

condemned it as 'a very scurrilous and personal attack'³¹ and L'Estrange's only biographer George Kitchin called it 'a tract his biographer must feel some shame in mentioning. The little restraint observed in his first attack on the poet has entirely disappeared, and the most venomous spirit discovered'.³² Even William Riley Parker has tentatively stated that 'when one reads some of his other pamphlets, this one seems restrained and impersonal by comparison'.³³ But we must remember that these were polemical tracts vying for much needed support from the uncommitted factions. One did not only discredit an opponent's opinions but also his personal credibility. Indeed, these pamphlets were written in a time of relative press freedom and published with great speed. These unlicensed tracts of controversy were for an audience which desired a pamphlet which was topical, often irreverent, and accessible. This was a field in which there was no prescribed decorum and the quality of the writing was highly variable.

It is possible to see *No Blinde Guides* as a paradigm; an early example of the path L'Estrange's work would take in 1660–61 and later in 1680–81. It is also the juncture which brought two major polemicists together: John Milton the intellectual embodiment of the English revolutionary bourgeoisie and Roger L'Estrange the royalist spokesman for privilege and tradition. The pattern which we perceive in *No Blinde Guides* is one of methodical damning of Milton's work by selective quotation. Any residual coherence in Milton's arguments is destroyed by L'Estrange's eliciting component elements and putting them into a new context. The integrity of the text was now destroyed and this was amplified by besmirching the author personally. Two audiences were catered for: those looking for humour and the odd laugh and those who might, perhaps, enjoy the textual debate on matters both classical and biblical. L'Estrange no doubt would have suppressed Milton's works had he had the power he was later to be given. But, failing this censorial post, he turned to his other role and offered an 'antidote' to the people. When Charles returned to England and gradually brought in people to offices which were to fit the needs of the time, L'Estrange would eventually become Surveyor of the Press: the knowledge which he had acquired during this period would be used with varying effect upon those printers, booksellers and authors who chose to traduce constituted authority.

With Charles back in power in June 1660 the Cavaliers lobbied for appointments in his court. Amongst those who drew attention to the dangers and services they had undertaken for the monarch during the interregnum was Roger L'Estrange. He gathered together unsold copies of *No Blinde Guides* and *Physician Cure thy Self*, and reprinted *A Seasonable Word*, *Treason Arraigned* and *Double*