

*Abstract: By the end of the seventeenth century, matters relating to literary property, originality, and copyright had been neither literarily nor legally clearly defined. In the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century, the Battle of the Books occupied the attention of the men of letters. The battle of the ancients and the moderns, the division of art and science, and the displacement of bonnes lettres by belles lettres occurred as a consequence of the new conceptual change which redefined the notion of literature: the emergence of the new category of the aesthetic, based on the perceptual, rather than the cognitive. The distribution of various forms of knowledge in the shape of printed material, including periodicals, imaginary voyages, fiction narratives, pamphlets, and biographies brought about a crucial transformation in European intellectual thought. In England, the increase in printed material created many possibilities and even pirated editions or literary forgeries were taken for granted as public vehicles to transmit knowledge. This article attempts to illustrate the conflict between literary forgery and the eighteenth-century "invention" of the literary canon, which implicitly refers to the role of the author in late Stuart England, the production and distribution of books/knowledge, laws of copyright and their role in the publication of illegitimate editions of books.*