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# Passing Through Vanity Fair: *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the Marketplace

NATASHA SIMONOVA

**Abstract:** Although it is usually approached as a religious text or a precursor of the novel, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* was also a bestseller of its time and thus a valuable literary property, making it an important landmark in the history of authorship. This paper examines the publication history of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and its sequels (by Bunyan and others) from within the context of the Restoration book trade, focusing on their paratexts and the controversies of ownership that surrounded them. Despite his initial apology for writing a work of fiction, Bunyan came to assert greater authority over it, motivated first by accusations of plagiarism and then by the publication of Thomas Sherman's *Second Part*. A significant role in configuring Bunyan's authorship was also played by his publisher, Nathaniel Ponder, who—working in his own interests as the 'proprietor' of *The Pilgrim's Progress*—repeatedly defended Bunyan's authorial canon from piracy and spurious texts, including the anonymous *Third Part* brought out after Bunyan's death.

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## 1. Publishing Bunyan's authorship.

It may seem somewhat odd to approach *The Pilgrim's Progress* from the perspective of the marketplace. An allegorical dream-vision seen by its religious readers as the closest thing to Scripture and by modern critics as a precursor of the novel, the narrative sees Christian and Faithful roundly reject the temptations of fame and fortune offered by the worldly hawkers of Vanity Fair. Yet from its first publication in 1678, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was one of the major bestsellers of its time.<sup>1</sup> As valuable literary property, it led John Bunyan, the preacher and dreamer, to become inextricably caught up in the complex disputes over authorial ownership that were an important part of the Restoration book trade. In this he was assisted by his publisher, Nathaniel Ponder, and impelled by the several unauthorised continuations that sprung up around his work.

Certainly, neither the claiming of authorship nor participating in the contemporary fashion for serial fiction initially appeared to be among Bunyan's concerns. If, as the Oxford editors conclude, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was composed during the period of Bunyan's first imprisonment, then at least six years passed before he allowed it to be printed (Wharey and Sharrock xxi-xxxv). In the prefatory 'AUTHOR'S Apology', Bunyan notes his hesitations about publishing a text 'in such a mode' and

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Green lists 'thirteen editions of part 1 in ten years and at least another ten in the next forty years, and at least fourteen editions of part 2 in just under fifty years' (424); N.H. Keeble supposes that 'the 22 seventeenth-century editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* probably represent over 30,000 copies' (1987: 128).

describes its composition as an involuntary process: while writing an entirely different book, he states, 'Before I was aware, I this begun' and 'fell suddenly into an Allegory' (sig. A3r-v). As Michael Davies writes in *Graceful Reading*, Bunyan is 'at pains to deprecate' the 'creative and contrived aspect' of his work: 'Far from being a conscious fictional creation, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is emphatically presented, rather, as being authored by a more appropriate kind of spiritual inspiration' (188). Barbara Johnson points out, however, that these prefatory statements should not be taken to mean that Bunyan was literally an 'unconscious artist': on the contrary, they are a deliberate strategy to diffuse objections to the fictional nature of his work and guide its proper interpretation (39).

While Bunyan makes demands of his readers, these do not imply the further writing of fiction. Instead, Bunyan insists that Christian's progress should make Christian readers undertake their own, internal journeys of interpretation and self-analysis. To that end, he employs various strategies to prevent his readers focusing on the 'fictional' surface story alone, including extensive marginal notes providing explanations and referring to the Bible. As Davies writes, these 'prevent an absorption into the fictional realm of *The Pilgrim's Progress* for its own sake' (267)—that is, precisely the kind of reading most likely to lead to the composition of sequels. While the vivid narrative has certainly made it possible for readers over the centuries to engage solely with the surface plot, Bunyan was particularly concerned to forestall this. The verse conclusion of *The Pilgrim's Progress* cautions the reader to 'take heed / Of misinterpreting' by 'playing with the out-side of my Dream.' In fact, the only circumstance in which Bunyan alludes to a continuation is if the reader fails to follow his guidance and discards the message of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as 'dross': 'But if thou shalt cast all away as vain, / I know not but 'twill make me Dream again' (300). Nothing could be further from the kind of sentiment expressed by Bunyan's contemporary, the bookseller and writer Francis Kirkman, in a preface to his continuation of *The English Rogue*: 'If you desire that [the next part], you must give me encouragement by your speedy purchasing of what is already Written, and thereby you will ingage, *Your Friend, Francis Kirkman*' (A3r-v). Failure, not success and reader desire, would motivate Bunyan's continuation—he gives the warning of a preacher, rather than the advertisement of a bookseller.

Yet, almost in spite of himself, publishing *The Pilgrim's Progress* involved Bunyan in the same world of competing books in which figures like Kirkman participated. As an uneducated Baptist minister, he was accused of plagiarism in composing his work—an accusation that, as Johnson observes, places *The Pilgrim's Progress* within 'a literary tradition' rather than the purely Scriptural one of his original preface (24). Bunyan answers the charge in an 'Advertisement to the Reader' prefixed to his new allegory, *The Holy War* (1682), on the title page of which he is first identified as 'JOHN BUNYAN, the Author of the *Pilgrims Progress*':

Some say the *Pilgrims Progress* is not mine,  
Insinuating as if I would shine

In name and fame by the worth of another,  
 Like some made rich by robbing of their brother.  
 Or that so fond I am of being Sire,  
 I'le father Bastards. (399)

The language of commerce and authorial reputation is here first applied to Bunyan's work. Metaphors of theft and illegitimacy, already conventional in the discourse of authorship by this time, are employed to combat the idea that Bunyan appended his name to another man's production. Indeed, it is that very name that is brought into evidence at the close of the poem:

Witness my name, if Anagram'd to thee,  
 The Letters make - *Nu hony in a B.*  
 JOHN BUNYAN. (400)

While bees are also a traditional figure in discussions of imitation, they are generally used to symbolize the skilled gathering and distillation of others' ideas. Bunyan, on the other hand, insists that his is *new* honey, with only a single source. This source is no longer the Bible or the voice of God, but the author himself:

It came from mine own heart, so to my head,  
 And thence into my fingers trickled;  
 Then to my Pen, from whence immediately  
 On Paper I did dribble it daintily.  
 Manner and matter too was all mine own,  
 Nor was it unto any mortal known  
 'Till I had done it. Nor did any then  
 By Books, by wits, by tongues, or hand, or pen,  
 Add five words to it, or wrote half a line  
 Thereof: the whole, and ev'ry whit is mine. (399)

Bunyan then goes on to insist that the same is true of *The Holy War*, concluding that he is not motivated by personal glory but to prevent the misuse of his name by those who would 'scandalize' it (400). Although the composition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* may have been divinely inspired, the human author John Bunyan here comes forward to take decisive ownership of it ('ev'ry whit is mine') and protect his reputation as its sole writer.

Meanwhile, the commercial rights to *The Pilgrim's Progress* were being defended by Bunyan's publisher, Nathaniel Ponder. Prior to the work's publication, Ponder had taken care to have it—alone of Bunyan's works—officially licensed and registered with the Stationers' Company in his own name.<sup>2</sup> Following the Restoration, the Licensing Act

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<sup>2</sup> A transcript of the entry can be found in the Oxford edition (Wharey and Sharrock xxi).

of 1662 had tied entry in the Register, which protected a copy against piracy, with state censorship overseen by the Surveyor of the Press, Roger L'Estrange. Such censorship was potentially an issue for the book, given Bunyan's own periods of imprisonment and the fact that some of his previous publishers had faced prosecution for disseminating nonconformist texts.<sup>3</sup> However, although Ponder's own catalogue contained a large number of such publications and his entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* states that he 'worked under the constant threat of investigation and prosecution', Ponder's only run-in with press regulation occurred with the 1672 publication of Andrew Marvell's *The Rehearsal Transpos'd* (Lynch; Keeble 1987: 114). No difficulties seem to have arisen about the licensing of *The Pilgrim's Progress*—its genre as a fictional dream vision may have made it appear uncontroversial, and an overburdened licenser likely missed its topical applications (Keeble 1987: 118, 120). Still, any risk that Ponder ran in publishing Bunyan would have made him all the more determined to protect his property following the enormous success of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The lapse of the Licensing Act between 1679 and 1685 allowed for greater press freedom, including the publication of most of Bunyan's other major works—with *The Holy War* featuring an attack on L'Estrange himself as 'Mr. Filth' (Hill 54; Keeble 1987: 102). Ironically, however, it left Ponder at a disadvantage in defending his rights. In January 1680, Ponder announced in the *True Domestick Intelligence* that he was suing a printer called Thomas Bradyll (spelled 'Bradwell' in the newspaper) for selling pirated copies of Bunyan's work. Since the lapse of the Licensing Act meant that he was unable to obtain any legal redress, such a publicity campaign may have been Ponder's best course of action.<sup>4</sup> In the fourth edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1680, an 'Advertisement from the Book-seller' complains that

The *Pilgrims Progress*, having sold several Impressions, and with good Acceptation among the People, (there are some malicious men of our profession, of lewd principles, hating honesty, and Coveting other mens rights, and which we call *Land Pirates*, one of this society is *Thomas Bradyl* a Printer, who I found Actually printing my Book for himself[...]) but in truth he hath so abominably and basely falcified the true Copie [...] that they have abused the Author in the sense, and the Propriator of his right, (and if it doth steal abroad, they put a cheat upon the people.) You may distinguish it thus, The Notes are Printed in Long Primer[...]. Whereas the true Copie is Printed in a Leigable fair Character and Brevier Notes [...]<sup>5</sup> this Fourth Edition hath as the third had, The Authors Picture before the Title, and hath more than 22 passages of Additions, pertinently placed quite thorow the Book, which the Counterfeit hath not.

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<sup>3</sup> These publishers included Francis Smith, Benjamin Harris, and George Larkin (Sharrock and Forrest 1980: xvi, Sharrock 1962: xxxvii).

<sup>4</sup> A summary of the court case is given by Frank Mott Harrison in his article on Ponder; it is also in John Lilly's *Modern Entries* (67), and, as one of the few cases relating to literary property before 1710, was frequently referred to as a precedent in the eighteenth-century copyright debate.

<sup>5</sup> At the bottom of the page, Ponder includes an illustration to distinguish Brevier type from Long Primer.

While Ponder is unquestionably the 'Propriator' who has 'rights' over the work, however, he notes that the Author's 'sense' is also being 'abused' by the piracy. Bunyan's revisions to the text help to distinguish the 'true Copie'; although these are actually minor in the fourth edition, Ponder insists that they are 'placed quite thorow the Book' to prevent easy appropriation.<sup>6</sup> The famous frontispiece portrait of Bunyan as the Dreamer surrounded by figures from his narrative (on the reverse of which Ponder prints his advertisement) also serves to differentiate and authorize the text.<sup>7</sup> Bunyan's testimony on behalf of Ponder's edition was purely symbolic: there is no record of the author actually being called to testify in the court case against Bradyll (Harrison 277). However, when the *Second Part of the Pilgrim's Progress* was published in 1684, it is John Bunyan who signs a note on the first page reading 'I appoint Mr. *Nathaniel Ponder*, But no other to Print this Book.'

## 2. The Second Part(s).

Piracies were not the only unintended consequence of the text's enormous success. In 1682, 'T.S.' (the General Baptist Thomas Sherman) published *The Second Part of the Pilgrim's Progress*, with an extended title that directly mirrors Bunyan's. His dedication of the work to God also echoes the terms of Bunyan's 'Apology' in fearing purely plot-based readings by an audience motivated by 'Curiosity' to 'sport and play with the shaddow' rather than 'entertain the substance' (A3r.) Sherman then goes on to describe his own life in terms of a pilgrimage, in which his work is 'an instrument of doing good to my fellow pilgrims,' establishing authority from autobiographical experience similar to Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* (A3v-4r). There follows a commendatory poem 'To the Ingenious AUTHOR Of this SECOND PART Of the Pilgrims Progress' signed by 'R.B.', and then 'The Authors Apology for his BOOK.' Thus far, the text appears to be a 'Second Part' that does not acknowledge a predecessor. However, in the 'Apology' Sherman writes that the popularity of 'Novels, Romances and Plays [...] whilst Tracts of Divinity are also wholly slighted and neglected' has caused some 'eminent and ingenious' religious writers to couch their 'plain Truths' in a style that would be appealing to both the 'most illiterate' and 'most Judicious, Learned, and Knowing Reader.' Although he is never named, it appears that Bunyan is one of these:

And this consideration was the Motive which put the Author of the First Part of the Pilgrims Progress, upon composing and publishing that

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<sup>6</sup> The additions, mainly of marginal notes, are discussed in the Oxford edition by Wharey and Sharrock (c-ii), who note that they may not be authorial (civ). In fact, their survey of title-pages shows that *all* of Ponder's issues of *The Pilgrim's Progress* claimed to contain additions.

<sup>7</sup> Anne Dunan-Page provides some details of the portrait's background and subsequent history in "'The Portraiture of John Bunyan" Revisited.' She notes that the portrait suggests the generic boundaries being crossed by the volume, positioning Bunyan somewhere between an 'author' and a 'divine' (27). Editions of Bunyan's *Second Part* also include a sleeping portrait with an updated cast of characters (Wharey and Sharrock cxiv-v).

necessary and useful Tract, which have deservedly obtained such an Universal esteem and commendation. And this Consideration likewise, together with the importunity of others, was the Motive that prevailed with me, to compose and publish the following Meditations in such a method as might serve as a Supplyment, or a Second Part to it: Wherein I have endeavoured to supply a fourfold Defect, which I observe, the brevity of that discourse necessitated the Author into: First their is nothing said of the *State of Man* in his first Creation: Nor Secondly, of the Misery of Man in his Lapsed Estate before Conversion, Thirdly, a too brief passing over the Methods of Divine Goodness [...]. And fourthly, I have endeavoured to deliver the whole in such serious and spiritual phrases, that may prevent that lightness and laughter, which the reading of some passages therein, occasion in some vain and frothy minds. ([\*4]v-[\*5]r)

Sherman is here speaking the language of earlier seventeenth-century continuations: like Francis Kirkman, he lists his own motivations for undertaking the work, and like the various continuators of Sir Philip Sidney's unfinished *Arcadia*, he refers to his text as a 'Supplyment [...] to supply a fourfold Defect.' Yet while Sherman considers that these defects are caused by the too-short length of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the gaps he notes are doctrinal and stylistic rather than narrative. Although he commends Bunyan's work as a 'necessary and useful Tract,' Sherman's intention is to improve upon it in both language and theology. In fact, despite Sherman's description of his 'method', the *Second Part* is not strictly speaking a continuation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at all, but rather a full-scale rewriting, intended not to supplement but to replace it with a more theologically-sound and less suspiciously romantic account of the soul's journey (Davies 294-8). While its title may have been an attempt to exploit an interest in sequels to popular texts, the *Second Part* therefore differs from other continuations in its fundamentally anti-fictional orientation. Although Davies does not entirely clear Sherman of profiteering, he argues that he is also 'voicing profound concerns about the dangers of accepting Bunyan's allegory in terms of narrative "froth" alone—a reading for the "story" which, according to Sherman at least, Bunyan has manifestly failed to discourage' (297).

Despite several reprintings, there is no evidence of Ponder ever addressing this text: Sherman's rewriting does not claim to be by Bunyan, and does not seem to have constituted an infringement of Ponder's rights as 'Proprietor.'<sup>8</sup> However, the year after the *Second Part* appeared (1683), Ponder's publication of Bunyan's *One Thing is Needful* included an advertisement warning readers that

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<sup>8</sup> A 'second edition with additions' was published for Thomas Malthus in 1683 and 1684, and in Edinburgh in 1684 and 1696 (*ESTC*). Ponder had previously published two of Sherman's other tracts, which were listed alongside the fourth edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the 1680 Term Catalogue (Forrest and Sharrock 1988: xi).

THIS Author having Publish'd many Books, which have gone off very well: There are certain Ballad-sellers about *Newgate*, and on *London-Bridge*, who have put the two first Letters of this Author's Name, and his Effigies to their Rhimes and Ridiculous Books, suggesting to the World as if they were his: Now know, that this Author publisheth his Name at large to all his Books; and what you shall see otherwise he disowns.

Other works at this time, therefore, were seeking to capitalise on Bunyan's popularity by usurping his identity as an author.<sup>9</sup> While his initials and portrait ('Effigies') have come to lose the power that Ponder had earlier attributed to them through such appropriation, his full signature ('at large') continues to be invoked as an authenticating gesture.

When Bunyan published his own *Second Part* in 1684, its verse preface seems to be a direct response to Sherman and these other derivative texts.<sup>10</sup> The 'Authors Way of Sending forth His Second Part of the Pilgrim' constitutes a dialogue between Bunyan and his book, figured as a pilgrim or group of pilgrims. The book objects:

*But how if they will not believe of me  
That I am truly thine, cause some there be  
That Counterfeit the Pilgrim, and his name,  
Seek by disguise to seem the very same.  
And by that means have wrought themselves into  
The hands and Houses of I know not who. (A2v)*

Since Bunyan conceives reading *The Pilgrim's Progress* as an act of hospitality, the spurious continuation becomes a deceptive guest, inveigling its way into readers' homes through false attribution. As he replies, echoing the terms of Ponder's earlier advertisement, these spurious texts appropriate not only his book's title but his own authorship:

'Tis true, some have of late, to Counterfeit  
My Pilgrim, to their own, my Title set;  
Yea others, half my name and Title too;  
Have stitched to their book, to make them do;  
But yet they by their *Features* do declare  
Themselves not mine to be, whose ere they are. (A3r)

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<sup>9</sup> In his survey of religious publications, Green notes that false names or initials could often be used to increase sales, providing several other examples (18).

<sup>10</sup> Sharrock and Wharey refer to the appearance of 'spurious "Second Parts"' at this time, forcing Bunyan to 'resume his dream' in 'sheer self-defence'. However, they appear to base this entirely on Bunyan's own statements, and cite only the one continuation by Sherman, admitting 'Nowhere is the claim advanced that the work is Bunyan's' (cxii-cxiii). I suppose that Bunyan is probably conflating Sherman's text with the 'Rhimes and Ridiculous Books' denounced by Ponder.



Such a strategy to ‘make them do’ implies an improved status and marketability for these texts, through the invocation of the popular *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Bunyan then returns to the conventional bastardry trope in disclaiming continuations that do not have an acknowledged author of their own: unlike Bunyan, they do not properly ‘own’ their texts since they publish under stolen names or, like Sherman, sign themselves only with initials.

The poem continues to set out the criteria by which readers might distinguish genuine from counterfeit, all of which are directly dependent upon Bunyan’s authorship. First, there is the style that Sherman criticised for lacking ‘serious and spiritual phrases,’ but which instead becomes an inimitable mark of quality defining the author’s own against the ‘spurious’: the book speaks in ‘thine own native Language, which no man / Now useth, nor with ease dissemble can’ (A3r). The final proof, however, can only come from Bunyan himself. If any continue to doubt of the book,

Send them for me  
And I will Testifie, you *Pilgrims* be;  
Yea, I will Testifie that only you  
My *Pilgrims* are: And that alone will do. (A3r)

Bunyan thus becomes the chief and only possible witness to the book’s quality and truth—a question of truth that is particularly acute when the readers’ souls might be at stake in what they believe or welcome into their homes.

After all the justifications of the first ‘Apology,’ Bunyan’s confidence as an author here is remarkable. He mentions some of the objections put forward against *The Pilgrim’s Progress* by critics like Sherman, including that ‘he laughs too loud’, the allegory is too ‘dark’ to understand, or the ‘method’ comes too close to ‘Romance’. However, instead of responding to these at length, he only advises the book to ‘leave such [readers] to their choice’ as there is no accounting for taste (A4v-5r). Like his contemporaries in more commercial genres, Bunyan assumes that the first part’s popularity should guarantee the sequel’s reception, listing at length the various languages and regions in which *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (repeatedly referred to as ‘my *Pilgrim*’) has been successful: ‘Yet more, so comely doth my *Pilgrim* walk, / That of him thousands daily sing and talk’ (A3v). The language recalls that of the preface to Parts Three and Four of *The English Rogue*, in which the authors advertise the text through comparison to its successful predecessors: the continuation ‘is a younger brother to the former, lawfully begotten, and if you will compare their faces, you will find they resemble one another very much’ (Gibson 91-2). Similarly, Bunyan writes:

Wherefore my *Second Part*, thou needst not be  
Afraid to shew thy Head [...]  
‘Cause thou com’st after with a *Second store*,  
Of things as good, as rich, as profitable. (A4r)

Indeed, the 'Hearty Prayer of the Author, *JOHN BUNYAN*' at the conclusion of the verse preface seems evenly balanced between the spiritual benefit to his readers and the financial risk:

And may its buyer have no cause to say,  
His Money is but lost or thrown away  
[...] And may it perswade some that go astray,  
To turn their Foot and Heart to the right way. (A6r)

As Roger Sharrock writes, in publishing the sequel Bunyan 'could not help being aware of his new stature and responsibility as a writer with a public' (1968: 139-40)—not least because this stature had been challenged by others seeking to usurp or undermine his authority. While it may have begun as a divinely-inspired meditation, by this point the two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and their author seem to have firmly taken their place within the competitive literary marketplace.

If (as so many critics have assumed) Bunyan was motivated to write his own continuation by the appearance of Sherman's, he responded by stealing back the title that had been stolen from him: he composed a *real* second part of the story, repeating the successful elements of *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the medium of a narrative sequel, which no longer apologises for its fictionality. The *Second Part* relates the pilgrimage of Christian's wife, Christiana, along with her children and companions. This links it to the earlier text through family relationships and events, as Christiana traverses a landscape bearing the traces of Christian's journey and encounters characters who have met him. In fact, Michael McKeon sees this use of memory as a direct response to the subversive potential of the spurious continuation, since "The subject of Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is nothing other than the documentary objectivity of "the first part of the Records of the *Pilgrims Progress*," which characters within the narrative have accessed as a text, and which is repeatedly referred to and cited in the margins (313). This allows the two texts to 'support and bear witness to each other' through their interrelation (Austin 494), supplanting the more tenuous links of Sherman's *Second Part*.

Bunyan's sequel both fills a narrative gap noted by readers of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Christian's seemingly-heartless abandonment of his family) and expands its doctrinal meaning. Johnson argues that Bunyan 'capitulates to the will of his readers and returns to the question of Christian's wife and children. This concern with character rather than doctrine signals the shift from allegory to novel, from religion to literature' (246). Yet Christiana's story also constitutes a thematic and theological complement. While rebutting Sherman's stylistic criticism, Bunyan's continuation does address some of his concerns: whereas the first part depicts a man's individual journey, the second focuses on female characters and the church community in order to 'complete the picture of Christian life in the world' through the model of a marriage (Schellenberg

313).<sup>11</sup> Michael Austin considers that the two parts parallel the structure of the Old and New Testaments, existing in a similarly typological relationship with each other. The verse preface supports such a reading, since Bunyan presents the *Second Part* as an interpretative gloss upon the first, a 'Key' that will retrospectively aid in understanding it:

Besides, what my first *Pilgrim* left conceal'd,  
 Thou my brave *Second Pilgrim* hast reveal'd  
 What *Christian* left lock't up and went his way;  
 Sweet *Christiana* opens with her Key. (A4v)

Austin argues that this 'narrative logic of typology' means that 'a sequel might differ radically from its original in style, tone, theme, and argument, yet at the same point be considered a perfectly logical continuation of the earlier work. [...] Apparent contradictions between the two works can be resolved by assuming unity at the outset and interpreting one work in light of the other' (488). It is significant, however, that the site of this 'unity at the outset' is located in the author—Austin notes that typology requires readers to assume both 'a common authorship' and 'a common authorial intention for both texts' (494). Such a 'point where contradictions are resolved' into a coherent doctrine is also precisely how Michel Foucault has famously characterised the 'author function' (286). This is what unites the disparate halves of the text into a single 'canon', and it is why Bunyan insists that he is the sole possible witness to the *Second Part's* authenticity.

### 3. 'And now this Third is extant'.

Discussions of Bunyan's first and second parts generally present them as a completed diptych, the form in which they continue to be reprinted. Yet while *The Pilgrim's Progress* allowed for further dreaming only in the case of interpretative failure, the *Second Part* explicitly leaves the door open for additional sequels. Although, as Margaret Bridges argues, the dream-vision form creates a strong expectation of closure in the narrator's awakening, Bunyan all but abandons the premise in the *Second Part* (83, 94). Instead, he seems to blur the boundary between dreaming and waking, replacing inward experience with geographical specificity:

Now it hath so happened, thorough the Multiplicity of Business, that I  
 have been much hindred, and kept back from my wonted Travels into  
 those Parts whence he went, and so could not till now obtain an

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<sup>11</sup> For more on these aspects of the *Second Part* and Bunyan's changed personal circumstances, see Betty Schellenberg, 'Sociability and the Sequel: Rewriting Hero and Journey in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part II', and Kathleen M. Swain, 'Mercy and the Feminine Heroic in the Second Part of *Pilgrim's Progress*.' Keeble sees the continuation as more culmination than revision, arguing for 'The Unity of *The Pilgrim's Progress*' as a single text.

opportunity to make further enquiry after whom he left behind, that I might give you an account of them. But having had some concerns that way of late, I went down again thitherward. Now having taken up my Lodgings in a Wood about a mile off the place, as I slept I dreamed again.

And as I was in my Dream, behold, an aged Gentleman came by where I lay[...] (1-2)

The gentleman (Mr. Sagacity) and Bunyan then proceed to discuss the city they see before them, exchanging news about Christian as though he was a mutual acquaintance. The narrative is now authenticated, not as a record of a personal vision, but through, as McKeon notes, an ‘oddly literalistic’ move toward historicity (313). Christian and his family seem to be real figures, and Bunyan and his dreams serve as the reader’s point of access to them: ‘I told you then also what I saw concerning his *Wife* and *Children* [...]. Wherefore as I then shewed you, he left them and departed’ (1). This also allows him to end the *Second Part*, not with the decisive rupture of awakening, but the potential of a further relation:

As for *Christian’s* Children, the four Boys that *Christiana* brought with her, with their Wives and Children, I did not stay where I was, till they were gone over. Also since I came away, I heard one say, that they were yet alive...Shall it be my Lot to go that way again, I may give those that desire it, an Account of what I here am silent about; mean time I bid my Reader *Adieu*. (223-4)

As well as the direct promise of continuation in the fates of Christiana’s four sons, the multiple pilgrims joining Christiana’s group all have their own stories to tell, ‘implying a potentially unlimited multiplication of equally significant and narration-worthy pilgrimages’ (Schellenberg 319). The possibility of further sequels combines the commercial impetus of continuation-writing (giving readers what they ‘desire’) with Bunyan’s allegorical goals, since each story serves as a gloss upon the former and encourages further narratives/pilgrimages. The *Second Part* concludes with the death-bed scene of Stand-fast, who asks that his own wife and children may be told ‘of *Christian*, and of *Christiana* his Wife, and how *She* and her Children came after her Husband’, in order to encourage them to follow in his footsteps (221). By representing the act of receiving the story within the text, Bunyan thus manages to combine the promise of further narrative with the goal of active imitation in Christian life.

His publisher’s later statements (quoted below) suggest that Bunyan may in fact have begun work on another continuation, but if so, it was not completed by the time of his death in 1688. However, *The Third Part of the Pilgrim’s Progress* (first published in 1693) fully exploited the powerful draw of the original author, justifying Bunyan and Ponder’s complaints that his name and title were being stolen. While this text by ‘J.B.’ never directly claims to be by Bunyan, it does everything possible to suggest it, fully

incorporating the author within its modes of self-advertisement.<sup>12</sup> The title page copies the ‘sleeping portrait’ of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as well as its title, and features Bunyan’s name in large type as the subject of an appended biography of ‘the Author of the First and Second Part; this Compleating the whole Progress’. The ‘Life and Death’ (which claims to be by a close friend of Bunyan’s) continues the elision between the former two parts and the third, describing their composition entirely in the passive voice:

And now to make him more known and noted in the World, out comes his First Part of his *Pilgrims Progress* [...] which gained much Approbation and Applause, and in which his Name shall live to the end of the World; since which a Second Part, and now this Third is extant, compleating the whole, wherein are such Lively Representations of things Figured out to the mind, that it cannot but be very pleasing and delightful, as well as profitable, to a Godly life. (38)

The *Third Part* claims to be an essential part of the text, emerging from the same process, and in no way inferior to the rest of the ‘whole’. Its preface advertises that

It is a piece so Rare and Transcending what had hitherto been Published of this kind, that I dare, without any further Apology, leave it to the Censure of all Mankind, who are not Impartial, or Byassed: And so not doubting but it will render Comfort and Delight, I subscribe my self, as heretofore, your Souls hearty well Wisher, and Fellow Labourer in the Vineyard of our Lord Jesus,  
J.B. (A4r-v)

The ‘as heretofore’ strongly suggests that the speaker is Bunyan—particularly since the appended ‘Life’ also calls him ‘A Painful and Faithful Labourer in Christ’s Vineyard’ (3)—although it is difficult to imagine even the more confident author of the *Second Part* engaging in such obvious self-promotion.

The text also includes two commendatory verses to a ‘Worthy Friend, the Author of the Third Part of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*’ (signed ‘B.D.’ and ‘L.C.’), each praising the work in the terms of Bunyan’s Apology: ‘This is a Dream, not fabl’d as of old; / In this Express the Sacred Truths are told’ (A5r); ‘You write so plainly, that the weakest mind, / Under Similitudes, may comfort find’ (A6r). However, they also engage in more obvious advertising: ‘This Book has my voice, / And is of all in this kind the most choice’ (A6v). It is hard to determine whether the two parts of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* are to be considered together with the *Third Part*, or with the previous works of that ‘kind’ that it surpasses, but the intent is certainly to persuade an audience to buy and read this

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<sup>12</sup> Harrison suggests that the ‘J.B.’ actually stood for Josiah (or Joseph) Blare, one of the publishers of *The Third Part* (285). However, as Ponder’s previous denouncement of chapbooks published using Bunyan’s initials shows, no correspondence with a real name is necessary.

particular text. To that end, one of the poems uses language that would have been quite foreign to Bunyan:

As well in every Part the Scene is laid,  
That it to Charm the Reader may be said,  
With curious Fancy, and create delight,  
Which to an Imitation must Invite. (A5v)

While the 'Imitation' in this case is a pilgrimage, the terms are that of literature—and particularly of romance—rather than religion. Indeed, as Davies argues, the *Third Part* seeks to tone down the more radical and restrictive aspects of Bunyan's doctrine, so that, for example, 'Bunyan's doctrine of law and grace is replaced by a far more reasonable and socially appropriate doctrine of fasting and temperance' (347). The language and allegory are also simpler and less demanding of interpretation, thus appealing to a potentially broader market.

At the same time, however, the *Third Part* attempts to gain an audience by exploiting the familiarity of Bunyan's successful text. The opening recalls that of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, combining the summarising of a sequel with a continued usurpation of Bunyan's voice:

After the two former Dreams concerning *Christian*, and *Christiana* his Wife, with their Children and Companions Pilgrimage from the City of *Destruction* to the Region of Glory; I fell asleep again, and the Visions of my Head returned upon me: I dreamed another Dream, and behold there appeared unto me a great multitude of People, in several distinct Companies and Bands, travelling from the City of *Destruction* [...] (B1r)

As well as formal similarity in the repetition of common phrases (such as 'Now I saw in my Dream') and occasional marginal notes, the pilgrimage, like that of Bunyan's *Second Part*, features many places and characters from *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Despite the change in doctrinal emphasis, Davies writes that 'The book is true to Bunyan's allegorical world,' as the protagonist, Tender Conscience, passes through all the physical landmarks experienced by the previous pilgrims and recalls the events of the prior two parts (347). As Johnson argues, the *Third Part* 'is a clear attempt to profit from Bunyan's phenomenal success, but it also correctly diagnoses what readers were hungering for', with a superficially-similar narrative that skims the surface of Bunyan's allegory and focuses on 'characters rather than doctrine' (248).

However, while Davies may be correct that Bunyan would have considered the diminished theological rigour of the *Third Part* 'as much an outright abuse of his original creation as Thomas Sherman's bogus *Second Part*' (347), the work was attacked on very different grounds by Nathaniel Ponder. The advertisements in the 1693 edition of Bunyan's *Second Part* include a note, apparently inserted at the last minute, reading: 'The Third part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* that's now abroad, was not done by *John*

*Bunyan*, as is suggested. But the true Copy left by him, will be Published by *Nath. Ponder*' (A1r). A fuller explanation is given in that year's edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, printed for Ponder's son Robert. It contains an Advertisement for the *Second Part* and for *Grace Abounding*, described as '*JOHN BUNYAN's* Life [...] written by his own Hand [...] To which is added, The Remainder of his Life to his Death, by the Hand of a Friend, and Re-printed and Sold this Year, 1692 by *Nath. Ponder.*' The Advertisement goes on to note that

*The Pilgrims Progress; The THIRD PART; in a Dream: Printed in 1692. is an Impostor, thrust into the World by a Nameless Author, and would insunuate to the Buyers, that 'tis John Bunyan's, by adding a false Account of his Life and Death, not compleating the Work, as is said, &c. The Skeleton of his Design, and the Main of the Book, Done by him, As a Third Part, remain with Nath. Ponder; which, when convenient time serves, shall be Published. (A1v)*

Though Davies suggests that 'With the theological differences so evident, it is hardly surprising that Nathaniel Ponder [...] disclaimed this *Third Part* as an outright "impostor"' (347), Ponder's advertisement never mentions questions of doctrine (which no critic would remark upon until the nineteenth century), and is instead predicated on the facts of the text's production. A *Third Part* by a 'Nameless Author' is incapable of 'compleating the Work' and necessarily inferior to a skeleton draft left to be edited by Bunyan's literary executor; the biography is also 'false', and should be substituted by *Grace Abounding*. Ponder was clearly eager to protect his rights over the Bunyan canon; the same year, he refused to sell his copies for inclusion in Charles Doe's folio collected works (Harrison 284). His editions of Bunyan texts often included a catalogue of the author's other writings, and (as seen earlier) he frequently spoke out against impostors appropriating Bunyan's name and image. In publishing the author's most successful works, Ponder's reputation became inextricably connected to Bunyan's, so that his fellow bookseller John Dunton refers to him as '*Nathaniel (alias Bunyan) Ponder*' (437). However, as Harrison writes, 'In the closing decade of the century, Nathaniel Ponder had been hard put-to in conserving his property: so popular had Bunyan's writings become (272). Not only did *The Third Part* appear, but its advertisements include the same publisher, Josiah Blare, selling "The Pilgrims Progress, and all the Works of that Laborious Minister, Mr. *John Bunyan.*'

In 1697, Ponder once again sued the printer Thomas Bradyll at the Court of Chancery. Although Harrison considers that, given the final lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, 'Ponder's monopoly had ceased', he still pursued this case as the text's legal copyright holder: 'Ponder stated that, as a freeman of the Stationers' Company, he was the sole proprietor of the copyright of *The Pilgrim's Progress* which had been formally

entered in the Hall Register to his use' (272).<sup>13</sup> As summarised by Harrison and Henry Plomer, the main accusation was that, while printing editions of the first and second parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding* for Ponder, Bradyll had made extra copies and sold them off on the side to make a profit. However, in the midst of this business dispute between publisher and printer, Ponder also chose to accuse Bradyll of having written and published *The Third Part of the Pilgrim's Progress*. Bradyll denied any involvement with this text; Ponder's witnesses (three fellow booksellers, who were generally unhelpful in the case) were asked only 'whether they knew that Braddyl was the printer of the Third Part of the "Pilgrim's Progress,"' though none of them attempted to answer the question (Plomer 66). The accusation of authorship against Bradyll ultimately seems gratuitous, considering that he appears in the case exclusively in his role as a printer. It is important, however, that Ponder brings up *The Third Part* in order to argue that it, 'by transporting a great part of the original work, especially the titles, hindered the sale of the plaintiff's copies' (quoted in Plomer 65). Hidden within this obscure Chancery case (far less well known than Ponder's earlier suit against Bradyll), we thus have the first statement in which a narrative continuation constitutes not only an offense against an author's intentions, but a violation of property and a commercial threat.

The publisher's efforts to expose the *Third Part* as a fraud were ultimately unsuccessful, as was his attempt to assemble and publish an authorized continuation. The *Third Part* evidently sold well, and from the middle of the eighteenth century, was frequently bound with the first two parts as a single volume containing the complete *Pilgrim's Progress*.<sup>14</sup> Its authorship was questioned only in the nineteenth century, when, Susan Cook suggests, it fell out print because of new conceptions of 'authorial authenticity' (202). Yet, years before the introduction of authorial copyright and the late eighteenth-century discourse of original genius, we can already see Nathaniel Ponder—acting out of his own self-interest as a publisher—being highly concerned with the authenticity and integrity of Bunyan's work. The publication history of *The Pilgrim's Progress* shows how closely commercial and theological concerns could combine in the arena of the Restoration literary marketplace. While Sherman's *Second Part* and the anonymous *Third Part* serve very different purposes in rewriting Bunyan's doctrine and continuing his story, both seek to gain an audience by exploiting a connection with the popular text. At the same time, even for a religious writer like Bunyan, defending the genuineness of his vision meant taking ownership of his writing in the language of literary property—though it was left to Ponder to actually pursue the matter in court.

The distinction drawn in this case between the 'Author' and the 'Proprietor' of *The Pilgrim's Progress* would be reflected in the ambiguities of the Copyright Act of 1710 (also known as the Statute of Anne), which, after fifteen years of trade uncertainty

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Treadwell discusses other cases of individual stationers treating copyrights as common-law property even after final lapse of Licensing Act (773), though Joseph Loewenstein notes that 'trade confidence in traditional protections virtually collapsed' (213).

<sup>14</sup> 'No fewer than fifty-nine editions of [*The Third Part*] had appeared before the end of the eighteenth century' (Wharey and Sharrock cxvi n2).



following the end of licensing, ultimately 'Vest[ed] the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors, or Purchasers, of such Copies' (Rose 46). In the subsequent legal disputes over its interpretation, which lasted for much of the eighteenth century, the plaintiffs sought, as far as possible, to blur this distinction: continuing copyright in the works of long-departed authors like Shakespeare or Milton could thus be reframed as the moral defense of original creative labour. The growing discourse of authorial rights, in which even Bunyan participated, would therefore be invoked in the service of booksellers seeking, like Ponder, to protect their commercial investments.

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