underworld), the battle itself (a series of individual skirmishes in the Homeric manner), a council of generals with the intrusion of a Thersites (Bentley), a night expedition and the ‘deaths’ of Bentley and Wotton in a wonderful parody of Virgil’s Nisus and Euryalus episode.” Excepting the episode of the Bee and the Spider, all of these, this critic

¹⁰⁵ In addition to the examples discussed by Ulrich Broich, *Studien zum komischen Epos: ein Beitrag zur Deutung, Typologie und Geschichte des komischen Epos im englischen Klassizismus, 1680-1800* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1968), pp. 196-201, a case in point is Andrea Guarna’s *Bellum grammaticale* of 1512, which relates a war, and the casualties suffered in it, between the Latin nouns and verbs, and which enjoyed great popularity throughout Europe. It was repeatedly reprinted in Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain and Denmark and engendered a large number of translations and imitations (*Andrea Guarnas Bellum grammaticale und seine Nachahmungen*, ed. Johannes Bolte [Berlin: Hofmann, 1908]).

¹⁰⁶ GUTHKELCH AND NICHOL SMITH, pp. l-li.

continues, “very obviously fit the mock-epic pattern, and it is striking to realize just how much characteristically epic material ... Swift has gotten into so short a work.”¹⁰⁷ And this mock-heroic framework, another reader has argued, was “fitting enough,” too. After all, the *Battle*’s occasion had been “a dispute over literary matters,” and, as a result, it was but natural to cast a battle recording the Ancients’ victory in the most highly regarded and “best-known of all literary forms, the epic.”¹⁰⁸ This view is borne out by the surviving evidence about Swift’s reading in the 1690s.

During his various stays at Moor Park, Swift always proved an avid, if not insatiable, reader, and he went about his reading meticulously. According to Patrick Delany, who claimed Swift’s own testimony for this, Swift “studied at least eight hours a day, one with another, for seven years” after his return from Oxford to Moor Park in July 1692.¹⁰⁹ Confirming Delany’s assertion, Deane Swift at some length describes the “extracts,” some of them “copious,” Jonathan took during this time. “[I have them] at present lying upon my table,” he asseverates.¹¹⁰ Among the titles Swift recorded in the account of his reading during 1697/8, the epic classics figure prominently: not only did he read Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but also Virgil (twice) as well as *Prince Arthur*, Sir Richard Blackmore’s modern imitation of an epic.¹¹¹ Swift’s preoccupation with heroic poetry during these early years likewise manifests itself in his annotating Milton’s biblical epic *Paradise Lost* for Stella and Rebecca Dingley before the Ladies moved to Dublin in

¹⁰⁷ Thomas E. Maresca, *Epic to Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), pp. 163-64. Other readers have concurred (see, for example, Kathleen Williams, *Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise* [Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1958], pp. 122-23, 128; Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr, *Swift and the Satirist’s Art* [Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963], p. 115).

¹⁰⁸ Quintana, *Swift: An Introduction*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁰⁹ *Observations upon Lord Orrery’s Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr Jonathan Swift* (London: W. Reeve and A. Linde, 1754), p. 50.

¹¹⁰ *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, of Dr Jonathan Swift* (London: Charles Bathurst, 1755), p. 276.

¹¹¹ REAL (1978), pp. 128-32.

1703.¹¹² All this easily accounts for his intimate familiarity with the whole repertory of epic conventions – in diction and imagery, motifs and themes, style and structure.¹¹³ In fact, in the ‘heroic’ world which the *Battle* describes no major constituent seems to be missing: neither the council of the Gods (p. 42, l. 32 – p. 43, l. 7) nor the invocation of the Muse (p. 45, ll. 15-18; p. 46, l. 4), neither the epiphanies of divine combatants (p. 45, ll. 13-14; p. 47, ll. 1-2, 23-24; p. 48, ll. 13-15) nor the voyage to the underworld (p. 43, l. 20 – p. 44, l. 18), neither the catalogues of troops (p. 42, ll. 11-23, 24-27) nor the *aristeiae* of heroes (p. 45, ll. 30-36; p. 46, ll. 1-17; p. 47, l. 28 – p. 48, l. 13), neither retarding digressions (p. 38, l. 25 – p. 41, l. 33; p. 43, l. 20 – p. 44, l. 18) nor an ostensibly fragmentary structure (p. 45, ll. 23-29, 37-39; p. 47, ll. 7-10, 20-23; p. 48, ll. 17-20; p. 52, ll. 29-32), not to forget the multitude of epic images and formulae.¹¹⁴ The only epic element that contemporary readers would have expected and that Swift omitted is Horace’s advice to launch “in medias res,” to haste “into the midst of things,” as Milton put it.¹¹⁵

Of course, the *Battle*’s epic world is actually mock-epic, parody being its dominant mood.¹¹⁶ In order to be successful, parody needs to be

¹¹² Hermann J. Real, “Stella’s Books,” *Swift Studies*, 11 (1996), 70-93 (pp. 80-82).

¹¹³ The best account still is Richard Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*, 3rd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972 [1915]).

¹¹⁴ For more details, the Editors refer readers to the evidence assembled in the pertinent *lemmata* of the Commentary.

¹¹⁵ *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (London and New York: Longman, 1971), p. 39; *De arte poetica*, in *Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Daniel Heinsius (Leiden: Elzevir, 1628), p. 230, l. 148 (PASSMANN AND VIENKEN II, 905-6, 1247).

¹¹⁶ The terminological history of ‘parody’, and its siblings ‘(high and low) burlesque,’ ‘mock-epic,’ ‘travesty,’ and ‘pastiche,’ manifests the same seemingly interminable hassles as that of satire (Hermann J. Real, “An Introduction to Satire,” *Teaching Satire: Dryden to Pope*, ed. Hermann J. Real [Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1992], pp. 7-19 [9-10]), exacerbated by the fact that eighteenth-century usage at times differs widely from current practice (Richard Terry, “The Semantics of ‘Parody’ in the Eighteenth Century,” *Durham University Journal*, 85 [1993], 67-74). As a result, it seems good advice to regard the definition of ‘parody’ not as a *factual* question but as a *decision* question (following the recommendation of Robert C. Elliott in “The Definition of *Satire*: A Note on Method,” *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 11 [1962], 19-23). The implication of this

recognized for what it is. Like satire, parody is for the cognoscenti, for readers who are ‘initiated,’¹¹⁷ who are able to see through hints and allusions, perceive parallels and pre-texts.¹¹⁸ By evoking established generic conventions and refunctioning them, parody may engage in sabotage and destruction: like a greedy parasite, it devastates the land on which it is fattening.¹¹⁹ However, this view applies to the *Battle* only with a pinch of salt. Here, parody is not so much a *critical* instrument with which to perform tasks of ridicule and disparagement¹²⁰ as a means to provoke laughter; here, parody does not mean that Swift had “*a mind to expose*” the admired ancient authors by

approach, it is important to realize, is that the Editors are not aiming at a general, comprehensive, and trans-historical account of parody but at a definition applicable to the text(s) they deal with (such as *The Battle of the Books*). In the paragraph that follows, the contours of what they take to be indispensable elements for a definition of ‘parody’ will emerge: a mode, or mood, not a genre, ‘parody’ relies, and draws, on anterior texts. To that extent, ‘parody’ is inter-textual, or ‘parasitic.’ In invoking, *and* transforming, these models, their structures and styles, themes and motifs, imagery, accents, and voice, by mimicry, distortion, and hyperbole, ‘parody’ establishes a discrepancy between content and form, “an incongruity between style and subject” constituting a violation of rhetorical decorum (Richmond P. Bond, *English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750* [New York: Russell & Russell, 1964], pp. 3-17) – with either of two ends: to provoke laughter or to hold the victim up to (hostile) ridicule. In the latter function, as a polemical or aggressive vehicle, ‘parody’ becomes a *means*, a *stratagem* of satire (see, for valuable observations on this issue, Simon Dentith, *Parody*, *The New Critical Idiom* [London and New York: Routledge, 2000], pp. 1-38).

¹¹⁷ See the Preface of the Author, *The Battle of the Books*, p. 32, ll. 1-3.

¹¹⁸ See, among others, Tony Bex, “Parody, Genre and Literary Meaning,” *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 25 (1996), 225-44 (pp. 228-29). Although he leans on a different theoretical model, Robert Phiddian agrees that parody “cannot exist without having pre-existing verbal and/or intellectual formations to diverge from” (*Swift’s Parody* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], pp. 13-23 [p. 19]).

¹¹⁹ Hermann J. Real, “Archimedes in Laputa, III, v, 9,” *The East-Central Intelligencer*, 17, no 3 (2003), 21-24.

¹²⁰ Terry notes that, among eighteenth-century theorists, parody was often taken for “a straightforward expression of ill-will towards enemies” (“The Semantics of ‘Parody’ in the Eighteenth Century,” p. 68).

personating their “*Style and Manner*” (An Apology for the *Tale*, p. □). Rather, when rewriting his sublime epic models, he emphasized the discrepancy between presumption and performance, the gap between Modern arrogance and Ancient achievement: “[In] the mock-heroic Swift does not attack the epic but the pretensions of men who hope to achieve greatness by putting on the trappings of Achilles,” Swift’s most eminent biographer posits, adding the timely warning: “To some outsiders, however, the parody seems an affront not to pretensions but to poetry.”¹²¹ In the *Battle*, confronting the Ancients on their own ground turns out to be a lethal experience for the Moderns.

This result also clinches the case in the contested matter of Swift’s ‘sources.’ *The Battle of the Books* proves a carefully designed pastiche, a parodic mosaic, which, at least in its second, larger part, is composed from numerous epic (and mock-epic) patterns and motifs, scenes and episodes, and the individual stones of which may as a rule not be reduced to any single pre-texts. Swift’s sources of inspiration were not any *specific* French or Italian models but rather the whole ancestry of the European epic, and mock-epic, tradition, not only Homer but also Virgil, not only Ovid but also Milton, not only Cowley but also Dryden, not only Butler but also Garth and Boileau.¹²² To label such art, indeed virtuosity, ‘parasitic’ would be an injustice. Some components of formulaic language excepted, Swift never reduplicates but always transforms; whatever epic (or mock-epic) parallels and devices he evokes, or invokes, he recomposes; while he seems to be

¹²¹ Ehrenpreis, *Mr Swift*, pp. 210, 231; endorsed by David Ward, *Jonathan Swift: An Introductory Essay* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 66. Remarkably, this warning had been anticipated by Robert Boyle: “Nor will any intelligent reader undervalue the charming poems of *Virgil* or of *Ovid*,” he commented drily in *Some Considerations Touching the Style of the Holy Scriptures*, “because, by shuffling and disguising the expressions, some French writers have of late been pleased out of rare pieces to compose whole books of what they call, *Vers Burlesques*, designed by their ridiculousness to make their readers sport” (*The Works*, ed. Thomas Birch, 6 vols [Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965-66 {1772}], II, 125).

¹²² Again, the Editors refer readers to the evidence assembled in the pertinent *lemmata* of the Commentary.

ransacking his arsenal, he in fact reconfigures it. *The Battle of the Books*, Sir Walter Scott praised this “perfection of fictitious narrative,” was remarkable above all for its “most undeviating attention to the point at issue.” Whoever examined it, he continued, “will find that, through the whole piece, no one episode or allusion is introduced for its own sake, but every part appears not only consistent with, but written for the express purpose of strengthening and supporting the whole.”¹²³

This is not the end of the story yet, however. The *Battle*'s library is more than just “the beaches and plains of Homer’s Ilium,”¹²⁴ or Virgil’s Latium, for that matter. In fact, the kaleidoscope of its epic episodes serves a very marked rhetorical purpose, that of proving, by a sequence of ‘historical’ *exempla*, the validity of the moral message announced in the proem (see the note on “NOW, whoever will please to take this Scheme, and either reduce or adapt it to an Intellectual State, or Commonwealth of Learning” [p. 34, ll. 10-11]). This message is unmistakably satirical: in the proem, in epic nomenclature, *propositio*, Swift replaces Sir William Temple’s cyclical philosophy of history by a linear one in which have-nots appear as aggressors. By the time Swift was engaged in writing *The Battle of the Books*, this view had acquired the gnomic quality of a moral maxim sanctioned by the ages (see the note on “Invasions usually travelling from *North* to *South*” [p. 33, ll. 9-10]), and it enabled him to affiliate it with that other argument with which the Moderns, throughout the seventeenth century, had propounded the belief in their equality with the Ancients, the invariability of humankind’s (creative) potential: “*Natura est semper eadem* [Nature is always the same].” Like Sir William Temple,¹²⁵ Swift concurred, but being his patron’s defender against the Moderns, he gave the maxim an aggressive satirical twist: it is true that humankind’s nature is always the same; it *is* have-

¹²³ SCOTT I, 497-98.

¹²⁴ Matthew Battles, *Library: An Unquiet History* (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 103.

¹²⁵ *Sir William Temple's Essays "Upon Ancient and Modern Learning" and "Of Poetry": eine historisch-kritische Ausgabe mit Einleitung und Kommentar*, ed. Martin Kämper (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 17-19, 170 (*ad* 18.639-19.660).

nots who tend to be aggressors, and Modern have-nots are no exception to this rule.

To some critics, the subsequent fabric of mock-epic tug-of-war has appeared to be “deliberately episodic,” manifesting little coherence and only a “little sense of satiric strategy or climax.”¹²⁶ This view is as misleading as it is unjust, ignoring as it does the interrelatedness of the mock-epic episodes and the proem’s satiric message. While the proem, or *propositio*, makes a point – the Moderns are aggressive have-nots – the episodes, the epic narration of individual duels with the nocturnal expedition of the marauding Bentley and Wotton as climax, illustrate, *and* prove, this point: not only do the Moderns claim what is not rightly theirs, the higher summit of Parnassus (p. 34, ll. 19-31), their quarrelsomeness also disturbs the peace of libraries (p. 34, ll. 22-31; p. 36, ll. 17-18); not only does their protagonist, Bentley, rage at the leaders of the Ancients, Phalaris and Aesop, and without any reason, too (p. 36, l. 35 – p. 37, l. 4); not only are the Moderns the first to prepare for war, they are also the first to opt for battle (p. 37, ll. 26-28); not only are they the first to open hostilities (p. 38, ll. 16-18), their champions, Bentley and Wotton, are also the last to end them (p. 50, l. 26 – p. 52, l. 5), not to forget that the Moderns are encouraged in their belligerent endeavours by their patron deity, Criticism, the incarnation of the spirit that always says ‘No’ (p. 43, l. 22). Conversely, the Ancients repeatedly reveal their peaceful mind: Plato, for one, has peaceably lived among the theologians for hundreds of years (p. 36, ll. 12-14), the Ancients, for another, are the ones to propose peace negotiations (p. 37, ll. 36-38), and, finally, all warmongering by the Moderns notwithstanding, they resolve to act on the defensive (p. 38, ll. 19-21).

The conclusion is rather obvious. The sequence of events in *The Battle of the Books* evinces a dichotomous thematic structure: *praeceptum* is followed by *exemplum*, a general, ‘philosophical’ point by a demonstration of its ‘historical’ proof. This structure is reminiscent of an argument first proposed by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Apologie for Poetrie* of 1595. The

¹²⁶ Rosenheim, *Swift and the Satirist’s Art*, p. 116.

supremacy of poetry in the *ordo scientiarum*, the hierarchy of the disciplines, Sidney argued, was secured by the poet's ability to combine the 'virtue' of the (moral) philosopher with that of the historian. While the philosopher's "knowledge standeth so vpon the abstract and generall, that happie is that man who may vnderstand him," the historian, by contrast, "wanting the precept, is so tyed ... to the particuler truth of things ... that hys example draweth no necessary consequence."¹²⁷ In this view, a poet, ideally, *thinks in images*, and this is exactly what Swift did in the *Battle*, grounding a historian's "Full and True Account OF THE BATTEL Fought last *FRIDAY*, Between the *Antient* and the *Modern* BOOKS IN St. *JAMES*'s LIBRARY" in a philosopher's maxim.¹²⁸ Admittedly, there is no evidence that Swift was

¹²⁷ *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. Smith, I, 164-67.

¹²⁸ This state of the argument allows of some conclusions on the character and function of the *Battle*'s historian-persona (all the more desirable because of the semantically as well as theoretically still confusing debate on persona; see "The Concept of the Persona in Satire," *Satire News Letter*, 3 [1965-66], 89-153).

It seems that Swift decided on the 'historical' *exemplum* (rather than, say, a 'dream' or 'vision') for reasons of narrative persuasion. This decision, in turn, necessitated the persona's construction as historian and, more importantly, as eye witness (p. 36, ll. 26-34). As a result, the historian-persona is, first, unlike what several critics have assumed, not in any way identical with any of the *Tale*'s multiple 'voices' (for a brief summary of the earlier debate, see John R. Clark, *Form and Frenzy in Swift's "Tale of a Tub"* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970], pp. 153-55; and, more recently, Frank H. Ellis, "How Many Voices hath *A Tale of a Tub*?" *Swift, the Enigmatic Dean*, eds Rudolf Freiburg, Arno Löffler, and Wolfgang Zach [Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1998], pp. 35-39); second, as a participant in the allegorical events, the *Battle*'s historian-persona has an ontological status of his own, and thus, third, cannot be identical with the historical Swift. Rather, the historian-persona is like a puppet on the strings of the puppeteer, Swift, who is ever in a position to 'manipulate' the puppet as it suits narrative exigencies. The implication of all this is that, in principle, the views of a persona like the *Battle*'s historian *may be* those of the historical author, that, in other words, a persona may be the mouthpiece for his own views (as claimed by Gardner D. Stout, Jr, "Speaker and Satiric Vision in Swift's *Tale of a Tub*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 3 [1969] 175-99 [pp. 176-78]), but not necessarily so. Practically, it means that only a victory of the Ancients which is authenticated as "full and true" can count as an effective as well as successful defence of Sir William Temple, Swift's patron. But then, appearances may be deceptive. There are hints

familiar with Sidney's *Apologie*,¹²⁹ but the thought remained popular throughout the seventeenth century, and Swift may have picked it up from numerous sources.¹³⁰

Praeceptum and *exemplum* is the combination of 'telling and showing,' a narrative technique which is as constitutive of Swift's art as that of his predecessors Spenser, Milton, and Bunyan, all of whom he owned, read, and admired.¹³¹ In the 'commentary' of the proem, Swift announces the meaning of the subsequent 'heroic' action, the battle of the books. He ensures that his readers are not entirely left to their own devices in their hermeneutic efforts but gently guides them to the constitution of meaning. To that extent, Swift is didactic, but his didacticism is rarely obtrusive; he may be making a point, but he is never hammering it home, as a dogmatic, opinionated preacher might. *The Battle of the Books* does not work by frontal assault, precept or telling, but largely by methods of indirection, example or showing.

in the *Battle* which undercut the historian-persona's ostensible historiographical objectivity (see the note on "an *Historian*, and retained by neither Party," [p. 36, ll. 32-33]), and which seem to ironize, and sabotage, the author's endeavours (Martin Price, *Swift's Rhetorical Art: A Study in Structure and Meaning* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953], pp. 64-65). Consequently, it is difficult to state with any clarity of precision whether Swift had the same feelings about the Ancients and the Moderns as Temple.

¹²⁹ The only reference to it occurs in the presumably apocryphal *Letter of Advice to a Young Poet* (*Prose Works*, IX, 327). For an imperious statement on the pamphlet's 'canonicity,' see Ehrenpreis, *Dean Swift*, pp. 135-36.

¹³⁰ See, for example, John Dryden, *Discourse concerning Satire*, in *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. James Kinsley, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), II, 649; *The Dedication of the Aeneis*, III, 1003; John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, in *The Critical Works*, ed. Edward Niles Hooker, 2 vols (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1939-43), I, 337-38.

¹³¹ Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Show and Tell in *Gulliver's Travels*," *Swift Studies*, 8 (1993), 18-33. The Editors are indebted to this seminal essay in more ways than they dare to remember.

Besides, from the beginning of his career as a satirist, Swift showed himself at pains to cultivate his talent for paradox, not only in the modern meaning of “unacceptable conclusion derived by apparently acceptable reasoning from apparently acceptable premises,” but also in the seventeenth-century (etymological) sense of arguing *contra opinionem*.¹³² Paradoxes never ‘hold’ positions; they never ‘assert’ views; and they never commit themselves to anything. One element common to all types of paradox is the fact that they kick against the pricks of some orthodoxy; they challenge prevailing assumptions, conventions, and norms. Their sole function is to surprise, to provoke, and to confuse. Above all, they are meant to stir their readers into thought and into debate, and thus to make them think (again). Like allegory and irony, paradox is a figure of indeterminacy; to that extent, it is not didactic but anti-didactic. Instead, paradoxes invite, or perhaps more precisely, tease readers into teaching themselves.

It is true that paradox does not permeate *The Battle of the Books* with the same frequency and in the same intensity as its companion piece, *A Tale of a Tub*, and it is also true that at times a striking paradox of the *Battle* was a *donnée*, a given that Swift was confronted with as he entered the fray, such as the fact that Britain’s most accomplished classical scholar, Richard Bentley, was fighting in the camp of the Moderns.¹³³ On the other hand, Swift seems to have gone out of his way to augment these paradoxical configurations. A case in point is that, in outward appearance, the *Battle* presents itself like an

¹³² See, in addition to Clark, *Form and Frenzy in Swift’s “Tale of a Tub”*, pp. 181-203, for what follows in particular Rosalie L. Colie’s magisterial account of the genesis, typology, and functions of paradox, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), and, for further material, both primary and secondary, on the issue, Hermann J. Real, “The Dean’s European Ancestors: Swift and the Tradition of Paradox,” *La Grande-Bretagne et l’Europe des Lumières*, ed. Serge Soupel (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1996), pp. 135-42.

¹³³ This aspect has been noted by many historians and critics of the *Querelle*; see, for example, Jones, “The Background of *The Battle of the Books*,” p. 35; Stephen Gwynn, *The Masters of English Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 184; Davis, *Jonathan Swift: Essays on his Satire and Other Studies*, p. 203.

ancient codex, studded with marginalia, marred by lacunae, and eroded by chasms, which narrates a most recent event of supreme topicality. As early as 1729, Swift's first German translator, Georg Christian Wolf, surmised that the lacunae were intended to make the *Battle* "look like an ancient manuscript [damit es einem alten Manuscripte desto ähnlicher sey]."¹³⁴ And the marginalia, too, were conducive to making this 'codex' a document of authenticity and authority, sufficiently appropriate, it appears, for the victory of Antiquity over Modernity. "[Where] I haue had any supplies extraordinary, eyther out of Record or such Instruments of State, as I could procure," Samuel Daniel declared in the Preface of his *Collection of the History of England*, which was in Swift's library, "I haue giuen a true account of them in the Margin So that the Reader shall be sure to be payd with not counterfeit Coyne, but such as shal haue the Stampe of Antiquity, the approbation of Testimony, and the allowance of Authority."¹³⁵

¹³⁴ "Vollständige und Wahrhaffte Erzehlung von dem unter den Büchern gehaltenen Treffen." *Des berühmten Herrn D. Swifts Märghen von der Tonne*, 2 vols (in one) (Altona: auf Kosten guter Freunde, 1729), sig. b4r.

¹³⁵ (London: Simon Waterson, 1626), sig. A3v (PASSMANN AND VIENKEN I, 493). It is important, the Editors think, to bear in mind that the marginalia and notes in the *Battle*, though fewer in number and, with one certain exception, less critical than those of *A Tale of a Tub*, serve similar functions (Starkman, *Swift's Satire on Learning in "A Tale of a Tub"*, p. 129 and n32; Jean-Paul Forster, "Swift and Wotton: The Unintended Mousetrap," *Swift Studies*, 7 [1992], 23-35; Harald Stang, *Einleitung-Fußnote-Kommentar: Fingierte Formen wissenschaftlicher Darstellung als Gestaltungselemente moderner Erzählkunst* [Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1992], pp. 21-42). Like the *Tale's* glosses, the ones in the *Battle* tend to be "illuminating and helpful" rather than humorous or revengeful (Donald Greene, "Swift: Some Caveats," *Studies in the Eighteenth Century, II: Papers Presented at the Second David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra 1970*, ed. R. F. Brissenden [Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973], p. 350, arguing against GUTHKELCH AND NICHOL SMITH, pp. xxii-xxv). It is misleading, the Editors think, that the footnotes are intended to show that Swift "knew the minutiae of philological technique when he left gaps in his own text, filling them with asterisks and describing them, in the margins, as 'hiatus in MS'" (Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* [London: Faber and Faber, 1997], p. 113). See *A Tale of a Tub*, pp. □□.

In fact, the impression of paradoxy establishes itself from the very beginning. Not only does the ‘old’ originality topos from Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* on the title page, which boastfully proclaims the Moderns’ title to novelty, constitute a case of plagiarism,¹³⁶ it also stands in stark contrast to the flood of pamphlets adding fuel to the fire of the controversy in the latter half of the 1690s. In the Preface, the author excuses the popularity of satire with its ostensible lack of effectiveness (p. 32, ll. 1-3), only to write in what follows a satire himself. As the allegory unfolds, an account parading in the guise of historical objectivity (p. 36, ll. 32-34) metamorphoses into a *parti pris* document in favour of the Ancients, and the outcome of a seemingly ‘final’ battle is declared to be inconclusive: “the Manuscript, by the Injury of Fortune, or Weather, being in several Places imperfect, we cannot learn to which side the Victory fell” (p. 31, ll. 18-20). This may not satisfy the reader’s demand for a neat closing twist.

But again, things are not what they appear to be. Not to mention ‘minor’ paradoxes which repeatedly reveal the Moderns as Ancients (p. 38, ll. 2-3), most importantly, perhaps, the Ancients sweep to victory over the Moderns in a genre, mock-epic, that is essentially a product of Modernity,¹³⁷ and in the end the future Dean of St Patrick’s, Dublin, proved unable to escape the paradox of his own condition, either. Though to all intents and purposes an Ancient, Swift by letting himself in for his modern *Battle* engaged in a self-defeating exercise. After all, *The Battle of the Books* was, as Mr Walden assured Miss Byron in Samuel Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandison*, “a very fine piece,” and even if it *was* written “in favour of the ancients, and against the moderns,”¹³⁸ it remained a modern feat nevertheless, and as a modern accomplishment, it championed – not the cause of the Ancients but that of the Moderns. If Swift became aware of this self-contradiction, he did not let on about it, at least not publicly, but a

¹³⁶ See *A Tale of a Tub*, pp. □□.

¹³⁷ Broich, *Studien zum komischen Epos*, p. 1.

¹³⁸ *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 53.

younger contemporary did. In his “Verses on *The Battle of the Books*” of 1734, James Sterling, a fellow clergyman, playwright and poet,¹³⁹ complimented the aging Dean on this masterpiece of his youth:

While thus he behaves, with more courage than manners,
And fights for the foe, deserting our banners;
While Bentley and Wotton, our champions, he foils,
And wants neither Temple’s assistants, nor Boyle’s;
In spite of his learning, fine reasons, and style,
- Would you think it? - he favours our cause all the while:
We raise by his conquest our glory the higher,
And from our defeat to a triumph aspire;
Our great brother-modern, the boast of our days,
Unconscious, has gain’d for our party the bays:
St. James’s old authors, so famed on each shelf,
Are vanquish’d by what he has written himself.¹⁴⁰

It is unknown whether Swift ever saw these lines.

¹³⁹ Patrick Fagan, *A Georgian Celebration: Irish Poets of the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: Branar, 1989), pp. 83-88.

¹⁴⁰ *The Poems of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, ed. William Ernst Browning, 2 vols (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1910), II, 404.

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Parodies¹⁴¹

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¹⁴¹ This bibliography lists only the holdings of the Ehrenpreis Centre; it does not pretend to be complete. Wherever possible, we record the date of the first edition; later reprints have been omitted.

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