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Repackaging Milton for the Late Seventeenth-Century Book Trade

Jacob Tonson, *Paradise Lost*, and John Dryden's
The State of Innocence

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The 1688 folio edition of *Paradise Lost*, published by Jacob Tonson the Elder (1655/6–1736) and his fellow bookseller Richard Bentley (1645–97), had a profound impact both on Milton's authorial afterlife and on Tonson's career as a stationer.¹ Milton may have been dead by 1688, but this volume was nonetheless an act of mutual promotion: Tonson made Milton into an elite book-trade product as Milton made Tonson the fortune and reputation that enabled him to transform his fledgling company into the eighteenth century's most formidable literary publishing house. I contrast the material features of this expensive publication with previous editions of *Paradise Lost* to suggest how the 1688 folio helped to revive interest in Milton's work and canonize him as a prestigious literary author. I also explore the reasons why Bentley and Tonson chose to publish Milton at this time and posit that Tonson's motivation for investing in *Paradise Lost* may have had more to do with the success enjoyed by an operatic alteration, John Dryden's *The State of Innocence*, than it did with the perceived marketability of Milton's poem.

Early Editions of *Paradise Lost*

An examination of earlier editions of *Paradise Lost* helps to make clear the influence that Bentley and Tonson's 1688 folio had on Milton's authorial

¹ I emphasize the impact the 1688 folio had on Tonson's career, but in doing so I do not wish to diminish Bentley's role in the project. It seems that Bentley owned a quarter share (see Mandelbrote, 'Richard Bentley's Copies'). The 1688 edition was issued with three different imprints: one listing Bentley, one listing Tonson, and one listing both men together. It would thus be incorrect to refer to the 1688 edition as Tonson's alone, but Bentley died in 1697, less than a decade after the folio's publication, whereas Tonson lived until 1736 and went on to become the most influential stationer of the early eighteenth century.

reputation. These were issued by Samuel Simmons, a printer-publisher.² Simmons published Milton's poem early in his career as a stationer, and he does not appear to have had great confidence in the poem's ability to sell.³ *Paradise Lost* was first published in 1667 and sold by a handful of booksellers. Robert Boulter, Peter Parker, Matthias Walker, S. Thomson, H. Mortlack, and T. Helder were all named in imprints as stocking the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, thus suggesting caution as each would have been responsible for selling a small number of copies. That said, the large number of stationers stocking *Paradise Lost* at shops operating from locations as far apart as 'Fleet-Street' and 'Bishopgate-Street' will have had the positive side effect of making Milton's poem available from a range of locations across London. The more diverse the shops selling a book, the more likely consumers were to stumble upon it, whether they were actively looking to acquire a copy or not. Simmons's caution may thus have been to Milton's advantage, with his sales strategy inadvertently helping to promote Milton to a wider readership.

Simmons's 1667 quarto edition of *Paradise Lost* was reissued a number of times, with the paratextual material added to later issues suggesting that he (and his fellow booksellers and their customers) thought it necessary to augment and improve on the first.⁴ The first issue did not contain any paratextual framework, meaning that readers went straight from title page to poem. The poem was divided into ten books, with line numbers helpfully inserted (perhaps for the first time in an English poem) to mark every tenth line of verse,⁵ but there was no pagination and the text appears cramped, with little spacing and double-rule lines around—at times poorly set—type. The lines of verse sit snug against claustrophobic text boxes. Later issues of the first edition were furnished with fourteen pages of paratexts that prefaced the poem with arguments detailing the main action of each book, with a note from the printer, an errata list, and justification from Milton himself explaining why the poem, contrary to most of the heroic works circulating in the late 1660s, did not rhyme. The addition of arguments aligned

² Simmons's name did not appear on a copy of *Paradise Lost* until 1668; explanations offered for Milton's choice of printer include the location of Simmons's print shop; the fact that Simmons, unlike most members of the book trade, was not badly impacted by the Great Fire of London in 1666; fidelity, as Simmons's relatives had printed some of Milton's earlier work; and the fact that Simmons was known as a dissenter (Lindenbaum, 'Milton's Contract'; MacLennan, 'John Milton's Contract for *Paradise Lost*'; Dobranski, *Milton, Authorship, and the Book Trade*, 35–6; and Moyles, *The Text of Paradise Lost*).

³ As Campbell and Corns observe, *Paradise Lost* was the first title Simmons entered into the Stationers' Register alone. See *John Milton: Life, Works, and Thought*, 333.

⁴ As Moyles shows, there were five issues of the first edition of *Paradise Lost* and, as Dobranski has demonstrated, there were six variant title pages of the first edition, but 'there is no relationship' between the different title pages and internal variants within the issues. In seeing the added paratexts as improvements, I do not wish to suggest that internal changes and corrections within the different issues necessarily show improvement. See Dobranski, 'Simmons's Shell Game', 64–5, 65; and Moyles, *The Text of Paradise Lost*, 4, 16.

⁵ William Poole states that the addition of line numbers was 'a practice unwitnessed outside the editions of the Greek and Latin classics prepared for schoolboys and scholars' (*Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost*, 10).

Milton's poem with the classical epics he sought to emulate, but this was a case of reissuing rather than generating a new edition (the text was not reset), so it was not possible to situate the arguments before each book. Instead, they are grouped together before the poem begins. The arguments are not afforded a new page each—something which would have been possible with reissuing, had Simmons deemed it worth the cost in extra paper—and are instead clumped together, divided only by rule lines. Rather than prepare the reader for the content of the book that follows, the combined and continuous arguments therefore offer a summary of the entire plot of Milton's epic. Thus, the reissued copies of the first edition of *Paradise Lost* augmented the number of paratexts and, in doing so, arguably aided readers, but the overall quality of the edition remained low.

Sales of Milton's *Paradise Lost* may have been somewhat slow when it was first published in 1667. The author's contract with Simmons has survived, and it stipulates that Milton was to receive five pounds on receipt of the manuscript and a further five pounds once Simmons had sold 1,300 copies of the poem. Milton did not receive the second sum until April 1669, suggesting that it took almost two years to sell 1,300 copies.⁶ It would seem that *Paradise Lost* made but a modest impact when it was first released onto the market.

A second edition of *Paradise Lost* was published in octavo format in 1674, seven years after the first. It was advertised on its title page as 'Revised and Augmented' by Milton, divided into twelve books, and supplemented by commendatory poems by 'S.[amuel] B.[arrow]' (in Latin) and Andrew Marvell (in English). The poem's arguments were now helpfully positioned before each book. The edition also featured a portrait of Milton, but, as Don-John Dugas has observed, this edition is 'much less attractive than the first edition because of the poor quality of its type'.⁷ Equally, the line numbers of the first edition are no longer present, meaning that part of the helpful apparatus disappeared even as the poem's arguments moved to greater usability and prominence. The second edition was reissued a year later, possibly suggesting poor sales. A third edition of *Paradise Lost*, released in 1678, retained the octavo format and the division of the poem into twelve books but did little to improve on the quality of the previous two editions. It was also printed on cheap paper, with a great deal of bleed-through. As Moyles notes, it also introduced 'fresh ... compositorial errors, chiefly foul case and omission'.⁸ Simmons did not publish any further editions of *Paradise Lost* as he sold the rights in copy (that is, the copyright) to Brabazon Aylmer shortly after.

Confusion over the transactions between Simmons, Aylmer, and Tonson might have unnecessarily complicated our understanding of when *Paradise Lost* was and

was not deemed to be a valuable investment. Aylmer purchased the rights in copy in 1680 and is reported to have paid twenty-five pounds for it, but he never published *Paradise Lost*.⁹ It may be that Aylmer, a friend of Milton's, purchased the rights to prevent the poem from falling into the hands of the wrong publisher.¹⁰ Aylmer then sold the rights to Tonson, and it is at this point that confusion seems to have crept into the story. Dugas writes that 'Milton scholars agree that Tonson bought the half-copyright to *Paradise Lost* from Aylmer in 1683 and that he paid more for that half than the £25 Aylmer had paid Simmons for the whole copyright in 1680', but adds that 'the original source of this story remains obscure'.¹¹ These transactions are not recorded in the Stationers' Register, but we do have a reliable early witness in the form of Thomas Newton.¹² In his account of 'The Life of John Milton', which precedes his 1749 edition of *Paradise Lost*, Newton reports that Aylmer sold the rights in copy 'to Jacob Tonson at two different times, one half on the 17th of August 1683, and the other half on the 24th of March 1690, with a considerable advance of the price'.¹³ Thus, rather than suggest that Aylmer made a profit in 1683, Newton's account states that Tonson paid more for the *second* half of Aylmer's copy in 1690/1 than he did for the *first* half in 1683. This makes far more sense when we consider that the first three editions of *Paradise Lost* were by no means bestsellers and that Aylmer did not deem the poem profitable enough to produce his own edition.

Newton's account of the transaction history also makes more sense in the context of Tonson's career because it is unlikely that he would have been able to afford to pay a great deal for the rights in copy to *Paradise Lost* in 1683. Indeed, I suspect that half was all he could afford at that stage and that he likely co-financed the purchase with his regular business partner, Bentley, with whom he went on to co-publish the 1688 folio.¹⁴ In 1683, Tonson was but a junior stationer. He was apprenticed to Thomas Basset in June 1670, but he did not complete his apprenticeship or set up his own publishing firm until 1678.¹⁵ Tonson began his career with joint publishing ventures with other stationers, particularly with his elder brother Richard and with Bentley, who was then working alongside

⁹ He did, however, publish *Epistolarum familiarum liber* (1674) and *Brief History of Muscovia* (1682), but was refused a licence to publish Milton's *Letters of State*. See Marja Smolenaars, 'Aylmer, Brabazon (*bap.* 1645, *d.* in or after 1719), bookseller'.

¹⁰ On their friendship, Lindenbaum notes that Aylmer is reported to have occupied a role as pall bearer at Milton's funeral. See 'Authors and Publishers in the Late Seventeenth Century'.

¹¹ Dugas, *Marketing the Bard*, 77, n. 9.

¹² As Lindenbaum states, 'there is good reason to believe' Newton's account as 'Newton's edition of *Paradise Lost* was prepared for the Tonson firm and Newton had access to Tonson's records' ('Authors and Publishers in the Late Seventeenth Century', 33, n. 4).

¹³ MCVIII.

¹⁴ According to the list of stock transferred from Bentley to Richard Wellington after the former's death in 1697, Bentley at some point owned a one-quarter share in *Paradise Lost*. See Mandelbrote, 'Richard Bentley's Copies'.

¹⁵ On Tonson's early career, see MacKenzie, 'Tonson, Jacob, the elder (1655/6–1736), bookseller'.

⁶ See MacLennan, 'John Milton's Contract for *Paradise Lost*', and French, *The Life Records of John Milton*, 4: 429–31. Moyles suggests that copies of the first edition went on sale soon after the poem's entry in the Stationers' Register in August 1667, thus about twenty months before Milton received payment on 26 April 1669. Like me, Moyles suspects that sales were 'lagging' (*The Text of Paradise Lost*, 4, 14–15).

⁷ Dugas, *Marketing the Bard*, 77. ⁸ Moyles, *The Text of Paradise Lost*, 32.

James Magnes (d.1678). Tonson's early releases predominantly involved quarto playbooks and poems, particularly those by John Dryden. In the 1680s Tonson had by no means attained the formidable reputation which he was to acquire in the eighteenth century. He was, however, already engaging in shrewd, at times illegal, publishing projects, such as the pirate edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that he brought out with Bentley in 1683/4.¹⁶

Tonson was clearly planning ahead as we know that he had heard of and developed an interest in Milton before the end of his apprenticeship.¹⁷ Aylmer may not have wished to publish *Paradise Lost*, but one assumes that, if he could have owned the complete copyright, then Tonson would have purchased it in its entirety in 1683. Tonson's ambition despite low funds is also reflected in the fact that the 1688 *Paradise Lost* was financed by subscription. As John Barnard notes, subscription publication, which first emerged in the mid-seventeenth century, was designed to enable the publication of 'large, learned books that were commercially unviable'.¹⁸ It seems that it was only by pre-selling copies of the folio and by negotiating with Aylmer, who may have retained a 50 per cent share in the poem,¹⁹ that Tonson could bring out a luxurious publication that was to transform both the reputation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and his own career. Indeed, Aylmer is included in the subscribers list, suggesting either that his name was published out of recognition for letting Bentley and Tonson publish the poem to which he owned half the copyright, or else that he just purchased an advance copy of the 1688 folio. In the latter case, this may again be due to the friendship Aylmer enjoyed with his late friend Milton.

Milton, Tonson, and the 1688 *Paradise Lost*

The material form of the fourth edition represented a radical departure from those discussed above. The 1688 edition smacked of quality. It was the first edition of *Paradise Lost* to be published in folio format, with its 'monumental stature [seen to] symbolize big or important ideas'; indeed, it has been suggested that books in this format 'proclaimed their own merit, whether or not public opinion had yet deemed them worthy of such celebration'.²⁰ The 1688 folio was furnished with wide margins that offered readers plenty of room to add their own annotations to Milton's poem. The type was clear, and the volume featured an engraved portrait of Milton over an epigram in which Dryden helped to canonize him as the

national poet by depicting Milton as an English heir to the two most revered classical writers. Dryden claims that Milton possessed both Homer's 'loftiness of thought' and the 'Majesty' of Virgil. The 1688 folio was also printed on quality paper to match the elite company in which Dryden's epigram placed Milton, and the volume even featured twelve detailed engravings—one for each book—by John Baptist Medina and others (see Figure 4.1). Concerning the illustrations, Robert B. Hamm, Jr acknowledges that the 1688 *Paradise Lost* was remarkable in that it 'helped to introduce the Franco-Flemish style of book illustration to England', but he rightly adds that these illustrations are yet more exceptional in the context of Tonson's career as a stationer and 'should not be seen as indicative of the general quality of Tonson's books' until that point.²¹ Thus, the 1688 folio marked a radical



Figure 4.1 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. A poem in twelve books (1688). Illustration to and argument of Book IX. Folger Shelfmark M2147. Gg[1] (p. 219) and facing plate. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

¹⁶ This edition, Wing S2951, was deliberately misdated '1676'. See Depledge, 'False Dating'.

¹⁷ Tonson wrote of how he "had a mind to have seen Miltons Books" and of how, having failed to gain any during his first trip to see Milton, he would gaze in the direction of Milton's home whenever he went to Moorfields'. See Lynch, *Jacob Tonson: Kit-Cat Publisher*, 13.

¹⁸ Barnard, 'London Publishing, 1640–1660', 11.

¹⁹ The absence of Aylmer's name on the 1688 folio imprints suggests that he was a silent partner.

²⁰ Robert B. Hamm, Jr, 'Rowe's "Shakespeare"'.
²¹ Ibid., 181. On innovations associated with Tonson and Dryden's earlier translation projects, see Gillespie, 'The Early Years of the Dryden-Tonson Partnership'.

departure not just for Milton's poem but also for Tonson's house style as the publisher pulled out all the stops for Milton.

Perhaps most significantly, though, the 1688 folio edition included a list of 'The | NAMES | OF THE | Nobility and Gentry' that 'Encourag'd' the volume's publication through their subscriptions, a list that transformed Milton's reputation from that of a dissenting king killer to one appreciated by men across the political spectrum. The list included the likes of Dryden, as well as a series of earls, lords, even bishops, some of whom prepaid for one copy, others of whom paid for as many as three copies of Milton's poem. Some subscribers were Whigs and others were Tories; it was not a partisan list. Instead, the list suggests that Milton's poem was aimed at and approved by a great variety of readers. Surprisingly, even Sir Roger L'Estrange subscribed to the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*.²² This was the first time that a work of imaginative English literature had been published by subscription, and the financial aid Bentley and Tonson enlisted had positive implications for Milton. Readers perusing the list included at the end of the volume would have seen the names of 538 influential figures who not only supported the publication of *Paradise Lost* but also by implication endorsed the poem and its author. The ranks and reputations of the subscribers added status to the publication and helped to promote Milton and his poem as belonging to elite, high culture, much as Tonson's later subscription edition of Shakespeare (1723–5), which featured a list headed by the King, helped to canonize Shakespeare.

As is often noted, Tonson stated that the 1688 *Paradise Lost* turned out to be the most lucrative of his publishing ventures,²³ but this venture also looks to have transformed *Paradise Lost* into an elite book-trade product. The 1667, 1674, and 1678 editions of the poem cost approximately 3s each.²⁴ Tonson claimed that 'the Price of [the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*] was Four times greater than before'; this indicates a retail price of around 12s for the 1688 folio, but Barnard, who used paper counts to calculate his figures, suggests that 'even 15s. is a reasonable estimate for the price of a copy of the 1688 *Paradise Lost*'.²⁵ As a point of comparison, Milton's single poem was in 1688 retailing for around the same price as a copy of the Fourth Folio (1685) of Shakespeare's collected plays.²⁶ The subscribers to this volume were not only promoting Milton but also self-fashioning, as the list announced them as people capable of spending up to 15s

on a single poetry book. Thus, in contrast to earlier editions of *Paradise Lost*, the 1688 folio edition was a magisterial publication and one that functioned as a material witness attesting to the quality of Milton's work, Tonson's (and Bentley's) house style, and the financial worth of its subscribers.

The 1688 folio marked the beginning of Tonson's promotion of Milton and was Tonson's first major publishing venture. Thus, the project played a highly significant role not just in Milton's authorial afterlife but also in Tonson's career. As Peter Lindenbaum states, 'Tonson was the leading publisher and bookseller of literary works of his generation and it was John Milton who made him.'²⁷ Even the most famous portrait of Tonson depicts him as proudly holding his folio edition of *Paradise Lost*. According to Newton, Tonson acquired the last of Aylmer's copy in 1690/1, presumably with profits from 1688, and (with Bentley) brought out a second folio edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1691. Tonson also acquired the rights to a substantial number of other Milton texts and in 1695 published alone both a third folio edition of *Paradise Lost* and *The Poetical Works of John Milton*. The 1695 edition of *Paradise Lost* then arguably took Tonson's project to canonize Milton via the book trade a step further by also including critical commentary by the scholar Patrick Hume. Indeed, this was the first critical edition of a work of English poetry.²⁸ Profits from the 1688 edition enabled Tonson to not only acquire and publish Milton's other works but also bring out similarly prestigious editions of Virgil, Homer, and Shakespeare.²⁹ As Barnard writes, Tonson's 'willingness to advance copy money [£200 to Dryden for his Virgil] was undoubtedly based on his earlier experience of jointly publishing...*Paradise Lost* (1688)'.³⁰ Thus, I would argue that this project was mutually beneficial: Tonson shaped Milton's authorship, while his later publishing career was shaped by the profits earned from the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*.

Conclusion: the Influence of Dryden's *The State of Innocence*

To anyone who observed the fortunes of the first three editions of *Paradise Lost*, Tonson's decision to invest in Milton's poem may have seemed an unusual, unwise business move. I wish to conclude by suggesting that the 1688 *Paradise*

²² On the relationship between the two, see von Maltzahn, 'L'Estrange's Milton'.

²³ Osborn, ed., *Joseph Spence: Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters*, 333.

²⁴ Robert Clavell lists the price of *Paradise Lost* bound as costing 3s in 1669, and a Term Catalogue entry for Trinity 1674 lists 'Paradise Lost. A Poem, in Twelve Books; Revised and Augmented by the Author, John Milton' (i.e. the second edition) as costing the same, 3s. The prices for *Paradise Regained* are taken from the *Term Catalogues* (I. 56 and I. 453).

²⁵ This calculation is based on the number of sheets used to print the 1688 edition in comparison with those used to print the related publication *Paradise Regained*, which used a tenth fewer sheets and which retailed (bound) for 4s in 1671 and for 1s 6d in 1680. See Barnard, 'Large- and Small-Paper Copies', 270.

²⁷ Lindenbaum also suggests that Tonson 'unmade John Milton' by dividing Milton's literary from his non-literary works, but I would instead emphasize the greater visibility Milton as literary author gained in the wake of the 1688 folio edition of *Paradise Lost*. On Milton and Tonson and the division between Milton's literary and non-literary works, see Lindenbaum, 'Rematerializing Milton', 5.

²⁸ See Moyles, *The Text of Paradise Lost*, and David Harper, 'The First Annotator of *Paradise Lost* and the Makings of English Literary Criticism'.

²⁹ On the Virgil, see especially Barnard, 'Dryden, Tonson, and Subscriptions for the 1697 Virgil'. On Alexander Pope's translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, see Mack, *Alexander Pope: A Biography*, 268, 416.

³⁰ Barnard, 'The Large- and Small-Paper Copies', 269.

Lost had less to do with the perceived vendibility of the poem and more to do with Tonson's own ambitions and frustrations as a stationer, particularly as Dryden's stationer. Dryden, who we know admired the poem, probably helped to persuade Tonson—his friend and collaborator on numerous projects—to bring out an edition of *Paradise Lost*,³¹ but Tonson may also have seen *Paradise Lost* as a consolation prize for Dryden's *The State of Innocence*. Dryden's operatic alteration of *Paradise Lost* had proven to be an exceptionally profitable print commodity. *The State of Innocence* was first entered in the Stationers' Register on 17 April 1674. It was entered by Henry Herringman under the title '*The Fall of Angels and man in innocence, An heroic opera*' and attributed to 'John Dreyden' [sic].³² It is sometimes misstated that Tonson and not Herringman entered the copy for *The State of Innocence* in 1674.³³ It is a logical mistake to make as we tend to think of Tonson as always having been Dryden's publisher, but their literary-commercial relationship was not confirmed until 1679. That it was Herringman and not Tonson who entered the copy for Dryden's adaptation is, I argue, precisely the point. Tonson lost out to Herringman because *The State of Innocence* came too early in Tonson's career as a stationer.

Dryden's alleged conversation with Milton in 1674, during which he is said to have asked permission to put Milton's 'Paradise Lost into Rhime for the Stage',³⁴ is now infamous. However, the anecdote and the critical fortunes of Dryden's *The State of Innocence* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* may, I believe, have masked our appreciation of the role Dryden's alteration played in the promotion of Milton's poem at the end of the seventeenth century.³⁵ The relationship between Milton's and Dryden's texts goes beyond the mere act of adaptation, or 'alteration'. Dryden asked permission to 'tagg [Milton's] Points' in 1674, and his opera was not published until February 1677, but it still looks to have impacted on the second edition of *Paradise Lost* when it was released in summer 1674. A piece of commendatory verse, composed by Milton's friend Marvell, was added to the second edition, and it is hard not to read Marvell's lines as a response to Dryden's alteration. It is generally assumed that Marvell, and perhaps Milton too, read the

opera shortly after it was composed. Indeed, in the preface to the first edition Dryden claimed that the opera had also enjoyed extended manuscript circulation, complaining that 'many hundred Copies of it [were] dispers'd abroad without my knowledge or consent'.³⁶ This suggests that the opera will have been easy to access despite the delay between completion and print publication. Marvell speaks of how others ought not 'dare' to pretend to share in Milton's labours, and refers to 'town-Bayes', Dryden's nickname. The second edition of Dryden's opera appeared in 1678, within twelve months of the first edition. The third edition of *Paradise Lost* also appeared in 1678, after a hiatus of four years, suggesting that it could have been released in response to the interest generated by Dryden's piece. Thus, even before the first edition of *The State of Innocence* was published, Dryden's alteration looks to have impacted on the timing of and paratexts to the second edition of *Paradise Lost*, and it may also have influenced the timing of the release of the third edition of *Paradise Lost*.

I suspect that Dryden and his opera also influenced the publication of the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost*. Tonson did not become Dryden's publisher until 1679, but he soon after sought to obtain the exclusive rights to publish Dryden's earlier works.³⁷ Tonson did not manage to secure the rights to *The State of Innocence*; one imagines that Herringman would have been loath to relinquish the rights to such a popular print commodity. Dryden's opera went through an impressive nine editions between its first release in 1677 and the turn of the century. A second edition was published in 1678, a third and fourth followed in 1685, a fifth in 1690, a sixth in 1692, and a seventh and eighth in 1695. A pirated ninth edition, falsely dated '1684', was also published.³⁸ The closest Tonson came to publishing *The State of Innocence* during the seventeenth century was to include the title within *The Dramatic Works of Mr John Dryden in Three Volumes*, which was issued from 1691, but this was but a *Sammelband* of previously published Dryden quartos, stitched together and furnished with new title pages.³⁹ Tonson's interest in the title is also reflected in his appearance in the imprint to the 1695 edition of *The State of Innocence*, but he merely stocked the play in his shop; it is printed for Herringman and to be sold by others, as Herringman was by then a wholesale publisher.⁴⁰ Tonson finally obtained the rights in copy from Herringman around the turn of the century: he is named in

³¹ Dryden and Tonson collaborated on translations and collections in the early 1680s, and Dryden's influence over Tonson is demonstrated in Tonson's acceptance of Dryden's advice to reprint 1,000 copies of Lord Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse*. See Ward, *Letters of John Dryden*, 22–3. Tonson also credited John Somers with persuading him to publish Milton in 1688 and again in 1711. See Gillespie, 'The Early Years of the Dryden-Tonson Partnership'.

³² Eyre and Rivington, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers of London*, 1.479.

³³ See, for example, Zwicker, 'John Dryden Meets, Rhymes, and Says Farewell to John Milton', 184.

³⁴ See Darbishire, ed., *The Early Lives of Milton*, 335, and, for a recent discussion of the important relationship between Dryden, Milton, and Andrew Marvel, see Zwicker, 'John Dryden Meets, Rhymes, and Says Farewell to John Milton'.

³⁵ On *The State of Innocence*, see Marcie Frank's chapter 'Staging Criticism, Staging Milton: John Dryden's *The State of Innocence*' in her monograph *Gender, Theatre, and the Origins of Criticism from Dryden to Manley*; and Zwicker, 'John Dryden Meets, Rhymes, and says Farewell to John Milton'.

³⁶ For more on manuscript copies of Dryden's opera, see Hamilton, 'The Manuscripts of Dryden's *The State of Innocence* and the Relation of the Harvard Ms to the First Quarto'.

³⁷ As Raymond N. MacKenzie has stated, Tonson 'began to buy up the rights to Dryden's earlier works during the 1680s' ('Tonson, Jacob, the elder (1655/6–1736), bookseller').

³⁸ See Hamilton, 'The Early Editions of Dryden's *The State of Innocence*'. This edition is listed as MacDonald 81c. See Macdonald, *John Dryden: A Bibliography of Early Editions and of Drydeniana*.

³⁹ See Macdonald, *John Dryden: A Bibliography of Early Editions and of Drydeniana*.

⁴⁰ The imprint states that the edition was printed for Herringman but 'sold by J. Tonson, F. Saunders, and T. Bennet'. Herringman was by then a wholesale publisher and had turned his shop, the Blue Anchor, over to Saunders and Bennet. On Herringman's career, see Francis X. Connor, 'Henry Herringman, Richard Bentley and Shakespeare's Fourth Folio (1685)'.

the imprint as the publisher of the opera in 1703. Thus, he clearly wanted to profit from *The State of Innocence*, but the rights to publish it remained beyond his reach during the seventeenth century.

The publication history of Milton's most famous poem could therefore have been shaped less by the work's perceived 'genius' and more by Tonson's frustrations after failing to obtain the rights to a successful Dryden adaptation. We may never know for sure what made Tonson and Bentley decide to publish the 1688 folio edition of *Paradise Lost*, but we do know that it proved to be a wise decision: the venture was a huge success. It marked the beginnings of Jacob Tonson's rise to commercial prominence and his long career as a shaper of the literary canon. But, of yet more importance to this volume, the 1688 folio edition of *Paradise Lost* also helped to canonize Milton as a prestigious author and *Paradise Lost* as an elite book-trade product.

5

Joseph Addison and the Domestication of *Paradise Lost*

Thomas N. Corns

As WILL [Honeycomb]'s Transitions [from one topic to another] are extremely quick, he turned from Sir ROGER [de Coverley], and applying himself to me, told me, there was a Passage in the Book I had considered last *Saturday*, which deserved to be writ in Letters of Gold; and taking out a Pocket *Milton*, read the following Lines, which are part of one of *Adam's* Speeches to *Eve* after the Fall. . . .¹

Sir ROGER listened to this Passage with great Attention, and desiring Mr. HONEYCOMB to fold down a Leaf at the Place, and lend him his Book, the Knight put it up in his Pocket, and told us that he would read over those Verses again before he went to Bed.²

Thus, on the Tuesday following Joseph Addison's Saturday examination of the tenth book of *Paradise Lost*,³ Richard Steele ingeniously loops back to engage with that essay. There used to be a commonplace observation in media studies that the characters in television drama were never depicted watching television. Steele, boldly, shows the characters of Mr Spectator's club actually discussing a copy of *The Spectator*. The characters primarily engaged in that exchange are surprising, and Steele's choice indicates how readership and styles of reading had apparently changed since Milton had envisaged a 'fit audience', presumably of ideologically sympathetic readers, appreciating his epic in the 'evil days' of the mid-1660s (7.25–31).⁴ We do not hear from Sir Andrew Freeport, though he is present as the discussion starts. As a Whig merchant he is perhaps the heir to the London puritans Milton may have anticipated as his readership. Instead, the advocate of Milton's poem is Will Honeycomb, something of a womanizer (at least in his youth): 'To conclude his Character, where Women are not concerned, he is an

¹ Here Steele inserts *Paradise Lost*, 10.888–908. The passage had been briefly discussed but not quoted in Addison's essay.

² Bond, ed., *The Spectator*, 3:345. ³ *Ibid.*, 3:329–39.

⁴ All quotations from *Paradise Lost* in this chapter are drawn from Orgel and Goldberg, eds., *The Major Works*, 355–618; subsequent references are cited in my text.