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This collection of fifteen essays by leading scholars examines the extraordinary diversity and richness of the writing produced in response to, and as part of, the upheaval in the religious, political and cultural life of the nation which constituted the English Revolution. The turmoil of the civil wars fought out from 1639 to 1651, the shock of the execution of Charles I, and the uncertainty of the succeeding period of constitutional experiment were enacted and refigured in writing which both shaped and was shaped by the tumultuous times. The various strategies of this battle of the books are explored through essays on the course of events, intellectual trends and the publishing industry; in discussions of canonical figures such as Milton, Marvell, Bunyan and Clarendon; and in accounts of women's writing and of fictional and non-fictional prose. A full chronology, detailed guides to further reading and a glossary are included.

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