

From Text to Work: The Presentation and Re-presentation of *Epistles to Several Persons*

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1

IN WHAT FORM can the literary work of art be said to exist? This is a question that has often been posed before.¹ One theory of literary creation, which has perhaps received its most influential expression for modern readers in the work of the English Romantics, posits an ideal state for the literary work, in relation to which the text produced by the writer stands in a contingent relationship — as Coleridge put it in describing ‘Kubla Khan’ as the product of a drugged sleep in which ‘all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions’.² According to this paradigm, the text before the reader merely embodies the ‘correspondent expressions’ rather than the poem itself, which only exists in the imagination of the writer. In the terms proposed by the philosopher Charles Peirce, the text exists only as a type and any linguistic manifestation of the text is a token of that type.³

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¹See for example René Wellek, ‘The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art’ in René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd edn. (London, 1963), F. W. Bateson, ‘The New Bibliography and the New Criticism’ in *Essays in Critical Dissent* (London: 1972), and James McLaverty, ‘The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the *Dunciad Variorum*’, *Studies in Bibliography*, xxxvii (1984), 82–105. For a philosophical examination of some of the problems associated with this question, see Richard Wollheim’s *Art and Its Objects*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 4–10 and 75–84.

²*The Poems of Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge (Oxford, 1912), p. 296.

³See Peirce, *Collected Papers*, ed. Charles Hawthorne and Paul Weiss, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: 1931–58), IV, paragraphs 537ff.

This conception of the mode of existence of literary works of art is comparable to the theoretical position that informs the work of textual critics in the tradition of W. W. Greg and Fredson Bowers. According to Bowers, the ultimate aim of the textual critic is to produce a text that will 'approximate as nearly as possible an inferential authorial fair copy, or other ultimately authoritative document.'⁴ Thus the scholarly synthetic or eclectic text seeks to approximate to the ideal state of the work — one that is not necessarily represented in any of the historical documents, but one which accords with the author's 'final' or 'best' intentions: 'The aim of a critical edition should be to present the text, so far as the available evidence permits, in the form in which we may suppose that it would have stood in a fair copy, made by the author himself, of the work as he finally intended it'.⁵ The platonic notion of text that underlies the practice of eclectic editing means that the establishment of a synthetic text in a critical edition is, paradoxically, an act of decontextualisation — variants included in the critical apparatus are seen in relation to this 'ideal' or 'preferred' text and are thus also stripped of their context. The problem with an eclectic text is that it assumes a teleological development towards whatever is chosen as the preferred text.

There is a sense in which these theoretical assumptions highlight a particular problem in considering questions about the identity and integrity of literary works. Common readers, and even professional critics, want to feel that they can talk in broad terms about the meaning or significance of a particular piece of literature, and that if there is disagreement about its meaning or significance then at least the object about which they are disagreeing is a stable one. This is, of course, a sense of security that has never been shared by textual critics. And yet, despite any acknowledgement of the complex issues raised by textual variation, literary critics are still, by and large, happy to talk of the *Epistle to Bathurst*, say, in general terms as though it were something the identity of which was somehow guaranteed — that its 'essence' (over the quality or meaning of which one might disagree) is somehow unaffected by choices that editors might have made between variant states in the 'corresponding expressions'.

This attitude often results in readers ignoring, or underestimating, the radical transformations that can take place as the work of art is

⁴Bowers, 'Textual Criticism', in James Thorpe ed. *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, 2nd edn. (New York, 1970), p. 33.

⁵W. W. Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1954), p. x.

constructed and reconstructed, presented and re-presented. Provided on the printed page with what purports to be a 'finished' text, the natural tendency of a reader in considering any variant states — if this is attempted at all — is to work backwards from the 'finished' state of the text: rather than prompting a re-interpretation of the text, the process of revision and re-presentation is itself interpreted in the light of a reading of the 'final' text, which becomes the point towards which the writer has been working all along. This approach is particularly unhelpful when it is applied to a writer for whom revision, occasionally radical revision, and reorganisation were processes ended only by death, and in whose work readings once rejected remain susceptible to reinstatement by the author in subsequent incarnations of the 'finished' text. Alexander Pope is the paradigm of such a writer.

Pope exercised an unprecedented level of control over the presentation of his work.⁶ He was concerned with every element of the appearance of his poems in print, from the layout on the page and the typography to the choice of engravings and designs.⁷ The result of this concern is that his texts are embodied in a physical form that might appropriately be described in terms of visual art. When dealing with the poems thus transmitted, however, it is important to recognise that there are two distinct impulses at work. Pope's concern for the book as object and his attitude to the text as field of meaning are, to a certain extent, in conflict. While the appearance of a poem on the page achieves a monumental quality, his commitment to revision leaves its text to some degree fluid.

Towards the end of his life he appears to have sanctioned an unusual procedure which of its nature places a question mark over the completeness and finality of any text chosen for publication. In the 1730s he arranged for Jonathan Richardson Jr. to collate the MSS of several poems together with the printed editions and record the variant readings.⁸ A small selection of variants, all from printed texts,

⁶Pope's financial independence derived largely from his agreement with Lintot for the publication by subscription of the translation of the *Iliad*. For a full account of this venture, see Foxon, *Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, rev. and ed. James McLaverty (Oxford, 1991) pp. 51–63.

⁷Foxon provides a detailed account of Pope's relations with the book trade and his involvement with the process of production together with an extended discussion of the effects of his concern for the appearance of his text in print (*Pope and the Early Eighteenth-Century Book Trade*, esp. pp. 153–236).

⁸See *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1956), IV. 78 and 374, and Jonathan Richardson Jr., *Richardsoniana: Or, Occasional Reflections on the Moral Nature of Man* (London, 1776), p. 264.

was published with the notes to the 1735 *Works* (Vol. II), and in the 1736 *Works* (Vols. I and II) Pope included some variant readings rejected from his MSS. The Richardson collations most probably provided the material for the 'Variations' published by Warburton in the third and fourth volumes of the 1751 edition of the *Works*. The inclusion of 'a great number of fine verses taken from the Author's Manuscript-copies . . . communicated by him for this purpose to the Editor' seems calculated to secure this praise for Pope's judgement, as well as for the quality of his first thoughts.⁹

While it is true, as John Butt has said, that the publication of variant readings is part of a wish on Pope's part 'to present his poems as a modern classic should appear', a corollary effect of their inclusion is to extend the textual field in a way which invites a reading that goes beyond the limits of the version which is presented as the prime text.¹⁰ Whereas the ultimate aim of the editor of a classical text is to recover the actual words used by the author, in the case of Pope's 1735 *Works* the reader is provided with alternatives, all of which derive their authority directly from the poet. The variants published in the scholarly apparatus of a work of classical literature are part of an attempt to create a stable and definitive text in the face of MS transmission at considerable remove from authorial authority. In the 1735 *Works* the author himself provides the variants and sanctions their publication. The reader must attach a different kind of significance to variant readings of this kind: paradoxically, the effect is to reverse the tendency toward stability and authority, with the result that the boundaries of the prime text become blurred.

2

The title of this paper makes reference to *Epistles to Several Persons*, a collection of poems published by Pope. However, it should be apparent that even at this level of description the designation 'Epistles to Several Persons' is a problematic one. To which poems and to what state of which poems does it refer? I want to develop three of the

⁹*The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, ed. W. Warburton, 9 vols. (London, 1751), I, p. vi. Warburton's reference to a 'Manuscript-copy of the other *Ethic Epistles*' would seem more plausibly to refer to Richardson's transcriptions than to Pope's autograph drafts.

¹⁰Butt, 'Pope's Poetical Manuscripts', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XL (1954), 23-40 (23).

issues that seem to me to be raised by this question. The first concerns the possible constitution of this group of poems and the ways in which variations in that constitution might affect a reading of any given poem or of the group as a whole. The second concerns textual variation within the constituent members of that fluctuating group; and the third concerns decisions about the distinction between manuscript and printed versions of the poems where manuscripts survive.

The composition of the 'Epistles to Several Persons' has a complicated history. There are essentially three different groupings made by Pope during his lifetime, according to which the collection consists of seven, eleven or four poems.¹¹ The first time any such collection appears is in the 1735 *Works*. In the first two editions (in folio and quarto), the *Essay on Man* — designated the first part of 'Ethic Epistles' — is followed by *To Cobham*, *To A Lady*, *To Bathurst* and *To Burlington*, together with 'To Mr. Addison', 'To Robert Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer' and *To Dr. Arbuthnot* under the heading 'The Second Book'. However, in the quarto edition, the 'Directions to the Binder to place the Poems' indicate that the 'Essay on Man, or Ethic Epistles' is to be followed by 'Epistles to Several Persons', which suggests that a distinction is being drawn between the 'Ethic' epistles of the *Essay* and the seven 'familiar' epistles. In the volume itself, however, the 'Epistles to Several Persons' have no separate title-page, and are introduced instead with four arguments under the heading 'The Contents of the Second Book' — Epistle I 'Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men', Epistle II 'Of the Characters of Women', Epistle III 'Of the Use of Riches' and Epistle IV 'Of the Same' — which would suggest that these four poems are to be taken as a continuation of the 'Ethic Epistles' of the *Essay on Man*. Each of the poems starts on a fresh leaf and where there is space at the foot of a page on which a poem ends it is taken up by an engraving. However, on the page on which 'Epistle IV' ends the poem is followed immediately by 'Epistle V To Mr. Addison (Occasion'd by his Dialogues on Medals)', which is in turn followed, on the verso of its last page, by 'Epistle VI To Robert Earl of Oxford &c' and, on a fresh sheet, 'Epistle VII To Dr. Arbuthnot'. This arrangement sends out some strange signals in terms of the proper interrelationship of these groups of poems.

¹¹For further discussion of some of the issues surrounding the constitution of the 'Epistles to Several Persons', see Donald W. Nichol, 'Pope's 1747 *Ethic Epistles* and the *Essay on Man* Frontispiece: An Abandoned "Opus Magnum"?' in Colin Nicholson ed. *Alexander Pope: Essays for the Tercentenary* (Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 222–35.

While the arrangement within the volume suggests that the second group of poems is almost a continuation of the *Essay on Man*, the directions to the binder suggest a formal separation between the two. While the 'Epistles to Several Persons' run in sequence from I to VII, the fact that the first four epistles are preceded by prose arguments — as with those of the *Essay on Man* — whereas the other three are not, suggests a distinction between these two groups, a distinction that is emphasised by the difference in titles: the first four emphasising the abstract arguments — 'Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men', 'Of the Characters of Women', and 'Of the Use of Riches' — the next three highlighting the addressee — 'To Mr. Addison', 'To Robert Earl of Oxford &c', and 'To Dr. Arbuthnot'. These anomalies suggest some hesitation about the way in which the poems are to be combined, a hesitation that seems to persist in subsequent editions.

In the 1735 octavo the title-page of the *Essay on Man* reads 'Ethic Epistles The First Book, To Henry St. John L. Bolingbroke, Written in the Year 1732'. At the end of the fourth epistle there is a note that reads 'End of the First Book'. This is followed by a title-page reading 'Ethic Epistles The Second Book', which is in turn followed by four arguments under the title 'The Contents'. Following *To Burlington* there is a further title-page reading 'Epistles, The Third Book. To Several Persons'. This third book consists of 'To Oxford', 'To James Craggs', 'To Mr. Addison', 'To Mr. Jervas', 'To Miss Blount', 'To the Same' and *To Arbuthnot*. This arrangement is maintained in the 1736 edition.

In the 1739 edition of the *Works* the *Essay on Man* is once again described as the first book of 'Ethic Epistles', while 'Epistles to Several Persons' now includes all eleven of the other poems taken together — a format that is retained in the 1740 and 1743 editions of the *Works* (Vol. II part I).

The title-page of the British Library copy of the suppressed 'death-bed edition' of 1744¹² contains 'An Essay on Man. Being the First Book of Ethic Epistles. To H. St. John L. Bolingbroke', followed by *To Cobham*, *To A Lady*, *To Bathurst* and *To Burlington* grouped under the heading 'Epistles To Several Persons', rather than 'The Second Book of Ethic Epistles' or some such title. However, an 'Advertisement' between the 'Argument' and the opening of *To Cobham* does outline the relationship of the *Essay on Man* to the 'Epistles

¹²BL C. 59. e. I. Used by Bateson as the copy-text for his Twickenham edition.

to Several Persons' within the framework of the abandoned 'Opus Magnum'.¹³

That Pope expected the grouping of his poems in these ways to affect the way in which they were read is clear from a letter to Swift of 16 February 1733: 'my works will in one respect be like the works of Nature, much more to be liked and understood when consider'd in the relation they bear with each other, than when ignorantly look'd upon one by one'.¹⁴

When the four Epistles addressed to Bathurst, Burlington, Cobham and 'a Lady' are grouped together with the *Essay on Man* what tends to be emphasised is the abstract philosophising in the poems, the way in which they advance the theory of the 'ruling passion' and the ways in which they develop and illustrate the ideas of the *Essay on Man*. That there was a period during which Pope planned to incorporate the four poems, reproduced as 'Epistles to Several Persons' in the Twickenham Edition, with the *Essay on Man* as part of an 'Opus Magnum' seems beyond doubt. That this was his 'first', 'final' or even 'best' intention is rather more contentious. There is a sense in which the relationship to the formal method of the *Essay* in which these four poems stand is as much parodic as complementary. The *Epistle to Bathurst* in particular seems to have been contrived to defy any easy accommodation within a moral scheme. Rather than providing a firm foundation for its maxims and aphorisms, Pope's re-workings of that poem seem directed towards giving full play to ironies and ambivalences. The four 'Epistles', above all else, embody an engagement between the poet and an imagined interlocutor to whose interests he responds and with whose particular point of view he disputes and engages.

A reading of the 'Epistles to Several Persons' that includes the epistles *To Addison* and *To Harley* highlights the fact that, while these poems show Pope dramatising his relationship with figures with whom he shares friendship and admiration, these are not offered uncritically — the combination of the 'Epistle to Addison' with the Atticus portrait in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* being a particularly telling instance of this. When the collection is expanded to include the 'Epistle to Craggs', 'To Jervas' and the two epistles to the Misses Blount it can be seen to encapsulate a series of engagements of wildly differing

¹³For discussion of Pope's planned 'Opus Magnum', see Miriam Leranbaum, *Alexander Pope's 'Opus Magnum'* (Oxford, 1977). Leranbaum reproduces and discusses the 'Advertisement' (pp. 177–181).

¹⁴Pope, *Correspondence* III. 348.

resonance, from the personal counsel of the 'Epistle to Miss Blount with the works of Voiture' to the more politically resonant epistles to Harley and Craggs, the personal, artistic reminiscence of the 'Epistle to Jervas', and the politically charged self-revelation of the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*.

The line, 'And of myself too something must I say?' — which opens the MS poem out of which grew the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*¹⁵ — finds an echo in the description that Pope gives of *To Arbuthnot* in 'The Author to the Reader' at the beginning of *Works* (Vol. II): '... all I have to say of *Myself* will be found in my last Epistle'. Here Pope openly acknowledges the development that has taken place in the epistles that follow the *Essay on Man* — that he himself has taken centre stage. Much more than embodying philosophical precepts, aphorisms or maxims, the 'Epistles to Several Persons' — above all when read as a group of seven or eleven poems — embody the articulation of a particular poetic voice engaging with an audience of intimates and through that with the 'World beside'.

Pressure of space precludes a more detailed examination of the hermeneutic implications of editorial decisions about the composition of the 'Epistles to Several Persons', but it is worth briefly drawing attention to the anomalous practice of the Twickenham Edition in its re-presentation of these poems. Despite lamenting the effect of Warburton's title, 'Moral Essays' (which puts 'all the emphasis on the didactic elements in the poems', suggesting that they constituted 'another *Essay on Man*' and calling attention 'to all that is weakest and most pretentious in the four Epistles', while ignoring altogether 'the social satire that is their real *raison d'être*'), the Twickenham editors follow the precedent of the 'death-bed' edition by grouping the four poems with the *Essay on Man* (in parts i and ii of Vol. III) and separating them from the other epistles which are, with the exception of *To Arbuthnot*, consigned to the volume of 'Minor Poems'.¹⁶ And yet, in deciding on the text of the four poems to reproduce, revisions of the structure of the *Epistle to Cobham* and *To Bathurst* that Pope made specifically for the 'death-bed' edition are rejected because Warburton's malign influence was deemed responsible. However, his

¹⁵Reproduced by Maynard Mack, *The Last and Greatest Art Some Unpublished Poetical Manuscripts of Alexander Pope* (Newark, 1984), pp. 419–54.

¹⁶*The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope* (henceforth T. E.), ed. John Butt et al., 11 vols. (London and New Haven, 1939–69); Vol. III. ii, ed. F. W. Bateson, 2nd edn 1961, p. xxxvii.

influence can equally well be observed in Pope's decision to isolate the four poems in this way in the first place. As Bateson himself suggests, 'the fact is a striking example of the way the *Essay on Man* has cast its distracting shadow over what are essentially four Horatian Satires'.¹⁷

3

In order to address the second of my three issues — the status and effect of textual variation within the 'Epistles' — I want to begin by looking at the revisions that Pope made to the structure of the poem originally published under the half-title 'Of Taste, An Epistle to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington' and subsequently included in the 1735 *Works* under the title, 'Of the Use of Riches . . .'.¹⁸ An examination of some of the variations between the MS version of the poem, the separately published versions, and those included in the various 'Epistles to Several Persons' highlights the difficulty of treating the poem as though it maintains a stable field of meaning.¹⁹

There is a sense in which the versions of the *Epistle* that Pope sent to Burlington in MS, the versions published in 1731 and the versions published in 1735 should be regarded as distinct poems — with a slightly different resonance, scope and meaning — rather than as versions of the same poem, each one supplanted by subsequent revisions in a process of correction.²⁰

Howard Weinbrot's position is fairly representative of traditional readings of the *Epistle to Burlington*. While he concedes that Pope seems resigned to Burlington's Palladian example being 'distorted and degraded', he accepts as a fact that, for Pope, 'Burlington himself

¹⁷T. E. III. ii. xx.

¹⁸This change in title reflects a shift in the emphasis of the poem from 'taste' to 'use'.

¹⁹For a more detailed examination of the revisions that Pope made to this poem, in manuscript and print, see my article, 'From Taste to Use: Pope's *Epistle to Burlington*', the *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 19, 2 (1996), 141–159. I am grateful to the editor for permission to reproduce some of this material.

²⁰Cf G. Thomas Tanselle: 'There are in general two kinds of situations in which . . . "final intentions" will prove unsatisfactory: (1) when the nature or extent of the revisions is such that the result seems, in effect, a new work, rather than the "final version" of an old work; and (2) when the author allows several alternative readings to stand in his manuscript or vacillates among them in successive editions. In the first case, one may say that there is more than one "final" intention; in the second, that there is no final intention at all'. *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing*, (Charlottesville and London, 1990), pp. 51–52.

remains unsullied'.²¹ The tendency to take at face value the role of positive *exempla* has also characterised the work of critics presenting essentially hostile 'demystifications' of Pope's poetry. In her account of the poem, Laura Brown states that 'Pope's friend Burlington is presented as the ideal capitalist landowner' whose activities are 'indistinguishable from a corollary contribution to imperialist expansion'.²²

The text of the poem that these scholars have made the focus of their attention is that printed in the Twickenham Edition, an eclectic text based on the 'death-bed' edition of 1744.²³ Any presentation of a 'final' text of *To Burlington*, even one that includes variant readings, tends to mask the radical nature of the changes to its structure that Pope made after its initial publication. As it evolves through the various editions, and as the force of the sequence of verse paragraphs is enhanced by internal revision, Pope engineers significant shifts in ironic emphasis. In the course of this process, the figure of Burlington acquires an increasingly equivocal position.

The surviving autograph of the poem is a fair copy, bearing the title 'Of Taste: An Epistle to The Earl of Burlington'.²⁴ The MS consists of a single folio sheet, containing sixty-four lines, together with a further twelve lines of marginal and interlinear additions. The text breaks off immediately before the description of Sabinus in his 'young Woods', which precedes the celebrated portrait of Timon's villa in the first edition.²⁵ The MS was obviously the product of considerable calligraphic labour — the title imitates typeface, as does the initial letter of the text, and the lines of verse are numbered — which suggests that the poem had reached a provisional state of completion, and that Pope had prepared the MS for circulation amongst friends. The Twickenham editors describe the MS as 'an early . . . draft'; however, when Pope's revisions to the fair copy are taken into account, the MS can be seen

²¹Weinbrot, *Alexander Pope and the Traditions of Formal Verse Satire* (Princeton, 1982), p. 184. Other discussions of the poem marked by this tendency include Reuben Brower, *The Poetry of Allusion* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 243–249; Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope* (New Haven, 1975), pp. 319–25.

²²Brown, *Alexander Pope* (Oxford, 1985), p. 118.

²³See the textual note in T. E. III. ii. 128–130.

²⁴The MS is preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library (MA 352, fol. 1). A facsimile and transcript have been published by Mack (*Last and Greatest Art*, pp. 156–164).

²⁵The MS concludes with the catchword 'Thro', indicating that it was to have continued with what becomes line 89 of the first edition. There is a cue for the interpolation of this paragraph at an earlier point in the MS and Pope has added, and cancelled, a new catchword, 'At', which suggests that the description of Timon's villa was intended, at least at one time, to follow on immediately at this point.

to embody the text of the first half of the poem in a form fairly close to that of the first edition.²⁶ In addition to the autograph draft, a contemporary transcript of a complete version of the poem survives at Chatsworth among the Devonshire archives.²⁷

In the MS versions and the separately published editions of the poem, its pivotal point is a more or less straightforward opposition between false 'Taste' — represented by Timon — and true 'Taste', represented by Burlington. In the revised structure that makes its first appearance in the 1735 *Works*, emphasis is much more firmly placed on the idea of 'Use', in the light of which the significance of Burlington's role as an example of true 'Taste' becomes more problematic.

When the order of verse paragraphs was revised for the 1735 *Works*, the section beginning 'You show us, *Rome* was glorious, not profuse' — which had formed part of the conclusion (following line 180) in the first edition of the poem — was moved to follow the 'standing sermon' of lines 21–22. After asserting that Burlington has demonstrated the possibility of uniting pomp and 'use', Pope immediately goes on to explain ways in which this precept will be misapplied. While he obviously makes a distinction between Burlington and the 'coxcomb' of line 22, the new structure allows only two lines of wholehearted commendation for Burlington before Pope highlights the fact that, in the world posited by the satirist, Burlington's example is destined to be travestied. His just and noble 'rules' will be barely distinguishable from the 'rules' of art by which the wealthy dunces will be pleased to starve.

In the text of the 1735 *Works*, the first line of this paragraph — which had read 'Just as they are, yet shall your noble Rules' in both the Chatsworth transcript and the first edition — is altered so that the opening couplet reads:

Yet shall (my Lord) your just, your noble Rules
Fill half the land with Imitating Fools:

Bateson cites the criticism, expressed in *A Miscellany of Taste*, that the sense of the first version is ambiguous.²⁸ In addition to making the meaning of 'just' clearer, the revised line throws greater weight on the qualification 'yet', by placing it at the beginning of the line.

²⁶T. E. III. ii. xxvi, n 3.

²⁷Devonshire MSS (1st series, 143.74 (2)). Mack also reproduces the text of the transcript (*Last and Greatest Art*, pp. 165–6). While Mack (p. 158) suggests that this version represents an intermediate stage between the autograph and the first edition, the autograph also seems to have undergone a further stage of revision that postdates the transcript.

²⁸T. E. III. ii. 139 n.

The introduction of the parenthetical address '(my Lord)' disrupts the flowing rhythm of the line, an effect that is reinforced by the repetition of 'your' and by the painstaking hiatus between 'your just' and 'your noble' which, leading as it does into the swifter rhythm of the following line, makes the rhyme of 'rules' and 'fools' more telling.²⁹ The revised line has an altogether different tone from the original version. In the first edition, in which this passage had followed the description of Timon, the tone suggests commiseration on the part of the poet for the way his addressee's 'rules' will be misapplied; in the version in *Works* (Vol. II), Burlington is much more clearly being warned of the potentially disastrous outcome of his dissemination of the Palladian ideal.

The revisions to the structure of the poem create a sequence in which Pope first emphasises the role of a 'Guide' in leading wealthy fools astray, then identifies Burlington himself as a contrasting example — 'You show us' — and then goes on immediately to describe the ways in which this example will inevitably, if inadvertently, result in monstrosities such as 'some patch'd dog-hole ek'd with ends of wall'. The fact that in the revised structure the paragraph beginning 'Oft have you hinted . . .' now follows this dismal catalogue of misapplied taste emphasises the impotence evoked by its opening phrase. The word 'hinted' contrasts ironically with the extreme image of starving 'by rules of art' with which the repositioned passage ends.

When, in the first edition, this passage followed the description of Timon, it provided a clearer contrast to it. In 1735, by its being moved to follow the lines of generalised mockery and to introduce a series of paragraphs outlining a method for attaining good taste, emphasis is placed in a different way on the various elements of the passage. The revised structure means that Villario, Sabinus and Timon exemplify the fact that Burlington's precepts will be misconstrued. In the teleology of the first edition, Timon and the other misguided 'Imitating Fools' had already perpetrated their acts of tastelessness before specific mention of Burlington's Palladian example had been made. The new structure points out the folly of Timon and the others more clearly as a misinter-

²⁹The repositioning of this passage sees Burlington's 'noble rules' juxtaposed with the earlier couplet in which Pope makes a telling pun on the word 'Rule'. Ripley's 'Rule' — which will be used as a rod to beat the 'wealthy fool' — appears in this context to suggest not only a carpenter's implement but also a precept. In the course of the evolution of the poem, the first gesture towards Burlington is altered from a direct address in the opening line of the MS, to an aside in the eleventh line of the first edition, to an aside in the third paragraph of the text printed in *Works* (Vol. II).

pretation of the same sort of 'rules' of taste that Burlington is propagating, whereas in the original order of verse paragraphs there was a much surer connection between Burlington's elucidation of the pomp and glory of Rome and the 'Imperial' conclusion of the poem.

The first edition follows the description of Sabinus with the passage in which 'laughing Ceres' re-assumes the land: it also immediately follows the 'Timon' episode with the couplet,

In you, my *Lord*, Taste sanctifies Expence,
For Splendor borrows all her Rays from Sense.

which continues with the section 'You show us, Rome was glorious, not profuse', that we have already seen repositioned towards the beginning of the poem in the 1735 *Works*. Thus, in the first edition Burlington's Palladian example is directly contrasted with the 'huge heaps of littleness' displayed at Timon's villa. The twofold repetition of 'you' asserts the importance of Burlington's role in a logical connection of 'Taste' and 'use'. In *his* person '*Taste* sanctifies Expence' and *he* shows that 'pompous Buildings once were things of *use*'.³⁰ The repositioning of the 'Ceres' passage creates a significant disjunction within the teleology of the poem between Timon's wasteful magnificence and its counteraction by Burlington's Palladian ideal.

In the revised order of verse paragraphs in the 1735 *Works*, Timon's grand folly — on which Pope has expended almost seventy lines of ridicule — does at least have one saving grace:

Yet hence the *Poor* are cloath'd, the *Hungry* fed
Health to himself, and to his Infants bread
The Lab'rer bears: What his hard Heart denies,
His charitable Vanity supplies.

These lines, which make up the first section of the 'Ceres' passage, represent the sole intrusion of the poor and hungry into the world created by the poet, one in which the only thing that arouses his overt indignation is the 'lavish cost, and little skill' of his tasteless host. The repositioning of these lines at the pivotal point of the poem ensures that they serve not merely as a coda to the abuses of wealth and the indulgence of false 'Taste', but also provide, ironically, an introduction to the theme of successful agrarian capitalism that leads the poem to its triumphant conclusion. As F. R. Leavis put it, 'Art and Nature,

³⁰The emphases are mine.

Beauty and Use, Industry and Decorum, should be reconciled, and humane culture, even in its most refined forms, be kept appropriately aware of its derivation from and dependence on the culture of the soil'.³¹ However, by advertising the Mandevillian irony of the fact that 'a bad Taste employs more hands and diffuses Expence more than a good one', Pope disturbs any straightforward reconciliation between 'Taste' and 'use' that the poem might be supposed to effect.³²

When, in the MSS and the first three editions of the poem, this passage preceded the description of Timon's Villa, the scathing reference to 'Charitable Vanity' is pointed not at a third person but a second-person subject:

... What thy hard Heart denies
Thy Charitable Vanity supplies.

What, in the order of paragraphs established in 1735, refers back to Timon must refer in the earlier versions of the poem to Burlington himself. Pope makes the point 'that all those who lavish money on building, including Burlington, must have hard hearts, for they could give to the poor and unemployed directly'.³³

It has been pointed out that, in its new position, the 'Ceres' passage halts the confident momentum of the condemnation of Timon,³⁴ but it is its separation of the positive example of Burlington from the process of condemnation that is of greater importance. The passage can be seen to provide what amounts to an alternative eight-line version of the whole poem in which the first four lines present the unhappy compromise of things as they are, a perspective that embraces the poor as well as the wealthy and privileged, while the second four evoke the possibility of a future georgic Golden Age: in the face of this, while the efforts of Burlington and other would-be arbiters of 'Taste' are

³¹Leavis, *Revaluation* (London, 1935), p. 80.

³²Pope's note in the octavo *Works* (Vol. II). For a different account of the effect of this passage within the structure of the poem, see Hibbard, 'The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), 159-174.

³³Erskine-Hill, 'Avowed Friend and Patron', in Toby Barnard and Jane Clark, eds. *Lord Burlington: Architecture, Art and Life* (London, 1995), pp. 217-229 (p. 225). In the 'Master Key to Popery' Pope shows himself aware of the possibility, however misguided he might want to claim it to be, of applying the lines to Burlington himself. T. E. III. ii. (pp. 179-180).

³⁴Erskine-Hill makes this point, *The Social Milieu*, pp. 300-301.

lauded, they are deprived of the centrality that they enjoyed in the earlier versions.³⁵

In the first edition, Burlington's role in the conclusion of the poem is established by the lines 'In you, my *Lord*, Taste sanctifies Expençe' and 'You show us, *Rome* was glorious, not profuse'. In the text presented in the 1735 *Works* both of these lines are removed, in one way or another, from the final section of the poem. The revision that Pope makes of the couplet,

In you, my *Lord*, Taste sanctifies Expençe,
For Splendor borrows all her Rays from Sense.

so that the specific mention of Burlington and, more importantly, 'Taste' is removed — "'Tis *Use* alone that sanctifies Expençe' — is one of the most important in terms of its effect both on the status of Burlington as *exemplum* within the poem, and on the relationship of 'Taste' to 'Sense' and 'Use'.

In a letter to Tonson, dated 7 June 1732, Pope emphasises the importance, above all else, of the positioning of the portrait of the Man of Ross within the *Epistle to Bathurst*:

To send you any of the particular verses will be much to the prejudice of the whole; which if it has any beauty, derives it from the manner in which it is *placed*, and the *contrast* (as the painters call it) in which it stands, with the pompous figures of famous, or rich, or high-born men.³⁶

It is hard to see how the figure of Burlington, who shows us 'pompous buildings once were things of Use' can escape a painterly contrast with the Man of Ross when the poem addressed to him follows the *Epistle to Bathurst* in the 1735 *Works*.³⁷

³⁵The *Argument*, added to the poem in 1735, contains the rather dismissive phrase 'even in works of mere Luxury and Elegance', T. E. III. ii. 131. Even if the suggestion of the Twickenham editors that the *Argument* was contributed by Jonathan Richardson Jr. is true, it must still have received Pope's sanction, because in one form or another it makes up part of the apparatus of the *Epistle* from 1735, onwards.

³⁶Pope, *Correspondence*, III. 290.

³⁷In her discussion of Pope's projected 'Opus Magnum', Leranbaum examines the changes that Pope made in the epistle in the context of its accommodation within this larger scheme, particularly in relation to the *Epistle to Bathurst*. Her concern to emphasise the importance to Pope of his 'ethic scheme' leads her to underestimate the radical nature of his revisions: 'the state of the poem as first published was from the beginning so apposite to the scheme that substantial recasting proved to be unnecessary' (*Alexander Pope's 'Opus Magnum'* p. 109).

4

As well as major re-casting, the constituent members of the 'Epistles to Several Persons' also undergo less dramatic, but nonetheless significant revision. The section of the *Epistle to Bathurst* in which Pope describes the effects on society of paper-credit is one which evolves significantly as he revises the poem for the various editions of the second volume of the *Works*. The revision of the couplet in which the poet addresses 'Blest Paper-credit' can be seen to reflect an increasingly gloomy attitude to the contemporary economic situation. What starts out in the first edition as an imagined eventuality becomes a description of the current state of affairs. The text of the first edition preserves one of the rejected revisions from the later of the two extant drafts:³⁸

Blest Paper-credit! that advanc'd so high,
Shall lend Corruption higher wings to fly!

Here paper-credit will facilitate corruption in the future but the syntax makes the tense of 'that advanc'd so high' ambiguous. In the text of the 1735 *Works* this ambiguity is removed when Pope reverts to the original reading from the first extant draft in revising the second line, which becomes 'Now lends Corruption lighter wings to fly!'. In the 1744 text the qualification 'advanc'd so high' is removed. It is no longer paper-credit taken to extremes but paper-credit *per se* that contributes to corruption, a shift reflected in the removal of 'now' from the second line. Thus the revised couplet embraces the concept of paper-credit in a wholly ironic way, directed explicitly at the current state of affairs:

Blest Paper-credit! last and best supply!
That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly!³⁹

The changes to this couplet are difficult to accommodate within a

³⁸The extensive autograph material relating to the *Epistle to Bathurst* is preserved in the Huntington Library (MSS HM6007 and HM6008). Facsimiles of the MSS together with transcriptions have been published by Earl Wasserman, *Pope's Epistle to Bathurst: A Critical Reading with an Edition of the Manuscripts*, (Baltimore, 1960). Two more or less full drafts survive together with two sheets of a third MS containing basically the description of the Man of Ross and the lines in which Pope directly addresses Bathurst, as well as all but the last six lines of the portrait of Sir Balaam. For a detailed discussion of the evolution of the poem, see Ferraro, "Rising into Light". The Evolution of Pope's Poems in Manuscript and Print' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 1993), pp. 55–106.

³⁹This image of paper-credit ironically echoes Proverbs 23.5: 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven'.

model of textual revision that seeks to establish a text that represents a set of 'final intentions'. The changes that Pope makes are important as *changes* — the fact that the poet has felt it necessary to alter his text is itself a further indictment of the society that he criticises. The act of revision gives the poem a further dimension: it dramatises the relationship between 'word' and 'world', as the text can be seen responding to changes in the society with which it interacts.

A further aspect of the textual evolution of Pope's poems, his habit of retaining rejected MS readings for possible future revision, is also demonstrated by the section of the poem that follows the lines on paper-credit. Pope often returned to his original drafts when revising printed texts for new editions, and in the lines below he must have worked between both of the MS drafts of *To Bathurst*. The first draft originally continues with the following couplet:

Pregnant with thousands, flits the scrap unseen
And silent, sells a King, or buys a Queen.

In the margin these lines are marked for omission, presumably because, even though no king or queen is specified, they are politically dangerous. In the initial draft in the second MS the verse paragraph concludes with the couplet on paper-credit. Here, Pope marks these lines with a '1' and beside them he interpolates the following couplet, marked '2':

Possess of both, how easy hardest things!
They pocket States, they fetch or carry Kings,

The syntax of this couplet creates an ambiguity in the subject of the second line. The lines might suggest a passive role for, presumably, the 'dropping Guinea' of line 66 and paper-credit, which together enable a nameless 'They' to control politics at the highest level.⁴⁰ In the second draft the first line is revised to make the guineas and paper-credit clearly the subject rather than the object — 'When both unite, how easy hardest things!'. In the first edition these lines become

Gold, imp'd with this, may compass hardest things,
May pocket States, or fetch or carry Kings.

Pope has replaced the nebulous 'they' with his original villain. It is not

⁴⁰Pope's note to this couplet, in the second octavo edition of *Works* (Vol. II) seems to strike a wistfully ironic note: 'In our author's time, many Princes had been sent about the world, and great changes of Kings projected in Europe. . . . France had set up a King of England, who was sent to Scotland, and back again'.

just the newfangled paper-credit and the corruption it facilitates that 'may' destroy established hierarchies, but the perennial evil, 'Gold'.

In the text of the 1735 *Works*, the second line of the couplet is revised in keeping with the second line of the preceding couplet, 'may' being replaced by 'can'; what is described is no longer a potential but a proven ability. In the 1744 'death-bed' edition, the lines are revised once more. Pope now addresses the lines directly to 'Blest Paper-credit' and reinforces the sense of immediacy by emphasising the power of the winged monster with a threefold repetition of the word 'can':

Gold, imp'd by thee, can compass hardest things,
Can pocket States, can fetch and carry Kings;

This revision re-establishes paper-credit as an agent rather than an object, giving it an identity that the poet addresses, as it were, face to face.

The evocation of 'paper-credit' as something directly addressed by the poet serves to create a moment of actual engagement — the satirist boldly confronting a virtual personification of the economic system whose vices he denounces, a physical realisation of paper-credit which Pope continues to develop in revisions to the imagery in the lines that follow. In the second draft the following couplet is interpolated to follow the first mention of paper-credit:

Whose Leaves like Sybils, pregnant with our fates
Bears Fates of Men and Empires to or fro.⁴¹

In the margin the couplet is re-ordered to follow that beginning 'Gold imp'd wth this', and between these two couplets Pope interpolates a third expounding the political significance of paper-credit:

A single Leaf shall waft an Army o'er
Or send a Senate to some distant shore.⁴²

In the text printed in the 1735 *Works* the politically dangerous couplet, marked for omission in the first MS draft, is finally reintroduced to conclude the expanded description:

⁴¹These lines are in turn revised to read:

A Leaf like Sybils, as the wind shall blow
Scatters our Fates & Fortunes to and fro.

⁴²The MS has an interesting cancelled alternative to 'a Senate' — 'hot Patriots' — which adds a further dimension to Pope's sense of the possibilities opened up by paper-credit.

Pregnant with thousands flits the scrap unseen,
And silent sells a King, or buys a Queen.⁴³

It is clear that Pope was wary of making direct references to the monarchy in the poem, only feeling comfortable about reincorporating these lines, with their allusion to Sir Robert Knight's gift to Queen Caroline, when *To Bathurst* was printed with the other 'Epistles to Several Persons'.⁴⁴ Perhaps he wished to exclude more seriously controversial elements from this poem at a time when the furore over the application of the character of Timon to Lord Chandos would have led to close scrutiny of the poem from hostile critics. Such a hypothesis is at least supported by Warburton's recollection: 'Mr. Pope used to tell me, that when he had anything better than ordinary to say, and yet too bold, he always reserved it for a second or third edition, and then nobody took any notice of it'.⁴⁵

In the last lines of the poem Pope again suppresses controversial — possibly treasonable — lines until the poem is incorporated in the 1735 *Works*. MS 1 reads

His Wife, Son & Daughter, Satan! are thy own;
His Wealth, yet dearer, forfeit to the Crown;
The Devil and the King divide the prize,
And sad Sir Balaam curses God and dies.

The middle two lines are marked in the margin of MS 1 for deletion and the words 'the King' are erased almost completely. Pope supplies the alternative, 'prize', above 'own' in the first line, so as to leave the two remaining lines as a couplet. The second MS reproduces this left-over couplet, with no hint of the previous reading, and it is with this that the first and second editions of the poem and the first (folio) edition of the 1735 *Works* end. Pope is not confident enough to return to MS 1 and reinstate the deleted lines until the second (quarto) edition of the *Works*. He has already implicated 'GEORGE and LIBERTY' in the bankruptcy of Cotta's son in the first edition of the *Works*,

⁴³Once again, this change suggests that Pope returned to MS 1 when revising the poem for inclusion in this volume, since the couplet does not appear in MS 2.

⁴⁴Pope's letter to Swift of 29 November 1729 suggests that he gave credence to the report of a gift from the cashier of the South Sea Company to the Queen (*Correspondence*, III, 80).

⁴⁵Warburton to Hurd, 22 September 1751, *Letters from a Late Eminent Prelate* (London, 1809), p. 86. Cited by Bateson, T. E. III. ii. 42.

but this alliance between the King and the Devil is much more forceful.⁴⁶

The policy of suppressing material until later editions accords such interpolated lines a problematic status. They are clearly part of the poem, and yet so is the fact of their omission. In such cases it is not merely the nature of the differences between versions of a poem that are important, but also the very fact that there are such differences.

The text of the portrait of Sporus in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* also undergoes telling revision for the 1735 *Works*. In the course of this, Pope's satire of Hervey becomes, if anything, more ruthless. The most obvious example of this thoroughly meditated exercise of his 'proper Pow'r to hurt' is his decision to use the name 'Sporus' at all. In the first edition Pope designates his victim as 'Paris', despite the fact that the MS refers to him only as 'Sporus'. This name, referring to Nero's palace catamite and eunuch, is among the most gloriously rude elements in the portrait. Pope's decision to reinstate it in the text of the 1735 *Works* is typical of his tendency to reserve some of his most provocative gestures for this collection.

The same strategy can be seen in the characterisation of Sporus in the lines that follow:

His Wit all See-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.

These provocative lines do not appear in the first edition, but are reintroduced from the MS in the text of the 1735 *Works*. Indeed, it is in this edition that much of the emphasis on sexual ambiguity that characterises the second half of the portrait makes its first appearance in print. Pope replaces the line from the first edition — 'Did ever Smock-face act so vile a part' — with a version of another line retrieved from the MS — 'Amphibious Thing! that acting either part' — to expand upon the hermaphrodite suggestion. He also interpolates a further couplet, again largely retrieved from the MS:

Fop at the Toilet, Flatt'rer at the Board,
Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.

Once again, Pope suppresses the most potentially controversial and

⁴⁶The line, 'Twas George & Liberty that crowns thy Cup' appears in the first MS draft. In the first edition Pope includes a compromised version: "'Tis the dear Prince (Sir John) that crowns thy cup', while the text of *Works* (Vol. II) sees a return to the MS version, with the addition of bold capitals.

provocative aspects of his satire when it is first published and would receive the closest scrutiny. In his 'Note on the Text' in the Twickenham Edition, John Butt attributes these changes to the fact that the character of *Sporus* was 'the last part of the poem to receive final correction'.⁴⁷ However, the existence of these additional lines in the MS suggests that the subsequent alterations can be attributed more to Pope's desire to choose his moment to include material already in existence, than to a process of 'final correction'.⁴⁸

The changes that Pope made in the text of various poems in the 1735 *Works* are evidence of the way that he manipulated the potential resonance of elements of those poems over time. For Pope the revision process is not simply one of 'correction', but evolution; it is not so much a process tending towards a 'final' point, as an evolving dialogue with the poet's literary and political environment, between 'word' and 'world'.

5

I want to turn now to the third issue I raised at the beginning of this paper — the distinction between manuscript and print. In his preface to the first volume of the Twickenham Edition, John Butt distinguished manuscript readings as of interest only to 'the student of poetical origins', and explained their exclusion from the critical apparatus of all the volumes of the edition, except that dealing with the minor poems, by describing manuscripts as part of 'the partially formed, prenatal history of the poems . . . provisional only, liable to rejection, and frequently in fact rejected'.⁴⁹ However, I think that a good case can be made for considering the elaborate MSS on which Pope lavished such careful calligraphic labour — often imitating type — and which circulated amongst a wide group of friendly readers as belonging to a rather more postnatal stage in the history of the poems. The fact that such MSS of the *Essay on Man*, *To Burlington*, *To Bathurst*, and *To Arbuthnot* were subsequently so heavily revised as to become in effect drafts once more only emphasises the artificiality of the notion of 'finished' states of their texts.

⁴⁷T. E. IV. 93.

⁴⁸For a detailed examination of the evolution of the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, see Ferraro, 'Rising into Light', pp. 143–215.

⁴⁹T. E. I. vii.

In his study of the 'Epistle To Robert Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer', Geoffrey Tillotson reproduced the text of the MS version that Pope sent to Harley in October 1721⁵⁰ and examined the way in which, when he came to publish the poem in 1722, the revisions that Pope made to punctuation and capitalisation affect the meaning and tone of the poem.⁵¹ The verbal changes in the published form can be seen to diminish the emphasis on Pope's personal interest in Harley's fate that infuses the MS version. In the concluding lines of this Pope, through *his* 'Muse', adopts the stance of the bold friend to virtue that one can recognise from the satires of the 1730s:

My Muse attending strews thy path with Bays,
 (A Virgin Muse, not prostitute to praise),
 She still with pleasure eyes the Evening Ray,
 The calmer Sunsett of thy Various Day;
 One truly Great thro' Fortune's Cloud can see,
 And dares to tell, that Mortimer is He.

In the printed version this personal muse is replaced by an impersonal one whom Pope mentions only once, earlier in the paragraph, so that the conclusion is governed by muted personal pronouns:

Ev'n now she shades the Evening Walk with Bays,
 (No Hireling she, no Prostitute to Praise)
 Ev'n now, observant of the parting Ray,
 Eyes the calm Sun-sett of thy Various Day,
 Thro' Fortune's Cloud One truly Great can see,
 Nor fears to tell, that MORTIMER is He.

Gone too is the warmth of 'with pleasure eyes the Evening Ray'. The defiance of 'And dares to tell' is also replaced by the more muted negative construction, 'Nor fears to tell', which contributes to the emphasis in the final line on 'MORTIMER', at the expense of the muse. It has been pointed out that the revised version 'both conceals and reveals Pope' and that the image of "'The Muse" . . . emphasizes his role as recording-dignifying poet and thus dignifies his attendance'.⁵² The two states of the 'Epistle' reveal Pope taking up two distinct

⁵⁰This MS is preserved at Longleat (Portland Papers vol. 13, fos. 5-6). A further autograph MS of the poem has recently been discovered and reproduced by Michael Brennan, 'Alexander Pope's 'Epistle to Robert Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer'. A New Autograph Manuscript', *Library* 15, 3 (1993), 187-205. This MS is most probably the copy used by Lintot when the poem was first printed in 1722.

⁵¹Tillotson, 'Pope's "Epistle to Harley"'. An Introduction and Analysis', in J. L. Clifford and L. A. Landa eds. *Pope and His Contemporaries* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 58-77.

⁵²Griffin, *Alexander Pope: The Poet in the Poems* (Princeton, 1978), p. 119.

positions, the bold personal engagement of the private MS version and the grander self-effacement of the printed version. The changes hardly constitute a revision of the 'final intentions' of the MS version and cannot really be said to supersede it; rather, they create a different impression for a different context.⁵³

In his excellent essay, 'The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the *Dunciad Variorum*', James McLaverty, after suggesting that it is 'valid to regard works in the post-Gutenberg era as having inscriptions as their instances', emphasises the importance of the early eighteenth century as the period in which literature begins explicitly to engage with the consequences of its mode of existence in the age of mechanical reproduction. His suggestion that the physical form of the *Dunciad Variorum* as both a serious and a mock scholarly edition is an integral part of its significance as a work of literature is both a convincing and a resonant one.⁵⁴ Pope's attitude to revision throughout his later work reveals a comparable concern with the nature of the publishing process, which creates a dividing line between what become two distinct states of a modern text: the private manuscript and the public printed version. The writer can exercise absolute control over the text of a manuscript while it is upon his or her desk, but once it is in the public domain such control becomes problematic, a fact lamented in our own century by another formidable satirist, the Austrian writer Karl Kraus: 'I do not trust the printing press when I deliver my written words to it. How a dramatist can rely on the mouth of an actor!'⁵⁵ Pope seems to try to retain some of the flexibility of a working manuscript in the published versions of his poems, not only by including rejected variants along with his prime texts in a critical apparatus, but by returning to his MSS when revising those prime texts themselves in subsequent published versions.

In his recent book, *The Textual Condition*, Jerome McGann makes a distinction between the terms 'text', 'poem' and 'work'; defining the

⁵³In making a case for the 'suppressed' lines with which Ruffhead claimed the MS of 'To a Young Lady, on leaving the Town after the Coronation' concluded, W. W. Robson seems to be arguing for a similar distinction between MS and printed versions of this poem. In a MS version, produced with a narrow circle of readers in mind, the 'Licentiousness' of the 'suppressed' lines can be read as a further stage in the series of contrasts that define the structure of the published poem (Robson, 'Text and Context: Pope's Coronation Epistle', in Colin Nicholson, ed. *Alexander Pope: Essays for the Tercentenary* (Aberdeen, 1988), pp. 195-205). See also T. E. VI. 232-233.

⁵⁴McLaverty, 'The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art'.

⁵⁵Kraus, *Half Truths and One-and-a-Half Truths: Selected Aphorisms*, ed. and trans. Harry Zohn (Manchester, 1986), p. 50.

'text' as 'the literary product conceived as a purely lexical event', the 'poem' as 'the locus of a specific process of production (or reproduction) and consumption' and the 'work' which 'comprehends the global set of all the texts and poems which have emerged in the literary production and reproduction processes'.⁵⁶ By circulating his poems in MS versions; by revising the published versions and including textual variants, both from MSS and previous editions, in his presentation and re-presentation of those poems; by reordering and reconstituting and retitling the larger units in which those poems are grouped, by annotating his poems (and even annotating his notes), Pope seems to have had a conception of the products of his literary endeavour as 'works' very much in this sense. As Maynard Mack has put it:

Throughout his career, the typical Pope poem is a work-in-progress. States of provisional wholeness and balance occur along the way, some more inclusive than others but each conceivable as an end stage and the one at which the poet finally rests . . . never declares itself to be definitive in any absolute sense. Subtractions and accretions remain imaginable.⁵⁷

⁵⁶McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, 1991), p. 31-2.

⁵⁷Mack, *Last and Greatest Art*, pp. 16-17.

