Censorship, Collaboration, and the Construction of
Authorship in Early Modern Theatre

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I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and its sources have been acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

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Abstract

This thesis argues that censorship is central to early modern authorial self-construction and that the regulation of drama should be part of an understanding of dramatic collaboration. Over the last twenty years, literary scholarship has paid increasing attention to the collaborative processes involved in early modern theatrical production. Despite this interest, there has yet to be an account of how dramatic censorship operates as part of the collaborative model, or how censorship affected authorship. This thesis explores the relationship between authorship and political authority, so as to reconsider who is an author and why. By engaging with textual and literary analysis, this thesis reveals how plays were shaped by a culture of collaborative censorship.

I have chosen four collaboratively written and censored plays so as to consider the relationship between writing and regulation. From this starting point, I examine the ways that authorship is constructed both within plays and outside of them in early modern as well as our own contemporary culture. I begin with a survey of censorship and collaboration criticism in my Introduction and offer a way of reading early modern drama through collaborative censorship. In Chapter One, I consider the role of credit in Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston’s *Eastward Ho!* and how this system of social and financial exchange produced the playwrights’ collaborative and singular modes of authorship. In Chapter Two, I examine the role of scribes and censors as collaborative agents, if not authorial figures, in John Fletcher and Philip Massinger’s *The Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt.* In Chapter Three, I suggest that service relations are central to dramatic collaboration, and are what prompted the censorial revision of Fletcher, Massinger, and Nathan Field’s *The Honest Man’s Fortune.* Finally, in Chapter Four, I consider how several models of collaborative authorship have constructed different editions of *Sir Thomas More.* Each chapter demonstrates how reading a
collaborative play through censorship, or a censored play through collaboration, can reveal the workings of dramatic production, the relationships between playwrights, and the construction of the authorial self. By being attentive to the relationship between censorship and collaboration, I argue that the regulation of drama was fundamental to dramatic production and the authorship of dramatic texts.
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Introduction: Reading for Collaborative Censorship

Let the interpreter beware: for none euer h[e]ard me
make Allegories of an idle text.

- Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the diuell*

Interpreting the censored playwright

Over the last twenty years, literary scholarship has paid increasing attention to the collaborative processes involved in early modern dramatic production. This work created new models of authorship by questioning the totalising influence of the playwright, which has revealed the dispersed authority of scribes, compositors, actors, and others in the production of both performed and printed plays. The dramatic output of the most famed playwrights of the period has come under intense scrutiny in the hopes of uncovering these agents. Once these agents have been found, however, questions still remain about the extent to which they hold authorial influence over a text. Whilst literary critics have worked to make sense of collaboration in print

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1 Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the diuell* (London: Printed by Abell Ieffes, for I. B[usby], 1592), sig. ¶2.

2 The recent critical interest in collaboration has resulted in three sometimes overlapping avenues: theoretical, practical, and attribution focused. Jeffrey Masten’s controversial *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) instigated a new debate over the place of collaboration in early modern drama. Criticism is still coming to terms with this important book, and other scholars have since tried to find new ways to conceptualise collaboration. Gary Taylor, for example, has read collaborative writing as a type of artisanal creation in “Artiginality: Authorship after Postmodernism,” in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion*, ed. Taylor and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) (NOS hereafter). Collaboration has, more broadly, been accepted as the playmaking practice within the companies, such as in Heather Anne Hirschfeld in *Joint Enterprises: Collaborative Drama and the Institutionalization of the English Renaissance Theatre* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), and David Nicol in *Middleton and Rowley: Forms of Collaboration in the Jacobean Playhouse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). Other critics have considered collaboration in relation to Shakespeare’s authorial style, such as Jeffrey Knapp in *Shakespeare Only* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). The major interest in collaboration, however, is in relation to Shakespearean attribution, see Brian Vickers in *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) as a starting point.

3 The most recent example of this phenomenon is the *NOS: Authorship Companion*.  

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and performance, one significant area has yet to receive due attention: censorship.\textsuperscript{4} The regulation of early modern drama allowed for a greater dispersal of authority than has previously been assumed. Similarly to scribes, compositors, and actors, the Master of the Revels had the literary authority to alter a play’s shape and language. As Cyndia Susan Clegg argues, censorship granted authority to multiple agents, so the study of censorship “is to study moments of individuation, moments that were historically contingent, ideologically based, and mediated by other individuals”.\textsuperscript{5} Although cultural historians have come to understand censorship’s relationship to the creation of the individual, literary critics have yet to account for the ways in which censorship adumbrated individual – authorial – agents during the process of playwriting.

In this thesis I consider how censorship opens up our current models of authorship. I argue that censorship was central to authorial self-construction, the textual processes of early modern drama, and subsequent critical understanding of collaboration. I ask what it would mean to reconceptualise collaboration with a mind to censorship. Censorship muddies the waters of authorship as we find that a playwrights’ authority, or responsibility for a text, is either unwillingly thrust upon him, dispersed to other agents, or perhaps completely ignored. Current work on collaboration, by and large, falls into two broad camps: two or more playwrights writing individually to construct a play, or collaborative writing as a cycle of

\textsuperscript{4} Although there already has been significant work done on censorship in early modern English drama, none have tackled the relationship between censorship and collaboration. Work on censorship broadly falls into two camps: those who see the regulation of drama as systemic and perilous, and those who see companies and playwrights as complicit benefactors of the Master of the Revels. In ‘Art made tongue-tied by authority’: Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic censorship (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; St. Martin’s Press, 1990), Janet Clare argues that state censorship was centralised though haphazard. In Richard Dutton’s Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1991), he suggests that the Master of the Revels was not so much an authoritarian censor as an intermediary between the court and the playhouses. Finally, in what is perhaps the most influential writing on censorship in the theatres, Annabel Patterson in Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), argues that readers and playwrights of plays understood political writings through a certain literary code. Extreme cases of punishment only occurred when writers went beyond what was accepted in that code.

socially produced and producing texts and relations. Whilst the first model looks at a play’s internal evidence to find the collaborators, the second is more interested in how collaboration is culturally constructed. A major point of contention between these two models of collaboration is the place of the individual author within a playtext, indeed, whether they are there at all. This thesis wishes to act as a mediator between these two methodologies, as I see collaboration as socially produced whilst also enacted by individual agents. In doing so I wish to broaden out critical conceptions of early modern authorship so as to include censoring agents.

My thesis is prompted by the question of whether there is a difference between authorship and political authority, and which was more relevant in the playmaking process. To author a work is not only to write a text, but also to incite an action, or to be a person on whose authority a statement is made. To author, as in to authorise, is imbued with a type of power: either a cultural power, or a political one. This thesis is interested in the various authorities which generate an early modern text, and how those texts are understood in relation to these perhaps competing powers. The Master of the Revels is a major political authority in this thesis, whose very role was to authorise – allow – plays for performance. In the patent given to the then Master of the Revels, Sir Edmund Tilney, on 24 December 1581, the queen authorised him to:

warn commuande and appoint in all places within this our Realme of England, aswell within franchises and liberties as without, all and every plaier or plaiers with their playmakers, either belonginge to any noble man or otherwise, bearing the name or names of usinge the facultie of playmakers or plaiers of Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes or whatever other shows soever, from tyme to tyme and

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at all tymes to appeare before him with all such plaies, Tragedies, Comedies or shows as they shall in readines or meane to sett forth, and them to recite before our said Servant or his sufficient deputie, whom we ordeyene appointe and auctorise by those presents of all suche shows, plaies, plaiers and playmakers, together with their playing places, to order and reforme, auctorise and put downe, as shalbe thought meete or unmeete unto himself or his said deputie in that behalf.\(^7\) (emphases mine)

This patent imbued Tilney with the queen’s authority to license companies and censor plays. Moreover, the Masters of the Revels had the authority to reform plays, that is, rewrite them to make them acceptable for the stage. If the Master of the Revels is permitted to refashion plays, and then sanction their performance, why then would he not then have an authorial role?

The Master was meant to “peruse” every play performed on the early modern stage, potentially “reform” them, give or reject his allowance for performance, and perhaps pay the company to perform the play for the monarch.\(^8\) As described by Richard Dutton, the Master of the Revels’ primary function was to organise entertainment at court.\(^9\) Their role as censor subsequently grew out of their courtly responsibility, which inevitably had a run off effect on London’s theatrical industry. In theory this means that he had the authority to intervene in playtexts when he thought appropriate so as to make the play acceptable for a courtly audience. Some of the extant manuscripts from the period bear the marks of one or other of the Masters of the Revels, who cut and added comments where they saw fit. And yet, the censor is not thought to have authorial jurisdiction over a play, let alone considered an agent. I argue for a


\(^8\) Part of the Masters’ duties was “perusing and reforming of plays sundry times as need required for her Majestie’s liking,” see Dutton, *Mastering*, 34.

\(^9\) Dutton, *Mastering*, 31-34.
re-evaluation of the Master of the Revels’ collaborative writing role in the processes of playwriting.

The relationship between censorship and joint writing cuts to the heart of current critical debates about the nature of authorship, specifically, whether authority confers authorship, and vice versa. This thesis is interested in the relationship between political authority and censorship, and how authority does not necessarily derive from literary authorship. By considering the fine line between the two, we can better understand who an “author” in early modern drama is and why. The ultimate political authority in England also censored plays on a few occasions. James I censored Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones’ *Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion* and Charles I had some lines taken out of Philip Massinger’s lost *The King and the Subject*. As the then Master of the Revels Sir Henry Herbert wrote in his records, “Kinge Charles, my master, who, readinge over the play at Newmarket, set his marke upon the place with his own hande, and in thes words: This is too insolent, and to bee changed”.

Although Massinger wrote the play, his authorship does not carry the weight of authority to allow the play or control its meaning. Charles, and his proxy the Master of the Revels, altered plays and refashioned their meanings, and so collaborated on the final textual product.

The question of where authority lies in relation to censorship goes beyond the Master of the Revels’ work to make plays acceptable for the stage. The regulation of early modern drama had a profound impact on playwrights and the plays that they wrote. Indeed, it is too easily forgotten by critics that some playwrights experienced imprisonment and probably

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10 As recounted by Martin Butler, “The Venetian ambassador claimed that James had demanded cuts in *Neptune’s Triumph* to remove ‘some rather free remarks’ against the Spanish”. See Introduction to *Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion* in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. 5, 1611-1616, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 645-49, 648. The masque was initially delayed so as not to offend either the French or Spanish ambassador, but then it was eventually laid aside.

torture because of their writing. Prior to controlling playwrights’ bodies, the state could first control authorial identity. Michel Foucault has suggested that the state created authorship through the application of blame, “Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, sacralised and sacralising figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive”. The idea that a writer becomes an author as soon as those with political power wish to punish them is encapsulated nicely in Jonson’s Apology to Poetaster: “it had the fault to be call’d mine. / That was the crime”. As a way to deflect blame, and in defence against their texts being suppressed, some playwrights such as Jonson attempted to create his authorial persona in print by placing the playwright at the centre of literary production. This was done in the hope that they could control their texts and authorial persona and thereby avoid punishment. Censorship also affected the relationships between writers, who singularised their authorial identities in competition with other playwrights as an act of self-defence. I will argue that when confronted with the ire of the state, playwrights could install themselves within the protective carapace of collaboration. Censorship resulted in a type of collaborative writing that forced playwrights to regenerate both their texts and their authorial identities.

Despite the conflictual nature of censorship, regulators such as the Master of the Revels and the Privy Council were exegetic readers of plays, and contributors to them. A study of literary censorship, and the act of censorship itself, is thereby dependent upon how the reader interprets a text. In essence, the Master of the Revels had to decide what a text means in order to reform, allow, or prohibit it. When the Master of the Revels, or a member of a theatrical

14 Joseph Loewenstein has called this the manifestation of Jonson’s “bibliographic ego, a specifically Early Modern form of authorial identification with printed writing”. See Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.
company, revised a play for political or religious purposes, they were doing so with the assumption that they could pin down meaning and control subsequent interpretations. Cases of censorship were often the result of interpretation gone awry. The playwright or the company lost control over of the meaning of a play once the Master of the Revels perused it. This is particularly the case when the Master decided that a play made a political statement, or that it is libellous. A text was witnessed by a variety of audiences – in the theatre, informal readers, or juridical ones – who all had their part in creating the meaning of a play through their interpretations. Actors would also interpret and perform the play differently from the playwrights’ intentions. Actors were not the only reason playwrights had to feel nervous about the reception of their plays. The probing reader could just as easily misinterpret plays in print. The self-justifying paratexts in printed editions attest to this. As my above epigraph from Nashe documents, the reader is always interpreting when there is material to be construed.

Early modern writers often accused their readers of overzealous reading practices. Nashe also bemoaned “this moralizing age, wherein every one seeks to shew himselfe a Polititian by mis-interpreting”. The sort of reading my thesis engages in does not come without the danger of misinterpretation, especially considering that the texts I examine were written in a previous century under a veil of allegorical subterfuge, and there are scant extant records to boot. However, considering that my thesis is exploring stories of dissent but also the creation of collective meaning, I am happy to act as one of Nashe’s politicians. It is this very act of interpretation which marks out a text as literary because a reader or viewer seeks to pin down meaning through exegesis. As Annabel Patterson has written, “it is to censorship that we in part owe our very concept of “literature””. Patterson is arguing that the treatment of the censored or the censorable text gave birth to a practice of reading in between the lines to find

15 Nashe, Pierce Penilesse, sig. ¶.
16 Patterson, Censorship, 4.
meaning. This was the sort of reading the Master of the Revels engaged in when revising a play. It was also the work of a self-censoring scribe who revised out lines that could create dangerous interpretations. They had to read for sedition, libel, and general immorality. We, as twenty-first century editors and literary critics, also engage in this practice of exegesis. We are looking for meanings and interpretations, and sometimes we read too much and are led awry. Critical interpretations are based in readings, through which plays are recreated in new forms, both expanding and limiting potential meanings of a text. I argue, for example, that some current editorial practices expunge collaborative censorship in Sir Thomas More, blotting out the ways in which collaboration and censorship was part of the process of early modern production. Even now, our interpretations are revising the meanings of early modern plays.

My dissertation explores some of the ways that censorship and collaboration intersected in the early modern theatrical industry in order to demonstrate how authorship was – and still is – negotiated. By examining a group of collaboratively written and censored plays produced between from the end of the Elizabethan to the beginning of the Caroline periods, this research shows how the concept of literary authority is in flux. Central to my approach is an understanding that playwrights embedded the process of collaboration into a play’s content. That is, collaboratively written plays are implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, interested in the process of their own creation. This resulted in constant reformulations of plays’ meanings and their makers’ textual authority. This affected the relationships between members of theatrical companies as well as with political authorities. This thesis documents how productive textual collaborations were often the result of sometimes fractious interactions between companies, playwrights, and representatives of the state. My thesis intervenes in and adds to a growing body of scholarship that considers the ways collaborative writing worked in the early modern
I show how joint-writing was both collective and individualising, in so far as playwrights were keenly aware of their status as collaborative writers. The broader model of collaboration for which this thesis advocates demonstrates the need for early modern studies to allow for different understandings of creative authority in the period, thereby reshaping the author into a more diverse and mutable figure.

**Understanding early modern dramatic censorship**

The extent to which texts were censored in early modern England, and the way that censorship functioned continues to be a space for debate. This is because there is not enough extant material from the period to clearly demonstrate how the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline states organised the regulation of drama. The question at the heart of historical studies of censorship is whether the state programmatically regulated and censored drama or if it was an ad hoc affair. Furthermore, studies of censorship ask whether censorship was violent and repressive, or more like mutually beneficial cooperation between various parties. Indeed, interpretations of the material are dependent on the kind of terminology used: was the state engaging in censorship, or merely regulation? From the extant information, and from the propensity of critics to skew the evidence either way, it was probably both depending on different cases. Further to this, the word “censure” itself had multiple meanings in the period, it could mean both the condemnation and the extirpation of textual material.  

Recent studies in collaboration vary between authorial attribution studies, such as Hugh Craig and Arthur F. Kinney’s *Shakespeare, Computers, and the Mystery of Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and scholarly works which understand collaboration as more than just two playwrights writing together, such as Belén Bistué, *Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013). Others want to understand what collaboration is not, such as Gabriel Egan in “What is Not Collaborative about Early Modern Drama in Performance and Print?,” *Shakespeare Survey* 67 (2010), 18-28. There has also been important work done in understanding early modern women’s collaboration, see Patricia Pender and Alexandra Day, ed., *Gender, Authorship, and Early Modern Women’s Collaboration* (Cham: Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

have a broad understanding of censorship so as to apprehend it both as statecraft and as a dispersed cultural practice which resulted in collaboration. In this thesis, censorship is enacted not just by political figures such as the Master of the Revels and the Privy Council, but also by playmakers and playhouse functionaries. I pay particular attention to the Masters, Sir George Buc and Sir Henry Herbert, and the scribes, Ralph Crane and Edward Knight. This allows me to show how censorship functioned in unexpectedly collaborative ways. My thesis proposes that the relationship between playmaking and censorship was simultaneously conflictual and productive. Playmakers had different management strategies to deal with collaborative censorship: it was sometimes a rejection of the “rules” and sometimes compliance.

More recent work on early modern censorship is concerned with the extent to which dramatic censorship was systemic. Janet Clare finds that early modern censorship was at once centralised and utterly random. Surveying a variety of censored plays and considering the reasons for either revision or suppression, she suggests that it was “never quite clear what was prohibited and what would be permitted”, which led to playwrights either taking greater risks or self-censoring. This arbitrariness reveals how the state increased uncertainty around what was permissible on stage, as playwrights never knew how far they could take their political or religious commentary. The beginnings of early modern censorship was, however, a haphazard affair according to Clare, and a way for the civic London authorities to shirk their censorial responsibilities. What went from informal censorship when the situation necessitated it became “a centralised agency of control” orchestrated by the Master of the Revels so that the Privy

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19 Here I follow Burt’s argument that censorship “pervaded early Stuart theatrical culture: it was practiced and nurtured not only by the court but also by playwrights, theatrical entrepreneurs, printers, poets, courtiers, and critics”. See Licensed, x.

20 F. S. Seibert originally argued that early modern censorship was repressive and systemic in Freedom of the Press in English 1476-1776: The Rise and Decline of Government Control (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1952).

21 Clare, Censorship, 213.
Council had someone to watch over the mushrooming of London’s theatres. Ultimately, Clare finds that Elizabethan and Jacobean censorship was a repressive regime which stifled creative output, reminding her readers that “all the plays of our period were written in the shadow of the censor and that no dramatist could unchain his thoughts from the agent of that most arbitrary and punitive instrument of state control”. Whereas there are records of the writers and publishers of political works being publicly maimed, such as John Stubbs and William Page’s punishment for the *The Discovery of the Gaping Gulf* pamphlet, there are no records of playwrights receiving similar treatment. Without this evidence it is difficult to prove how repressive state censorship really was.

That early modern writers produced texts under the constant spectre of censorship is something that subsequent critics have pushed back against. Whilst Clegg concurs with Clare that state censorship was randomised, she finds that the “historical model of unified and repressive state censorship” is outmoded. Although Clegg works on printed texts rather than drama, her revisionist study of censorship follows a trajectory similar to that of drama critics, problematizing the extent to which regulation was a conscious and absolutist mode of statecraft. Clegg argues that those cases of censorship – the *cause célèbres* such as the cropping of Prynne’s ears or the cleaving of Stubbs’ hand – should not be taken as the norm but examples of extremity:

…censorship was less a part of the routine machinery of an authoritarian state than an *ad hoc* response – albeit authoritarian – to *particular* texts that the state perceived to endanger the exercise of its legitimate and necessary authority.  

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22 Clare, *Censorship*, 10.
23 Clare, *Censorship*, 215.
In essence, Clegg argues that physical punishments were only ordered when the state felt that something needed to be done to push writers back over the line they had crossed. Although, as Joad Raymond has rightly argued, when revisionist histories of censorship insist that the actual number and severity are small and exceptions to the norm, it is useful to remember that “the arrangements for the normal were effective in part because of the abnormal”. To be more explicit, there would have been more instances of physical punishment if examples had not been made of other writers. Furthermore, if English censorship really was as “erratic, infrequently enforced, under-resourced, and was never conceived or imagined as a form of ideological control”, as revisionist historians argue, then it is a wonder why early modern writers complained about having their work censored. Indeed, George Chapman was just one of many when he lamented his “poore dismemberd Poems”. Censorship was a tangible reality for playwrights, exacerbated by the threat of imprisonment or torture.

Much of the critical debate about whether and how state censorship functioned is centred on the figure of the Master of the Revels. Dutton is similar to Clegg in his argument that early modern English censorship was not intended to be repressive or programmatic. Instead, he argues that the Master of the Revels and the companies were complicit in a commercial system which guaranteed the Masters’ payment and the companies playing. I extend Dutton’s understanding of the cooperative relationship between the Master and the companies in my chapters on the John Fletcher and Philip Massinger play *The Tragedy of Sir John van Olden Barnavelt* and their collaboration with Nathan Field in *The Honest Man’s*
Like Clare, Dutton finds that the Revels Office was “created on an ad hoc basis”, but diverges by arguing that the Master of the Revels offered the “patronage, and indeed collusion, of the court”.

The Revels Office was under the responsibility of the Lord Chamberlain and his original responsibility was to organise the monarch’s entertainment at court. Dutton’s understanding of the role of the Master of the Revels is rooted in a study of the documents that gave the Master his powers, such as the ordinance that the Master’s functions included “calling together of sundry players and perusing, fitting and reforming their matters otherwise not convenient to be shewn before her Majestie” and “perusing and reforming of plays sundry times as need required for her Majestie’s liking”. To wit, the Master’s role was to filter out material that was inappropriate to be shown before the monarch.

Dutton suggests that whilst the Master of the Revels was a role given to individuals rather than a fixed court position, over time the Master of the Revels “translate[d] these powers into authority over the commercial kingdom, whether or not it had a bearing on what was to be offered at court”, thanks to the patent given to Tilney by Elizabeth in 1581. Dutton argues that the Master of the Revels’ relationship with the players was symbiotic, and it was in the Master’s interest not to stifle the companies. This was because he made an income by charging the companies for perusing play manuscripts. Tilney made seven shillings off the entrepreneur Philip Henslowe for every play he read, whether he subsequently allowed it or not. For their good relations with the Masters, companies had better access to and representation in court. Whilst I agree with Dutton that dramatic regulation was symbiotic and that there was “cooperation” between the Revels Office and the theatres, he does not account for the anxiety on the part of the playwrights that also occurred within this culture of censorship.

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argues that it was only when the machinery of regulation broke down that the more extreme examples of censorship took place.\textsuperscript{35} Whilst Dutton is right to note that the patent does not name any intention of a “comprehensive system of state regulation of the drama”, this does not mean that censorship did not take place.\textsuperscript{36} Due to a dearth of extant evidence, including manuscripts and the lost Privy Council and Revels Office papers, we cannot really account for the extent to which early modern plays were censored. But the evidence we do have shows that censorship did make the playwrights fearful of repercussions.

Awareness of a culture of censorship allows for a method of reading which looks for censorable material. Patterson argues that writers and readers of censored texts, including casual readers and representatives of the state alike, engage in “the hermeneutics of censorship”, which is an alertness to the strategies and conventions writers use to alert their readers to deeper political meanings.\textsuperscript{37} A pertinent example of this is Jonson’s claims of reliance on Tacitus in his quarto of \textit{Sejanus}; the use of the ancient text simultaneously implies that the play is a scholarly pursuit, and yet, the use of Tacitus indicates a political significance to those readers interested in Republicanism.\textsuperscript{38} By building “\textit{functional} ambiguity”, writers could hint towards political concepts whilst protecting their work by placing the burden of interpretation on the reader.\textsuperscript{39} This thesis is an extension of Patterson’s work, as I engage in exegetical readings which look for the implicit and unsaid. I am also interested in the ways that playwrights use the hermeneutics of authorship to deflect blame, particularly in the case of Jonson, Chapman, and Marston’s \textit{Eastward Ho!}. In Chapter One on \textit{Eastward Ho!} I discuss how the playwrights consciously use collaboration as a way to deny writing a libellous, or

\textsuperscript{35} Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{36} Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 48.
\textsuperscript{37} Patterson, \textit{Censorship}, 8-9.
\textsuperscript{38} Patterson, \textit{Censorship}, 50.
\textsuperscript{39} Patterson, \textit{Censorship}, 18.
possibly even seditious, play. Indeed, several early modern playwrights made a habit of blaming their collaborators.

My thesis diverges from Patterson’s argument that writers and the state had an implicit understanding of what could be said and what could not. She views censorship as systemic but only oppositional in extreme cases. Patterson is therefore similar to Clare in her findings that state censorship was an organised system, but she is even more similar to Dutton in that they both see censorship as more complicit than antagonistic. Patterson, unlike Dutton, suggests that the regulation of the content of drama was “a fully deliberate and conscious arrangement”.\textsuperscript{40} She imagines censorship as a complex literary game wherein the players, readers, and Masters of the Revels understood the rules. It was only when these rules were broken that punishment occurred. Patterson also suggests that the “famous puzzling incidents of noncensorship”, similar to Richard II on the eve of the attempted Essex rebellion in 1601 or Middleton’s A Game at Chess, can be explained by the understanding between writers and the state because the writers played within the rules.\textsuperscript{41} Her reasoning, however, puts too much responsibility in the hands of the writers, as though they created this agreement or were to blame when things went wrong. Thinking about supposedly extreme cases does not take into account more quotidian ones: economic precarity, threats, and induced fear. Whilst I find Patterson’s reading of early modern texts for censorship very useful, my thesis sees the playmakers as cooperative with the authorities, rather than colluding. That is, they were not players in a game, but collaborating because they had little choice in the matter. Censorship is ultimately a means of control, which figures such as the Master of the Revels and groups such as the Privy Council had over playwrights and the companies. Playmakers seem to have had ways to push back against those with more power, which could lead to physical repercussions at worst or the

\textsuperscript{40} Patterson, Censorship, 17.
\textsuperscript{41} Patterson, Censorship, 17. Patterson’s emphasis.
excision of a few lines of text at best. Despite the unsolicited nature of censorship, the collaboration between the Revels Office and the companies usually resulted in a performed play.

Through this survey of early modern censorship criticism, it has become clear that there is a lack of scholarship that deals with censorship’s relationship to collaborative playwriting. In particular, the above studies have yet to consider the ways in which censorship modulated various agents’ relationships with the textual process. Or, to be more specific, the extent to which censorship constructed literary authority and, thereby, authorship. Furthermore, censorship studies tend to focus on the extent to which censorship was systemic or complicit, without considering the difference between complicity and cooperation in a culture of censorship. Indeed, one modern usage of the very verb “collaborate” is meant for those who have traitorous, willing, relationships with an enemy.\(^\text{42}\) Whilst this thesis considers the richness of texts that were the result of a culture of censorship, I differentiate collaboration from collusion. Furthermore, censorship studies can do more to investigate those plays that undermine ideas of censorship as being either systemic or complicit. In particular, despite revisions by the censor, the plays *Sir John van Olden Barnavelt* and *The Honest Man’s Fortune* still managed to be performed whilst retaining potentially dangerous material. In order to work towards filling this gap, I will outline the ways that collaboration is currently considered in early modern studies.

**Approaches to early modern collaborative authorship**

\(^{42}\) To collaborate as to “co-operate traitorously with the enemy” came into being during World War Two. See "collaborate, v." OED Online, last modified June 2018, Oxford University Press, www.oed.com/view/Entry/36195. It is perhaps no accident that even the language we use to discuss joint writing, *collaboration* and *agent*, have negative connotations which call to mind twentieth-century spies and sabotage.
The extent to which Shakespeare and other playwrights of his era did or did not collaborate has become one of the more agonised debates in current early modern criticism. Discussions of what constitutes early modern authorship peaked and troughed in the last decade of the twentieth century, although debates have resurfaced thanks to *The New Oxford Shakespeare’s* categorising of several new plays as collaborative in 2016. There are two fundamental questions most studies on collaborative authorship ask: in which plays did Shakespeare collaborate, and how does this recalibrate what we know of him as an “author”? My thesis only considers the latter question and broadens it out to appraise other figures. Although the nature of Shakespearean authorship is beyond the scope of my argument, I am interested in how what Foucault has called the “author function” has shaped our understanding of early modern collaborators. But prior to that, this thesis concerns itself with how censorship modulates early modern collaborative authorship. My intervention in this debate is a consideration of the difference between authority and authorship. The texts I consider reveal how authors do not necessarily have authority over a text, whilst those we would typically consider non-authorial figures do. Central to this is the question of who we – as critics – consider authors, and why. My responses to this are shaped by the materiality of the collaborative documents left behind, as well as a historicisation of those texts and the relationships which shaped them.

Whether collaboration was the dominant mode of theatrical creative practice or not has become one of the small culture wars playing out in early modern literary criticism. Since G. E. Bentley estimated that “as many as half” of the professionally written plays of the period were written by more than one playwright, critics have been at odds to determine whether

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43 I do not engage in these debates as they are based on computational stylistics, which is beyond the remit of my methodology.
44 Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” 211. This essay has been the theoretical launch pad for many studies of early modern collaboration, though critics are often fast to criticise Foucault’s ability as a historian, particularly his claim that the “Author” did not exist prior to the Enlightenment. It may seem as though criticism has moved beyond him in some ways, though I believe we should return to Foucault to properly consider how the “author function” still dictates our cultural understanding of collaborative writing.
singular or joint writing was the primary mode of authorship. The field has been shaped by the extent to which critics agree with Bentley’s figure, with scholars such as Jeffrey Masten suggesting that “collaboration was a prevalent mode of textual production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only eventually displaced by the mode of singular authorship with which we are more familiar”. Jeffrey Knapp, however, argues that if “as many as half” of Bentley’s figure are collaborations, then “the primary theoretical model for playwriting throughout the Renaissance was single authorship”. Whether collaboration or solo-writing was the dominant mode of textual creation in the Renaissance acts as a stalking horse for the question of whether playwrights understood themselves to be “authors” or not. In his lecture “What Is an Author?”, Foucault suggested that the discursive author did not exist until the seventeenth or eighteenth century when “a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict rules concerning author’s rights, author-publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted”. By implication, there was no such thing as an author during the Renaissance. This claim has received plenty of criticism, particularly because Foucault’s suggestions are not adequately historicised. My thesis, however, is not so interested in whether early modern playwrights self-identified as authors, but to redefine the limits criticism has placed on definitions of collaborative authorship.

Attempts to determine whether early modern writers theorised playmaking as either singular or collaborative have acted as a red-herring which has occluded more useful questions about authorship. Indeed, there has not been sufficient time spent on understanding what collaborative writing is and who might be considered a collaborator. Although Foucault’s


48 Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” 205.

critics have attempted to invalidate his suggestion by disproving his dating, his broader argument about the value that our culture places on the figure of the author have not been adequately addressed. He does not suggest that the author did not exist historically, but that notions of authorship have curtailed the proliferation of meaning:

[T]he author is not an indefinite source of significations that fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction.  

Foucault is suggesting that our culture uses the figure of the author to ascribe and simultaneously limit the potential meanings of fiction. Further to this, we exclude the other agents involved in the creation of the text if we only pay attention to those who we would traditionally identify as the author. My thesis seeks to ameliorate these limitations and exclusions by considering a broader range of authorial figures that includes censors, scribes, and editors. By looking at the dispersed authorities that were part of textual creation we can alleviate the pressure placed on singular authorship and better understand how plays were written.

Masten is considered the principal inheritor of Foucault’s theories of authorship within early modern studies. He seeks to shirk “post-Enlightenment paradigms of individuality, authorship, and textual property” so as to understand the relationship between dramatic authorship and sexuality, particularly, the bonds between would-be gentlemen. Masten’s extremely influential work on collaboration is based on the premise that collaboration – specifically, dispersed authority – was the primary creative model during the Renaissance.

50 Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” 221.
51 Masten, Textual, 4.
Furthermore, he argues that authorship only emerged as a concept as articulated through a model of patriarchal-absolutist authority. Masten sees the collaborative text as a unified whole, and thus sees the attempts of attributionists such as Cyrus Hoy or contemporary computational stylistics as anachronistic. His argument is predicated on the belief that early modern authors did not want or assume that their work would be divided up because “the collaborative project in the theatre was predicated on erasing the perception of any differences that might have existed, for whatever reason, between collaborative parts”. Masten is suggesting that the process of dividing up texts according to who wrote what is a post-Enlightenment aesthetic judgement of unity over disjointedness. However, although Masten champions collaboration, his methodology is also predicated on the singular, unified text. By melding together the individual agents’ voices in a singular edition of a play or in analysis, the distinctive contributions of the various collaborators is blotted out. Masten is surely correct in that early modern playwrights may not have considered that hundreds of years in the future, people would be dividing up their work by hand, scene, or phrase. But this does not mean that there is not value in understanding how the various agents came together to build a text, each adding their own essence to a work.

52 Masten, Textual, 113. In Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare’s Time (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), Masten argues that it was only the intervention of the state which prompted Thomas Kyd to define his authorship in relation to Christopher Marlowe, 89.

53 Masten, Textual, 17. Masten’s mode of reading collaborative texts as unified wholes has been influential. For example, in Joint Enterprises, Hirschfeld treats the collaborative texts as unified wholes, despite arguing that playwrights sought to differentiate themselves. Masten’s critics, however, argue that his reading is anachronistic, and Vickers accused Masten of writing with a “gay agenda”, Shakespeare: Co-Author, 541. Taylor, too, has made the veiled criticism that a critic who does not differentiate between writers in her analysis is nothing short of a tyrant, “all tyranny begins in the simple refusal to acknowledge that there is more than one kind of human”, in “Artiginality,” 26. These critics unfairly ignore the originality of Masten’s analysis and how his work offers a compelling reading of same-sex relations in print.

54 As Taylor points out, although his work is antithetical to Cyrus Hoy’s, Masten ironically follows Hoy’s injunction that, “The crucial issue for the aesthetic appraisal of” a collaborative play “is how satisfactorily the multiple dramatic visions have fused into a single coherent one”. Taylor, citing Hoy’s “Critical and Aesthetic Problems of Collaboration in Renaissance Drama,” (1976) in “Why Did Shakespeare Collaborate?,” Shakespeare Survey 67, no. 1 (2014), 1-17. 14. It is also ironic that Vickers too looks for cohesiveness in a collaboratively written play, despite “disdain[ing]” Masten, 14. Taylor also questions the critical instance on the unified text, noting that the Renaissance clearly valued “Ovidian variety more than Horatian unity”, 15.
Masten’s particular methodology stems from primarily working on printed texts and, more controversially, by refusing to countenance the worth of attribution scholarship. It is easier not to carve up plays by author when the writers have been anonymised through the printing process. When working on scribal manuscripts, however, the different hands are more obvious to the reader. My thesis is an extension of Masten’s work on the cultural importance of collaboration in the early modern period, particularly regarding what collaboration tells us about friendships and working relationships. Although I do not follow Masten’s method of considering plays as unified wholes, I am indebted to his argument that early modern collaborative authorship is “not about the precise attribution of intellectual property but about the allocation of labor, and (co)laborers”.\footnote{Masten, “Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration,” in \textit{A New History of Early English Drama}, ed. John D. Cox and David S. Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 357-382, 367.} My thesis is in parts concerned with how collaborative authorship modulates a playwright’s relationship to a play but I am more interested in how different agents laboured to create a work.\footnote{This is similar to Tiffany Stern’s argument that plays are made up of patches in \textit{Documents of Performance in Early Modern England} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).} Masten’s analysis is founded on seeing the mode of writing as reflective of the text’s thematic interest, “we cannot begin fully to understand the practice of playwrighting, collaborative \textit{or} singular, until we see them as enmeshed in, located within, \textit{conversant} with (in the earlier senses) other material practices and discourses”.\footnote{Masten, “Playwrighting,” 366.} This understanding that a text’s meaning is reflective of its mode of production is central to my thesis. I examine a group of collaboratively written censored plays in order to consider how textual processes shaped the artistic product.

Although numerous critiques have been levelled at Masten’s work, his arguments have set the tone for the studies of collaboration to follow. Theorists of early modern authorship have to grapple with Masten’s pluralised understanding of Renaissance writing. These critics generally fall into the dichotomy of singular versus collaborative however, which does not
reveal much more about the different cultures of writing at the time. Gabriel Egan, for example, has criticised the supposedly postmodern readings of the Renaissance’s “socialized model of publication”. He argues that texts were not understood as collaborative, but singular, and that texts became corrupted by non-authorial agents through the process of transmission. As an example of this he considers a company’s handing over of a unified text to the Master of the Revels. But Egan does not take into account what happens after the Master of the Revels peruses a play – the work of the censor, scribe, and playwrights to rework a play for performance if it has been found unsatisfactory by the Revels Office. Egan also laments how critics are “treating corruption as collaboration”, particularly when critics cite scribal and compositor accidentals as evidence of collaborative writing.

Egan, however, is not looking at the right evidence. Censored plays reveal socialised texts because the changes are not accidental but deliberate. Even so, small changes in a line by a scribe, compositor, or Master of the Revels can alter potential meanings. As literary critics, our job is to look deeply at language and consider its implications, not to brush aside textual difference as aberrations. Furthermore, although Egan disagrees with critics conflating “the labour of agents in the chain of transmission” with “true artistic collaboration that is meant to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts”, he is espousing a top-down model of authorship that does not take into account that a playwright was just one of many who worked to get a play on the stage or in print. Dramatic, and sometimes textual, production does not begin or end with a playwright, but it is part of a chain of agency that needed more individuals to function than only the writer. As well as this, if self-censoring scribes and the Master of the Revels had to revise a play to make it workable on stage, does that not constitute a collaborative act? Collaboration is not only aesthetic. Furthermore, Egan is arguing for a romanticised

60 Egan, “Collaborative,” 27.
definition of “collaboration” – two playwrights working on the same text whilst writing side by side – that does not seem to have existed during the Renaissance. When he critiques those who use a term such as collaboration too broadly, he forgets that “collaboration”, meaning the literal act of working together, did not come into use until the late nineteenth century. We are all victims of an anachronistic nomenclature. But there is also a benefit to using ahistorical terms. As Heather Hirschfeld has suggested in her extensive survey of early modern collaboration studies, “wide definition[s] of collaboration – as any kind of cooperative endeavor behind literary performance – opens the field or function of the author to a variety of other roles”, such as commendatory poets, patrons, and scribes. I intentionally use a broad definition of collaboration, because the censored, jointly-written texts I examine were the work of a variety of agents cooperating towards the end goal of creating a playable text. Without these agents, the texts as we have them would simply not exist.

Critics have also argued that singularity trumps collaboration in order to place Shakespeare at the centre of discussions of textual production. This is particularly the case for Knapp, who argues that singular authorship was the primary mode of understanding writing in the Renaissance. This argument is servicing his broader case that Shakespeare’s singularity as a writer emerges from his ability to use the multiple agents and voices of the theatre to create unified texts. He critiques the “absolute displacement of authors” in narratives of theatre history, such as Masten’s, and wishes to put Shakespeare back into the centre of the narrative

61 The first example of “collaborate” as I have thus far been using it as “To work in conjunction with another or others, to co-operate; esp. in a literary or artistic production, or the like” only came into being in the late nineteenth century. See “collaborate, v.” OED Online, July 2018, http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/view/Entry/36195?redirectedFrom=collaborate.


63 In my methodology I follow James Purkis who argues for the “interpretive significance” of the author by attending to “the trace of the work of authorial and non-authorial agents as closely as possible… Such a course intends to develop a reading of collaborative texts that neither ‘disintegrates’ the collaborative dramatic text nor effaces all differences among the text’s contributors”. See Shakespeare and Manuscript Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 105-6.
(one could argue that he never left). Knapp also questions social readings of the Renaissance that see authority as displaced. In particular, he critiques Stephen Orgel’s suggestion that a playwright lost “authority” and “interest” in a manuscript once he gave it to a theatrical company, “Why should a loss of control over a script (if playwrights did indeed lose control as completely as Orgel assumes) amount to a loss of authorship?”. Knapp asks this question because he believes that a playwright maintained authorial authority over a play, although he does not seek to define or consider the meaning of either of these terms. When a play was given to the Revels office, for example, the playwright’s authority makes no difference to the censor when he cut out lines he found inappropriate. The Privy Council, however, saw the playwright (and sometimes the actors) as possessing authority over a text when they assigned punishments. Authority, and authorship, are more fluid concepts in the Renaissance than Knapp has considered.

Central to studies of authorship and collaboration is the question of who is speaking, and whether the individuality of that speaker is important. This is a question considered by Gary Taylor, “What does it matter who is speaking?”, when he takes up the question Foucault asked when he quoted Samuel Beckett’s Textes pour Rien. This is also the question Masten asks in Textual Intercourse, quoting all those who have come before him: “What does it matter who is speaking,” someone said, “what does it matter who is speaking.” It turns out that the question of speaking matters quite a bit to those who are asking, although it depends

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64 Jeffrey Knapp, Shakespeare, 11.
65 Knapp, quoting Stephen Orgel, “What Is a Text?”. Orgel’s writing on the “hard core of uncertainty” that comes from an early modern text’s lack of authority has also been a touchstone for collaboration studies. Orgel suggests that “the text belonged to the company, and the authority represented by the text – I am now talking about the performing text – is that of the company, the owners, not the playwright, the author”. See Stephen Orgel, “What Is a Text?,” in Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), 83-87, 84.
on who the who is, whether they are a canonical playwright or an anonymous scribe. “Artiginality” is an encapsulation of Taylor’s many years of work on collaborative playwriting, and a summation of his theory of what a collaborative author is. He conceives of the early modern author as an artisan, someone who “tinker[ed] with an existing artefact”. By calling an author a “wrighter” – similar to playwright, shipwright and cartwright – he argues that we can take playwriting back to its origins as a craft, and lose the Romantic associations that authorship has accumulated. Taylor defines a co-author as “another wrighter, a fellow artisan, a fellow maker, at work on the same object”. This definition could, theoretically, encompass a variety of different agents at work on the development of a text. Although, Taylor is careful to limit this role to those we would traditionally deem as authors, suggesting that we need to distinguish between “the collaborative milieu of the London print trade from the collaborations between playwrights”. This decision is despite the recent counter-tendency to expand editions, both of Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton, in order to account for networks of collaboration.

Taylor’s circumspect definition of authorship is also dependent on the findings of computational stylistics, which form the backbone of The New Oxford Shakespeare’s allocations of authorship. He writes that the edition is based on the “fundamental ethical principle of giving people credit for the work they have done”. This is a pronouncement which is fair indeed, but this statement is somewhat coloured by who these particular people are.

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68 Taylor, it seems, does not care for Masten speaking. He does not reference Masten once in “Artiginality”, despite using an opener already made infamous by Masten two decades earlier.

69 Taylor is perhaps the foremost critic on the mechanics of collaborative authorship and has extensively edited Shakespeare and Middleton’s collaborative plays. See also, “Why Did Shakespeare Collaborate?”; “Collaboration 2016,” in Shakespeare in Our Time: A Shakespeare Association of America Collection, ed. Dympna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett (London; New York: Arden Shakespeare, 2016), 141-8; and the NOS: Authorship Companion more generally.


Computational stylistics has dominated the field of late, and its important work is based on finding the various individuals within a playtext based on their particular linguistic traits, known as function words. This, over time, builds up an “authorial signature”, which makes a playwright findable in a variety of works. Studies of authorial style are integral to understanding collaboration, as without knowing who wrote what, how can we understand the social processes of writing and the culture around it?

Computational stylistics, however, fail to take into account the competing authorities and agents that worked to produce a dramatic text. A focus on a playwrights’ style as a way to understand collaboration can be a red herring because different individual styles within a text do not elucidate how collaborative writing worked or functioned within early modern culture. Hugh Craig and Brett Greatley-Hirsch claim that the findings of computational stylistics “contradict many of the pronouncements of critics who prefer to see dispersed agency – through collaborative writing, or the influence of theatre or printing house participants in the process of transmission – as trumping the importance of the author”. Considering that every algorithm is designed by a human, unintended biases may have generated these sorts of results. Whilst attribution studies have given many collaborative playwrights their due, a test to take censorship into account has yet to be created. Indeed, whilst computers can figure out who put what words in, they cannot account for why – and what – words were taken out. Censored plays re-frame our understanding of early modern authorship because they reveal the usually inaudible collaborators who shaped plays’ meaning. Adjusting our model of Renaissance collaborative authorship to include censorship allows us to take into account both individualised and dispersed authority. Readings of personal style and collaborative contexts

can work side by side with the acknowledgement that plays are created by diverse, and sometimes unseen, agents besides the playwrights.

It is ironic that the dictum of “giving each his due” is said by those who can be the gatekeepers of authorship. But this is something that is particular to those who work on the canonical – and importantly, male – playwrights of the period. Critics who work on Renaissance scribal cultures and women’s writing have allowed for broader definitions of collaboration. This has the effect of destabilising the hierarchical definitions of authorship that have traditionally excluded those less known and politically ostracised. For example, Patricia Pender has argued that Mary Sidney’s development of her brother’s work was a major contributing influence for the development of the English author. 77 Further on this theme, Hirschfeld has written that studies that wish to reclaim female voices have to “move beyond the dominant Romantic definition of the individual author and to recognize, in the diversified processes of textual production, alternative formulations or experiences of authorship”. 78 My work is similar to the current criticism on women’s collaboration, as I am conscious of the need to continue expanding understandings of who an author can be. 79 Studies of early modern scribal work also see collaboration and revision as central to the authorial process. As Harold Love writes, scribal works in circulation underwent “ongoing adaptation to the expectation of readers” by various authors. 80 Collaborating upon a text was part of the very fabric of readers’ interest. Further to this, as Arthur F. Marotti writes, literary culture was not necessarily organised by an understanding of singular authorship, as scribes were pivotally important to the recording and circulation of texts:

78 Hirschfeld, “Collaboration,” 615.
Scribes and compilers were not only free to alter, rearrange, supplement, imitate, conflate, excerpt, ascribe (sometimes misascribe), title, or retile, parody, or answer the texts they received, but also to record their own poetic compositions – that is to exercise a degree of collaborative and co-creative participation in literary creation.  

In literary manuscript circles, scribes took on what we would call an authorial function. An understanding of scribes as authorial figures has not, however, crossed over into critical writings on theatre. This is perhaps because these critics focus on the works in print, rather than in manuscript. I seek to recalibrate an understanding of scribes as authorial collaborators in early modern plays, and thereby have a fuller understanding of dramatic production in the period.

**Reading for collaborative censorship**

This thesis was born out of the question of whether there is any relationship between censorship and collaborative writing. As my above survey of the literature on collaboration and censorship demonstrates, no sustained consideration of the two topics exists. Collaboration and censorship are sometimes placed aside each other, although without a thorough investigation of their relationship, as when Peter Stallybrass writes:

> [I]nstead of a single author, we have a network of collaborative relations, normally between two or more writers, between writing and acting companies,

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between acting companies and printers, between compositors and proof-readers, between printers and censors.\textsuperscript{82}

The censor is, theoretically, part of the network of collaborators, although the ways in which censorship is collaborative is yet to be uncovered. Throughout this thesis, collaboration and censorship are two dimensions of a complex system of early modern textual production. These two dimensions feed into each other and overlap in complex and sometimes unexpected ways.

My approach is two-fold: whilst I consider how censorship and collaborative writing relate, I also interrogate why figures such as the Master of the Revels or scribes have not been considered collaborative writers, or at least agents, until this point. This thesis presents a series of case studies of collaboratively written censored plays in order to demonstrate how censorship can be form of collaboration and collaboration can be form of censorship. By repositioning those individuals who are usually considered the artistic outliers in the process of dramatic and textual production as central to a play’s creation, this thesis challenges preconceived notions of what an author is and who has authority over a text. I offer a new way of reading early modern plays, through collaborative censorship, as a way to add further layers to our understanding of how authorship worked in the period. Central to my approach is an interrogation of the nature of the relationships between the various agents, whether they are playwrights, impresarios, scribes, or other figures. I also wish to understand how texts were created and informed by a culture of censorship. The study of censorship has encouraged me to remember that the various individuals I write about were once real people, not simply historical curiosities. They made choices that had profound effects on their and other lives. This is the same for the texts themselves: they are not simply dead things, but sites of conflict, holding the stories of creative control and inspiration.

Central to my approach is the understanding that collaboration is not simply the act of two playwrights writing a play together. This is particularly the case for those moments of collaboration that cannot be quantified by attributional stylometrics. I am attempting to fill in the gaps of understanding about how collaboration worked, but this thesis is also a thought experiment: what would it mean to re-conceptualise collaboration? I understand collaboration as an individual working to help produce a play – whether in manuscript, print, or performance form. This may mean that the collaboration may not have been a happy one, or one of equal parts, but still essential to the mechanics of early modern theatrical culture. Many hands make light work, as they say, without which the texts as we have them would not have come to be.

To make a distinction between an author and an authority, I will only use the term author when gesturing towards the author function. Otherwise, I will use playwright when referring to those who professionally wrote plays for the London theatrical companies. I also consider the collaborative act as potentially conflictual or unwanted when happening for reasons of censorship. This is particularly relevant in a study where censorship is a central concern. Censored texts are, invariably, the site of conflict between the state and the individual. In my thesis, I document the conflict between playwrights, between scribes and playwrights, the Master of the Revels and playwrights, and the Privy Council with various playmakers. I also consider how the collaborative author and censored text has come to be understood as the result of scholarly editing. A consideration of the collaboration of printers and compositors is beyond the remit of my thesis however, as I am more interested in the workings of the playhouse than the printing house.

83 Here I take after Stern, who suggests that to understand the collaboration that created Cardenio/Double Falsehood we should look at the types of joint-writing “that cannot be captured by stylometrics”. Particularly, she considers the kind of practicalities of collaborative writing in relation to the development of a play’s “plot” or scenario. See “‘Whether one did Contrive, the Other Write,/Or one Fram’d the Plot, the Other did Indite’: Fletcher and Theobald as Collaborative Writers,” in The Quest for Cardenio: Shakespeare, Fletcher, Cervantes, and the Lost Play, ed. David Carnegie and Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 115-130, 115.
In order to map out the relationship between collaboration and censorship, I consider the two from a variety of textual forms and methods. I engage in both textual and literary analysis, whilst paying attention to the historical contingencies which framed particular cases. As a literary critic rather than a historian, I am more interested in how censorship and collaboration can be read through the texts. This is combined with a historicised understanding rather than seeking to understand the historical situations that led to the censorship of particular plays. Central to my interpretation is the idea that the themes of a play are conversant with their textual processes. Or, to be more precise, in these plays the form reflects the meaning. I argue that a collaboratively written, censored, play makes it audience or reader aware of its status as a jointly-written text. It gestures towards its creation, as collaboration is thematised and the contentious material within draws the audience’s attention. The playwrights’ hall of mirrors representation of joint writing reflects a culture of censorship and collaboration which both shaped texts and recreated that same culture.

In this thesis, I consider a group of plays that range from the end of the Elizabethan to the beginning of the Caroline periods. One of these I look at in printed form, two in manuscript, and the final play in its various incarnations as a twentieth and twenty-first century scholarly edition. Through each play I am able to focus on the different agents involved in playmaking: playwrights, scribes, censors, impresarios, and editors who have contributed to modern understandings of early modern texts. The plays this thesis focuses on are taken from a small pool of plays written by more than one playwright and that also contain obvious marks of censorship. In theory, there are many other censored collaborative plays that exist but without the discernible involvement of the Master of the Revels. There are also plays in the early modern canon which exist in manuscript form with the hand of the Master of the Revels included, such as Buc in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* and Herbert in Fletcher’s *The Woman’s Prize; or the Tamer Tamed*. Furthermore, there are the *causes célèbres* such as Middleton’s *A
Game at Chess and the performance of Shakespeare’s Richard II on the eve of Essex’s attempted rebellion. I do not write extensively on these plays for two reasons: firstly, they were originally written by a single playwright; and secondly, they have already received plenty of critical attention. By reorientating our lens away from some plays, others come into focus. There is, I think, value to be gained from looking at little known plays such as Sir John van Olden Barnavelt and The Honest Man’s Fortune. The play that has received the most attention in my thesis, Sir Thomas More, is looked at from a different angle than has previously been considered: the effect of editing upon a censored and collaborative text. I have not placed the chapters in chronological order so that the chapters show the sequence of dramatic creation in relation to censorship. I begin with authorship in Chapter 1 before moving to the role of the censors and playhouse scribes in Chapters 2 and 3, and end with the place of censorship within contemporary editorial work in Chapter 4. Placing the chapters in chronological order would impose a teleological narrative on the plays. The texts in this thesis reject any idea that censorship developed in any stable trajectory. I believe that the methodology I employ in this thesis – treating censors and scribes as collaborators – can be extended to singularly written plays. I choose plays with more than one playwright, however, as a way to experiment with preconceived notions of authorship and authority.

I begin with Jonson, Chapman, and Marston’s Eastward Ho! in order to contextualise collaborative authorship in the Renaissance. Chapter One considers the ways in which competitive collaborative authorship and censorship shaped the play and the careers of the playwrights, with a focus on Jonson in particular. In this chapter I use the early modern culture of credit as a way to understand the writing process of the play and its subsequent fallout. I then read credit and collaborative dynamics back into Eastward Ho!. This chapter also considers how the playwrights self-authorised through the language of collaboration,
particularly in their attempts to un-authorise themselves of the material which placed them in prison.

Chapters Two and Three focus on the role of the Master of the Revels and playhouse scribes in the creation of plays. I consider Fletcher and Massinger’s *Sir John van Olden Barnavelt* and the revival of Fletcher, Massinger, and Field’s *The Honest Man’s Fortune*. In Chapter Two I argue that Buc and Crane should be considered as performing authorial work and are therefore collaborators in the writing of *Barnavelt*. I focus particularly on Buc’s relationship to the play, suggesting that his personal interest and familiarity with Dutch politics is what created the difficulties in getting the play to the stage, but also, what allowed him to eventually authorise it. This chapter also considers Crane’s organisation of the manuscript and how the censorship of the play turned the revision into a collaborative process.

Chapter Three also focuses on the process of revision, particularly how the re-writing process functions as collaborative censorship. This chapter considers how service relationships in the court and playhouses inform the playworld of *The Honest Man’s Fortune* and the King’s Men’s subsequent censorship of the play during a revival. I argue that the relationship between the company and the Master of the Revels is modelled on collaborative service. Through my analysis of the treatment of homoerotic friendship and gentlemanly service in *Fortune*, I suggest that the King’s Men’s scribe, Knight, eliminated some passages that commented on James’ sexual relationships with his favourites so as to appease Herbert.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I turn away from dramatic and textual production towards contemporary editing. This chapter considers a group of recent scholarly editions of *Sir Thomas More*, originally written by Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle, and revised by Chettle, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Dekker, Shakespeare and the anonymous Hand C. I examine how the idea of Shakespeare’s singular authorship is used to shape editions of this collaboratively
written and censored play. I look at the various ways the editors approach Shakespeare’s authorship and the role of Hand C. I ultimately argue that editors should take the collaborative censorship of More into account, without which early modern writing practices are obscured.

In this thesis, I propose that there is a greater connection between censorship and collaborative writing than has previously been suggested. I argue that authorship was modulated by the dual systems of censorship and collaboration. By thinking about the links between the socialised production of plays in early modern London and the ways in which a culture of censorship operated, the complex and sometimes conflictual relationships between the various playmakers come to light. This thesis shows that authorship, then, and now, is always under construction and always roving. Further to this, I suggest that censored versions of plays should be considered as singular texts worthy of editorial interest. My thesis begins with the premise that it is worthwhile to ask who is speaking, but not only to listen to the loudest voices. These sorts of questions are pertinent to a study of censorship, which tells stories of those who were not allowed to speak, or whose voices are constrained. I do not mean to create a corollary between authorship studies and censorship, but I think that certain scholarship silences the past by letting some speak more loudly than others. I approach this work not because authorial status was necessarily important to them, but because it should be important to us.
Collaborating on Credit: *Eastward Ho!* and the Death of the Co-Author

In 1593, soon after his release from prison and the death of his erstwhile friend Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd wrote a desperate letter to Sir John Puckering. Having been charged by the state with heresy and subsequently tortured, Kyd had lost the support of his patron and was hoping the Lord Keeper would intercede on his behalf. In this infamous moment in early modern literary history, the authorities raided Kyd and Marlowe’s shared room and found an Arianist tract amongst the papers. Arianism asserts that Jesus Christ is distinct from his father, God, and therefore subordinate to him. In an attempt to win back his lost reputation after having been connected with this heresy, Kyd claimed that Marlowe was the owner of the “disputation” which had become mixed up in their shared writings:

When J was first suspected for that / Libell that concern’d the state, amongst those waste and idel papers (which J carde / not for) & which vnaskt J did deliuer vp, were founde some fragmentes of a / disputation toching that opinion affirmd by Marlowe to be his, and shuffled / with some of myne (vnkown to me) by some occasion of our wrytinge in one / chamber twoe yeares synce

The picture that emerges of Kyd and Marlowe’s shared room is perhaps not the most organised, but it does speak to the shared writing practice between the two playwrights. For two years, the playwrights had been writing in the same chamber and using the same materials. Presumably, they were writing together. Kyd argues that the papers in question did not belong to him, although they were found in a room where everything else was shared. The state’s prosecution

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of Kyd and his subsequent defence is predicated on collaboration, or, a disavowal of it. Masten understands this affair as an example of early modern “shuffling” – the intellectual exchange that was part of the domestic and sexual relations of early modern theatre – evidencing that “early modern playwrights were far less interested in keeping their hands, pages, and conversation separate” than critics would give them credit. Indeed, Kyd only came to disavow the papers, and his friendship with Marlowe, when the state intervened upon their chamber, bodies, and lives. At this juncture, collaborative writing became a handy line of defence. Kyd’s use of collaborative writing as proof of innocence against accusations of seditious heresy was not an uncommon tactic amongst playwrights of the period. Indeed, claiming a text was written collaboratively was a useful way to deflect blame onto someone else. By declaring that Marlowe was the real owner of the papers, Kyd can disown the text, thereby using collaborative authorship as a way to demarcate proprietary rights, and more importantly, innocence. Kyd is suggesting that because he did not authorise – permit – the text, he is not its author.

Kyd’s letter reveals the ways that the shared writing practices of the theatre were attendant on its social practices. Shared writing created shared responsibility – whether that be the responsibility of a shared home or merely following through on professional commitments. Kyd and Marlowe lived together and wrote together, but Kyd accuses Marlowe of not fulfilling his obligation of mutual care because he brought a seditious text into their room. Other playwrights were also dependent on each other in order to write, get paid, and survive, and sometimes relationship breakdowns between playwrights were triggered by a failure to uphold the social contract between collaborators. This dynamic of mutual obligation and trust extended beyond playwrights and affected all members of society. It was known as credit. The “economy

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2 For a brief discussion of collaboration in relation to Kyd’s letter to Puckering, see Nina Levine, “Citizens’ Games: Differentiating Collaboration and Sir Thomas More,” Shakespeare Quarterly 58, no. 1 (2007), 31-64, 43-45. Levine reads the letter as evidence of collaboration as consent; I am, however, more inclined to argue that collaboration does not necessitate agreement.

3 Masten, Queer, 88.
of obligation”, as Craig Muldrew has called it, intertwined creditors and debtors of a community and created a social-tie system that encouraged reciprocity across hierarchical boundaries. Before *credit* took on its modern usage, it was a morally laden indicator of an individual’s adherence to social codes. In his letter to Puckering, Kyd records how Marlowe failed in his social credit, but also how Kyd, in turn, has lost credit with his lord: “as J maie still reteyne the favours of my Lord, whom J haue servd almost / theis vj yeres nowe, in credit vntill nowe, & nowe am vttierlie / vndon without / herein be somewhat donn for my recoverie”.5 Kyd’s intent in writing the letter in the first place is to win back his credit by proving himself trustworthy. He hopes to gain back this trust by disavowing ownership of his and Marlowe’s shared papers. He hopes that Puckering can put in a good word to his lord, thereby reinstating himself within the patronage system of mutual credit and dependency that guarantees his employment. Credit once lost, however, is not easily regained: Kyd died less than a year later, leaving a debt-ridden estate.

Kyd’s letter is instructive of two dynamics that inform early modern playmaking culture: disavowals of authorship and the social mechanics of credit. These two frameworks can also help explain Jonson, Chapman, and Marston’s *Eastward Ho!*’s collaborative process, its reflective representation of playing culture, and the playwrights’ subsequent fallout with each other and the authorities. The play is deeply interested in the organisation of a culture of credit, and in an uncanny coincidence, like the play’s characters,

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4 Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), xiii. Muldrew’s study is the defining text on early modern credit culture, in which he records how credit unexpectedly brought communities together. Following suit is Ceri Sullivan’s *The Rhetoric of Credit: Merchants in Early Modern Writing* (Madison; London; Cranbury: Farleigh Dickinson University Press; Associated University Presses, 2002), in which she maps out the positive place of credit within city comedy, and Jill Phillips Ingram’s *Idioms of Self-Interest: Credit, Identity, and Property in English Renaissance Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2006), in which Ingram accounts for the ethics of credit that allowed for acts of communally accepted self-interest. More recent scholarship has been sceptical of credit culture, looking at the ways in which credit acted as a stranglehold on communities. See Amanda Bailey in *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) and Brian Sheerin, *Desires of Credit in Early Modern Theory and Drama: Commerce, Poesy, and the Profitable Imagination* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2016).

the playwrights failed in their responsibility to each other, and ultimately were saved by using the language of credit. The story of *Eastward Ho!* also reveals the ways that the playwrights manifested their singular authorship in relation to collaboration, particularly in their attempts to disclaim authorship of the play’s scandalous matter. Just like Kyd’s safety and reputation is built on the extent to which he can maintain his credit with the authorities, so too were the collaborators of *Eastward Ho!* dependant on collaboration to maintain their position in circles of patronage. This chapter reads *Eastward Ho!* through the playwrights’ lives, particularly Jonson’s, identifying how credit and collaboration operates in both the play and the playmaking culture it is derived from. More specifically, I consider how the playwrights attempted to use the theatre’s social dynamics and shared writing practices to their advantage when caught writing contentious material. First, I introduce the censorship context of *Eastward Ho!* before turning towards credit culture and the figure of Philip Henslowe as a way to understand the social and financial dynamics of *Eastward Ho!* and theatre culture more generally. I then analyse *Eastward Ho!* in relation to collaborative credit. Finally, I consider how the playwrights defended themselves against accusations of sedition through the language of deflected authorship. I ultimately show how reading the play through both collaboration and censorship allows for an understanding of how social credit comes to bear on early modern modes of authorship.

A short plot overview is necessary for this bustling play. The play revolves around the goldsmith Touchstone, his apprentices Quicksilver and Golding, and his daughters Gertrude and Mildred. Golding and Mildred are pious and industrious (naturally, they marry), whilst Gertrude and Quicksilver are vain profligates. Desperate to become a Lady, Gertrude makes an inopportune marriage to the “thirty pound knight” Sir Petronel Flash.6 He convinces her that

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6 Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston, *Eastward Ho!* , ed. Suzanne Gossett and W. David Kay in the *Works*, vol. 2, 1601-1606, 529-640, 4.1.140. All subsequent quotations of this edition will be incorporated within
he has an estate in the country, but it soon becomes apparent that it is made of air. Quicksilver spends his days gulling gallants out of their wealth. Once he leaves his apprenticeship, he and Petronel come up with a cunning plan to escape their debts by cheating Gertrude out of her dowry and sailing away to Virginia. The usurer Security, who is cuckolded by his young wife Winifred with Petronel, backs the prodigals’ scheme. Soon after leaving shore, they are shipwrecked at different points in the Thames, and subsequently find themselves imprisoned in the Counter for debt. Golding, who has improbably moved up the City’s ranks to become deputy alderman, tricks the unforgiving Touchstone into going to prison to witness Quicksilver’s dramatic repentance song. Touchstone is moved, the debts are forgiven, and the play ends with an ironic act of reconciliation. It is a plot that revolves around the economic concerns typical of city comedy, particularly the ideas of credit, debt, and collaborative performance.

The censorship of *Eastward Ho!*

Sometime during the late summer of 1605, whilst King James and his court were travelling to Oxford, the Children of the Queen’s Revels performed *Eastward Ho!*⁷ The Children were, up until that April, supervised by Samuel Daniel, who had acted as the company’s licenser for the Revels office. Daniel, however, was brought before the Privy Council to account for his play *Philotas*, which was thought to have pro-Essex sympathies. The Children took advantage of the moment and performed without a license. Chapman, Jonson, and Marston soon found

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⁷ The precise dating of the play’s performance is unknown. *Westward Ho!*, by Thomas Dekker and John Webster, the play from which *Eastward Ho!* got its parodic title, was performed in the winter of 1604-5. *Eastward Ho!* was entered into the Stationers’ Register on 4 September 1605. James and his court were on progress to Oxford from 16 July to 31 August, which included the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Suffolk. It is within this two-week period that the date of the play’s performance lies. See Kay and Gossett, Introduction to *Eastward Ho!* in the *Works*, 531-541, 532.
themselves in hot water for their barbs at the new Scottish king and the unctuous courtier culture he seemed to have brought with him. In Jonson’s recount of the incident to William Drummond fourteen years later, the playwrights took themselves to prison after a Scots courtier, James Murray, informed on them:

He was delated by Sir James Murray to the King for writing something against the Scots in a play, *Eastward Ho!*, and voluntarily imprisoned himself with Chapman and Marston, who had written it amongst them. The report was that they should then had their ears cut and noses. After their delivery he banqueted all his friends: there was Camden, Selden, and others.8

In true Jonson style, the episode ended with dinner. Drummond’s writing of Jonson’s retelling produced some erroneous details. There is no evidence that Jonson and Chapman self-incarcerated (indeed, why would they?), or that Marston went to jail at all. Anthony Nixon wrote in 1606 that Marston was “sent away *Westward* for carping both at Court, Cittie, and countrie”, which could mean either he was imprisoned in a different location, or he managed to run away before the authorities caught hold of him.9

Either before, or whilst the playwrights were languishing in prison, *Eastward Ho!* went to print. The playwrights and the company may have reckoned that the best way to profit from the salacious play was to sell it to the stationers William Aspley and Thomas Thorpe, considering that their unlicensed performances were swiftly put down.10 What followed were two issues of the first quarto. Someone involved, perhaps the playwrights or the printer George Eld, became worried about the material in the first copy, and so self-censored the play in its

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9 Anthony Nixon, *The blacke yeare Seria locis* (London: Printed by E. Allde, for William Timme, 1606), sig. B2v. Gossett and Kay suspect that Marston may have been imprisoned in a different location to Chapman and Jonson, if he was imprisoned at all. See Introduction to *Eastward Ho!*, 533.
10 Gossett and Kay, Introduction to *Eastward Ho!*, 534.
first run. This resulted in odd spacing which indicates the missing lines. In the second issue of the first quarto, there was included a half-sheet insert which replaced material about the Scots. This did not make much difference considering that there was offensive material still left in the play, including the mockery of James’ selling off cheap knighthoods. This line was potentially rendered in a Scottish accent on stage, “I ken the man weel, he’s one of my thirty pound knights”. Luckily for the playwrights, their faux pas was forgiven after Jonson and Chapman sent a series of apologetic letters to various noblemen, including Thomas Howard, Robert Cecil, the Herbert brothers, and the king himself.

This was not the first, or the last, time that Jonson, Chapman, and Marston ran into the law. All three playwrights were well versed in the appropriate rhetorical responses to an accusation of a libellous play. Whilst Chapman’s literary career is not as known for censorship as Jonson and Marston’s, his Sir Giles Goosecap was censored in print. Also, a few years later, The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Biron, Marshal of France was badly received for its satire of the French court. The Tragedy was heavily cut in print and Chapman had to go into hiding until the surrounding furor had passed. Before Eastward Ho!, Marston’s satires were suppressed in the Bishops’ Ban of 1599. Two of his satirical books, The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image and Certain Satyres and The Scourge of Villanie were

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11 Between fourteen and seventeen lines were cut from pages A3, A4v, C1v, and C2 in Q1. See Gossett and Kay, Introduction to Eastward Ho!, 535.
12 Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston, Eastward hoe. As it was playd in the Black-friers. By the children of her Maiesties reuels / Made by Geo: Chapman. Ben: Ionson. Ioh: Marston. (At London: Printed for William Aspley., 1605), sig. F4r. All subsequent references to Eastward Ho! as a censored play will come from this edition and incorporated into the body of the text. This edition is from the Dyce Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. In this edition, the leaves that were excised from the first issue (E3 and E4), were pasted into this already corrected copy. See Suzanne Gossett, “Eastward Ho!: Textual Essay,” The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online, accessed November 5, 2018, https://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/benjonson/k/essays/Eastward_Ho_textual_essay/.
14 See Clare, Censorship, 138-145.
burnt.\textsuperscript{15} His writing career may have been ended later by the now lost “Silver Mine” play in 1608.\textsuperscript{16}

Of the three playwrights involved, Jonson had the most complicated history of censorship. Despite his experiences of censorship, Jonson still wanted and subsequently received a warrant for the reversion of the Master of the Revels Office in 1624. In the words of Richard Burt, Jonson’s eventual alignment with the Master of the Revels shows how the playwright “internaliz[ed]” the “interpretative categories and practices” of the Revels Office.\textsuperscript{17} He was imprisoned – and probably tortured – for the now lost “Isle of Dogs” in 1597, the Apologetical Dialogue to \textit{Poetaster} was suppressed in print in 1602, and he came before the Privy Council to defend \textit{Sejanus} in 1603 which he subsequently self-censored in 1605. After he was imprisoned for \textit{Eastward Ho!} in 1605, he was “accused” for \textit{The Devil is an Ass} 1616.\textsuperscript{18} Subsequently, he was examined by the Privy Council for verses ostensibly about Buckingham’s death, and he was cited before the Court of High Commission in 1632 for \textit{The Magnetic Lady}. As well as this, James himself censored Jonson’s masque \textit{Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion}.\textsuperscript{19} In this context, \textit{Eastward Ho!} is just one of a long line of censored plays; Jonson clearly wanted to tread the line between social commentary and scandal. \textit{Eastward Ho!} stands out in his oeuvre however as the play was a turning point in his presentation of authorship.


\textsuperscript{16} There are two possible authors for the “Silver Mine” play, either Marston or John Day. E. K. Chambers has influentially suggested Marston as the likely author. However, as Wiggins points out, “Lotti states that the author absconded in fear of execution; he was therefore probably not John Marston… Marston had either left London in 1606, when he forfeited his chambers in the Middle Temple, or was still in London on 8 June 1608, when a man of that name was imprisoned at Newgate”. See Wiggins and Richardson, “1586. Satirical Play,” \textit{British Drama} 5:491; and “Silver Mine,” \textit{Lost Plays Database}, editors, Roslyn L. Knuston, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library), accessed November 5, 2018, \url{https://lostplays.folger.edu/Silver_Mine}.

\textsuperscript{17} Burt, \textit{Licensed}, 4. See also Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 1-2.

\textsuperscript{18} Jonson, “Informations,” 319.

\textsuperscript{19} For Jonson’s history of censorship, see Burt, \textit{Licensed}, 3 and Patterson, \textit{Censorship}, 49.
Once the incident was over, Jonson did all he could to distance himself from the theatrical companies’ style of collaborative writing in his printed plays.

The intensity of *Eastward Ho!’s* satire and the resultant furore was due to the satiric sensibilities of the playwrights as well as the company for which they were writing. The playwrights had all experimented with satire (with varying political success) and this was exacerbated by the act of writing together.\(^{20}\) As Suzanne Gossett and W. David Kay write, “it seems likely that collaboration had only strengthened the tendency of these three irrepressibly satiric writers to disregard well-understood, if sometimes unspoken, norms of political and social acceptability”.\(^{21}\) Furthermore, they were writing for a company who had made their fame by playing inflammatory material. *Eastward Ho!* was a typical Revels production. The company leaders, particularly Thomas Kendall and Edward Kirkham, were keen on producing satirical plays, and they “might have had an equally strong influence on dramatic production”, as Lucy Munro notes.\(^{22}\) Their spate of anti-Jacobean plays in the first decade of the seventeenth century did not have a good outcome for the company. *Eastward Ho!* was the last nail in the coffin and, soon afterwards, they lost their royal moniker.\(^{23}\) The play comes second in the timeline of the Children’s inflammatory plays – Daniel’s *Philotas* between 1604 and 1605, *Eastward Ho!* in 1605, John Day’s *The Isle of Gulls* in 1606, and Chapman’s *Byron* plays and the “Silver Mine” play in 1608. The culmination of this series of plays was Henry Evans’ withdrawal from the Blackfriars lease, which fell into the Burbages’ hands, and giving up management of the company.


\(^{21}\) Gossett and Kay, *Introduction to Eastward Ho!*, 531.

\(^{22}\) Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 53.

\(^{23}\) Munro, *Children*, 21.
This was not the first time that censorship resulted in company collapse. *Eastward Ho!* descends from the ill-fated “The Isle of Dogs”, written by Jonson and Nashe, and performed by the Pembroke’s Men at the Swan Theatre in 1597. In the ensuing fallout from the play, the Swan was not relicensed for performance, and members of the Pembroke’s Men either defected to other companies or re-formed as a touring company, never allowed to work in London again. “The Isle of Dogs” triggered a short moratorium of playing in London by the Privy Council. In a letter, the Privy Councillors ordered that the playhouses be “plucked down” because of lewd plays and disorderly behaviour. 24 Although this order seems to have gone ignored, the play had a lasting presence in theatrical London’s, and perhaps even Jonson’s, psyche. As Dekker wrote in *Satiromastix* (1601), one of the “Poetomachia” plays attacking Jonson, “and when the Stagerites banisht thee into the Ile of Dogs, thou turnd’st Ban-dog (villainous Guy) and euer since bitest”. 25 After he was punished for the play, Jonson could not withhold his satirical bite.

It is reasonable to suppose that the play left a long-lasting impression on those involved. The matter was investigated by Elizabeth’s notorious chief operative, Robert Topcliffe, and resulted in Jonson’s imprisonment alongside the actors Gabriel Spencer and Robert Shaw. They were then questioned and tortured. Nashe’s lodgings were raided, though luckily the papers had been destroyed and he had already managed to escape to Yarmouth. 26 Although the text of “The Isle of Dogs” is lost, Jonson returns to that ill-fated isle in *Eastward Ho!* At the climax of the play, which Jonson seems to have originally written, the prodigals Quicksilver and Petronel, alongside the sailor Seagull, land on the Isle of Dogs, and this is where the infamous

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satire of the Scots occurs. Figuratively returning to the Isle of Dogs was a dangerous move for Jonson, and part of the state’s response could have been due to the allusions to the earlier play. As Ian Donaldson has put it, *Eastward Ho!* “acquired a suggestive power of its own” through “satirical topography”.

What was so uproarious about “The Isle of Dogs” has been lost to history, though for audiences in 1605, the earlier play was fresh enough in the communal memory for *Eastward Ho!* to make a splash. Gesturing to the Isle perhaps was enough to indicate to audiences, and then readers, that they should be watching out for scandalous content. Clues of this sort are part of the hermeneutics of censorship. As Patterson writes, in censored texts, “provocation is given, or signification prompted, by some kind of signal in the text itself”. By 1605, the Isle of Dogs was reputed to be a debtors’ haven, an apt site for the shipwreck of a group of spendthrift profligates. The area got its name from the reign of Henry VIII, as it was where he kennelled his hounds just across the water from the royal palace at Greenwich. During the Elizabethan era, the bank’s proximity to the palace would have allowed the playwrights to reflect on the monarch and her courtiers. Indeed, dogs are associated with grovelling typical of the court. It seems likely too that “The Isle of Dogs” satirised specific courtiers, and Jonson so much as admitted this in a letter he wrote to Robert Cecil from prison:

I have so attempered my style that I have given no cause to any good man of grief; and if to any ill, by touching at any general vice, it hath always been with a regard, and sparing of particular persons.

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27 The traditional attribution breakdown is as follows: Marston, 1.1-2.1, Chapman 2.2-3.3, Jonson 4.1-5.5. The Isle of Dogs scene occurs in 4.1. See Gossett and Kay, Introduction to *Eastward Ho!*, 537-8.
30 Patterson, *Censorship*, 47.
In order to defend himself against accusations of libellous representations on stage, Jonson suggests that he had changed his style to satirise vices instead of known individuals. Returning to the Isle of Dogs, however, alerted the audience to the satire of courtiers, and Jonson’s justification only goes so far considering it is on the Isle of Dogs in *Eastward Ho!* that the satire of James I occurs.

In *Eastward Ho!*, and surely in “The Isle of Dogs”, the Isle functions as a synecdoche for the island of England. After having washed ashore on the Isle, the social-climbing knight Petronel is convinced that the prodigals have arrived in France. He attempts to communicate in broken French with two men they come across, although the First Gentleman is quick to point out that they are still in England, “On the coſt of Doggs Sir: Y’are ith’ Ile a Doggs” (sig. F4v). Once the play makes clear that the Isle of Dogs is emblematic for the whole of England, the playwrights go in for the kill. Petronel describes himself to the two Gentlemen as “A poore Knight of England” (sig. F4v), to which the First Gentleman scoffs, “I ken the man weel, hee’s one of my thirty pound Knights” (sig. F4v). The Second Gentleman then adds, “No no, this is he that stole his knighthood o the grand day, for foure pound giving to a Page, all the money in s purfe I wot well” (sig. F4v). It may be that what was so uproarious about *Eastward Ho!* was a direct representation of James on stage, even if it was only momentary. The First Gentleman’s use of a mock-Scottish accent invites the actor to say the line in a way that ridicules the king. The two Gentlemen are referring to the ease with which people could buy knighthoods at the beginning of James’ reign, particularly the cheap knighthoods he gave out at his coronation. Petronel, as a second-rate knight himself, points to the status-hungry lower nobility, but also towards the Scottish stereotype of avarice – the sale of knighthoods certainly added to the royal coffers.

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The climactic middle scenes of *Eastward Ho!* which featured the Isle of Dogs added to the playwrights’ troubles. Although this was not, perhaps, even the most contentious part of the play. In their attempts to attenuate the mounting crisis, the printers replaced four pages in the quarto hoping to soften the play’s satirical bite. Fourteen of the sixteen extant copies of *Eastward Ho!* are corrected issues with two replaced leaves, E3 and E4, alongside lines cut in other scenes.34 The replaced pages contained the tavern scene, where Seagull, the captain of the ship that was meant to go to Virginia, explains to the sailors Spendall and Scapthrift the glories that await them in the New World. Seagull tells the sailors that they can live freely in Virginia, “without Sergeants, or Courtiers, or Lawyers, or Intelligencers”, but they should take care to remember that they will be living aside “only a few indufts Scots” (sig. E3):

> who indeed are disperft ouer the face of the whole earth. But as for them, there are no greater friends to the English men and England, when they are out an’t, in the world, then they are. And for my part, I would a hundred thousand of hem were there, for wee are all one Countreymen now, yee know, and wee should finde ten times more comfort of them there, then wee doe heere (sigs. E3-E2).

Written two years after James’ coronation, these lines must have been heard ironically by the play’s audience. Seagull’s speech reveals the English discomfort with the Scottish outsiders arriving in London and taking up positions of affluence and influence. This passage may have been taken out of circulation, but buyers of the book must have been attuned to the subtle hints in the text to other libellous content.35 It may have seemed inevitable to the playwrights that they would face censure. Having lost his credit because of “The Isle of Dogs”, it is a wonder

34 Gossett, “*Eastward Ho!*: Textual Essay.”
35 Hillman suggests that readers would not mind the anti-Scot content cut, as Petronel still acts as the satirical heart of the play, “Vomit,” 510.
that Jonson would return to the infamous location in *Eastward Ho!* Indeed, he was bargaining with his and his collaborators’ credit by bringing the Isle into the play.

*Eastward Ho! and the culture of credit*

Just as it was important for Kyd to display to Lord Puckering his trustworthiness, Jonson felt it was necessary to perform to Drummond his taking part in the codes of homosocial friendship. Both playwrights were interested in maintaining their reputations and thereby their social credit. Jonson told Drummond that he had “voluntarily imprisoned himself with Chapman and Marston”, which history has proven incorrect.36 Perhaps Jonson’s memory over the space of fourteen years had lapsed, but what is more likely is that by presenting himself as self-imprisoning with his collaborators, he can commit himself to social obligations rather than the truth. What was at stake for Jonson was his credit: his reputation for trustworthiness and good social standing. In his taking part in early modern credit culture, Jonson was at pains to prove his reliability and integrity at times of duress.

In seventeenth-century England’s economy of obligation, the intertwined creditors and debtors of a community created a social-tie system that encouraged reciprocity across hierarchical boundaries.37 This was based on a traditional system of kinship and service that became more formalised as a result of the coinage crisis of the sixteenth century. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, the demand for coinage grew by an estimated 500 per cent, although there was only a 64 per cent increase in supply.38 Because of this shortage of coin, most of the market ran on personal loans between households and individuals. As the mercurial

37 As Muldrew writes, “The nature of obligation in credit relationships was not based on social inequality, although such factors obviously influenced the amount of credit people possessed and were willing to extend, but rather on the reciprocity of right,” *Credit*, 97.
Quicksilver of *Eastward Ho!* puts it, “Ka me, ka thee’, runs through court and country” (2.2.12). Or, if you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours. But this system could only be maintained by having a reputation of trust. Out of a somewhat flippant anecdote that centres on *Eastward Ho!*, Jonson, perhaps not unintentionally, revealed to Drummond his immersion in the credit economy, and how much credit determined friendship and collaborative partnerships. Jonson’s idea of friendship is not necessarily commensurate with the reality of commercially orientated collaboration, although collaboration can often be dressed in the clothing of homosociality. Jonson’s social and economic context moulded a collaborative practice that is homologous with the content of *Eastward Ho!* itself, however discordant this is with Jonson’s portrayal of himself later in his career.\(^39\)

In *Eastward Ho!* collaboration is represented with an ambivalence corresponding to the views of the playwrights. Similar to credit culture, collaboration between the characters of the play, and between the playwrights, is both mutually beneficial and destructive. In the play, the characters feel the push-and-pull of social credit and financial obligation, which plays out in their alliances and interdependencies. Outside of *Eastward Ho!* collaborative practice allowed for the success of several playwrights. However, when a jointly written play was subsequently censored, the play was a brush that tarred all involved. Jonson was faced with a dilemma: although he wished to escape the brush of *Eastward Ho!*, his involvement in a culture of credit structurally reinforced the importance he already gave to his friendships and working relationships. Jonsonian singular authorship subsequently emerged out of the collaborative economy of obligation on which he relied, and perhaps rejected in print.\(^40\)


\(^{40}\) Jonson’s singularity is a notion generally accepted by scholars, and has much to do with the 1616 *Workes*, in which Jonson cemented his reputation as separate from the collaborative playhouses in which his work was first staged. This has created two general assumptions about Jonson: firstly, that collaboration was not important to his writing career; and secondly, that he was anti-theatrical. Loewenstein’s argument that Jonson created the “bibliographic ego” effectively singles Jonson out from the other playwrights of his age. See Possessive, 2.
Jonson, it is well known, was a very social man. Besides the copious references he makes to his friends in his Epigrams and the Informations, he was also a member of the Mermaid Club, and later in his life, he presided over the Tribe of Ben. With the importance Jonson placed on community, it is no wonder that sociability has been a frame used to understand his networks. Although community and social networks dominate readings of Jonson’s relationship to his society, this does not often extend to explorations of his writing. The most obvious parallel between Jonson’s community and his writing is collaboration. As Gossett has noted, “The very word collaboration suggests the creation of a community”. The tendency to erase Jonson’s history of joint writing originates in the myth of his singularity. That is, the 1616 Folio, The Workes of Beniamin Jonson, portrays him as separate from the material and social processes that generated plays in the seventeenth century. Joseph Loewenstein has argued that Jonson became an author by using the medium of print to construct his identity and assert ownership over his plays, self-editing to manifest his


42 See “Inviting a Friend to Supper” (Epigrams 101) and “An Epistle Answering to One That Asked to be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben” (Underwood 47).  


44 For example, see Kelly Stage, “Eastward Ho and the Strength of Weak Ties for Playwrights and Patrons,” The Ben Jonson Journal 22, no. 2 (2015), 208-228.  


46 Jonson’s authorial self-fashioning has a long history of critical interest. Central to this is Richard Helgerson’s Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), in which he argues that Jonson fashioned himself as a laureate through satire. In From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Douglas A. Brooks considers how playwrights transitioned from theatre to print, thereby shaping their reputations. Perhaps most important for Jonson studies is Loewenstein’s Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship, in which he argues that Jonsonian authorship – and the emergence of the ‘Author’ more generally – is coloured by possessive ownership of the plays. Finally, in “‘Divided Amongst Themselves’: Collaboration and Anxiety in Jonson’s Volpone,” ELH 69, no. 1 (2002), 57-81, Gregory Chaplin posits that Jonson’s experience writing Eastward Ho! resulted in the anti-collaborative bent of Volpone.
“bibliographic ego”. Loewenstein arrives at his argument by following Jonson’s self-presentation in print, but this method simultaneously assumes and omits Jonson’s self-hidden history of collaborative writing.

There is not much evidence for what Jonson was writing in his early years. By 1598, Frances Meres had noted that Jonson was one of “our best for Tragedie”. He was presumably already writing solo besides “The Isle of Dogs” and Eastward Ho!, but most of his work seems to have come from Henslowe’s circle. He made it seem as though he disdained collaborative hackwork, producing poetry that is “patched up in remnants and old worn rags”, as Lorenzo Junior put it in Every Man in His Humour. However, before 1605, he helped write a series of collaborative plays for the Admiral’s Men: Hot Anger Soon Cold with Chettle and Porter, The Page of Plymouth with Dekker, and Robert II, King of Scots with Dekker and Chettle. He also wrote “adicians in geronymo” (The Spanish Tragedy) for Henslowe in both 1601 and 1602. There was also the ill-fated “The Isle of Dogs”. Sejanus in 1605 was also, perhaps, collaboratively written. Furthermore, it is probably through the collaborative writing practices of the early modern dramatic economy that Jonson and Chapman’s friendship developed: Chapman was tasked to write “ij ectes of A tragedie of bengemens plotte” in October 1598. Jonson’s self-fashioning appears to have achieved his aims: not included in the Folio, and subsequently ignored in Jonson criticism, are the collaborative plays written for the public stage. Furthermore, if a play underwent censorship, Jonson had it appear either in a new form or not at all. Jonson’s only collaboratively written play that was printed with his name,

47 Loewenstein, Possessive, 2.
48 Frances Meres, Palladis Tamia; or, Wit’s Treasury (London: 1598), sig. Oo3.
51 The origin of Jonson and Chapman’s friendship is suggested by Gossett in “Marston, Collaboration, and Eastward Ho!,” Renaissance Drama 33 (2004), 181-200, 182. See also Foakes, Diary, f. 51’. Jonson also told Drummond that Chapman is “loved of him,” Informations, 125. Their friendship, unfortunately, fell out later.
52 Jonson did, however, include the masques that he created with Inigo Jones in the Workes, as they were written in service to the Crown and thereby accrued the status Jonson wanted.
Eastward Ho!, does not appear in the Folio. Jonson’s attempt to conceal his jointly written plays is typical of Renaissance attitudes towards collaboration more generally. As Belén Bistué has found, Renaissance theoreticians on the Continent who wanted texts to “offer a single, univocal vision” whitewashed the collaborative history of translation by repressing details of joint textual production. Jonson engaged himself in a similar practice of subterfuge when expunging references to collaboration in his Works.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, Jonson was ostensibly moving away from collaborative practices and towards solo writing. He had written Every Man in His Humour for the Chamberlain’s Men in 1598 and Every Man Out the year after. He also wrote Cynthia’s Revels and The Poetaster for the Children of the Chapel in 1600 and 1601. Despite writing these plays on his own, both the Children and Chamberlain’s Men had a collaborative ethos, which resulted in increased creative involvement from actors and playwrights, shared dividends, and the types of plays written. This worked well for the collaboratively minded Chapman, who had already written eight plays for the Children by 1605 and had several jointly-written plays for the Admiral’s before that. It seemed to work for Jonson too. His involvement in these two companies shows his willingness to collaborate with actors and sharers, and other writers. This was despite previous disagreements and animosities, particularly with Marston during the Poetomachia. Indeed, Jonson and Marston’s dislike of each other is infamous; Jonson told Drummond that, “He had many quarrels with Marston: beat him, and took his pistol from him; wrote his Poetaster on him. The beginning of them were that Marston represented him in the stage.” Despite the friction between Jonson and Marston, in the Children of the Queen’s Revels, as Munro has shown, the playwrights and sharers “appear to have been a fairly close-knit group, despite Jonson’s mixed comments on his fellow writers”.

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53 Bistué, Collaborative, 1.
54 Jonson, Informations, 216-18.
55 Munro, Children, 32.
of Jonson, Chapman, and Marston may seem odd, but Jonson could have been induced to collaborate on *Eastward Ho!* by the company preference for collaborative practices.

But the oddest one out of the *Eastward Ho!* group is certainly Marston because of his avoidance of literary collaboration. Gossett has written that “The events of Marston’s life demonstrate a constant tendency to reject cooperation or collaboration for competition and aggression”. Indeed, his only other collaborative play, *The Insatiate Countess*, was a diachronic collaboration finished by William Barkstead and Lewis Machin after Marston’s death. Whilst it certainly seems true that Marston was difficult to work with, even a potential anti-collaborator, he did however hold a one-sixth share in the Children of the Queen’s Revels company, which he bought between 1602 and 1604, and later sold to Robert Keysar in 1606. Involvement in this highly social and collaborative company indicates that Marston was able and willing to work within large groups. He may have simply preferred writing alone. By considering playwrights that are thought to have a highly singularised canon as collaborators, we can better elucidate sociability and its relation to the early modern playwriting community’s practice of collaboration. In doing so we can trouble the narrative of singularity, particularly because Jonson, Chapman, and Marston all emerged out of the collaborative credit economies of the playhouses. They relied on the credit culture of employment, but there was also the promise of trust, which the playwrights broke with *Eastward Ho!*. Censored plays were a form of broken credit in the playhouses: how could theatrical companies, actors, and other writers trust playwrights who had such risky run-ins with the law? This is perhaps why Jonson made such an effort after *Eastward Ho!* to distance himself from the collaboration.

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56 Gossett, “Marston,” 196.
57 Gossett, “Marston,” 185.
58 Munro, *Children*, 28.
Before *Eastward Ho!*, however, there was Henslowe. This somewhat mysterious figure typifies the credit culture of the early modern playhouses. Jonson, Chapman and Marston all had dealings with Henslowe to one degree or another, and their relationships with him helped shaped their collaborative careers. Henslowe half financed the building of the Rose theatre in 1587, and in 1604, he and his son-in-law Edward Alleyn secured a joint patent as the Master of the Royal Game of Bears, Bulls and Mastiff Dogs. For his tentacular business interests, Henslowe has come to symbolise the commercial dealings of the theatres. Henslowe’s *Diary*, the most detailed account of the day-to-day business of playing, includes particulars of the credit he gave out to his players, his pawnbroking side business, and the money made from performances at the Rose. Critics such as Douglas Bruster have taken the *Diary* as evidence of, “the inescapable fact that the Renaissance stage was, primarily, a place of business”.59 Henslowe and his *Diary* are reduced to cogs in the market machine if read in this particular light. But the *Diary* also catalogues and demonstrates the human relationships that were the beating heart of the industry. The collaborative economy that emerged out of the playhouses was not a depersonalised market, but an animated system dependent on relationships. By recording the links between Henslowe and his circle, as well as the different assemblages of collaborative writers, the *Diary* testifies to the merging of the economic and the social within playhouse culture.

Owing to his material legacy, Henslowe has a mixed reputation. He is at once the blundering manager embodied by Geoffrey Rush in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), a magnanimous father to the players, but also a miserly financier who was uninterested in art. In reality, similar to other individuals of his era, Henslowe’s business and personal life overlapped because of the particular relationships fostered by credit culture. Credit was one of the ties that

bound the playmaking community on an emotional level. Henslowe was sensitive about his role as financier and the effect this had on his relationships, as evidenced by his ambiguous scrawl on the first page of his *Diary*, “[F]or when I lent I wasse A | frend & when I asked I wasse vnkind”. It seems that he wanted to be close to his playwrights and players, but often the financial realities of a co-dependent working relationship got in the way. Indeed, Henslowe could care about his players whilst simultaneously seeing them as a playhouse commodity. R. A. Foakes warns against Henslowe’s reputation as “a kind of Scrooge,” especially because the evidence suggests that Henslowe did not expect the loans he gave to be paid back in full. Indeed, when Henslowe died in 1616, the company owed him £400 in unpaid loans.

He also seems to have genuinely loved his players; he wrote in a letter of 1593 that he supported them with “as good & faythfull a harte as they shall desyer to haue comen a mongeste them”. The exchange may have gone the other way too: for the playwrights, Henslowe was their guarantor of employment as well as something like a family head. Nathan Field addressed one letter to Henslowe as “Father Hinchlow,” and signed off several as his “loving son”. Family feeling seems to have been part of playhouse culture, but affection and financial transaction were not mutually exclusive. As both an impresario and a wealthy man within the playmaking community, Henslowe was obligated to employ and finance his players whilst the players were obligated to create the company wares for him. Only by working together in a mutually beneficial organisation did the playhouses prosper. As Jill Phillips Ingram writes, “the successful entrepreneur or merchant knew that in order to succeed he had to exploit the advantages of collectivism”. By loaning money to his hired men (especially profligate ones).

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60 Foakes, *Diary*, f. 1.  
62 Quoted in Foakes and Rickert, preface to *Diary*, ix.  
Henslowe ensured a continued relationship and their dependence on him for their future survival in the business.

Though Henslowe does not have the Scrooge-like reputation for nothing. Credit culture, although mutually beneficial in some ways, did not always create harmonious communities. Instead of bringing households together through mutual responsibility, between 1563 and 1640, debt cases in the English courts increased six-fold. Although Henslowe was benevolent towards the players and writers of the Admiral’s Men, he did have some unscrupulous business practices. Amanda Bailey is critical of sympathetic readings of Henslowe. By crediting his players, she argues, he brought his hirelings into debt bondage, “Like a savvy playhouse owner, Henslowe devised bonds in order to obtain control over what was arguably his most precious commodity: the player’s body”. Similar to a piece of costuming or the Rose playhouse, she posits, Henslowe saw his players as his property. The 1615 “Articles of Grievance and Oppression against Philip Henslowe”, written up by players of the Lady Elizabeth’s Men, the company Henslowe was managing before his death, provides ample evidence against his managerial style. He is accused of charging the players £200 for the playbooks and refusing to give them copies, of consciously putting players in his debt, wearing the company’s gold and silver costumes, and breaking companies and seizing all stock once the company was no longer in his debt. Whilst it seems unlikely that Henslowe was wearing the company costumes, the Articles show how the playhouse commercial system mainly benefited the entrepreneurs and not the players.

For credit culture to work, it had to go both ways. Whilst the Lady Elizabeth’s Men were fulfilling their obligation to Henslowe through their work, he was failing in his obligations

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65 In 1563 there were 5278 debt cases in advanced stages at the King’s Bench and Common Pleas courts, which rose to 13,105 by 1580. By 1606 there were 23,147 cases, and 28,734 by 1640. See Muldrew, Credit, 203.
66 Bailey, Bondage, 33.
67 For the “Articles” quoted in full, see Andrew Gurr, The Shakespearean Playing Companies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 76-78.
to them. By 1615, Henslowe had certainly lost his credit with the players, but in the late 1590s, when Jonson entered the Admiral’s circle, this was not the case. For Henslowe’s hirelings to survive at the turn of the seventeenth century, they had to trust that Henslowe would credit them, just as Henslowe had to trust that they would, in some way, repay their debt. A playwright’s debt – and thereby obligation – could be called upon in ways other than cash, such as through company loyalty, playwriting, and favours. The playwrights of *Eastward Ho!* were embedded within this culture. They were indebted not only to Henslowe, but also to the other players and playwrights that they worked with.

Jonson first came into contact with Henslowe sometime around the “The Isle of Dogs” imbroglio. One of the earliest records of Jonson in the *Diary* is his receiving of a hefty £4 loan from Henslowe, “to payd yt agayne when so euer eher I or any for me shall demande yt” on 28 July 1597, the same day the playhouses were ordered shut by the Privy Council and when Nashe went into hiding.68 What Jonson needed this money for we can only speculate upon, but the loan reveals that Jonson became reliant on Henslowe’s credit even before he began writing for the Admiral’s Men.69 It is likely that, having lost his social credit with the Pembroke’s Men, Jonson turned to Henslowe for both financial and social aid. Conveniently for Henslowe, this meant bringing another writer into his circle; he had already contracted the players William Bird, Thomas Downton, Richard Jones and Robert Shaa from the Pembroke’s.70 His charitable act of ushering the playwrights and actors to safety in the Rose theatre had a financial benefit. This is revealing of how credit culture worked: individuals could do good deeds that were ultimately for their personal advantage. The alliance was useful for Jonson too. Subsequent to

68 Foakes, *Diary*, f. 234. Curiously, on the same date but in another part of the Diary, Henslowe wrote that he received 3s 9d from Jonson for his “Sharre as ffolloweth”, which he subsequently crossed out, f. 24. Henslowe also lent Jonson five shillings on 5 January 1597.
69 Donaldson, *Jonson*, 126. Also see Chambers, *Elizabethan*, 3:352-3. Peter Beal has speculated that the money could have been used to buy a share in the Admiral’s Men or to help Jonson in prison. See “Ben Jonson’s Autograph Fair Copies of Two Poems”, Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, accessed November 13, 2018, http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/essays/jonsonpoems.html#fn01.
the initial entry, Jonson appears nine more times in Henslowe’s papers as a playwright, mostly for collaborative work. In other entries, Henslowe pays Jonson for scripts that he had not yet written, having only seen his plots, and has Jonson write additions for other plays. Contrary to how Jonson’s Folio makes it seem, much of his career was not spent writing singular works but collaborative plays. This pattern would continue later when Jonson was writing collaborative masques with Inigo Jones.

Chapman began writing for the Admiral’s Men in the mid-1590s, although unlike Jonson, he did not write collaborative plays. His first play was The Blind Beggar of Alexandria in 1596, and he came to prominence in 1597 for the extremely popular A Humorous Day’s Mirth. For the many appearances he makes in the Diary, the only collaboration that his name can be put to is the play he developed from Jonson’s plot in 1598. Despite being part of Henslowe’s collaborative playmaking enterprise, Eastward Ho! was Chapman’s first collaboration in earnest. Unlike Chapman and Jonson however, Marston did not find prominence in the London theatrical world through Henslowe. The only reference to him in the Diary is in 1599, when Henslowe “Lent vnto m’ marstone the new poete m’ Maxton in earnest of a Boocke called…”. Henslowe left the name of the play blank, so there is no evidence that Marston completed what was tasked of him. Marston may not have found the Admiral’s Men system of collaborative credit to his liking but, despite this, he too was

71 Jonson appears for an unnamed playbook (which he had already supplied the plot) in December 1597 (Foakes, Diary, 73, f. 37'); in August 1598, Hot Anger Still Cold with Porter and Chettle (Diary, 96, f. 49); a plot which Chapman was to finish in October 1598 (Diary, 100, f. 51'); The Page of Plymouth with Dekker in August 1599 (Diary, 123, f. 63'); Robert the Second King of Scots with Dekker, Chettle, and anonymous in September 1599 (Diary, 124, f. 64); additions to The Spanish Tragedy on 25 September 1601 (Diary, 182, f. 94); Richard Crookeck and more The Spanish Tragedy additions in May 1602 (Diary, 202, f. 106).
72 Chapman’s name first appears from an unnamed book in May 1598 (Foakes, Diary, 89, f. 45') and for a book called “the <.>yle of a Womon” in June 1598 (Diary, 91, f. 46'); a plot which was probably The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (Diary, 34, f. 14') and he later appears “the flouete of new facianes” in September 1598 (Diary, 99, f. 50'); Chapman wrote a play from Jonson’s plot in October 1598 (Diary, 100, f. 51'); a book called “the world Rones A whelles” – what came to be known as Al Fools – in January 1598 (Diary, 103, f. 53) which he finished in 1599 (Diary, 122, f. 63); there was also a tragic pastoral in July 1599 (Diary, 266).
73 This appears as “the comodey of vmers” in the Diary on 11 May 1597 (Foakes, Diary, 58, f. 26').
74 Foakes, Diary, 28 September 1599, 124.
immersed in the economy of obligation. As a shareholder of the Children of the Queen’s Revels, Marston would have been expected to work collaboratively with the other sharers so that the company could survive and thrive. His involvement in _Eastward Ho!_ and subsequent abandonment of his co-authors may be read as his breaking of the bonds of social credit, as he put the company in the line of fire. Marston perhaps was not able to win back his credit, seeing as he sold his share just one year later.

Unlike Shakespeare, none of the playwrights of _Eastward Ho!_ aligned themselves to a single company. This lack of commitment could be considered isolationist and disloyal. Jonson in particular has been considered as paradoxically both social and remote because he benefited from being part of multiple social networks.  

75 Having diverse relationships with his colleagues was of use value to Jonson, as well as Marston and Chapman, considering the potentially alienating effects of credit culture. As Brian Sheerin writes, in the face of the distrust and suspicion that arises in “urban, market-driven environments”, one had to maintain one’s “social ‘presence’ amidst onlooking others when one’s good name did not come as easily by other means”.  

76 Within a climate of collaborative friendship, socially loaded credit bonded the playwrights.

Homosocial displays of classical-style friendship are somewhat at odds, however, with commercially orientated collaboration. At the turn of the seventeenth century, as Jonson began to withdraw from the Admiral’s Men and Henslowe’s network, he began his association with the Children of the Queen’s Revels and the Chamberlain’s Men, thereby setting up a new group of friends. Jonson ultimately had a more sustained connection with the Chamberlain’s (subsequently, King’s) Men, perhaps because as David Bevington has speculated, the company

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76 Sheerin, _Desires_, 9.
“offered Jonson a more reliable source of income than did the boys, who were periodically being shut down or dissolved”. Both of these companies had a very different credit ethos to the Admiral’s: whilst financial credit seems to have been what oiled the Admiral’s machine, the company relations of the Children and Chamberlain’s encouraged more congenial collaboration which must have appealed to Jonson’s sociality.

Jonson’s involvement in *Eastward Ho!* may in part be due to his maintenance of social credit with company members. The more derisive passages of *Eastward Ho!* make sense within a context of mutual accreditation and social obligation between the playwrights. Furthermore, Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, in attempting to gain credit with each other, were probably prompted not only to collaborate in the first place but spurred into subversive territory. When Jonson told Drummond that he was jailed with Chapman and Marston, he was performing his commitment to his social creditors. By running away, Marston may have unintentionally reignited his quarrel with Jonson as he failed in his obligation to the other two playwrights. Working collaboratively was based on trust, and without it, a playwright would find it difficult to navigate London’s theatrical world. Marston never collaborated again after this point and, in print, Jonson began to construct himself as the singular authority that we know today.

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The playwrights wrote the kinds of debt and credit relationships they experienced in the companies into the plot of *Eastward Ho!*.

Although previous studies of *Eastward Ho!* have been interested in the play’s treatment of credit relationships, none have considered credit in relation to collaboration.

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77 Bevington, “Actors, Companies, and Playhouses.”
78 Although previous studies of *Eastward Ho!* have been interested in the play’s treatment of credit relationships, none have considered credit in relation to collaboration.
the final scene, Golding manoeuvres Touchstone into prison in order to hear Quicksilver’s coup de maître. The characters act like a group of players, writing and collaborating upon plots to ensure their end-goal of money and freedom. From early in the play, Quicksilver shows his deep investment in playing culture, often misquoting couplets from Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy to show Touchstone his defiance: “‘When this eternal substance of my soul’… ‘Did live imprisoned in my wanton flesh’” (2.1.106, 108). Touchstone’s sardonic interjection, “Change your gold ends for your play ends” (107), illuminates the underlying tension in the play between theatricality and financial necessity. Theatricalised collaboration is, on the one hand, what allows for the mutual success of the characters but, on the other, it is what brings them close to failure and poverty. Ultimately, collaboration and the financial reality of credit merge in Eastward Ho!.

The play works through some of the difficulties attendant to the creative production of plays. In particular, Eastward Ho! attempts to untangle the contradiction between the drive for individual authorial success and the dependence on community to achieve that success. The play presents the playwrights’ ambivalence towards the collaboration and credit that organised the playmaking community. Similar to the primitive venture capitalists of the play, playwrights, actors, and sharers had to carry the responsibility of a company’s success, enter into financial bonds of credit and social reliance, and use performance to extricate themselves from deprivation.

When the audience first meets Quicksilver, he is bound in apprenticeship to the goldsmith Touchstone. As the son of a gentleman, Quicksilver resents the reduction of his status in becoming a tradesman and yearns to go east to find his freedom. Early in the play, Quicksilver is introduced as a young man who lives by his wits, while his master Touchstone supposedly lives by fair trade without credit. Quicksilver’s device of loaning Touchstone’s cash to his gallant companions so that they, and subsequently their mortgages, go into
Touchstone’s credit becomes a point of contention between the two. Quicksilver attempts to convince Touchstone that he does this for the good of his master and society at large:

They spend it, well. But when they are spent, must not they strive to get more? Must not their land fly? And to whom? Shall not Your Worship ha’ the refusal? Well, I am a good member of the city if I were well considered. How would merchants thrive, if gentlemen would not be unthriffs? (1.1.26-29)

Quicksilver’s specious logic holds that by tricking gallants, he is the cog that keeps the machine of commerce turning because the city runs on credit. Without profligate spending, merchants such as Touchstone would make no money. This does not fly with Touchstone, who “fought low, took small gain, kept no debt book” (1.1.40). Quicksilver is ultimately unable to come to terms with what Theodore B. Leinwand has called Touchstone’s credo of “bourgeois thrift and risk-aversion”. 79 This is especially because Quicksilver resents being ruled by “flat cap” tradesman (1.1.80). Quicksilver wants to gain his freedom, and so devises to go “to the east – eastward ho!” (1.1.86) by leaving the city on a ship for Virginia.

Upon leaving his apprenticeship, Quicksilver turns to a more morally dubious crowd: Security and Petronel. Having abandoned his good credit, and without having anyone on which to rely, Quicksilver cannot go very far very fast. This does not mean, however, that Quicksilver sees himself as friends with Petronel and Security. As Kay writes, “The supposed fellowship among the rogues and prodigals will not survive close inspection, for their interactions are marked by mutual betrayal and cold indifference to others”. 80 Because the credit economy did not necessarily rely on friendship and fellowship, what Quicksilver needs is a social network

80 Kay, “Parodic Wit and Social Satire in Chapman, Jonson, and Marston’s Eastward Ho! [with illustration],” in English Literary Renaissance 42, no. 3 (2012), 391-424, 422.
that will provide him with collaborators.\textsuperscript{81} In his attempt to segregate himself from Touchstone’s community, Quicksilver makes a crucial mistake in picking a band of isolationists for collaborators. This is made clear when he reaches Security’s house and reunites with his mistress Sindefy, where he tosses away his costume of a city hat and coat, which are the vestiges of his apprenticeship:

\begin{quote}
There lie, thou husk of my evassalled state.
I, Samson now, have burst the Philistines’ bands
And in thy lap, my lovely Delilah,
I’ll lie and snore out my enfranchised state. (2.2.27-30)
\end{quote}

Quicksilver has forgotten that it was Delilah who cut Samson’s hair, and thus his place of refuge is actually what will enfeeble him. By quitting his apprenticeship and lying in the lap of sin, so to speak, Quicksilver is no longer a link in the Philistines’ – Touchstone and Golding’s – chain of credit. Unsure of his next career step, Security advocates turning to usury, as “we that trade nothing but money are free from all this” (2.2.95-6). The “all this” that Security refers to is the obligation that comes from having a social network. It is not only Security who advocates for an isolationist policy, but Petronel who posits that “A man in the course of this world should be like a surgeon’s instrument: work in the wounds of others and feel nothing himself. The sharper and subtler, the better” (3.2.163-5).\textsuperscript{82} Petronel does not care whether he cuts through people’s lives, as long as he gets what he wants. Quicksilver quickly pays the price for taking Petronel and Security as collaborators. As Touchstone asks him once he is taken to prison, “Which of thy gallants and gamesters, thy swearers and swaggerers, will come now to moan thy misfortune or pity thy penury?” (4.2.238-40). Quicksilver’s isolationist philosophy is anathema to a character such as Touchstone. As a goldsmith, his professional

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{81} Ingram, \textit{Idioms}, 34-5.
\textsuperscript{82} For Petronel’s individualism, see Ingram, \textit{Idioms}, 32 and Gossett, “Collaborative playwrights,” 100.
\end{flushright}
identity is all about the creation of links in a chain. Quicksilver’s venture with the prodigals shows that maintaining credit with isolationists is equal to having no credit at all.

What overtops the prodigals’ desire for separatism is their ultimate device for freedom, the voyage to Virginia, which resembles nothing so much as a joint-stock company. Indeed, besides theatrical troupes, voyaging companies in this period were the other type of business that had a sharer-based financial system. Journeys were also envisaged as innately theatrical. As Richmond Barbour writes, “Hakluyt and his contemporaries conceived completed journeys as performances: realisations of a plan or deliveries of a plot”.83 As Barbour points out, the title page of Raleigh’s Discoverie was “Performed in the yeare 1595”.84 It is not only their journey and the famous performance scene at the end of the play which heralds Eastward Ho!’s relationship to the structures of theatre. Imbued in the rest of the plot are links between collaboration, credit, and performance. The sailors Seagull, Spendall and Scapethrift are pictured as Quicksilver and Petronel’s fellow players, described as “followers in this voyage” (3.1.34) and “worthy associates” (3.1.52), and similar to other (theatrical) collaborations, the journey begins at the tavern. This is a fitting location, considering that taverns were where much of the social networking and collaboration between early modern playwrights took place, most famously at the Mermaid and Mitre.85 Jonson, especially, was associated with the tavern. Jasperry Mayne’s elegy for Jonson envisages him as even writing his plays there: “That such thy drought was, and so great thy thirst, / That all thy Playes were drawne at th’ Mermaid first”.86 Beaumont and Fletcher, too, are said to have begun their collaborations at the tavern.87

84 Barbour, Voyage, 23.
85 “The tavern from the latter part of the sixteenth century was increasingly identified with a specific cultural activity: writing plays and poetry”, O’Callaghan and Smyth, “Tavern,” 160.
87 The famous anecdote goes, “Meeting once in a tavern, to contrive the rude draught of a Tragedy, Fletcher undertook to kill the King therein; whose words being overheard by a listener (though his Loyalty not to be blamed
Although the tavern is the origin of their collaborative voyage, Quicksilver and Petronel become overly engrossed in the convivial atmosphere to the detriment of their trip. Indeed, in the culminating scene of the prodigals’ collaboration, the ship that was supposed to lead them to riches wrecks on the banks of the Thames.

The prodigals’ various schemes dramatize the fantasies attendant on theatrical collaboration. They embark on mutually created delusions, from gulling Gertrude to the adventurers’ conceptions of Virginia, who imagine the moment when “we shall share the rest of her maidenhead” (3.3.11). Becoming so carried away in their inventions of the fruits of their collaborative labour, the seamen become drunker and drunker until they cannot properly man their ship. Before their departure however, Petronel and Quicksilver embark on another device, this time to trick Security. On the afternoon of their voyage, Petronel enlists Security’s help to disguise his mistress and bring her aboard the ship. Although unbeknownst to Security, Petronel’s mistress is in fact his wife Winifred. Petronel has Security convinced that it is the lawyer Bramble’s wife that is being whisked away to Virginia. In order to pull the trick off, the prodigals plan to dress Winifred in “A sailor’s gown and cap to cover her, / And a player’s beard” (3.2.249-50). They force the theatricality of the moment, scripting their revenge on Security. Security is ultimately hoisted by his own petard, giving them one of Winifred’s dresses to convince Bramble that it is not his wife who is running away.

In order to convince Security to double cross Bramble, the prodigals ironically use the language of conviviality and credit to reinforce the bonds of obligation. As Ingram writes, Security and Petronel employ “the language of communalism… to apply social pressure at sensitive moments, most often as reminders of the social networks that depend upon

[herein], he was accused of High Treason, till, the mistake soon appearing, that the plot was onely against a Dramatick and Scenical King, all wound off in merriment.” Quoted in Gordon McMullan, The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 86.
reputation”.

Security and Petronel repeatedly use this communal language, calling each other their “compeer” (3.2.169, 173) and “gossip” (175, 201) and “partner” (182). Petronel then seals the deal by telling Security he wishes to use the tryst to add to each other’s credit, “As deeply as if you had ventured with me / Half my expenses” (183-4). In essence, Petronel asks Security to become a collaborator in his scam. Won over by a good plot and the language of credit, Security decides to shirk off his neighbourly responsibility to Bramble, “Who would not strain a point of neighbourhood / For such a point-device?” (215-16). Security forgets his social creditors, placing himself in the trust of two others who have abandoned their credit networks. Security tells Petronel and Quicksilver, “I’ll trust my name / On your cracked credits” (292-3), thereby rejecting what is left of his social network for the prodigals.

The playwrights show how seductive collaboration can be, but perhaps also the danger of having the wrong collaborators. Because the prodigals abuse their social networks, their collaboration comes to naught. After the shipwreck, it is only through the help of Golding that Quicksilver, Petronel, and Security can escape incarceration. This final scene in the Counter presents the debtors’ prison as another performance space in which the prodigals can enact their devices. This is the play’s metatheatrical climax, in which Quicksilver finally performs more than just memorised play-ends. The performance that closes the play uses credit to consider theatrical enterprise, as Jean E. Howard notes, “The play seizes on the Counter, the symbol of broken credit and financial abjection, and uses it to stage the triumphant emergence of a figure who upholds the credit of actors”.

Although Howard notes that theatricality is victorious, the actors’ credit does not rest solely on Quicksilver’s shoulders. From the ashes of cracked credit, the player can rise, but it is only achieved through collaboration.

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Once imprisoned with his fellow players, Quicksilver performs a new identity, the contrite criminal. He shaves his hair, shirks his gallant clothes, gives charity to the more impoverished prisoners, and becomes devout. Because he is imprisoned for stealing Touchstone’s money, the charges can be dropped only if he is forgiven. Touchstone, however, refuses to read Quicksilver’s letters or listen to his family members about the matter. This all changes when Golding enters the scene. Having heard of Quicksilver’s sudden and remarkable change, Golding wishes to help the prodigals escape, ostensibly “because I am desirous to do them some fair office” (5.3.88-9). Golding then enacts a plot of his own devising, where he has his ring taken to Touchstone in order to affect his imprisonment. Like Henslowe rescuing his contracted players and playwrights from prison, Golding ensures Quicksilver has his debts forgiven so that he can perform again. The back-scratching social economy of the play is what brings about the happy ending. As Ingram has argued, Golding takes on the “risk-taking, theatrical behaviours of the prodigals” because from the rescue he “receives a measure of social esteem”. Similarly to Henslowe’s manipulation of credit culture to his benefit, Golding’s charitable act is not solely for Quicksilver and Petronel. The collaboration embarked upon by the apprentices is mutually beneficial: as players need to cooperate to mount a play, Golding and Quicksilver need each other’s credit to succeed.

Golding can ensure that his credit is bolstered once he has “ventured on a device” (5.3.91), becoming a player similar to Quicksilver and Petronel. But Golding does not work alone. Although the audience is not privy to any scene where Golding and Quicksilver communicate about a possible plan, we must surely assume that the two characters are aware of each other’s intentions, as the device goes off without a hitch. Quicksilver performs his “Repentance” song, and Touchstone is instantaneously “taken” by the performance (5.5.51). Leinwand sees Quicksilver’s “Repentance” as a performance of credit rather than a

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commitment to credit culture, “he is not so much conforming to an ethics of credit as performing it, conforming to it by performing it”.\textsuperscript{91} But, even if Quicksilver is only performing credit, his performance mirrors how credit itself is only a feigned substance that early modern communities enacted; credit is money in word and deed but not in physical substance. It is through collaborating within a social network that credit is enacted. Throughout the play, Quicksilver shows his commitment to working collaboratively, only up until the ending, he had chosen the wrong collaborators. In the play’s final scene, Quicksilver is canny enough to realise that he should have been properly crediting Golding and Touchstone, if only for his own ends. Collaboration is envisaged not just as part of a fantastical scheme but reveals a truth central to early modern playmaking and early modern London more generally: individuals had to collaborate for their credit, and they needed a social network to produce a play.

Jonson may have realised that his social credit in the playwriting circles did not count for much in the face of the authorities. Indeed, when accused, he turned to a larger and more powerful creditor. Jonson used his aristocratic connections in his pleas to escape prison in 1605. As he wrote to Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, “Your power, your place, and readiness to do good invite me; and mine own cause, which shall never discredit the least of your favours, is a main encouragement”.\textsuperscript{92} Jonson effectively trades his play-ends for his gold-ends, such as Touchstone would advise him to do, trying to convince Herbert that giving aid will only add to his credit. Jonson also turned to Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, one of the Privy Councillors who interrogated Jonson for “The Isle of Dogs”, and perhaps helped secured his release in both 1605 and 1597.\textsuperscript{93} Jonson made it clear he would be indebted to Cecil for the rest of his life, “where freeing us from one prison you shall remove us to another: which is eternally

\textsuperscript{91} Leinwand, \textit{Theatre}, 49.
\textsuperscript{92} Jonson, Letter 7 to Philip Herbert, first Earl of Montgomery, “Letters from Prison,” \textit{Eastward Ho!}, 4-6.
\textsuperscript{93} For a discussion of Jonson’s complex obligation to Cecil during this period, see Donaldson, \textit{Jonson}, 118-20 and 217-23.
to bind us and our muses to the thankful honouring of you and yours to posterity”. Once he was released for *Eastward Ho!*, Jonson became immured in obligation. Cecil, for example, called in this social covenant by putting Jonson to work after the Gunpowder Plot to find a certain Catholic priest who could persuade the conspirators to confess. He was not successful.

Years later, in the epigram ‘To my muse’, Jonson addressed the actions that his zeal for writing had led to – working for his untrustworthy patron Cecil, “Away, and leave me, thou thing most abhorred, / That has betrayed me to a worthless lord”. Because he cracked his credit on a censured play, he was indebted to a lord who mishandled the patron-servant relationship. Jonson was fated to be a collaborator in both senses of the word: political cooperative and joint-writer. Despite his movement away from joint writing for the London playhouses, he did not shirk collaboration completely. Jonson was still to have a long career of collaborating on court masques with Inigo Jones – another one of his collaborative friendships that eventually went awry – and he would have taken part in the usual collaborative production processes of the public theatres. Jonson’s isolation from other playwrights and his contrasting conviviality were not separate parts of his career or compartments of his life. As long as Jonson was immersed in the economy of obligation, and in credit with his social network, he would be a collaborator.

**Collaboration and the language of deflected authorship**

Alongside Jonson, other playwrights also used their social credit in attempts to prove their innocence when charged with writing seditious or libellous texts. By rejecting their plays through the language of collaboration, playwrights could at once exonerate themselves, extend

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their social credit, and delineate the boundaries of their authorship. Once the *Eastward Ho!* playwrights were censored, their first line of defence from prison was letter writing. This was an ironic turn of events considering Jonson and Chapman found themselves incarcerated for a play which reaches its climax in a prison. This must have felt like history repeating for Jonson, as once again he was in jail for a collaborative play, and one of his collaborators had escaped. This worked to Jonson and Chapman’s advantage however as, without Marston, they were free to blame the seditious libel in *Eastward Ho!* on their erstwhile collaborator. The rhetoric they employed in their letters to Jacobean nobility took advantage of authorial disavowal. The playwrights wrote ten letters from prison, and Chapman even wrote directly to the king himself.

Jonson’s strategy in the letters was to accuse the audience and readers of the quarto of misinterpretation. He writes, “It hath ever been my destiny to be misrepresented and condemned on the first tale” and, in another letter, that their “offence [is] a play: so mistaken, so misconstrued, so misapplied”.96 Rather than saying that he did not write the material, Jonson insists that its intended meaning is different from its subsequent interpretation. Chapman, however, developed a language of deflection dependent on collaboration in order to escape punishment. Jonson would follow suit using this rhetorical strategy in the years to come. In essence, Chapman blamed Marston for the inflammatory material. Aside from his apology for causing unintended offence, Chapman suggested that he and Jonson should not be blamed for something they did not write:

> Vouchsafe, most excellent Sovereign, to take merciful notice of the submissive and amendsful sorrows of your two most humble and prostrated subjects for Your Highness’ displeasure, George Chapman and Ben Jonson, whose chief

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offences are but two clauses, and both them not our own; much less the unnatural issue of our offenceless intents.97

Chapman uses collaboration as a useful excuse to exonerate Jonson and himself from censure. He attempts to erase himself from the passages which insulted the king and, in doing so, shift the blame to Marston. The collaborators, he proposes, did not collaborate on that particular scene. Further to this, Chapman adds, they would not write something with the intent to offend the king in the first place. Both Chapman and Jonson claim that they did not write what they have been accused of. It is an easy strategy to pin the blame on your co-authors, because, who can prove who wrote what? This is the card Kyd was playing when he wrote to Puckering, claiming that the contentious tract did not belong to him, despite having been “shuffled” with his papers.

Chapman’s defence relies on the fact that it may be difficult to differentiate between unknown hands; as Masten asks, “What is the extent of the shuffling?”98 The Jacobean authorities probably never knew. Nor does it seem likely that they particularly cared. The playwrights’ names were already attached to *Eastward Ho!*, and so they were to blame for its existence. For a twenty-first century critic interested in collaboration, however, these are apt things to consider for a play which is thought to be stylistically coherent. As Hirschfeld has argued, the playwrights “deliberately eliminate the stylistic self-expression that in other venues they champion. They do so by saturating their play with commonplaces, a stylistic manoeuvre I see as an effort to pre-empt perceived threats to their personal and professional status”.99 Hirschfeld suggests that the playwrights attempted to de-authorise themselves so that a collaborative play would not derail their singular reputations. It is perhaps more likely that the

97 Chapman, Letter (a) to King James, “Letters from Prison,” *Eastward Ho!*, 2-5.
98 Masten, *Queer*, 89.
kind of writing that the playwrights were engaged in was so collaborative, so engrossing, that they created a more unified text alongside exacerbating the political elements of the play.

Jonson mysteriously told Drummond years later that he, Chapman, and Marston “had written it amongst them”. Indeed, as Gossett and Kay have found, Chapman was not telling the truth when he wrote to the king that the “two clauses” were not his and Jonson’s, but Marston’s. The traditional authorial breakdown would have it that Chapman solely wrote the scene in which Seagull discusses the New World, and only Jonson wrote the “Isle of Dogs” scene. But in fact, the play defies attribution. This is because the hands of all three playwrights can be found in the scenes that the other playwrights supposedly wrote. It is conceivable that the playwrights composed scenes individually off a plot they planned together, and then went over each other’s drafts. Chapman’s accusation of Marston was probably not true, but, it reveals how collaborative authors attempted to de-authorise themselves when the situation necessitated it.

Considering the specific way in which the playwrights rejected collaborative plays allows us to question the extent to which they considered themselves authors of a play. By denying their authorship, a playwright could suggest that they did not have any authority over a play, therefore they were not at fault for its content. However, in saying that, playwrights did not have the political authority to make the final decisions in these matters. Jonson and Chapman were jailed for Eastward Ho! because the state had decided that they were to answer for the play; they were responsible for the entirety of Eastward Ho! simply through the act of

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100 Jonson, Informations, 207.

101 Gossett and Kay, Introduction to Eastward Ho!, 538-9. Stylistic elements and linguistic preferences of the three playwrights are found throughout the play. Gossett and Kay record some examples of this: Marston’s preferred form *them* rather than *hem is* littered through Chapman’s scenes; in Marston’s Act I there is Jonson’s coinage ‘common shot-clog’, which was first used in Every Man Out and Poetaster; Chapmanesque phrases like ‘cut your thongs unto your leather’ is found in Jonson’s Act 5 Scene 5. There are some other unexplainable textual elements of the play either born out of collaboration or come down to the nature of textual transmission. Jonson’s preferred form, *hem for them*, appears 71 times in Q1, and yet only 4 times in Jonson’s Act 5. Perhaps the play was copied by a scribe who preferred that form, or Marston and Chapman edited Jonson’s work (538-9).

102 Gossett and Kay, Introduction to Eastward Ho!, 539.
writing parts of it. As a censored text, the authorship breakdown of *Eastward Ho!* did not matter, despite the playwrights’ attempts to exonerate themselves through the practicalities of collaboration.

The language of deflected authorship that Chapman employed to defend himself was also used by other playwrights of the period. Although not a case of censorship, but libel, Dekker, Ford, Rowley, and Webster were sued for *Late Murder in Whitechapel, or Keep the Widow Waking* (1624). Dekker defended himself by only claiming responsibility for “two sheetes of paper conteyning the first Act… and a speech in the Last Scene of the Last Act”\(^{103}\). He thereby tried to make the other playwrights responsible for the rest of the play. Nashe, too, attempted to distance himself from the authorship of “The Isle of Dogs” when he blamed the players (which probably included Jonson) for expanding the script:

> An imperfit Embrio I ma[y] well call it, for I hauing begun but the induction and first act of it, the other foure acts without my consent, or the last guesse of my drift or scope, by the players were supplied, which bred both their trouble and mine to[o].\(^{104}\)

Nashe begins by saying that he only wrote a very small part of the play. If he only wrote the induction and first act, then he was no longer collaborating by the time the play devolved into seditious libel. But also, he adds, the next four acts were written without his consent, and probably involved changes made by the actors too. Chapman also blamed the actors when he was later censored for his *Byron* plays. Having gone into hiding for a play which represented the Queen of France slapping the King’s mistress across the face, Chapman wrote to the Master

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\(^{103}\) Dekker’s deposition is quoted in full in Charles Sisson, “*Keep the Widow Waking: A Lost Play by Dekker,*” *The Library* 8, no. 2 (1927), 233-259, 257.


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of the Revels, Buc, that “I have not deserv’d what I suffer yf the two or three lynes you crost were spoken” by the actors, and furthermore, “I see not myne owne Plaies; nor carrie the Actors Tongues in my mouthe”. He no longer authorised the play once the actors start speaking lines he did not put down, or were previously crossed out by the censor.

Jonson learned from Chapman and Nashe’s defensive strategies when he published his quarto of *Sejanus His Fall* in 1605. The play, in its original year of 1603, was a flop on two fronts. Firstly, it was not a theatrical success, and secondly, he was brought before the Privy Council by his enemy Henry Howard and accused of “popery and treason”, perhaps because of ostensible sympathies for the Earl of Essex. In an act of public self-defence, Jonson had *Sejanus* published with prefatory material which laid the grounds for his innocence. He had three major aims for this publication: firstly, to defend himself against sedition; secondly, to restore his reputation; and thirdly, to monumentalise his burgeoning singular authorial identity. His self-defence in the quarto is reliant on collaborative authorship and the social dynamics of the theatre, particularly the use of intertexts. Similar to Chapman, Jonson uses collaboration as a way to delineate the boundaries of his authorial work and intent. These sorts of hermeneutic strategies had a two-fold effect for Jonson: he could simultaneously suggest that he does not have authorial responsibility whilst also making claims for himself as the singular producer of a play.

Jonson must have been afraid that the play would run into more trouble, and so built in deflective strategies in an attempt to limit audience interpretation. He tells his readers that he is reliant on ancient texts, and so is merely offering a translation of them. Jonson is particularly

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interested in showing his “integrity in the Story”, by which he means history, informing the reader that the plot of the play does not belong to him, but to the Romans:

… the Authors themſelues being all in the learned Tongues… To which it may be required,ſince I haue quoted the Page, to name what Editions I follow’d. Tacit. Lipſ. in 4°. Antuerp. edit.600. Dio. Folio. Hen. Step 92. For the reſt, as Sueton. Seneca.&c. the Chapter doth ſufficiently direct, or the Edition is not varied.107

Jonson, like any good scholar, references those on whom he relies: Tacitus, Cassius Dio, and Suetonius, including also the texts’ bibliographical information. As Patterson has argued, censorship encouraged writers to use historical texts and translations “to limit his authorial responsibility for the text (“Tacitus wrote this, not I”).”108 In the main body of the play, too, he glosses his translations through side-note citations in the page margins.109 By appealing to the Romans’ authority Jonson ostensibly relinquishes his literary authority over the play.

Despite setting up his personal distance from the play, Jonson ultimately lays claim to it. He insists that the play is a revised version of what was presented on stage, which was written with a collaborator:

Laſtly I would informe you, that this Booke, in all nũbers, is not the ſame with that which was acted on the publike Stage, wherein a ſecond Pen had good ſhare: in place of which I haue rather choſen, to put weaker (and no doubt leſſe

107 Ben Jonson, Seianus his fall (At London: Printed by G. Eld, for Thomas Thorpe, 1605), sig. ¶2r.
108 Patterson, Censorship, 57.
109 For the political purpose of Jonson’s marginalia, see Emma Buckley, “Drama in the Margins: Academic Text and Political Context in Matthew Gwine’s Nero: Nova Tragædia (1603) and Ben Jonson’s Sejanus (1603/5),” Renaissance Studies 30, no. 4 (2016), 602-222.
pleasing) of mine own, then to defraud so happy a Genius of his right, by my loathed usurpation.\textsuperscript{110}

Jonson writes that he revised the play, excising the lines written by a collaborator and replacing them with his own. He calls the “second pen” a “Genius”, which has led to much speculation of the putative collaborator’s identity. The two main candidates touted are Chapman and Shakespeare, though it must be said that there is no internal, nor much external, evidence to prove the involvement of either.\textsuperscript{111} Indeed, one may ask why no one else came before the Privy Council to answer questions about the play’s pro-Essex material. In a typically Jonsonian move, we must rely on his word and his word alone for proof that there was a collaborator. Considering that \textit{Sejanus} was censored, and that Jonson was a deft hand in the hermeneutics of censorship, it seems likely or at least possible that there was never any collaborator in the first place. In practical terms, the deletion of a considerable portion of the play allowed Jonson to expunge any potentially seditious material. He could also, conveniently, blame that material on an unnamed individual. Through the use of Tacitus and the “second Pen”, Jonson effectively disclaims himself from the play’s politics whilst in one fell swoop lays claim to the rest of it.

As Loewenstein has suggested, the preface to \textit{Sejanus} turns writing into property, “stapling, as it were, the author to his work”.\textsuperscript{112} Perhaps not coincidentally, he marks his literary territory only on works he suggests are solo-written, and therefore, apolitical. As he wrote in his self-justifying epistle to \textit{Volpone} in 1607, “My WORKES are read, allow’d, (I speake of those that

\textsuperscript{110} Jonson, \textit{Seianus}, sig. ¶2.


\textsuperscript{112} Loewenstein, \textit{Jonson}, 151.
are entirely mine). By implication, the collaborative works are the subversive ones, and more importantly they are not Jonson’s. By using the context of censorship and the language of collaboration, Jonson could further his project of proprietary authorship.

Joint writing is one of the rhetorical ploys playwrights used whilst navigating the choppy waters of the hermeneutics of censorship. There must have been a general understanding that collaborative writing was central to playmaking, as the playwrights’ collaboration defence only makes sense in a context where joint-writing was normalised. This may seem like an obvious point to make, but both Jonson and Chapman show an awareness of themselves as collaborative authors, although Jonson eventually rejects this identification in favour of singularised authorship. This provides for a more delineated understanding of how dramatic authorship worked in early modern England. Eastward Ho!, then, was a play authorised by no one. The Master of the Revels did not give his permission, and the playwrights swiftly rejected the play. It was the only major collaboration that Jonson’s name was connected to in print but, despite its popularity, he did not refashion the play as a singular text for reprinting. This is unsurprising considering that Eastward Ho! is exemplary in its multiplicity and social energy. Jonson would have had to rewrite the play in its entirety in order to fit it into his authorial project.

Jonson was, in effect, trying to win back his reputation’s lost credit by rejecting his collaborators. After a series of failed joint-authorship ventures, he seems to have felt that he could trust himself alone. He saw value in promoting himself as a singular playwright, untouched by the failing credit of others. Or perhaps not. Perhaps he only used singularity as a way to promote himself to potential readers. When Jonson began advertising himself as a non-collaborator, he was in fact embarking on a joint project with Inigo Jones on court masques.

113 Ben Jonson, Ben: Jonson his Volpone or The foxe ([London]: Printed [by George Eld] for Thomas Thorpappe, 1607), sig. ¶2v.
Jonson could not – and perhaps did not want to – escape the formal dependencies necessitated by artistic production. But sadly, his friendship with Jones did not work out, as with his friendships with Chapman and Marston. Despite their jubilant depiction of creative collaboration in *Eastward Ho!* the playwrights would all turn on each other to save themselves. A pattern of collaborative relationships has begun to appear. Returning to the pair of erstwhile collaborators with which I began this chapter: Kyd may have felt free to discredit the late Marlowe because he had already broken his trust by shuffling amongst their shared papers a tract which brought the two ruination. For Jonson, Chapman, and Marston it was the same: credit once lost between playwrights was not easily regained, despite the happy ending of *Eastward Ho!* The rise and fall of a playwright was dependent on his relationships with others. With flourishing credit he could find success with companies and patrons; with cracked credit, he faced the loss of reputation and future output. Although, it could turn him into a singular author.
In 1658, nearly twenty years after Philip Massinger’s death, and nine years after the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio was first published, Sir Aston Cockayne wrote a poem to the publisher Humphrey Mosley and compiler Humphrey Robinson outraged on the playwrights’ behalf:

In the large book of Playes you late did print

(In Beaumonts and in Fletchers name) why in’t

Did you not give justice? give to each his due?

For Beaumont (of those many) writ in few:

And Massinger in the other few; the Main

Being sole Issues of sweet Fletchers brain.¹

In this poem, Cockayne accuses the publishers of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of incorrectly attributing the plays. He questions why Beaumont and Fletcher are given equal credit for plays that Fletcher mostly wrote. Massinger, it should be noted, is not mentioned in the Folio at all. Due to Moseley’s canny decision to memorialise a pair of gentlemen friends, rather than a trio, Massinger was evicted from the temple dedicated to playwriting in an earlier age. He became a silent collaborator, present in the text but unheard in its publishing. Massinger may not have considered this such a bad fate. Indeed, as Masten has argued, the whiting-out of playwrights such as Massinger in early printed editions reveals the collaborative and commingling ethos of the age.² However, considering that textual production was dependent on a variety of figures apart from the authors, if critical discussions of authorship follow the

¹ Sir Aston Cockayne, “To Mr. Humphrey Mosley, and Mr. Humphrey Robinson,” in A chain of golden poems embellished with wit, mirth, and eloquence: together with two most excellent comedies, (viz.) The obstinate lady, and Trappolin suppos’d a prince / written by S’ Aston Cokayn (London: Printed by W. G. and are to be sold by Isaac Pridmore, 1658), sig. P5r. Quoted by Masten in Textual, 153.

² Masten, Textual, 7.
view that collaboration is anti-individualist, then playwrights, bookkeeper, actors, publishers, compositors, scribes, and the Master of the Revels are all are unwittingly merged together under the name of “author”. This abides by Masten’s advice to “forego anachronistic attempts to divine the singular author of each scene, phrase, and word” in order to maintain the historic unity of the collaborative.\(^3\) Though in doing so we do not, in the words of Cockayne, “give to each his due”.

Without taking into consideration the various agents who worked on a text for performance (let alone publication), we cannot adequately piece together the process of textual creation. Whilst Massinger has subsequently been accredited his share of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, more hidden figures have not. Eschewing those unnamed agents who preside in a play’s final form is a limitation on our current model of authorship, as we are not taking into account all the individual collaborators that took part in textual and dramatic production. Although there has been a turn towards singularity in our current authorship models, in which computational stylistics identifies individual writers, we have yet to adequately account for agents besides the playwrights. The scholarly interest in authorial singularity is ultimately determined by critical decisions of who is an “author”. This is the individual who is thought to have artistic authority over a text. For censored plays, however, authorship does not necessarily denote authority. An author is usually defined by who puts what words in, rather than who takes words out. But the excision of certain words can have a profound effect on a text, and this power is infrequently accounted for in critical readings of early modern authorship.

Due to the nature of theatrical regulation, playwrights and companies ceded control over their texts when a higher political power authorised them. This is particularly the case for Massinger and Fletcher’s *The Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*, written and performed

\(^3\) Masten, *Textual*, 7.
in 1619. In determining the final form the play took in performance, the playwrights had less textual authority than the scribe, Ralph Crane, and the Master of the Revels, Sir George Buc. In this chapter, I construe these two individuals as collaborative agents in, if not collaborative authors of, the Barnavelt manuscript (BL MS Add. 18653). The layered stages of revision that the play underwent indicates a collaborative process that is at once conflictual and fruitful. Buc required multiple changes, and multiple revisions, but he did so in order to produce the best playable text. The palimpsestic revision process of this manuscript reveals how central censorship could be when creating a play, something easily obscured in printed playtexts.

In this chapter, I model a type of collaborative authorship that includes silent authorial figures such as censors and scribes. I begin the chapter with a discussion of the political context of Barnavelt as a way to explain Buc’s response to it. I also examine his and Crane’s literary work as an historian and poet respectively. The chapter then moves on to a discussion of the manuscript before considering how Crane and Buc’s revisions constitute authorial changes to the play. This chapter is a deliberate experiment, questioning the difference between a collaborative agent and an author in the production of dramatic texts. The Master of the Revels and scribes are of particular interest as their control over a play is not made apparent in performance or in print. In the process of dramatic production, a scribe was sometimes employed to put together, and make sense of, a play draft. His interpretive decisions during this undertaking sometimes superseded the playwrights’ creative authority. Furthermore, during the revision process, the censor held sway over what form the play would take, according to what he found inappropriate for performance. Ultimately, the Master of the Revels could stop a play’s performance, which is a power playwrights and theatrical companies did not have. In the case of Barnavelt, Buc’s textual authority disturbs the playwrights’ proximity to authorship.
Barnavelt prompts questions of who has authority over a text, and whether that authority produces authorship. The tangled affair of censorship is central to understanding the play’s textual process because its production was dependent on Buc. Since Barnavelt does not exist in another form besides the manuscript, this is the only evidence for how it was made public in its time. Removing or ignoring censorship would mean excising one of the collaborative agents that helped bring the play to its final publicised form. But in current models of authorship, Buc’s political authority may not equate to his having an authorial function. As Clegg writes, authority and agency is central to thinking about censorship and textual production:

Since censorship concerns printed texts, and print as a medium interposed multiple agencies between author and authority – publisher, compositor, printer, bookseller, to say nothing of correctors, official authorizers, and readers – censorship conferred authority on multiple agencies. Furthermore, authors, publishers, readers were “individuals” upon whom the mere fact of print conferred authority – or in the language of recent theory, a new “subject” status – so to study censorship is to study moments of individuation, moments that were historically contingent, ideologically based, and mediated by other individuals.⁴

Although Clegg is writing about press censorship rather than dramatic censorship, her argument that censorship confers individuation on the mediating and interpreting parties of a censored text is true also of plays. Multiple agents were needed to censor and re-create a play such as Barnavelt, which resulted in the dispersal and multiplication of textual authority. Alongside the playwrights, Crane and Buc have an authorial influence over the play because

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⁴ Clegg, Press, 15-16.
their revisions were vital to the play’s meaning. Thus, Barnavelt troubles current critical categories for what constitutes an early modern author, pushing the boundaries of authorship to disperse authority even further.

It is understandable why censorship has not figured within models of dispersed authority until this point. To put it simply, censorship is anathema to modern liberalism, which would seek to validate the literary author’s intentions. However, considering the censor as a collaborator alongside the playwrights of England’s golden age reinforces the reality of the theatrical process that ensured the right to staging. But this is a reality that by and large goes ignored. Even the most recent edition of Barnavelt rejects the censorial changes made to the manuscript. Fredson Bowers, the editor of the 1992 Cambridge edition, justifies this decision as a way to eradicate the evils of censorship and its effects on the play:

[T]he edition’s aim has been to preserve the authority deriving from the working papers of the two dramatists as transmitted in modified form in Crane’s transcript… All censorship alterations, therefore, whether intended by the company or Buc, have been discarded in favour of the original text.5

Bowers considered Buc to have had no artistic authority over the play, and therefore he is not considered a collaborator. Although Bowers justifies his editorial decision as “censorship is censorship”, his choice to excise Buc and Crane’s revisions is wholly anachronistic.6 This is because the artistic authority which emanated from Massinger and Fletcher’s original text – then transcribed by Crane – was of little importance to Buc, without whose political authority the play would never have been performed. Buc’s involvement was what allowed for the play’s

6 Bowers, Textual Introduction to Barnavelt, 498.
eventual success; he could just as easily have banned the play outright. And a play prohibited from publication or performance would have little financial use for the playwrights and company.

Although I am experimenting with the idea of including the censor and a self-censoring scribe as authorial figures, this is not in ignorance of the forced nature of the collaboration itself. Naturally, because of the involvement of the Master of the Revels, the process did not run smoothly. As Clegg writes, the story of censorship “can never be one of consensus, cooperation, and cohesion” because of the element of anxiety on the part of the state, censor, and authors. If Eastward Ho! shows that collaboration could result in relationships breaking down between playwrights, adding censorship into the mix during the manuscript stage probably did not ease the usual tensions. However, Barnavelt reveals a collaboration process that was simultaneously uneasy and yet productive. The manuscript indicates the kinds of interruptive collaborations which generated early modern drama. The playwrights’ original papers contest with the scribe and censor’s adjustments, which play out over the manuscript’s palimpsestic revision process. The collaborative text may be a site of collision between the censor and the playhouse personnel, but the collision reveals layers of new meanings that would not be possible without the involvement of several agents.

It is no wonder that Barnavelt received such a heavy-handed intervention from Buc. It presents a perfect storm of religious and political circumstances that could hardly slip under the radar. The playwrights initially presented a version of events that portray England’s ally, Maurice, Prince of Orange, in a morally ambiguous light alongside the titular tragic hero. In the play, the character of Barnavelt is an imperious egoist, but one who acts as a voice of reason

7 As Dutton writes, “all these are matters that would have been most conveniently dealt with by an outright ban”, Mastering, 217.
8 Clegg, Press, 15.
against Orange’s creeping power over the Netherlands. The play takes its cue from translated Dutch pamphlets, depicting the Land’s Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt’s supposed conspiracy against the Netherlands and his fall from grace. A description of the plot makes sense of how the playwrights represented the political circumstances and Buc’s reaction to it.

In the play Barnavelt, along with his co-conspirators Leidenberch, Modesbargen, and Grotius, Barnavelt plans to stop Orange from gaining overreaching control of the Republic. Barnavelt first attempts to do this by gaining support from the Arminian leaders and by also enrolling provincial burgers into military companies to fight Orange’s troops in Utrecht. Before going to war, however, Barnavelt tries to use political means to defeat Orange by barring him from a Council meeting. Barnavelt is unsuccessful in this, and his actions only serve to isolate him from the other Dutch Councillors. Soon afterwards, Orange discovers Barnavelt’s plot. He retaliates by bringing his troops to Utrecht and takes the city from the Arminian rebels.

As his co-conspirators begin falling, Barnavelt progressively becomes more arrogant and tyrannical, especially when he convinces Leidenberch to commit suicide in prison. Orange’s character also changes; he begins the play as magnanimous but becomes determined to bring Barnavelt and his supporters down. Once Orange captures Modesbargen, he has enough evidence to arrest Barnavelt and try him at The Hague. At the trial, Barnavelt argues that he would not attempt to undermine a state which he helped create, but his arguments fall flat when Modesbargen gives testimony against him. He continues to protest his innocence, even after the court finds him guilty. Despite having decided earlier in the play not to execute Barnavelt, Orange sentences him to death. Orange also refuses to heed the worries of the French ambassadors, who warn him that executing Barnavelt will disrupt the delicate peace

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9 I use “Oldenbarnevelt” to refer to the historical figure and “Barnavelt” when referring to the character. For a detailed catalogue of the pamphlets the playwrights used, see Wilhelmina Frijlinck, Introduction to The Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt: Anonymous Elizabethan Play, Edited from the Manuscript with Introduction and Notes (Amsterdam: Van Dorseen, 1992). Also see Kimberly J. Hackett, “The English Reception of Oldenbarnevelt’s Fall,” Huntington Library Quarterly 77, no. 2 (2014), 157-176.
between the two nations. It is at this point in the play that Orange’s monarchical aims become clear. Despite France’s protestations, Orange orders Barnavelt’s death. At the execution Barnavelt reiterates his innocence, and members of the crowd rebut him. In the final moments of the play, an executioner who won the job by playing dice decapitates Barnavelt and accidently chops off his fingers. The play ends suddenly and unexpectedly with the inglorious execution of the play’s tragic hero.

The personal and political contexts of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt

Before Crane first copied the play for presentation to the Revels Office and Buc’s initial revision of Barnavelt, Massinger and Fletcher first wrote the play for the King’s Men within the space of three months. Inspired by a major event on the international stage, the company pushed for an early production to capitalise on the scandal. On 3 May 1619 Oldenbarnevelt was executed for treason after he was accused of mounting a religious conspiracy. He was another victim of the continued conflict between the Reformed Churches and Counter-Reformation Catholicism. At this time the Dutch Republic was split along the lines of Arminianism and Calvinism. It was also divided between republicanism and monarchism, and this political issue was channelled into the religious conflict. Oldenbarnevelt chose the wrong faction, backing the republican Arminian cause instead of aligning himself with Maurice’s monarchical Calvinism. His trial and execution caused an international scandal that entranced the English public through a series of inflammatory pamphlets. By 14 August, the King’s Men had “written, submitted to the censor, revised, resubmitted, licensed, and rehearsed” Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt.10 The play as we have it today is potentially a promptbook, as it is marked up by an anonymous bookkeeper in preparation for performance. It is unclear whether

this book was ultimately used in performance however, as it appears unfinished. Subsequent to Crane’s copying of the playwrights’ drafts, the manuscript was twice censored by Buc. The papers bear his copious marks in pencil and ink, crossings out, substitutions, and notes. According to T. H. Howard-Hill’s count, the manuscript of Barnavelt was marked seventy-one times by the Master of the Revels and, out of the extant manuscripts from the period, it bears the most censorious markings.11 The play clearly got under Buc’s skin, and he worked to ensure that it only went to the boards in the best possible condition.

After Buc’s fastidious emendations, Crane continued to revise the play, adopting Buc’s recommendations as well as making some changes of his own. There are also indications that the playwrights revisited the play in its manuscript form. The manuscript does not bear Buc’s license for production, which may be evidence that this was not the version of the play that was performed. This is significant because a “license” was the mark of a play’s legal right to performance. The Master of the Revels would write and sign a statement of either his approval or disapproval of a play and attach it to the last sheet. Problems arose for playwrights and companies when a play was performed without a license, as is what happened with Eastward Ho!. But, there is the possibility that the Barnavelt manuscript once contained a license that has been lost to time.12 Andrew Gurr has argued that the Master of the Revels received idealised versions of plays for perusal, which was different from the book that the players ultimately performed from.13 This could explain the lack of licence, but it does not explain why the bookkeeper subsequently marked up the playbook. Regardless, Buc and the company ultimately must have agreed on a play that looks like the manuscript as we now have it.

12 As Paul Werstine writes, “The last extant leaf does not provide enough room for a license, and there is apparent water damage to the last several extant leaves. Possibly an additional leaf containing a license became damaged by water and was destroyed”. See Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 282.
Just before the initial performance, however, John King, the Bishop of London and perhaps a member of the Privy Council, tried to stop Barnavelt’s performance. Dutton notes the peculiarity of this intervention, considering that it was not the Bishop’s role to censor plays. Thomas Locke wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador to The Hague, about this intervention on 14 August, “the players here were bringing of Barnavelt upon the stage, and had bestowed a great deal of money to prepare all things for the purpose, but at the instant were prohibited by my Lord of London”.\(^{14}\) It was unusual for the Bishop of London to become involved in this sort of matter as, whilst he censored printed material, it was not within his remit to censor plays. It may have been possible, however, that King had connections to the Privy Council, and was worried about “the religious dimension of the play”.\(^ {15}\) Despite this, the show did go on. By 27 August, the play was performed and, according to Locke, Barnavelt “had many spectators and received applause”.\(^ {16}\) Regardless of the play’s success, it never made it into quarto form, let alone the over-flowing Beaumont and Fletcher Folio. Perhaps because of the involvement of the Bishop of London, the play was seen as too controversial to print. It is somewhat of a miracle that the manuscript of Barnavelt was not lost to time. It is probable that William Fielding, the Deputy and Master of the Great Wardrobe, acquired the manuscript from Buc whilst he was still Master of the Revels.\(^ {17}\) It is unclear why the Master of the Revels still had a copy of the manuscript: did the King’s Men return the manuscript to Buc, or did they have another copy? Regardless, the fact that Buc had a copy to give away reveals his initial attachment to the play: he did not see fit to return it or destroy it.

Considering that they were using such contentious and contemporary material, the playwrights surely would have considered the Master of the Revels’ involvement. There are

\(^{14}\) Thomas Locke to Sir Dudley Carleton, August 14, 1619. Quoted by Dutton, Mastering, 207.
\(^{15}\) Dutton, Mastering, 207.
\(^{16}\) Thomas Locke to Sir Dudley Carleton, August 27, 1619. Quoted in Richard Dutton, Mastering, 207.
\(^{17}\) Subsequently, in 1851, the British Library purchased the manuscript from the then Earl of Denbigh. This line of transmission is put forth by Howard Hill in “Crane’s 1619 “Promptbook” of Barnavelt and Theatrical Processes,” Modern Philology 86, no. 2 (1988), 146-170, 148.
elements of implied religious and political debate in the play. Indeed, religion is politics in *Barnavelt*. The Arminian controversy was sparked by a theological dispute between Franciscus Gomarus and Jacobus Arminius, professors of divinity at the University of Leiden.\(^{18}\) One of Arminius’ beliefs, that God “had preordained all believers, not just the elect, to salvation” as the reason for mankind’s freewill, was seen as heretical by the Calvinist church.\(^{19}\) Over the next fifteen years of developing controversy, the religious dispute played out in political forums. The Calvinist Contra-Remonstrants, officially supported by Maurice by 1616, were pushing to unite the provinces of the Netherlands under a monarch and the Reformed Church. The Arminian Remonstrants, supported by Oldenbarnevelt, wanted to maintain the Provinces’ religious freedom. They also wanted the Provinces to remain linked but ultimately independent states, who were able to decide upon religious issues by themselves. In a fashion typical of the ongoing Wars of Religion that engulfed Europe during the Reformation between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, religion was used as a stalking horse in conflicts over the way countries were to be run.

Arminianism came to be, somewhat spuriously, connected with Catholicism in both the Dutch Republic and in England. In the context of the Republic’s territorial wars with Spain, Oldenbarnevelt was presented by Orange and the Contra-Remonstrants as a Spanish sympathiser at best and a traitor at worst. James too had a special interest in the United Provinces and Arminianism. He was initially sympathetic towards Arminianism, despite being an avowed monarchist. Though after Arminius’ successor, Vorstius, audaciously sent James two of his books, the English king tried to influence Oldenbarnevelt to forbid Vorstius the chair


\(^{19}\) Hackett, “Reception,” 159.
at the University of Leiden. After Oldenbarnevelt awarded Vorstitus the position, James wrote a refutation of his theology and ordered his books burned in Cambridge, Oxford, and London.\textsuperscript{20} He evidently distrusted Oldenbanavelt and after he was executed, James thought there was “no greate cause to mourne”.\textsuperscript{21} Maurice, however, James held in high regard. He saw him as a monarch of more or less equal stature to himself, and compared Maurice to Henry IV, “for wydsome, prowesse [happie] fortune & like fame of Gouernment & purifying all troubles prosperouslie as well in peace as warre”.\textsuperscript{22} The upsurge of republicanism in the Netherlands promised to cause problems for James’ politics of peace-making and force his hand to intervene. Oldenbarnevelt, in James’ mind, stood in the way of the Dutch Provinces becoming a monarchical ally, so his execution eliminated the threat of republican religious freedom.

In his revision of \textit{Barnavelt}, Buc would have kept in mind James’ position towards Dutch religious politics. In the play, the titular character’s Arminianism is connected to his republicanism, and the representation of religion in the play is more revealing of the characters’ political views than the sect’s beliefs.\textsuperscript{23} Even a rather meagre representation of religion was enough to worry Buc. In his revision of the play, he excised most of the religious elements. What remains is Arminianism in name, but the theological aspects are absent. Buc was also wary of the playwrights’ representation of a monarch-like figure who was still alive.\textsuperscript{24} But Orange, unlike James, was not a King but a Stadtholder, the steward of the nation and leader of the army. Similar to Octavius’ clutching of power in Ancient Rome, Orange made the republican role hereditary and thereby turned himself into the king. Because of Maurice’s

\textsuperscript{20} For more details on James’ relationship with Arminianism and Oldenbarnevelt, see Howard-Hill, “Censorship,” 54-55.
\textsuperscript{21} Sir George Calvert to Dudley Carleton, May 8, 1619. Quoted by Hackett, “Reception,” 164.
\textsuperscript{22} Gerard Herbert to Carleton, May 31, 1619. Quoted by Hackett, “Reception,” 164.
\textsuperscript{23} Carlson, “Arminianism,” 264.
\textsuperscript{24} There seems to have been a general edict against the representation of living monarchs, as recorded in a letter by Secretary Conway to the Privy Council during the \textit{The Game at Chess} affair in 1624, “His Majesty remembers well there was a commandment and restraint given against the representinge of anie modern Christian kings in those Stage-plays, and wonders much both at the boldnes nowe taken by that companie, and alsoe that it hath ben permitted to bee so acted”. Quoted in Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 242.
ambiguous status in the play, the playwrights are afforded a particular position from which to look incisively into the nature and creation of monarchical sovereignty. This portrayal of Orange was probably allowed because of his technical status as Stadtholder. This did, however, lead to some contradictions in the text; as Dutton writes, “Buc allows the Prince to be shown engaged in some dubious politics while engineering Barnavelt’s fall, but tactfully removes anything overtly disrespectful about him”.

Indeed, Buc’s emendations justify Orange’s actions towards Barnavelt.

Another danger was that the audience could read contemporary English politics into the play. Firstly, Orange’s involvement in Barnavelt’s downfall may have called to mind the perceived injustice of Sir Walter Raleigh’s execution the year before. There was also the chance that any play related to conflict between the United Provinces and Spain could cause some discord with the Spanish officials and could reflect badly on James. As a Protestant monarch, James was invested in Protestant Netherlands achieving independence from Catholic Spain. But, he was also trying to marry Prince Charles to the Spanish Infanta. Barnavelt could potentially offend the Dutch for its representation of Orange or offend the Spanish by a play which favours Dutch independence from Spain. Although a truce between the Netherlands and Spain had been achieved in 1619, Buc had to ensure that representations of the Low Countries treaded lightly so not to aggravate any tensions.

Besides the strained political situation, Buc seems to have had personal reasons for fastidiously combing through the play. Before becoming the Master of the Revels, he worked

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25 Dutton, Mastering, 212.
26 This argument is put forth by Dutton, “Both were ambitious men who had achieved great power and then fallen in favour; both were closely identified in the struggle against Spain”, Mastering, 209. Margot Heinemann thinks this is unlikely however, “Barnavelt is not represented by the dramatists in a heroic light, and Raleigh was a popular hero... The stage-Barnavelt’s pleas for liberty and local autonomy sound more attractive to modern editors than they would to a Protestant city audience in the period of the Counter-Reformation, who would probably have heard them as menacing”, Puritanism and Theatre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 205.
as a diplomat and had a literary career as a historian. He gained the reversion for Master of the Revels in 1603, and from 1606 he was authorised to license plays for publication. He officially presided over the Revels Office from 1610 till 1622 and left his post after he was declared insane. Before this point however, Buc’s time as Master of the Revels, like the other dramatic censors, was mostly occupied with staying in the monarch’s good graces by fastidiously revising plays for seditious content. As Clare writes, Buc “was primarily concerned to show his gratitude and loyalty by protecting the King’s interests and by shoring up royal authority against outbursts of dramatic satire”. 27 This meant making sure that James’ interests were protected on stage.

During his diplomatic career, Buc had a first-hand experience of Dutch politics. In August 1601, he was sent to the States of Zealand to visit Sir Francis Vere and “to deale with Count Maurice” in discussions of England’s aid in the defence of Ostend against the Spanish. 28 In Buc’s account of his mission he recalled that he “deliuerd my message from her Maiestie to the prince Maurice at Campvere at the Castle as he was newly arrived and had speech with him… hee gave me <very> good satisfaction in all thinges in like maner, & was confident that the enemy should never wyn Ostend”. 29 It is not clear whether Buc met Oldenbarnevelt, but the Land’s Advocate’s opinions would have been taken into consideration during these meetings. 30 It seems unlikely that Buc would have been so interested in Barnavelt if not for his involvement in diplomatic missions to the Netherlands. As a witness to some of the events in Anglo-Dutch relations, Buc was surely concerned with the veracity of the playwrights’ representation of current political figures.

27 Clare, Censorship, 14.
28 Information about Buc’s mission comes from Cecil’s rough draft of his instructions (SP 84/61, f. 238) and two scribal transcripts (BL MS Cotton Galba D. xii) which Buc corrected for Sir Robert Cotton in March 1605. Both are quoted by Howard-Hill in “Censorship,” 47-48.
Buc’s comprehensive revision of the manuscript was also prompted by his scholarly interest in history. Howard-Hill suggests that Buc’s response to the play was not only because of his “long experience in political affairs”, but that he brought “the critical intelligence and respect for recorded truth [as] an accomplished historian” to his role as Master of the Revels.\textsuperscript{31}

Whilst he was working in the Revels Office, Buc was writing histories of England’s kings which were published both in print and manuscript circulation. In these works, he was particularly attuned to the way history and language shaped the reputation of political figures. In the same year that he was revising Barnavelt, Buc was writing a proto-revisionist history of Richard III, \textit{The History of King Richard the Third}, in which he aimed to ameliorate Richard’s reputation through historical evidence.\textsuperscript{32}

Buc was also associated with, and perhaps a member of, the Society of Antiquaries.\textsuperscript{33} Whilst the Society of Antiquaries flourished during the Elizabethan era, represented by figures such as Robert Cotton and William Camden, it disintegrated under mysterious circumstances in 1607. It was mostly likely that the Society ceased to meet for political reasons. One member, Henry Spelman, suggested that the Society ended because of the members’ deaths. However, in 1614, the proposal to re-animate the society failed because “That for avoiding Offence, we should neither meddle with Matters of State, nor of Religion”.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, Spelman continued, “his Majesty took a little Mislike of our Society” for its discussion of contentious political and religious issues.\textsuperscript{35} Buc was caught between a rock and a hard place: his wish for historical truth, but also his commitment to the king. As a result, he troubled himself with the facts of the

\textsuperscript{31} Howard-Hill, “Censorship,” 49.
\textsuperscript{32} Buc embarked on a fair copy in 1619, though the manuscript is unfinished (BL, Cotton Tiberius E. X). See G. Buck, \textit{The history of King Richard the Third}, ed. A. N. Kincaid (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1979).
\textsuperscript{33} Buc’s name was amongst those Buckingham listed in 1620 as one of the “liuing person of prime worth, fit to keep vp, and celebrate the round table”, for an English Academy out of the ashes of the Society for Antiquaries. Howard-Hill, “Censorship,” 49.
\textsuperscript{35} Quoted by DeCoursey, “Society of Antiquaries (act. 1586–1607).”
treatment of Orange, but also made sure to revise the play so that Barnavelt’s death appeared deserved.

_Barnavelt_ may have been more of a news play than a history play considering its contemporaneity, though Buc used his skills as a historian to revise the play for veracity.\(^{36}\) His historical interest is most obvious in the scene where Barnavelt organises for Orange to be barred from entering the Council. Buc, doubting the likelihood of this event, noted in the margin: “I like not this: neithe’ / do I think y’ the pr. Was / thus disgracefully vsed. / besides he is to much / presented. [her]. G. B”.\(^{37}\) Buc objected not only because of the impropriety of representing the Prince of Orange as politically impotent, but also because he is sceptical that this moment ever occurred.\(^{38}\) His doubt is compounded by his wish to protect Orange – and monarchs in general – from the humiliation of the scene, and also to downplay his appearance as an antagonist throughout the rest of the play. When he first wrote his comment, Buc told the playwrights that Orange is overly-presented “her[e]”, in this scene in particular. But on second consideration, he crossed out “her[e]” suggesting that he objected to Orange’s “representation not only in this particular scene but throughout the play”.\(^{39}\) Despite Buc’s displeasure, he did not order the scene to be removed in its entirety. He may have doubted the scene, but he must have also recognised its thematic importance for the play’s development. It is in moments such as this that Buc’s collaborative involvement is most obvious: he wanted to revise the representation of Orange and Barnavelt’s dispute for personal, pragmatic, and political reasons. However, he did not stop the King’s Men from producing a play which, under a different Master of the Revels, may not have been allowed.


\(^{37}\) John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, _The Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt_, ed. Howard-Hill (London: Malone Society, 1980), 1.3.386. All subsequent quotes from this edition will be referenced within the body of the text.

\(^{38}\) Howard-Hill, “Censorship,” 57.

\(^{39}\) Clare, _Censorship_, 176.
Buc was not the only agent in the collaborative creation of *Barnavelt*. If Massinger and Fletcher were the pair of collaborators who created the original version of the play, it was Buc and Crane who created the artefact as we have it today. Similar to Buc, as a “mediating subject” of *Barnavelt*, Crane’s influence permeates the text in a way that decentres and potentially de-authorises the playwrights. Crane is mostly known to scholars for his transcriptions of Shakespeare’s plays that were printed in the First Folio, as well as his other theatrical and overtly literary manuscripts. He is a marginal figure in literary history as, despite completing a number of transcriptions of King’s Men plays, Crane was never a company member. His connection with the company spanned from 1619-1624, and he seems to have worked mainly for individual dramatists rather than the company itself. These manuscripts include Ben Jonson’s *Pleasure reconcild to Vertue*, Middleton’s *The Witch*, and the copies of Middleton’s *A Game of Chess*. He also produced a presentation copy of Fletcher’s *Demetrius and Enanthe (The Humorous Lieutenant)* for a prospective patron, Sir Kenelm Digby. The majority of Crane’s scribal work, however, was non-dramatic. He also published his own poetry, *The Works of Mercy, both Corporal and Spiritual* in 1621, worked as a clerk for Sir Anthony Ashley (who clerked for the Privy Council) and as an underwriter in the signet office and the Privy Seal from 1596. Crane’s preface to his *Works of Mercy* shows how by

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41 Vernon Guy Dickson calls Crane a “mediator” of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in light of his role as a scrivener and editor in “What I Will: Mediating Subjects: Or, Ralph Crane and the Folio’s *Tempest*,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 97, no. 1 (2003), 43-56, 44.

42 Crane’s dramatic work include Shakespeare’s *The Tempest, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Measure for Measure, The Winter’s Tale, Cymbeline* and *Othello*. His other theatrical manuscripts include Middleton’s *Women Beware Women*, Fletcher and Massinger’s *The Prophetess* and *The Spanish Curate*, Fletcher and Rowley’s *The Maid in the Mill*, Fletcher’s *Demetrius and Enanthe (The Humorous Lieutenant)*, Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* and several copies of Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*.

43 Werstine, “Ralph Crane and Edward Knight,” 28.

1621, he either saw himself, or was positioning himself, as a professional working for the King’s Men:

some imployment hath my usefull Pen

Had ‘mongst those civill, well-deserving men,
That grace the Stage with honour and delight
… Under the Kingly Service they doe hold.  

Crane represents his work as having some status, and that his copies have the mark of authority from the king himself. His professional pride is similar to Massinger’s, who claimed, “Is’t in me / And such as write a crime to take the fee / Due to our labours & deseru’d?”.

Crane, however, was not embedded in the theatrical scene in the same way that Massinger was because he was a hireling rather than a contracted company figure. Regardless of his unofficial status, Crane evidentially saw himself as a worker integral to the playmaking process and responded to his scribal work as such.

Crane’s self-directed professional status sheds some light on why he acted so independently with Barnavelt. He makes multiple interlineations in the manuscript, which is mysterious considering the lack of evidence of direction from the playwrights themselves. As Paul Werstine points out, there are still some lingering questions “about the authority of this putative revision”. Because Crane came from a professional scribal background, he may have been used to making changes to the manuscript without consulting others or, alternatively, no one assumed that he needed to ask permission in the first place. Although he did not add large swathes of text, Crane wrote in his own material when replacing lines Buc excised. Crane’s intervention into the text is, as some may see it, a direct usurpation of the playwrights’ role as

45 Ralph Crane, Works of Mercy (1621). Quoted by Howard-Hill in “Crane, Ralph (fl. 1589-1632)”.
47 Werstine, Manuscripts, 285.
he takes authorial agency over the play. This kind of scribal participation was common in manuscript culture. As Marotti writes, in manuscript culture, unlike printed culture, “the roles of author, scribe, and reader overlapped”.48 Indeed, scribal agency in dramatic manuscripts may be more common than assumed considering the dearth of extant manuscripts. Regardless, Crane’s revisions and interlineations show an assumption of authority over the text. He also seems to have acted as the mediator between Buc and the playwrights. Fletcher and Massinger’s handwriting is not present in the manuscript, although there are revised scenes with new material prompted by Buc’s requests. As Clare writes, “Crane’s deletions of lines and his reworking of passages censored by Buc provide further evidence of a collaboration between the Revels Office and the playhouse”.49 Without Crane, Barnavelt would not have reached a stage acceptable for performance because his copying and emendations make sense of the protracted revision process. He could be considered the centre of the play’s collaboration.

**Scribal work and dramatic purpose**

Fletcher and Massinger, Crane, Buc, and the anonymous bookkeeper each had their role to play so that the play worked on stage without political controversy. In the words of Howard-Hill, “The manuscript of Barnavelt is the product of co-operation of the scribe, censor, and bookkeeper to prepare a play acceptable for performance on the public stage”.50 Before Buc, Crane’s, and the bookkeeper’s involvement however, Barnavelt originated with the playwrights and other anonymous forces in the King’s Men who wanted a play about Oldenbarnevelt written. The play was perhaps devised when the King’s Men realised they could capitalise on a high-profile piece of news. Alternatively its provenance may have been

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49 Clare, *Censorship*, 175.
50 Howard-Hill, Introduction to *Barnavelt*, ix.

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Massinger and Fletcher’s interest in the Low Countries; they had already written a play about the Netherlands with Nathan Field, the lost “Jeweller of Amsterdam”. The playwrights surely discussed the structure of the play, and they both relied on pamphlet sources to bring it to life before receiving the help of Crane’s pen to piece their papers together.

After the play was written, Buc revised the manuscript twice, the playwrights emended the play at least two times, and Crane rewrote various sheets at four different stages. The company bookkeeper also added in theatre properties to plan for eventual staging. Finally, the revision process came to a halt after the interpolation of three new sheets. Either Buc accepted the play at this point, or Crane made a new copy of it that was subsequently lost. A description of the manuscript is useful for understanding how the play’s meaning evolved through the various revisions. There are three parts to the manuscript which show its stages of development. The first part is nineteen leaves of paper that are left from Crane’s first transcription of the play according to its original composition (fol. 1-7, 9-18, and 27-8). On these sheets Crane originally used brown ink that varies from light to dark. The bookkeeper used ink that is paler and yellower than Crane’s. This first set of leaves have papers which bear a pot watermark, which differentiates them from some of the later bunch of grapes papers. There is one anomaly in the first set, fol. 16, which Crane wrote in a larger hand. It may be that this leaf was substituted at an early stage in the play’s composition.

What happened next was that Buc saw the manuscript for the first time and decided that it needed to be changed, adding crosses in the margins and cutting passages. After receiving the manuscript back from Buc, the playwrights wrote new material and Crane copied it in. For these sheets, fols. 19-26, the second part of the manuscript, Crane used ink that is almost black,

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52 I follow Werstine’s description of the MS in Manuscripts, 282-286.
53 Werstine, Manuscripts, 283.
and the bookkeeper’s ink is also darker than in the first set. This sets these sheets apart from the first group. Despite the changes, the manuscript still did not meet Buc’s standards as he revised the play a second time. Probably because of Buc’s instructions, the playwrights ameliorated the script by re-writing the first part of 2.2, added scene 3.2, and appended 32 lines to 5.3. Crane then copied these new lines and added the new sheets to the manuscript. These added lines constitute the third part of the manuscript. It consists of three interpolated leaves: [8] (in 2.2), 14* (3.2), and 27* (5.3). All three sheets contain text on one side only and do not contain any marks from Buc, they “therefore seem to belong to a very late stage of the manuscript’s development – final revision made to satisfy him”. Either before or after adding the new lines, Crane again went through the papers, affirming and sometimes ignoring Buc’s changes and adding his own. The confluence of a variety of material considerations – censorship, political circumstances, the work of the playwrights and the playhouse personnel – reveal how at least five people were involved in the creation of a manuscript, and the amount of work needed to make a play ready for performance.

With so many agents involved, it is ambiguous who it is that has ultimate authority over the play. Was it the playwrights, who despite originally writing the play, had little control over the play’s final structure? Crane, for mediating the play’s development? Or Buc, for determining the shape that the play took? The playwrights did take part in the play’s revision, though they did so without authorial intent. Indeed, it is unclear to what extent the playwrights were involved in the revision process, as Howard-Hill writes:

The role of the collaborators is obscure. Since their revisions on account of the censor’s objections were not entered directly on the manuscript, they must either

54 Clare points out that the different set of sheets may not be enough evidence that fols. 19-26 were re-written, considering that the The Honest Man’s Fortune manuscript is made up of seven different types of paper (Censorship, 206). Howard-Hill’s finding that these sheets are replacements are well accepted, however. This is because of the change in ink coupled with the new type of paper.
55 Werstine, Manuscripts, 285.
have amended their foul papers or written out slips for Crane to incorporate in the transcript.  

Even without the playwrights’ handwriting, the replaced and interpolated scenes bespeak something about the process of collaborative censorship and the playwrights’ lack of authority. These rewritten scenes and interpolated passages all seem to have been written by Fletcher, if we follow Cyrus Hoy’s attributions. His study of relative attribution using the playwrights’ linguistic preferences (ye, ‘em, i’th) shows a fairly even split between the two playwrights:

Fletcher: I, 3; II 2-6; III, 1, 3-4; IV, 1-3; V, 1b (from exit of Ambassadors to exit of Provost), 2-3.  
Massinger: I, 1-2; II, 1; III 2, 5-6; IV, 4-5; V, 1a (to exit of Ambassadors), 1c (from exit of Provost to end).  

Hoy breaks the play up by scene instead of by sheet, so his study does not consider how the final version of the play was put together sheet by sheet, rather than scene by scene. If Hoy’s findings are followed, then the interpolated sheets [8], 14*, and 27*, are all found in scenes written by Fletcher: 2.2, 3.2, and 5.3. This prompts the question of whether Fletcher is the true authority – the author – behind the revised passages? Or is it Buc, who demanded the changes in the first place?

Hoy’s study is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, Buc and Crane are absent from his stylistic analysis. This may be because the play does not have enough of Buc and Crane’s function words for Hoy to work out the relative attribution. Thus, when Hoy allocates scenes, he only can do so from Fletcher and Massinger’s data set. Furthermore, he does not take Crane

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56 Howard-Hill, Introduction to Barnavelt, x.
57 Cyrus Hoy, “The Shares of Fletcher and His Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (I),” Studies in Bibliography 8 (1956), 129-146, 139.
and Buc into consideration as collaborators because he does not see them as authorial figures. Indeed, Hoy describes the scribal emendations as “tampering” with the manuscript.\textsuperscript{59} However, for \textit{Barnavelt}, and indeed all plays, what is left out is equally important as what is left in. In his copying, Crane kept Fletcher and Massinger’s particular stylistic tics. For example, the Fletcherian ye occurs 132 times in what we can assume to be Fletcher’s sections and only twice in what is thought to be Massinger’s.\textsuperscript{60}

As the scribe, Crane made choices about which of Fletcher and Massinger’s word preferences stayed and which went. He decided when to replicate and delete what is known in computational stylistics as the “authorial signature”.\textsuperscript{61} In his presentation copy of \textit{Demetrius and Enanthe}, Crane introduced thirty-four ye’s and omitted fourteen of them in comparison to the copy in the Folio.\textsuperscript{62} Unlike Fletcher and Massinger, Crane and Buc have a greater capacity to make choices about the text – even choosing the extent to which the authors’ style is retained. This has yet to be accounted for properly in attribution studies, which cannot adequately reckon with mediating agents such as scribes and censors. There is also the added problem that statistical analysis cannot look at small bodies of words but need large data sets to produce findings. Buc and Crane have not been considered as having “styles,” even though both have bodies of writing to draw on. Without taking into account the physical evidence of the manuscript, the political circumstances, and the various personal dynamics and professional relationships that got the play to the stage, authorship attributions uproot plays from their dramatic contexts.

Stylometric analyses only tell us so much about the process by which a play was written. Indeed, the questions Hoy cannot answer reveals the limitations of stylometrics when

\textsuperscript{59} Hoy, “Shares,” 139.
\textsuperscript{60} Hoy, “Shares,” 139.
\textsuperscript{61} Craig and Kinney, \textit{Computers}, 11.
\textsuperscript{62} Hoy, “Shares,” 142.
considering collaborative plays. This is because his studies are based on a model of authorship that is limited to playwrights. This model does not account for political authority over a play, or the role of the censor to reshape texts. Does Barnavelt not become Buc’s play once he took creative control and demanded that the playwrights refashion some of the scenes? What I am questioning here is the extent to which we can name Fletcher and Massinger as the authors of this play if they had little control over its meaning and effects. Stern poses a similar question about the authorship of Cardenio and Double Falsehood: how can we assign definitive authorship “particularly in those instances that cannot be captured by stylometrics, where one collaborator is responsible for the dialogue of the text, and the other writes the ‘plot’ or scenario for the play”. 63 Although I am not concerned with the plot but rather revision processes, the question still stands: is someone only an author if they fit inside a stylometric model, or do we need more diversified models of collaborative authorship to account for a play such as Barnavelt?

The putative function of the manuscript as a promptbook also reveals how the theatrical company ensured that a play reached the boards, despite the back and forth between Buc and Crane. If the manuscript is a promptbook, then the bookkeeper had to work with limited time and materials in order to get the book into a working condition. There is, however, no consensus on the manuscript’s purpose. This is because, as Howard-Hill has argued, it may be that the manuscript as we have it is not the one that reached the stage. 64 The inconsistencies within the script in terms of its entrances and exits, assigned parts, characters that are excised and yet retain their lines, and arbitrary inclusion of stage properties, could mean that “No plot could have been made from the Barnavelt manuscript which would not have produced serious

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64 Howard-Hill’s philological examinations of Barnavelt are by far the most extensive and are realised in his Introduction to the Malone Society edition. For his investigation of the manuscript as a theatrical document, “Crane’s 1619 “Promptbook””. See also, W. W. Greg, Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots, Actors’ Parts, Prompt Books (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 268-73; and Werstine, Manuscripts 119-123, 168-172, 282-292.
confusion on stage at different points”. In essence, Howard-Hill suggests that the manuscript is an example of a play in a process of theatrical production that had not reached its final stage. It could be that the play was copied out again into a more definitive form, particularly because the language in some of the passages Buc revised would not make sense without another revision. The unresolved problem of why Buc reacquired the playbook could also offer an answer to the manuscript’s purpose. Unless Buc requisitioned the manuscript after the performance, there must have been another copy in the playhouse.

Despite Howard-Hill’s argument that the manuscript was not a promptbook, other scholars suggest that the presence of the bookkeeper’s hand indicates that the company intended for Barnavelt to reach the stage in the form that we have it. Bowers argues that if the haste with which the play was staged is considered, the manuscript can function as a promptbook because there would be no need to prompt actors during later performances. Thus, the manuscript’s function was “to remind the keeper of necessary properties and the general ordering of the play”. Bowers takes the dishevelled manuscript of Barnavelt as an anomaly because of the timing of the play’s production, suggesting that “it would have been a makeshift book for a series of makeshift performances and thus the manuscript’s evidence cannot be applied to Jacobean prompt-books in general”. According to this reasoning, because the King’s Men wished to capitalise on the circulating news of Oldenbarnevelt’s fall, there was no intention to fix the book up to include the play in the company repertory or have it printed.

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65 Howard-Hill, “Crane’s 1619 “Promptbook”,” 169. Howard-Hill’s argument for status of the manuscript hinges on the eyewitness account of Thomas Locke, “When Barnevelt vnderstood of Ledenbergs death he comforted himself wth before he refused to do, but when he perceaueth himself to be arsted then he hath no remedie, but wth all speed biddeth his wife send to the Fr: Amb: she did & he spake for him, &c.” He argues that because there are two ambassadors present in the manuscript and only one in Locke’s account, the play was revised again to excise one of the ambassadors. Howard-Hill, “Cranes 1619 “Promptbook”,” 170.
66 Bowers, Textual Introduction to Barnavelt, 495.
67 Bowers, Textual Introduction to Barnavelt, 495.
Werstine agrees that the manuscript functioned as a promptbook. He finds that the bookkeeper’s annotations in the manuscript aimed at “adjusting the extant manuscript to use in the playhouse”. In particular, he notes how the bookkeeper would move stage directions inscribed by Crane to earlier than the dialogue necessitates so that he could pre-emptively mount spectacles rather than leave them to the last minute. Werstine believes that the manuscript would not have been re-copied for a promptbook because it was already such a mess, “Page-for-page transcription of Barnavelt would be impossible because of the large cuts marked, some of the excluded passages almost being obliterated by Crane’s scribbling over them”, so the company would just use the manuscript as is. The question of what this manuscript was ultimately used for comes down to these pragmatic concerns. Is it more likely that the company members would work off a disorganised manuscript to make the parts for the main actors and the plot, or would it be easier to re-write it entirely? Indeed, what modern eyes see as a mess of playbook may not have stopped the bookkeeper from performing his job. If the Barnavelt manuscript is a promptbook, then it would explain why there was such an effort on behalf of all those involved to make the play stage-worthy as quickly and easily as possible.

Despite the interruptive process of censorship, many hands made light work in the theatrical companies.

**Collaborative revision in the Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt manuscript**


69 Werstine looks at 2.6.952-6, when Baranvelt’s Arminian army comes across the stage. Crane writes the SDD “Droms | Enter ye | Arminians” when Orange says “Let theis new Companies / march by vs, through the Market, so to the Guard house, / and there disarme”. And then when the troops pass, he says, “hansom swag fellowes: and fit for fowle play.” Crane puts the SDD next to this dialogue. The bookkeeper, however, moves the SDD higher up. He first scribbles over the SDD at lines 952-55 and writes “pass ouer” next to these lines. Then, at 947, five lines earlier, he writes “and Arminiä.” Although it appears the bookkeeper is putting the SDD before the dialogue requires it, Werstine believes he does this because Crane’s SDD appear three lines before the top of a verso page, “There the bookkeeper will come upon it only as he turns the page, by which time he may not be able to mount the spectacle of a military parade when it is needed”, *Manuscripts*, 290.

70 Werstine, *Manuscripts*, 292.
Considering the practice of state censorship, it seems somewhat against the odds that a play such as *Barnavelt* was allowed at all. But despite the troubled collaboration, the Master of the Revels ensured that the play became stage-worthy and allowed the play’s performance. Indeed, this duality of conflict and productivity summarises the relationship between the Revels Office and the companies: symbiotic and yet antagonistic. As Dutton writes, “There must always have been a degree of complicity, as much as of antagonism, between the actors and those in power over them; they were mutually useful to one another”.  

Although the process of censorship seems to have led to the desired outcome of performance, the *Barnavelt* manuscript reveals a process that was if anything contentious. This is to be expected, considering that it was Buc’s role to curtail the companies’ and playwrights’ representation of politics and religion. The Revels Office was a necessary evil for the theatrical companies, without which they could not perform. To modern eyes, the relationship between the Master of the Revels and the companies can be reduced to pure censorship. But what the *Barnavelt* manuscript reveals is a collaboration that was at once interruptive, and yet pragmatic.

The political and bureaucratic relationship between the Master and the companies was also embedded within a system of exchange, not unlike the credit relationship experienced by the playwrights of *Eastward Ho!*. The Master was paid by the companies to review playbooks (some of which he would periodically disallow) and he could also organise lucrative performances at court. Complicity and contention went hand in hand in the collaborative process of writing *Barnavelt*. Buc’s fastidious reaction to the manuscript is a better response than an outright ban, and he was collaborating with the company to ensure performance. This was not always the case. If a play was found to be too controversial, it would be suppressed in its entirety, as happened when the now lost “Marquis d’Ancre” was banned in 1617.  

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72 Nothing is known about the provenance or authorship of “Marquis d’Ancre”. Although a threatening note from the Privy Council to Buc survives, “Wee are informed that there are certayne players or comedians wee knowe
instances, the total prohibition of a play usually did not come from the censor but from the Privy Council; the Master’s role was more to make plays workable within prescribed limits.\textsuperscript{73}

The Master of the Revels had a variety of methods to reshape a play to make it acceptable for performance. For example, the censor could ask for changes to the play’s location, so as to turn the play into allegory rather than a direct portrayal of current events. For \textit{Believe as You List}, Herbert ordered Massinger to change the setting of the play from Spain to ancient Rome, so that the subject matter of Sebastian of Portugal’s deposing by Philip II of Spain was not explicit. Herbert wrote in his office book, “This day being the 11 of Janu. 1630, I did refuse to allow of a play of Messinger’s, because itt did contain dangerous matter, as the deposing of Sebastian king of Portugal, by Philip the [Second,] and ther being a peace sworn twixte the kings of England and Spayne”.\textsuperscript{74} The danger, it seems, was in representing and criticising Philip II, thereby offending Charles I for dramatising his ally on stage. For Herbert and the other Masters, political commentary was acceptable as long as it was within the bounds of allegory. Cases such \textit{Believe as You List} give credence to Patterson’s theory of functional ambiguity, “in which indeterminacy inveterate to language was fully and knowingly exploited by authors and readers alike (and among those readers, of course, were those who were most interested in control)”.\textsuperscript{75} The censor was willing to permit the play as long as its meaning remained ambiguous. In their perusal of plays, censors had to act like exegetic readers, looking between the lines to find material that others would interpret as seditious or libellous. Patterson’s argument, however, does not hold up quite so well when looking at a play such as \textit{Barnavelt}. Indeed, the setting has no ambiguity at all, let alone functional ambiguity. This

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\textsuperscript{73} Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 206.
\textsuperscript{74} Quoted by Patterson, \textit{Censorship}, 94.
\textsuperscript{75} Patterson, \textit{Censorship}, 18.
\end{flushleft}
resulted in a different kind of involvement on the part of the Master of the Revels. He was, for all intents and purposes, an unintentional collaborator who altered the play’s direction. Although Buc did not require a change of setting, he did change the tenor of the play by weeding out the playwrights’ initial intentions, limiting the representation of religious conflict, and ensuring Orange was not the play’s antagonist.

It is only from Barnavelt and another manuscript, The Second Maiden’s Tragedy (1611), that we know how Buc conducted his censorial duties. His revision process was laborious, which speaks to the amount of effort he put into completing the job. He would begin by reading through the play with a pencil in hand, and he drew marginal cross marks (+) next to passages that he found troubling. He would also draw more ambiguous pencil markings like vertical lines, underlines, marginal lines, marginal brackets, and a particular swirly flourish in the margins to mark out the points he found questionable. After going through the play in pencil, he would then re-read the play, and with ink, draw over the pencil crosses next to the passages he thought needed deletion. He would also use ink to make interlined substitutions, and sometimes leave explicit comments, such as his “I like not this” about the treatment of Orange. Crane usually crossed out the lines next to the ink crosses that Buc left.

Buc’s collaborative censorial style can be seen in a particularly anti-monarchical passage which he went through much effort to rectify. Although Barnavelt dies in ignominy, it is possible to read the play as a staunchly republican commentary on the Dutch political crisis. From Barnavelt’s perspective, monarchy is something to be feared and abhorred, and at several points, he reminds the audience that without him the United Provinces could become a monarchy. Buc took particular umbrage at one of Barnavelt’s speeches, where he tells the tribunal that has found him guilty of treason that they will regret his death, just as the Romans

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76 I am following Howard-Hill’s description of Buc’s censorship style. For a thorough examination of Buc’s censorial markings in Barnavelt, see Howard-Hill, “Censorship,” 41.
regretted Octavius’ overtaking of Rome. Buc’s deletions are marked by square brackets, and his additions are placed in bold:

+ Octavius, when he did affect the Empire
and strove to read upon the neck of Rome
+ and all hir aucient freedoms, [tooke that course] cutt of his opposites
[that is now practisd on yo\textsuperscript{u}]: for the Cato’s
and all free speritts slaine, or els proscribd
that durst have stird against him, he then sceasd
+ the absolute rule of all: [yo\textsuperscript{u} can apply this]:
And here I prophecie, I that haue lyvd
and dye a free man, shall, when I am ashes
be sensible of yo\textsuperscript{u} groanes, and wishes for me;
and when too late yo\textsuperscript{u} see this Government
+ [chained] changd [to a Monarchie] to another forme, you’ll howle in vaine
+ and wish yo\textsuperscript{u} had a Barnauelt againe. (4.5.2436-48)\textsuperscript{77}

In his Cassandra-like prophecy to the Councillors, Barnavelt warns that similar to Octavius, Orange will trample and destroy the Republic and remake it to fit his monarchical vision. Buc found these lines extremely troubling and tried to put them to rights by removing the anti-monarchical tone. On his first read through of the play he put crosses in pencil next to four lines in this passage. When he returned to this speech with ink, he reinforced the cross next to “and all hir aucient freedoms, took that course”, “the absolute rule of all: yo\textsuperscript{u} can apply this” and put a fresh cross next to “chained to a Monarchie, you’ll howle in vaine”, despite not

\textsuperscript{77} Line 4.5.2447 is not a direct quotation from the Howard-Hill edition, where the line is “+ changd [to a Monarchie]” rather than “+ [chained] changd”. I have done this so that the reader has a better sense of what is happening in the manuscript, considering that Howard-Hill did not indicate that Buc changed chained to changd by writing over only part of the word within the lines, only in the notes.
putting a cross next to this line on his first reading. Buc then proceeded to cut lines out of the play and write in his own replacements.

Buc was not only displeased by the playwrights’ offering up the Netherlands as a reflection of Rome, but also with the possibility of the Dutch situation mirroring that of England. Barnavelt’s eloquent pro-republican stance does not sit well within a monarchical state, particularly when James was allied to Orange. Indeed, there is a possibility that the audience would understand Orange’s smothering of the Republic as similar to James’ relationship with his Parliament. As Howard-Hill suggests, Orange’s rise acts as an analogy for James’ “assertion of absolute rule over the prerogatives of Parliament… and the severe restrictions on all forms of dissent during his reign”. Having read an anti-Jacobean, or at least anti-monarchical tone in this speech, Buc decided to take out the lines which could create an allegory between the two countries. He replaced “took that course / that now is practisd on yo[u]” with “cutt of[f] his opposites”, so that the topic of the line is not a comparison but stays on the topic of Octavius’ rise to power. Buc also crossed out “yo[u] can apply this”, so that the audience would not be encouraged to relate the play to their own political circumstances. Finally, he replaced “chained to a Monarchie” to “changd to another form” by writing gd over the second half of “chained”, crossing out “Monarchie” and interlining “too another form”. Once a monarch rules a country, the play tells its audience, there is no going back to a republic. Buc tried to change the tenor of the speech so that monarchy is not the threat at hand. Despite going through such an effort to make this speech work, Buc ultimately decided that even with changes it was still dangerous, so he drew a diagonal line from “when” in 2436 to “Monarchie” in 2448. Despite cutting out a large chunk of text, Buc’s work here is still collaborative. Because of his involvement, the play is no longer overtly republican. Buc knew the potential danger the

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79 It is ambiguous whether this passage was actually deleted from the manuscript because Crane did not cross it out in his psuedoscript, as he usually did when concurring with Buc’s deletions.
playwrights and actors could find themselves in if these sorts of lines were said on stage and thus, by working on the play in this way, he ensured *Barnavelt*’s performance.

After Buc’s reading and initial changes to the manuscript, Crane then embarked upon making the requisite revisions necessitated by Buc’s various crosses and deletions. Crane cancelled text by drawing marginal deletion lines, “scribbling in the form of regular left-to-right vertical progressive oval shapes”, or he wrote in a sort of “pseudoscript” to cross words out by using the letter forms of secretary hand to overwrite the text. Crane’s psuedoscript is found alongside most of Buc’s deletions and pencil markings, and he used the black ink associated with the last stages of the manuscript’s production. Some of the verbal substitutions also occur in black ink, usually at moments where Buc has put crosses or other markings. For example, in Barnavelt’s lines “No, this ingratefull Cuntry, [and this bold] this base people / + [vsurper of what’s mine] most base to my deserts” (1.1.50-51), Buc added a pencil cross before going over it in ink, then crossed out the words “and this bold” and “vsurper of what’s mine”. Crane then overwrote Buc’s deletions with black ink and interlined “this base people” and “most base to my deserts”. Crane fills in the lines Buc deletes in order to help the speech make sense, without restoring to cutting the lines completely. It can be surmised that whilst Crane was in contact with the playwrights for the major revision work, he took responsibility for minor changes according to the general tenor of the larger revisions. In these instances, Crane was working in tandem with Buc in order to make the play workable in the theatre. In his edits, Crane self-censores the play, agrees or disagrees with Buc’s revisions, and incorporates the playwrights’ new work. He would have received instruction from various

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80 At ll. 36, 50, 51, 206, 215-28, 587, 724-9, 751-62, 801, 803-4, and 2334-53. Howard-Hill points out that Crane’s “psuedoscript” is not found in any of his other manuscripts, “Censorship,” 40.
83 Clare agrees that the smaller revisions are Crane’s, “Whether or not Crane was responsible for the actual composition of the revised lines which he has written in the manuscript is uncertain, although their poor quality suggests that he, rather than the playwrights, devised them”, *Censorship*, 175.
sources: the bookkeeper, who probably directed him to add speech-prefixes and stage directions; the censor, whose various crosses and emendations he had to factor into the text; and the playwrights, at least one of whom had a role in rewriting parts of three scenes.

Crane also had to engage in what looks like self-censorship in order to bring the play in line with Buc’s revisions. This is the case in Act 2 Scene 2 when the Dutchwomen are discussing the Arminian “preacher” Holderus with an Englishwoman:

Eng-gent’ W. and a [Preacher] Teacher do yo’ say?

2. Duch. w. a singuler [Preacher.] Teacher. (2.2.803-4)

Crane crossed out “Preacher” and interlined “Teacher” on both lines. A few lines earlier, Crane also replaced “preach” with “say” when 2 Dutchwoman claims about Holderus, “we can make him thinck what we list, [preach] say what we list, / print what we list, and whom we list, abuse in’t” (801-2). These revisions differ from the rest of the manuscript as most of Crane’s cancelling and interlined replacement phrases were done in order to replace text cancelled by Buc. It appears Crane began providing his own interlineations after Buc’s first revision. He was following the general tenor of Buc’s revision so as to fit the rest of the play in with the Revels Office’s orders. His collaboration with Buc and the playwrights only really begins when censorship necessitated it, authorising him after Buc’s enormous intervention required the manuscript to be re-worked. It is in these small revisions that Crane’s collaborative impetus can be seen: he may not add any long speeches of his own devising, but the small and subtle changes he inscribes recasts the play’s tenor so as to align it with Buc’s vision.

Despite the number of people involved in the play’s development, not all of the holes in the manuscript are filled in. The gaps that remain in the manuscript may reveal a case of too many cooks spoil the broth. Alternatively, considering that Barnavelt looks to be a promptbook, it seems more likely that company books did not have to be perfect in order to
serve their purpose. The collaborative process which resulted in a performed play did not run smoothly, nor did it create flawless results. Rather, the aim was to produce something that on its most basic level worked on stage. Crane did try to make the book flow as smoothly as possible, though he did leave some gaps to be filled later, perhaps by the actors. This is the case in Act 2 Scene 1, fol. 7v, in a speech where Barnavelt rages about the soldiers who have switched their support to Orange. Buc emptied the speech of sense when he crossed out several lines, and Crane attempted to ameliorate the script. However, the speech is left muddled as Crane ultimately crossed out his own changes too. It is not clear why this is. What seems most likely is that similar to Crane, having re-read the speech, did not think it could be kept without resulting in potentially seditious language, despite the revision:

oh, I am lost with anger : are we falne
so lowe from what we were, that we dare heare
this from o' Servants, and not punish it ?
where is the terro' of o' names, our powre,
That Spaine wth feare hath felt in both hir Indies ?
We are lost for ever : and from Freemen growne [slues]
[slaves to the pride of one we haue rasd vp]
+ [vnto this g<ian>t height, the Spanish y<. >k]
[is soft, and easie, if compard with what]
+ [we suffer from this popular S<na>ke, that hath]
[stolne like a cuning theif the Armyes harts]
[to serve his owne ambitious ends: Now F<r>ends]
I call not on yo' futheraunce, to preserve
the lustre of my Actions : let me with them
be nere remembered (2.2.718-732)
On his first reading of the passage, Buc put a pencil cross next to “we suffer from this popular Snake, that hath”, and upon his second reading he covered that cross in ink. He also added an ink cross during the second reading next to “vnt this giant height, the Spanish y<. .>.k”. Upon further consideration, he decided to rule through the whole passage not only because it portrayed Orange in a negative light, but James too. Whilst Buc did not find the reference to the Black Legend questionable, he could not accept the implication that England is also under the “Spanish yoke [sic]”. In Buc’s reading of this passage, the anti-Spanish sentiment reframes the action of the play within English international policy, implying that the Spanish Match would result in Catholic political and religious domination. Furthermore, Barnavelt’s lines disturb the Jacobean model of kingship by implying that Orange’s power comes from the army, rather than divine right, thereby delegitimising James’ authority.84

Crane had no choice but to concur with Buc’s deletion and wrote over the lines with his cancelling pseudoscript. With the threat of republicanism crossed out, Crane was left to make sense out of what remained of the speech, for the line could not go, “we are lost for ever : and from Freemen growne I call not on yo’ furtherance”. In his attempt to mend the passage, he added a marginal insertion to replace the cancelled lines, “Slaves so contemtible : as no wo’thie Prince / that would haue men, not sluggish Beaste his S’vants / would ere vouchsafe the owning, Now my Frends”. Crane picks up on the playwrights’ language of slavery and servitude, although the line seems to be about the quality of kingship rather than the loss of liberty. After writing the line, Crane second-guessed himself, and crossed it out.85 Still, the passage was not adequate, so he added “slau’es” next to “we are lost for ever : and from Freemen growne” (723) in an attempt to make sense of the line. He thought better of this too and so

84 This part of what Ivo Kamps argues is the play’s recognition “that power rises from below – from history – and does not descend from above, from a divine source”, in Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 158.

85 A similar interaction occurs in the text at 4.5.2334-53, during the trial scene. After Buc canceled text, Crane wrote a marginal addition to replace the cut lines, but subsequently crossed his addition out as well.
crossed out “slaues”. Ultimately, at this moment the collaboration became so interrupted that despite several attempts to make the speech workable, Crane just gave up. He ceded to Buc’s authority because any changes Crane made came too close to the tenor of the crossed-out lines.

There are points in the manuscript where all the authorial agents were involved in the play’s textual production. Buc wanted substantial changes made in the last part of the play, so one or both playwrights re-drafted part of a scene, and Crane copied it in and amended the playwrights’ revisions. Although the return of the manuscript to the playwrights for revision has been disputed, the evidence points towards someone re-writing large passages of the text. Grace Ioppolo believes that the playwrights “would most certainly have consulted this manuscript after its return from the censor in order to make these extensive revisions”, although Werstine argues that Ioppolo’s “assumption does not reset on any physical evidence in the MS which is free from the hand of either playwright”.

86 If Hoy is correct that the playwrights wrote the core of the play and the interpolated sheets, then Fletcher and Massinger collaborated with the Revels office to ensure the play was performed, even if that meant rewriting scenes. This is particularly the case for scenes such as Act 2 Scene 2, part of which was re-written on a new sheet, which Hoy finds is Fletcher’s work. The scene features a group of Dutchwomen boasting to an Englishwoman about their social freedoms, particularly how they dominate their husbands. The interruption into the manuscript comes early in the scene. The scene originally begins on the pot paper, but the last lines of the page (750-762) are cancelled with a marginal deletion line and then overwritten in Crane’s pseudoscript. Crane wrote the marginal note “vacat” in the margin, to make void, either before or after he crossed the lines out. Though, he must have written this in before he received the new lines from Fletcher to add to the manuscript. There also must have been one or more other pages which have been lost, because

The deleted twelve lines do not make sense if attached to the writing on the subsequent pages.

The final scene of *Barnavelt* was also reshaped by Buc’s instructions to make the play more politically acceptable. Buc wanted the end of the play rewritten so as to cast a harsher light on Barnavelt and validate Orange’s grasp for power. This is the purpose of [Fol. 27], an interpolated sheet placed in front of the manuscript’s last page. Moments before Barnavelt is executed, he gives a long speech from the scaffold reminding the crowd of the blood, sweat, and tears he has shed for his country, “bethinck ye of the travels I had for ye, / the throaes, and grones : to bring faire peace amongst ye” (5.3.2986-7). In the last lines of the speech, he asks the crowd to remember him and rue the day they forgot his work for the Provinces, “bethinck ye of theis things / and then turne back, and blush, blush my ruyne” (2917-18). Barnavelt makes a compelling case for his innocence, which casts his supposed treason in doubt and justifies his attempt to stop Maurice.

Orange does not feature in the final scene, and so there was no one to refute Barnavelt’s claims. Buc did not want the audience to leave the theatre feeling that Barnavelt’s end was unjust. So, Crane must have been instructed to organise for the playwrights to incorporate an element of dispute. On the inserted sheet, two Lords speak up from the crowd to denigrate Barnavelt, and more importantly for Buc, situate Barnavelt’s treason within an English context. In particular, the Lords compare Barnavelt to religious conspirators, “Examine all men / branded wth such fowle syns as yo now dye for, / and yo shall find their first stepp still, Religion” (5.3.2938-40). The root of Barnavelt’s attempted rebellion, these lines posit, is not a love of country, but heresy. 2 Lord goes on to localise Barnavelt’s actions:

*Gowrie in Scotland, ‘twas his maine pretention :*

was not he honest too? his Cuntries Father?
those fiery Speritts next, that hatchd in England

that bloody Powder-Plot; an thought like meteors
to haue flashd their Cuntryes peace out in a Moment

were not their Barrells loden w\textsuperscript{th} Religion? (2941-46)

This final image of Barnavelt as a fire that would raze his country to the ground for religion reconstructs the audience’s image of the protagonist. Buc’s required revisions and re-writings ensured that Barnavelt is the Machiavel rather than a tragic hero. Although Buc and Crane tried to excise religious doctrine from the play, it was allowed in the final scene so as to align Arminianism with crypto-Catholic radicals in the United Kingdom. The Gowrie plot was not a religious conspiracy, but it was similar to the Gunpowder Plot in that it was perceived as anti-Jacobean. By making these comparisons, the audience comes away thinking that Barnavelt and Arminianism posed a direct threat to themselves, albeit across the ocean. Thus, the gory decapitation in the last moments of the play – wherein Barnavelt loses not only his head but his fingers too – is rough justice, rather than the direct effect of Orange’s absolutism. Having noticed the playwrights’ sympathy for Barnavelt, Buc’s major contribution to the play “was that the character of Orange was strengthened at the expense of Barnavelt’s”.\footnote{Howard-Hill, “Censorship,” 58.} In his revisions, Buc tried to rectify this by bringing Orange forward and pushing Barnavelt back. In doing so, the play ceases to be a lament for the Dutch Republic, and instead becomes a celebration of Jacobean-style kingship. By interrupting the manuscript and having Fletcher re-write the ending, Buc’s part in the collaboration ensured that the play moralises Barnavelt’s downfall.

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This chapter began with the premise that a play’s silent collaborators should be given their due for a greater understanding of textual transmission and dramatic processes. In the Barnavelt
manuscript, Buc and Crane collaborated in order to create a play workable on stage. This was a process of some difficulty, but one that was ultimately productive, as without Buc’s collaboration, the play would be lost to history. Buc’s vision was placed front and centre, with the playwrights labouring towards his ideal text. Buc’s authority determined what stayed, what went, and what was added. Even if Fletcher and Massinger were the original writers, by the end of the collaboration, the play was Buc’s version of a Jacobean vision of Orange and Oldenbarnevelt.

My aim in this chapter was to carry out a thought experiment about the nature of authorship. Current thinking about collaborative playwriting has sought to remodel understandings of authorial work and identity, though this has not been extended to the Master of the Revels and those who were obligated to factor his demands into plays. In this chapter, I have portrayed the revision process of The Tragedy of Sir John van Olden Barnavelt as one that was fractured, but essentially collaborative because Buc ensured its performance. But does Buc’s political authority confer the function of authorship? His tinkering with the manuscript and his directions to Crane to make further changes could be seen as having a destructive, rather than collaborative, effect on the play. Despite this, Buc and Crane’s revisions of the Barnavelt manuscript fits within Taylor’s “artinality” model of collaboration:

A co-author is another wrighter, a fellow artisan, a fellow maker, at work on the same object. An object made by one artisan is not necessarily superior to an object made by more than one. Although collaborators sometimes clash, sometimes they combine to produce an object that neither could have produced alone.88

88 Taylor “Artinality,” 23.
Whilst Taylor equates all playwrights through this model, he does not elevate individuals such as scribes or censors to the position of collaborative author. If we extend Taylor’s understanding of artiginality, this model should include censorial and scribal figures, particularly when those figures are part of the dramatic and textual production that ensures eventual staging. *Barnavelt* could not have been created without Buc and Crane’s changes. Even if the collaboration was interrupted by censorship, the manuscript evidences how a scribe and censor could have a profound effect on the shape and tenor of a play. If scholars and editors exclude censors and scribes like Buc and Crane from the position of collaborators – and even authors in this context – we cannot fully understand how plays reached the stage.
3 Sharing Pages: Censorial Service in The Honest Man’s Fortune

By the spring of 1614, Nathan Field, the erstwhile star of the Children of the Queen’s Revels had become the leading player, legal representative and a sharer in the newly formed Lady Elizabeth’s Men.¹ He had also begun to write plays. After writing two on his own, he entered into a collaborative venture with Fletcher, Massinger, and Robert Daborne. The four playwrights began working on The Honest Man’s Fortune. The play was contracted by Henslowe, who was now the landlord of the Hope, the theatre that the Lady Elizabeth’s Men rented.² Things were not going to plan however, as three of the four playwrights found themselves in jail without money for bail. One of those playwrights, Daborne, did not take part in the final project. Before Daborne’s departure however, Field calculated that the best way to get out of prison was to appeal to Henslowe for an early pay instalment for the play:

Mr Hinchlow

You vnderstand or vnfortunate extremitie and I doe not thincke you so void of christianitie but that you would throw so much money into the Thames as wee request now of you; rather then endanger so many innocent liues, you know there is xl more at least to be receaued of you, for the play, wee desire you to lend vs vl of that, wch shall be allowed to you without wch wee cannot be bayled, nor I play any more till this be dispatch’d, it will loose you xxl ere the end of the next weeke, beside the hin=derance of the next new play, pray Sr Consider

² In 1613, Henslowe partnered with the waterman Jacob Meade to erect the Hope theatre, designed as a playhouse-cum-bear-pit. They entered into an agreement with Field and another actor, Robert Dawes, as sharers in the merged company to house and furnish the Lady Elizabeth’s Men at the Hope. In this agreement, Henslowe and Mead paid for the plays the company performed, and the company reimbursed the businessmen on the second or third day of performance. See Greg, Henslowe, 23-5.
our Cases with humanitie, and now giue us cause to acknowledge you our true freind in time of neede; wee haue entreated Mr. Dauison to deliuer this note, as well to witnesse yr loue, as or promises, and allwayes acknowledgment to be euer

yr most thanckfull; and louing freinds

Nat: Field

the mony shall be abated out of the mony remayns for the play of mr fletcher & ours

Rob: Daborne

I have everfounde you a true lovinge freinde to mee & in soe small a suite yt beeinge honest I hope yow will not faile vs. Philip Massinger³

In this collaborative letter, Field begs Henslowe whilst simultaneously warning him of the financial repercussions if the playwrights’ needs are not met. Despite his newly acquired status in the Lady Elizabeth’s Men, the letter evidences Field’s continuing obligation to Henslowe as a contracted employee. The letter also invokes the mutual responsibility, or service, that Henslowe owed the playwrights. In this symbiotic relationship, Field provided Henslowe with his skills as a leading man to draw audiences to the Hope and Henslowe served Field in turn by furnishing him with a house to play in.

Although it is not directly mentioned in this letter, Field is employing the rhetoric of service in order to remind Henslowe of his obligations to the actors. Field is quite aware that Henslowe needs him just as much as he needs Henslowe and, whilst appealing to Henslowe’s

“christianitie”, he also points out that he thinks it unlikely that “you would throw so much money into the Thames as wee request now of you”. Both Field and Henslowe knew that keeping the leading man in jail would lead to a financial loss if said man could not perform: “nor I play any more till this be dispatch’d, it will loos you xxl [£20] ere the end of next weeke”. Field also reminds Henslowe that he, alongside the other incarcerated playwrights and the missing Fletcher, are still owed £10, but cannily asks only for £5 to be paid so that they can be bailed. After appealing to the business-end of service relations in the letter, Field then employs service’s related friendship rhetoric, “and now giue us cause to acknowledge you our true freind in time of neede… as well to witnes yr loue”, before signing off, “yr most thanckfull; and louing freinds”. This exploitation of friendship rhetoric was typical of Field; as Steve Orman has written, “In both the play and the epistles, friendship is at the forefront of [Field’s] service”. His experiences of service subsequently came to bear on The Honest Man’s Fortune, not only in terms of how it was made but also as a crucial aspect of the plot of the play itself.

Field had other ways to tug on Henslowe’s heart – and pocket – strings when employing service rhetoric. He also used the language of kin. In another letter written from prison asking for bail on a separate occasion, Field referred to Henslowe as “Father” and to himself as “your loving son”. This father-son language Field uses is typical of service relations, considering, as Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos writes:

Strong norms governed the relationship between masters and their servants, with masters being considered not just employers but something akin to parents

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4 Steve Orman, “Nathan Field’s Theatre of Excess: Youth Culture and Bodily Excess on the Early Modern Stage (1600-1613),” (PhD diss., Canterbury Christ Church University, 2014), 179.
5 Field, “Letter from Nathan Field to Philip Henslowe for a loan for bail, no date”.

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(‘in loco parentis’); the language of kin was often applied to them, implying moral obligations of masters to their servants.\(^6\)

When Field uses the language of kin to ask for favours, he relies on the emotional, social, and financial bond that ties relationships together. He was clearly adept at manipulating these links by using the formal rhetoric of reliance that service relationships necessitated. Field was not alone in this; Alleyn also had a father-son dynamic with Henslowe. These relationships were founded on mutual love, mutual profit, and mutual service.

The playwrights’ letter to Henslowe is indicative of the friendly service relationships that were central to the early modern theatrical community – and society at large. Service, similar to the dynamic of credit in *Eastward Ho!*\(^7\), forced cooperation and collaboration in an environment that could easily become antagonistic and litigious.\(^7\) Service was, however, fraught with social, political, and sexual undercurrents that both gave life to and strained master-servant relationships. This chapter considers how service relationships in the playhouse and the court inform the playworld of *The Honest Man’s Fortune*, particularly the parts of the play that were subsequently censored because of its sexualisation of servants. If service relationships were vital to the play’s production through the collaboration between playwrights

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\(^7\) Up until the late twentieth century, there was little critical interest in early modern service relationships. However, there has recently been an effluence of literature that considers the social obligations attendant on the master-servant relationships that made up early modern society. Mark Thornton Burnett first considered how writings about service culture allowed early modern people to consider power, social change, and economic crises in *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997). In *Discourses of Service in Shakespeare’s England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), David Evett writes on the ideals and practice of early modern service in Shakespeare’s plays, particularly through the servant characters. Judith Weil, in *Service and Dependency in Shakespeare’s Plays* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), suggests that the service relationship could be both a site of fear and licence because of dependents’ ability to change each other. In *Shakespeare, Love and Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), David Schalkwyk considers how love relationships were informed by social and structural formations of service, focusing particularly on Shakespeare’s sonnets. Finally, Elizabeth Rivlin, in *The Aesthetics of Service in Early Modern England* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2012) suggests that service was an unstable site of contact between master and servant because the servant could take on the subjectivity of the master. These critics have considered service from a variety of angles, though there has yet to be an account of how collaboration fits within the all-encompassing cultural dynamic of service.
and impresarios, these kinds of service relationships nevertheless remained a focus of potential disruption in *Fortune’s* plot. I suggest in this chapter that playhouse self-censorship is modelled on a type of collaborative service. The process by which the company revised *Fortune’s* representation of service is analogous to the company’s own service relationships with their patrons, audiences, and the authorities.

I begin by appraising the different textual instantiations of *Fortune* and explain some of the ways that the play was censored by the King’s Men. I then trace the place and purpose of service within the theatres and discuss how self-censorship was part of the service dynamic between the King’s Men and the then Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert. I then move on to explain how service operated within early modern culture more generally before discussing the sexual connotations of service. In particular, I discuss how Field’s profession as a boy actor turned him into an eroticised servant, and I place Field within a broader context, including James I’s notorious relationships with his “minions”. I then consider *Fortune’s* interest in service relationships alongside the company’s self-censorship of Francis Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding*. In order to explain why the King’s Men’s revision of *Fortune* was self-censorship, I suggest that the company read the thirteen-year-old play as a potential satire of James’ homoerotic service relationships. By contextualising this revision within the cultural mechanics of service, I ultimately want to show that censorship was a collaborative service offered to the Master of the Revels by the King’s Men.

**The texts of The Honest Man’s Fortune**

The play *The Honest Man’s Fortune* is determined by the collaborative service at the heart of London’s theatrical companies. Field wrote the core of the play, with Fletcher and Massinger
helping to fill out the action. It was originally performed in 1613 by the Lady Elizabeth’s Men at either the Swan or Hope Theatre. The King’s Men revived the play in 1625, performing it at either, or both, the Globe and Blackfriars. *Fortune* exists in two versions, the manuscript Dyce 9, and in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647 which was reprinted in 1679. However, included in the 1679 Folio is a list of the play’s original performers. It is this cast list that points towards the play’s provenance. Among the actors named are Field and Joseph Taylor, who were with the Lady Elizabeth’s Men and then later with the King’s Men. It was eventually Taylor who convinced the Master of the Revels Herbert to allow the play’s revival twelve years later. At some point between the play’s first performance and the revival, the man who would later become the King’s Men’s bookkeeper, Edward Knight, copied *The Honest Man’s Fortune* from what was probably the Lady Elizabeth Men’s book. This manuscript was then used as a promptbook for the play’s revival in 1625. The play disappeared into obscurity until 1641, when it was included in the Lord Chamberlain’s list of plays under protection from unauthorised publication. Then, around 4 September 1646, it was entered into the Stationer’s Register by Robinson and Moseley along with the 29 other plays that would make up the first Beaumont and Fletcher Folio published the next year.

The Dyce manuscript shows the process by which *Fortune* was prepared for the stage in 1625. Particularly, the manuscript evidences the fine line between theatrical revision and

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8 Cyrus Hoy’s authorship breakdown is as follows:
FIELD: I; II, III.i.144-206, ii; IV
FIELD AND MASSINGER: III.iii
FIELD AND FLETCHER: V.i, iv
MASSINGER: III.i.1-143
FLETCHER: V.ii, iii.
9 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Fifty comedies and tragedies written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen ; all in one volume, published by the authors original copies, the songs to each play being added* (J. Macock, for John Martyn, Henry Herringman, Richard Marriot, 1679), 509.
10 Malone reported that he had the manuscript in *Historical Account of the English Stage* in 1836, and it was subsequently sold to Alexander Dyce at the Heber Sales. Hoy, Textual Introduction to *Fortune*, 4.
censorship. Whilst many of the passages marked for omission show the company representatives considering how best to shorten the play for performance, these deleted passages were also ones that were – conveniently enough – not socially or politically suitable for staging in 1625. *Fortune* was performed at the sunset of James’ reign and the dawning of Charles’; and as such, it would have reflected back upon the previous era whilst adapting itself to the tastes of the new reign. As Clare writes, *Fortune* “bring[s] together the concerns of the Master of the Revels throughout James’s reign and yet, also, heralds changes in the scope of Jacobean and Caroline censorship”\(^\text{12}\). Because of the large gap in time between performances, the necessary revisions made to the play transforms the Dyce papers into a palimpsestic text. Whilst the original promptbook is lost, the extant manuscript and the Folio versions of the play both derive from the same earlier copy text.\(^\text{13}\)

The two versions have major differences. In the manuscript, the company made multiple emendations which included cauterising the play’s bawdy language and cutting out a whole scene.\(^\text{14}\) At some point between 1613 and 1625, Knight copied the play into a new promptbook.\(^\text{15}\) On the front sheet of his copy, Knight wrote, “*The Honest mans Fortune: Plaide In the yeare 1613:*” in reference to the play’s original performance date.\(^\text{16}\) It is unclear whether Knight copied the manuscript closer to the revival in 1625, or whether he copied it earlier whilst

\(^{12}\) Clare, *Censorship*, 201.

\(^{13}\) Hoy argues that the original copy was the playwrights’ “foul papers”, Textual Introduction to *Fortune*, 5. However, it seems more likely that the two subsequent copies derive from a promptbook, see Meg Powers Livingston, “Censorship in the Plays of John Fletcher,” (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1999), 180.

\(^{14}\) The papers used to put together the Dyce manuscript also hold six different watermarks, but unlike the *Barnavelt* manuscript, there is no evidence that this is because of cancellation and replacement.

\(^{15}\) There are up to four hands in the manuscript of *The Honest Man’s Fortune*. The first belongs to Edward Knight. The second hand in the manuscript is that of an anonymous stage adapter who used a normal italic, whose role was to cut and correct the text. Third is Herbert’s hand, who wrote part of a license on the final page, and perhaps crossed out some lines. And finally, there is the mysterious “Ihon”, also on the final page, beneath the “ffinis”. For years it was thought “Ihon” was the play’s scribe, but since Knight was identified, it is now unclear who “Ihon” was. He may have just been someone doodling on the manuscript. See Livingston, “Censorship,” 170.

\(^{16}\) Ioppolo, ed., *The Honest Man’s Fortune* (The Malone Society Reprints) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), [Fol. oal]. Subsequent references to the play will be incorporated within the body of the text.
he was still working for Henslowe, revising it later for the King’s Men’s performance. Evidence for the latter comes from the two different inks and handwriting styles used on the title page, which indicate different writing times. Whilst Knight used a mixed-secretary and italic hand for “Plaide In the yeare 1613”, he used an italic hand and a different ink for the title “The Honest mans Fortune”. The implication of this is that Knight added “Plaide In the yeare 1613” to the manuscript in 1625 so that Herbert could believe its historicity and thus its previous allowance. If Knight did copy it earlier than 1625, he was required to change the play’s ending even at that time. Regardless of when he copied the play, Fortune underwent two distinct revision processes. In the first round, the playwrights, or a member or members of the company, instructed Knight to copy the play into a new promptbook without the potentially offending material. Around the same time, or in a later revision, Knight and an anonymous stage adaptor cut more lines from the play using marginal lines and overwriting. Herbert then either went through the play or simply allowed it as it was, having seen that the company had already revised it.

The revision process resulted in a play that has been re-fashioned through playhouse collaborative censorship. Naturally, some suggestive material still slipped through the cracks, but the company employed certain hermeneutic strategies to displace meaning. This allowed for a play that was at once self-censored and yet still risqué enough to pique audience interest. This is particularly the case with Fortune’s representation of service relationships. In its subplot, the play is particularly interested in the difference between masters and servants, and the sexual implications of the master-service dynamic. Fortune romanticises the service given

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17 See Ioppolo, Introduction to Fortune, xvii.
18 Ioppolo, Introduction to Fortune, xvi-xvii.
19 It is unclear whether the playwrights were involved in the revision process, especially considering their hands cannot be found in the manuscript. Ioppolo argues that the play did return to the playwrights, and that the manuscript “reveals the entire and common process of authorial circularity”, Dramatists, 134.
to the aptly named nobleman Montaigne by his page Viramour. The play presents Montaigne as an object of love, whilst Viramour – translating roughly to “true love” – is the object of the audience’s desire. At the end of the play, the Courtier Laverdine becomes convinced that Viramour is a girl disguised as a page. In the final scene, Laverdine proposes marriage to Viramour, who is revealed to the audience dressed as a woman. It soon becomes apparent, however, that Viramour is in fact a boy after all. This revelation occurs after the men frisk him, discuss his genitalia, and reveal his breeches. In their revision of Fortune, the King’s Men tempered this eroticisation of service, modifying or excising references to young men as sexual objects whilst maintaining the play’s enshrinement of service relations.

Although the dating of the manuscript cannot be verified, it has been agreed that the King’s Men used the manuscript as a promptbook. The manuscript is fairly clean, despite the lines throughout which indicate cuts and omissions. Many of these passages seem to have ostensibly been cut for dramatic purposes. Perhaps the company wished to reduce some of the long roles for the boys or cut the play down because of time constraints. The line between theatrical revision and censorship is somewhat blurred in the manuscript however, as what appears as cuts for timing or acting purposes may in fact have more to do with the content of what was being cut. Indeed, even the small revisions in the manuscript occur within a pattern of cuts within the play, and with Fletcher’s plays and early modern theatre more generally. As Meg Powers Livingston argues, “censorship on a relatively small scale (of words, phrases, and brief passages) is consistently linked to censorship on a larger scale (long passages and even

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20 I follow the MS for the characters’ names. In the Folio, Montaigne is named Montague. I discuss the name change below.
21 Ioppolo, Introduction to Fortune, x.
22 As Hoy writes, the Dyce Manuscript “shows us the text of The Honest Man’s Fortune in the process of being prepared for the stage”, Textual Introduction to Fortune, 8.
entire scenes). All the small changes made to the manuscript accumulate to show a pattern of censorial revision which served the interests of the Master of the Revels.

The men revising the manuscript produced several different markings for the different kinds of cuts. The company firstly purged the play of oaths. In the manuscript, Knight wrote “heaven” eight times, whilst the Folio prints “God”. At one point, the scribe followed the papers he was originally transcribing, writing “God wot”, but on second thought he added another “o” in “God”, deleted “wot” and interlined “sooth”. These are small changes that every play of the period went through, but in adapting a play that had first been performed twelve years earlier, the King’s Men had to alter the play according to new political and social circumstances as well. The second type of cuts are “horizontal lines before and after the deleted dialogue with a vertical line in the margin”, which are supposed to be theatrical cuts. Ioppolo believes that these omissions are “designed to hasten the main action and to shorten the action or dialogue in the subplots”. Because this text was not deleted permanently by crossing out or scribbling, it may indicate that the lines could be used later in the correct performance conditions. The third type of cut is “marked both by horizontal and vertical lines as well as by heavy deletion”, that is, with close loops overwriting each line. The fourth type of deletion is crossing out for scribal errors. The fifth type of cut does not appear in the manuscript at all. Act 5 Scene 3 in the Folio is not included in the manuscript, but is disclosed through the single stage direction, “A Banquet: Set Out:” (TLN 2624).

23 Livingston, “Censorship,” 220.
24 The revision of oaths follows the 1606 “Acte to Restrain Abuses of Players” and the 1623 “An Act to prevent and reform profane Swearing and Cursing” which proscribed publicly speaking the name of God in jest or profanity. For an extensive analysis of the act and its effects on public speech and theatre see Hugh Gazzard, “An Act to Restrain Abuses of Players (1606),” The Review of English Studies 61, no. 251 (2010), 495-528.
25 Clare, Censorship, 103.
26 Ioppolo, Introduction to Fortune, xii. These appear on Fols. 4a, 16b, 17a, 18a, 20b-21a, 22a, 23b, 24a, 24b, 25a, 31a, and 34b.
27 Ioppolo, Introduction to Fortune, xii.
28 Ioppolo. Introduction to Fortune, xii.
29 Ioppolo, Introduction to Fortune, xii. These cuts appear on Fols. 9b, 10b, 18a, 19b, 23a, 28b, 32a, 32b, and 33a.
In the Folio, the Banquet scene is made up of three servants laying out the table for their mistress Lamira’s marriage banquet (although her suitor is yet to be announced). There is no substantive evidence to suggest that this scene was cut for only practical, theatrical reasons. Part of the reason for the cut could have been to shorten this otherwise lengthy play; the scene adds nothing by way of plot except for making the audience think that Montaigne (Montague in the Folio) is not one of the bachelors eligible to marry Lamira. Perhaps the company intended to make the play more palatable, particularly to the women in the Blackfriars audience. The scene opens with, “Then my Lady will have a bedfellow tonight” and continues with a bawdy description of Lamira’s possible sexual partners. With lines such as “heaven what a danty armefull shall he enjoy that has the launching of her, what a fight shee’l make” and the Fourth Servant telling the others he has made a posset that “some body shall give me thanks for’t, ‘tas a few toyes in’t will rase commotions in a bed”, it is little wonder the company chose to cut this scene. The company was well aware that Herbert, unlike Buc, was “acting more often as a censor of morality than of politics”.

It seems that the pre-banquet scene was cut for reasons of propriety, and this excision is in line with the other material cut from the play. The two versions of Fortune attempt – in their separate ways – to attenuate the play’s misogyny. The Folio erases some of the play’s misogynist insults, such as when Orleans calls his wife a “howling bitch wife” (TLN 2396), which only appears as “howling ---” in the Folio. The presence of this line in the manuscript points to the changing tastes between the late Jacobean era and the Civil War. The company also excised lines such as “you shall haue manye m’es, that will so mistake, as to / take their

30 Livingston, “Censorship” 189.
31 Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and tragedies written by Francis Beaumont and Iohn Fletcher Gentlemen... (London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the three Pidgeons, and for Humphrey Moseley, 1647), sig. Yyyyy1'.
32 Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and tragedies, sig. Yyyyy1'.
33 Bawcutt, Herbert, 73.
34 Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and tragedies, sig. Xxxxv.
horsekeepers, & footmen instead of their husbands” (TFN 1812-4) and “you smell like a woman's chamber, she newly vp, before she haue pincht hir vapors in with hir cloathes” (TFN 2175-7). Both lines were revised with a vertical line in the margin. This is exactly the sort of ribaldry that Herbert, if not certain members of the audience, would have found offensive.

The play’s representation of women was not the only place where the manuscript was reworked. Besides deleting misogynistic passages, the company agents also crossed out lines that satirised courtier culture. For example, the short ironic line, “pretious, tis almost as common as to have a lord arrested, & lye by it” (TLN 1579-80) was deleted with heavy scouring. The company’s revisions also aimed to minimise criticism of the corruption of the arms of government. Several passages are deleted in which courtiers lament to the tune of Laverdure’s contention that “in this Cannibal age, he that would have the suite of wealth, must not care whome he feedes on” (TLN 1677-8). And more explicitly, as the courtier La Poope reckons:

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Indeed corruption is a tree, whose branches are of an
  unmeasurable length, they spread every where, & the dew
  that drops from them have Infected some chairs and
  stools of authority. (TLN 1658-61)
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La Poope’s pun on the “stools of authority” – that the king’s throne is also his place of evacuation – is a digestion of the first play’s vision of the trickle-down effects of courtly corruption. The thirty-line passage from which these lines originate were cut with a vertical line in the left margin, ostensibly a revision for timing purposes. But the substance of the lines evidences how theatrical revision doubled as self-censorship in this manuscript.

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35 Livingston corrects Ioppolo for not including the deletion of “you smell…” in her edition of the play, “Censorship,” 297.
36 Incidentally, this line must have been thought very offensive as it does not appear in the Folio.
In *Fortune*, these deletions, both short and long, cannot be traced with certainty back to the Revels Office. But the manuscript evidence does point towards a large-scale revision originating from the playhouse, particularly because of Knight’s involvement alongside the hand of an anonymous bookkeeper. Apart from the misogynistic and anti-court material, these two paid particular attention to revising the manuscript’s representation of eroticised service relationships. There are corollaries between the play’s representation of service, the company’s service to the Master of the Revels, and the sexualisation of service in James’ court, the playhouses, and early modern culture more generally. The anxiety on the part of the company to moderate the play’s vision of servile relationships speaks to the company’s immersion within a service culture. They not only had to serve their patron and audience but plays also had to align with policies of the Revels Office. The resultant manuscript indicates how censorship emerged from the playhouses and that the culture of service was part of the machinery which produced playable texts.

**Cultures of service in early modern England**

Service operated through a trickledown effect and touched every member of society, even those who were not in another’s employment. Before the 1572 Vagabond Act, actors were considered masterless men – and thus social undesirables liable to punishment – unless they could prove they wore the livery of a nobleman.37 Service relationships guaranteed the players’ right to perform in the first place; without their patrons, the Chamberlain’s, Admiral’s, Queen’s, and King’s servants were unprotected and unemployed. Although the players’ status rose through their noble connections, they were also indebted to the person who patronised the company.

with their name. Company members were not only obliged to their patron but also to each other, the Master of the Revels, the monarch, and to their paying audience. Within this set of obligations, a theatrical company was the servant of many masters, and had to satisfy on all fronts whilst also working together to achieve the common goal of performance. The censorship of plays was just one of their many obligations. Because of this, it is not clear whether changes made to a play were done in service to the audience (whether public or noble), or to the Master of the Revels.

Obligation to the monarch, noblemen, and the paying audience was only one of the ways that service manifested in the early modern theatrical industry. Although the company names may gesture towards a conception of service that is aligned with the court, the hirelings of acting companies “belonged more to the fluid world of urban commerce than to the ostensibly unchanging domain of feudal retainers”. Fortune affiliates itself with a comic and romanticised view of service, representing an older and anachronistic master-servant dynamic that simplified the complex, disorderly and uncomfortable service relationships in the theatre and the world at large. In doing so, the play defends the company’s use of service relationships as one of the bedrocks for their successful operations. Service and mastery was integral to the companies’ organisational structure of labour, and key to collaborative processes (even if those who worked for the company had little choice). However, although the playwrights represent

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38 Courtly patronage of the companies was a kind of service relationship. As Rivlin writes, “Social hierarchy and affective reciprocity were fundamental to patronage, as they were to other forms of service”, Service, 19. In this chapter, however, I am more interested in service than patronage, because playhouse relationships appear to me to be closer to service because it is more commercialised and proto-capitalist.


40 This is similar to how Dekker represents “anachronistic modes of corporate affiliation over new ones” in his representation of guild and livery structures in The Shoemaker’s Holiday (1599), so as to defend the guild and livery corporate form in the theatres. See Henry S. Turner, The Corporate Commonwealth: Pluralism and Political Fictions in England, 1516-1651 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), xix. See also 117-143.
the older-style service as an idealised form of social relations, service was still developing in the playhouse as a structure to forward the companies’ corporate enterprises.41

Service relationships in London’s theatre did not only occur between shareholders and impresarios but extended also to playhouse personnel and government officials. It was within these conditions that the Master of the Revels perused plays, and the companies revised them according to his judgement. The relationship between the companies and the Master of the Revels went from hostile to fruitful because the companies served the Master’s need for employment and the Master provided the companies with royal performance opportunities and his services as a censor.42 The Master of the Revels’ was in turn a servant to the Lord Chamberlain and the monarch. Everyone, within this social fabric, was knitted to someone else. The manuscript of *The Honest Man’s Fortune* and its revival are a product of this context, in which Knight served the Lady Elizabeth’s and then the King’s Men, as well as Herbert, who served the nobility in turn. The process by which the play came to be performed reveals how service relationships affected plays. Furthermore, the relationship between the companies and the Master of the Revels allows for a consideration of where theatrical revision ends and where censorship begins. That is, in his revision of *Fortune*, Knight and the bookkeeper fulfilled their service to both the King’s Men and the Master of the Revels by condensing a bloated manuscript by cutting out the passages that were potentially libellous.

Companies produced workable texts by figuring censorship and revision practices as a type of service. As a group of servants working for various masters, the company associates

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41 Here I follow Turner’s argument that Dekker’s representation of the romanticised guilds and liveries in *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* is deceptive, “the degree to which incorporated guilds and livery companies were not anachronistic medieval institutions persisting in a newly early modern landscape but had themselves become important vehicles for integrating new modes of highly capitalized instrument and the values of a consumer-orientated market into urban, and even national, society”, *Corporate*, 131-2. Turner makes no reference to service here, though I am extending the implications of his argument to consider the other consequences of playhouse reliance on guild-style management.

42 Dutton, *Mastering*, 47.
had to ensure that their material performed the wishes of those who had the power to curtail their playing. Playhouse scribes, in particular, appear to have been conditioned to serve the Master of the Revels’ wishes. Just as Crane altered the manuscript of Barnavelt without in-text direction from Buc, so too did Knight and the King’s Men cut out offending passages before Herbert even flicked through Fortune. Indeed, it could be that the company decided to re-write the ending to forestall Herbert’s rejection. As N. W. Bawcutt writes, it is most likely that “the markings were made before the manuscript was sent to Herbert, and reflect the actors’ understanding of what he would be likely to find offensive”. Whether Herbert looked at the manuscript or not is beside the point because Knight was working in Herbert’s service and must have known what the Master expected. As Clare argues, it is not “wholly essential to differentiate between the hand of the scribe and that of the censor”, since Knight was revising according to Herbert’s wishes. This is evidenced by a rather prickly letter sent from Herbert to Knight in 1633, when the King’s Men were attempting to mount a revival of The Tamer Tamed. In his letter, Herbert acknowledges how Knight’s promptbooks made light work for the censor:

Mr Knight,

In many things you have saved mee labour ; yet wher your judgement or penn fayld you, I have made boulde to use mine. Purge ther parts, as I have the booke. And I hope every hearer and player will thinke that I have done God good servise, and the quality no wronge; who hath no greater enemies than oaths, prophaness, and publique ribaldry, wh[ch for the future I doe absolutely forbid to

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43 Hoy, Textual Introduction to Fortune, 5.
44 Bawcutt, Herbert, 58.
45 Clare, Censorship, 201.
bee presented unto mee in any playbooke, as you will answer it at your perill.

21 Octob. 1633.46 (emphasis mine)

In this vaguely threatening letter, Herbert begins by thanking Knight for preparing the promptbook according to some of the Revels Office’s specifications – but then moves into chastisement for not doing a thorough enough job. It could be that Knight – under direction from the company – cut just enough out to make the play acceptable but not enough for it to lose its bite. Herbert, however, considered Knight as failing in his role as a servant to the Revels Office. He did not appreciate having to extirpate the “oaths, prophaness, and publique ribaldry” on his own. Herbert was obliged to hold up the moral standards of the stage, if not for the King, but in service of God himself.

Employment in the companies, more generally, was figured in terms of service. It was not only actors that worked within these structures, but also the playwrights, bookkeepers and scribes. Henslowe would bind players and playwrights alike in terms of service, such as when Richard Alleyn “bownde hime seallfe vnto me for ij yeares in & asumsette as a hiered servante”.47 Players and playwrights were the servants of the landlord Henslowe, and yet technically they worked for the Admiral’s Men. Servant-master relationships in the theatre were thus more muddled than aestheticized representations would make appear. Many members of the companies were also free members of guilds, bringing guild-like organisational structures to the playhouses even though theatre groups were companies or associations.48

Ben Jonson, most famously, was a member of the Bricklayers’, John Heminges of the Grocers’ and Henslowe was a member of the Dyers’ guild. Free members of guilds took apprentices, who effectively became company servants. For example, Henslowe bought the

46 Bawcutt, Herbert, 183, 265e.
47 Foakes, Diary, March 25, 1598, 241. Quoted by Rivlin, Service, 103.
48 Turner, Corporate, 122.
rights to an apprentice boy named James Bristow from one of his players, who he then leased to the Admiral’s Men as a boy player despite Bristow’s technical status as an apprentice “grocer”. This resulted in what Henry S. Turner describes as a picture of “overlapping membership in several different corporate entities at once” because of the shared allegiances to guilds, liveries, and companies. The apprenticeship system was a double-edged sword for the companies. On the one hand, the regulation of members allowed for professionalisation and the development of a theatrical trade. But on the other, apprenticeships cemented service relationships which entrapped actors. Since service was shared in this context, the master was, as Elizabeth Rivlin writes, “an ambiguous, multiple presence”, being both a singular individual and the entire company. The simultaneously vague and binding bonds of service resulted in multiple authorities within a playhouse. The company employees, whether actors, playwrights, bookkeepers, or scribes, were the servants of many masters.

One of these servant-masters was Nathan Field, an apprentice to the Children of the Queen’s Chapel who eventually accrued masterly status in the Lady Elizabeth’s and King’s Men. Field knew the dangers of service. It is likely that he was one of those imprisoned for The Isle of Gulls and Chapman’s Byron. He was drafted into the theatre in 1600 at the age of thirteen, after Henry Evans signed a lease for the Blackfriars theatre from Richard Burbage with the intent of starting a children’s company. Field was impressed into the company via the Paul’s Chapel School. He may have had an experience such as Thomas Clifton’s, whose father sued Evans for kidnapping Thomas on the way to school:

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50 Turner, Corporate, 122.
52 Rivlin, Aesthetics, 103.
there to sorte him with mercenary players & such other children as by the abuse aforesaid they had there placed, and by lyke force & violence him there to detayne & compel him to exercyse the base trade of a mercenary enterlude player.53

What is at stake is not so much the fact that the boy was kidnapped, but that he was forced into the unseemly trade of the “mercenary players”. Field was listed amongst the other boys who had been captured for the company. From his very beginnings with the Children, he had no choice but to serve as a playhouse commodity. However, Field did eventually learn how to take advantage of those to whom he was in service.

The companies, theoretically, were also in service to both their patron and audiences. As time went on, however, theatrical companies found themselves in service to their patrons mostly in name, unless they were called to perform before the monarch for Christmas festivities. By the early seventeenth century, patrons’ names imbued companies with status, and sometimes protection, but not much else. Companies’ allegiances were shifting towards their audience because it was through the paying public that they could earn their daily bread. This created, as David Schalkwyk writes, “tension between an older relation of service to a patron and the newer commercial form of service to a paying audience” as a company tried to gratify both.54 Perhaps it is for this reason that companies became less afraid of satirising the nobility, as they wished to appeal more to their audience’s desire for salacious material rather than maintaining sensitivity towards their noble masters. This began to emerge in the plays, where stories of traditional service relationships are put under pressure by real world economic contingencies or romantic imperatives. Fortune is one such play, as it maintains that service is

53 Quoted in Margaret Ellen Williams, “‘A Play is not so ydle a thing’: The Drama Output and Theatre-Craft of Nathan Field” (PhD. diss., University of Birmingham, 1992), 12.
54 Schalkwyk, Love, 10.
central to romance and friendship, whilst its textual history bespeaks the changing connotations and dangers of service over the space of twelve years.

By the time Field and his collaborators were writing *Fortune*, the concept of service was in a state of flux both within and outside of the playhouses. Despite its changing meaning, service was still, in the words of Schalkwyk, “the predominant form of social organization and personal experience in early modern England”.55 Indeed, service was so all-encompassing that it was part of the definition of what it meant to be human. Michael Neill writes that, “it was almost impossible to conceive of a properly human existence without the hierarchy of masters and servants”.56 The service model structured life and work, beginning at a young age, particularly as most English adolescents, including the sons of noblemen, underwent a period of household work. Leaving the family home to take up a service role lessened the expenses associated with maintaining children and mitigated the risk of children being uncared for if their parents died, and was thus “complimentary to, rather than a substitute for, the parental home”.57 Service was also part of the Anglican understanding of one’s relationship to God. Serving God, it was thought, brought the believer closer to a state of freedom:

O God, which art author of peace, and lover of concorde, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternall life, whose service is perfect fredome: defende us, thy humble servauntes, in all assaultes of our enemies, that wee surely trustyng in thy defence, maye not feare the power of any adversaries: through the myght of Jesu Christ our lorde. Amen.58

This paradox was heard by churchgoers every Sunday after Archbishop Thomas Cranmer added it to the liturgy in 1549 in the Anglican Prayer Book’s service of Morning Prayer. Due

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58 Quoted by Evett, *Dependency*, 2.
to the prayer’s “consideration of service as a social practice”, service was domesticated because it called attention to servants’ obligation to their masters within the context of praising God.59 England’s social economy began at God, to whom all were in service, and then the king, who was only in God’s service, and then the noblemen, in service to God and the king and to each other, and then the rest of society, who served all of the above.

Although they were based on a master-servant dynamic, service relationships were not necessarily ones of bondage. Before the seventeenth century, service was ideally based on links of mutual trust, obligation and most importantly, love. This differentiated service from credit because credit was first and foremost a financial relationship. To be a servant of a family meant being part of that family, loving your master, and having your master’s love and obligation in return. The master-servant relationship was thought to guarantee protection and mutual sacrifice. More broadly however, the changes heralded by the burgeoning capitalism of the early modern economy meant the breakdown of these love-service relationships. What were once relationships based on long-term commitment became short-term positions paid in cash.60 Disarmingly similar to our own context, these economic and social changes led to greater mobility and opportunities available to servants, although it resulted in less financial and social stability.

Loving-service readily blended into the period’s friendship discourse, where friendship was the “ultimate form of mutual service”.61 In Shakespeare’s Sonnets in particular, service, friendship, and erotic desire are tied together through the idea that friendship is the natural extension of the self into the other.62 However, as the Sonnets show, these relationships did not necessarily guarantee mutual fulfilment. Service was, in any case, different to friendship in that

59 Evett, Dependency, 3.
60 Evett, Dependency, 4.
61 Schalkwyck, Love, 51.
62 Schalkwyck, Love, 52.
it was dependent on unequal status whilst friendship was predicated on equality. Because of this difference, friends could serve each other but a servant was emphatically not a friend. As Laurie Shannon writes about Renaissance friendship discourses, “The radical likeness of sex and station that friendship doctrines require singly enables a vision of parity, a virtually civic parity not modelled anywhere else in contemporary social structures”.

Whilst there is an overlap between discourses of friendship and service, such as mutual obligation, love, and homoeroticism, the two concepts are inherently different because one is based on consensual equality and the other on submission. The notion of amicitia, one soul shared between two bodies, was predicated on the bond between like and like. Thus, when Michel de Montaigne envisioned friendship as the perfect “commixture”, he imagined the process as a joyful seizure of each other’s wills:

… having seized all my will, induced the same to plunge and lose it self in his, which having likewise seized all his will, brought it to lose and plunge it self in mine … I may truly say, reserving nothing … that was either his, or mine.

Having captured each other’s intents and desires, the friends are able to take pleasure in their similitude. Within this model, a friend is not stealing the will without consent. In contrast to friendship, the servant, rather than sharing the same soul, was understood as a manifestation of the master, almost like another limb that acted according to his master’s desires.

The honest man of The Honest Man’s Fortune is given the name of Montaigne in the manuscript, a name that by the early seventeenth century might be considered synonymous with the discourse of ideal friendship. But, of course, the relationship that the Montaigne of the play enters into is not one of equal friends but of service. There must have been some

64 Michel de Montaigne, “Of Friendship.” Quoted in Shannon, Amity, 44.
discomfort with the name Montaigne, as he subsequently became Montague in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio. This unease centres on the play’s eroticisation of a relationship between unequals. Both friendship and service discourses could be figured within erotic terms. But service, in particular, was liable to be seen as the physical enactment of a superior’s pleasure. In the revision of *Fortune*, the King’s Men seem particularly squeamish about the loving relationships between those on different steps of the hierarchy. It was not only the bawdy representation of homoerotic desire, but that desire mixed with an excessively servile relationship.

Sexualised service was particularly fraught within courtly contexts, as James’ male favourites were believed to have served him in ways the court found scandalous. The understanding of friendship as a relationship between peers rather than with inferiors had implications for kingly relations. Although the king could have advisors, he could not have friends, because that would mean sharing his kingly soul with another, unequal, body. As Shannon writes, “When a king tries to undertake *amicitia*, he can only produce *mignonnerie*… [the] phenomenon at the juncture of friendship and (mis)rule”. Goodwrenches endanger the realm because the king is devoted to his friend instead of the commonwealth. The king could not technically engage in friendship because his friends are never his equals, but his servants.

Around the time the collaborators first wrote *Fortune*, rumours had circulated about James’

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affections for Robert Carr; and by the time the play was first revised between 1613 and 1625, the king’s affair with George Villiers was also widely known.  

James’ relationships with his “minions”, as they were known, can be read as symptomatic of the power relations between men in the period. As Alan Bray writes, “What determined the shared and recurring features of homosexual relationships was the prevailing distribution of power, economic power and social power, not the fact of homosexuality itself”. Bruce Smith terms this power dynamic in the period the “Myth of Master and Minion”, in which a man in a more powerful position took pleasure in a “boy”. In these scenarios, “sexual energy found release in the power play between them”. A dynamic in which one partner had significantly more power because of their social standing is significant for the lived realities and fictionalisations of service. As Mario DiGangi writes, there is “a convergence of servitude and eroticism that becomes particularly meaningful within the early modern discourse of male service”. James’ younger favourites were imbued with the erotic potential that came with the position of servant; indeed, their very desirability was dependent on their status.

James’ sexual interest in his favourites came to bear on plays such as Fortune, where the friendship between a nobleman and his servant are decidedly suggestive of the king’s love affairs. Viramour, the young servant, is the play’s main object of erotic attention. When the play was first written in 1613, James’ reputation was relatively stable, so a play which focuses

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68 James’ love affairs and sexual life were seemingly quite at odds with his advice to Henry in Basilikon Doron (1599), where sodomy is one of the “horrible crimes that yee are bound in conscience never to forgive” (alongside murder, incest, poisoning, false coin, and witchcraft). Quoted by Young, Homosexuality, 49. Although this seems as hypocritical to modern eyes, James may not have considered himself as performing sodomy. As Young writes, “James could have been perfectly earnest in condemning sodomy while simultaneously engaging in what we today would call homosexual behaviour”, Homosexuality, 49.


on eroticised male friendship did not necessarily have political undertones. By the 1620s, when “[c]riticism of James reached its zenith” because of his seemingly effeminate refusal to engage in the Thirty Years War, he began to be attacked for his “sexual morality”.  

72 In a context where pamphlets were circulating comparing James to Tiberius and Edward II, and Buckingham to Sejanus and Gaveston, the love-service relationship between Viramour and Montaigne perhaps did not seem prudent, even if the play is not particularly critical of love-service relationships.  

James’ love affairs were also considered as having a particularly theatricalised style within the public imaginary. As Francis Osborne posthumously wrote about James’ “favourites or minions”, “the kings kissing them after so lascivious a mode in publick, and upon the theatre, as it were, of the world, prompted many to imagine some things done in the tyring-house, that exceed my expressions no lesse then they do my experience”.  

74 Although Osborne is quick to claim ignorance of what goes on in the tiring house (and James’ bedroom), he still uses the theatre as a metonym for same-sex desire. Osborne envisioned James’ public-private enactment of his physical love for Buckingham and Somerset as the activity of players, who are understood as performers of homoeroticism. The King’s Men seem to have been well attuned to this reputation and so sought to attenuate the links between same-sex desire and servitude in Fortune so that the play was not seen to comment on James.

“Oh what a scoffe might men of woemen make, / yf they did knowe this boye”

By the time the company was self-censoring Fortune, they were already adept at reworking revived plays so as to bring them in line with current social mores. The King’s Men’s revision

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72 Young, Homosexuality, 62.
73 Young cites the circulating manuscript Tom Tell Troath (1622) and the pamphlet Speculum Belli Sacri (1624), both which compare James and Buckingham to Tiberius and Sejanus and other supposedly sodomitical historical precedents, Homosexuality, 62-3.
74 Quoted by Paul Hammond, Figuring Sex Between Men from Shakespeare to Rochester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 129.
of *Fortune* has several uncanny similarities to the censoring of *Philaster, or Love lies a-Bleeding* a few years before. In 1622, two years after the first edition of *Philaster* was released in quarto, the publisher Thomas Walkley printed a new and improved version, without the “dangerous and gaping wounds” which the play “received in the first impression”. Walkley never specifies what or where these lesions are in the play, but his admission that *Philaster* had undergone reconstructive surgery relies on the “functional ambiguity” of language inveterate to the theatre and publishing industries. He could be indicating that the reader should look between the lines to find the political content that had been excised in the previous edition. Indeed, Walkley uses the same trope of bodily injury as Chapman when he describes the censored *Byron* plays as his “dismembered poems”. Or, Walkley could be referencing the changes made to a play in the process of theatrical revision. But as the revision of *Fortune* shows, revision and censorship are often two sides of the same coin.

Q1 could reflect a recent performance of the play, one which did not have a boy-actor strong enough to carry a long role. Q1 *Philaster* is two hundred lines shorter than Q2, and substantial changes were made to one character in particular: the girl disguised as a page-boy, Bellario/Euphrasia. The changes made to *Philaster* for the first quarto could reflect both

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75 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, gent., *Philaster. Or, love lies a bleeding*, sig. A2v.
76 Patterson, *Censorship*, 18.
77 The first to argue that Walkley is hinting at censorship was J. E. Savage in “The Gaping Wounds in the Text of *Philaster*,” *Philological Quarterly* 28 (1949), 443-457.
78 Clare, *Censorship*, 185.
79 Even though Q1 was printed two years before Q2, the substantial changes made to the text, and the two hundred additional lines present in Q2 indicate that Q1 derives from Q2. See Gossett, ed., *Introduction to Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Philaster, or, Love Lies A-Bleeding* (Arden Early Modern Drama)* (London: Methuen Drama, 2009), 36.
80 Other printed plays from the period have cuts to shorten the roles of boy actors. As Scott McMillan argues, plays printed by Walkley and Okes around 1619-22 from the King’s Company have reduced boy roles, particularly in the 1620 printing of *Philaster*, “The roles for boy-actors are noticeably shorter in the final scenes of the 1620 edition. Where the 1622 edition has 25 speeches for women characters, totaling 106 lines, the 1620 edition has only 9 speeches for women, totaling 28 lines. The lead boy’s role (Bellario) is 75 lines in the final scene of the 1625 edition, but only 17 lines in the 1620 edition”. See Introduction to William Shakespeare’s *The First Quarto of Othello* (The New Cambridge Shakespeare) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28. The cutting of boy’s roles also seems to have occurred in *Othello* and *Theirry and Theodoret*. McMillan also makes this sort of claim for *Barnavelt*, but this would be impossible to prove considering there is no printed edition to compare with the manuscript. While the King’s Men may have wished to alleviate the strain upon their boy players, McMillan’s findings do not account for the changes to *Philaster* that fit within a broader pattern of censorship.
theatrical revision and censorship, with the work of multiple hands collaborating upon a new version of the play. In the words of Gossett, besides possible censorship, “Even more agents – dictating actors, an overworked or inadequate scribe, a penny-pinching printer and his compositors – may bear some responsibility for its condition”.

Texts were the result of multiple hands doing multiple jobs, whether perfunctory or political. In their revision of *Philaster* for revival in the late 1610s, the King’s Men decided to excise particular passages that were potentially troubling. By this point, the play had accumulated a series of meanings that were unintentional when the play was first written. By 1620, *Philaster* was “a palimpsest of major political controversies”, such as James’ and Parliament’s dispute over the extent of kingly power in 1609, his ambition to marry his children to foreigners in 1613, and his irresolute response to the Thirty Years’ War in 1619. In an attempt to defend themselves against possible inquiries from the Privy Council or the Master of the Revels, the company softened lines about foreign – Spanish – powers taking over Sicily through marriage, satire of courtiers was deleted, and they omitted any reference to the King’s second kingdom, Calabria, which could be read as James’ Scotland.

The revision also resulted in a new, toned down ending. At the end of Q2, Bellario reveals herself as Dion’s lost daughter Euphrasia, who dressed herself as a pageboy so that she could serve her beloved Philaster. Although the King offers her a dowry for marriage, she would rather serve Philaster and his bride Arethusa till the end of her days instead. This ending may have been disturbing for the audience, as Bellario’s decision undermines patriarchal and heteronormative sexual standards. Indeed, Bellario’s wish to serve takes on a particularly sexual valence. Earlier in the play, the King is under the impression there is more to Arethusa and her page’s relationship than meets the eye, “Put him away, I say. He’s done you / That

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81 Gossett, Introduction to *Philaster*, 91.
82 Gossett, Introduction to *Philaster*, 2.
good service shames me to speak of”.

Bellario, the King fears, has been performing his role as a servant inclusive of sexual intercourse. But the audience also knows that Bellario has an erotically charged attachment to his first master, Philaster. In the frenzy of phallic stabbings Philaster commits against Arethusa and Bellario, his page conflates his near-death experience with orgasm, “Oh, death I hope is come! Blessed be that hand; / It meant me well. Again for pity’s sake!”.

The potentially sodomitical ménage à trois at the end of the play hovers very close to the line of stage propriety. At the end of Q1, however, instead of continuing “in good service” to the royal couple, Euphrasia is married off to the previously unheard-of character Trasline. The underscoring of homoerotic service in the play’s original ending produced enough discomfort for the King’s Men that they were prompted to revise it.

Both Philaster and Fortune can be understood within a theatrical context that capitalised on the sexual allure of children and young men. This was particularly the case in the Children’s companies. As the star of the Children of the Queen’s Revels, and subsequently the leader of the Lady Elizabeth’s Men, Field’s status as an actor was dependent on the desirability connected to his youth. The allure of the boy player emerged from the intersection between the “physical attributes of the boy and their status as servants or page boys”.

Indeed, discourses of “age, social status, beauty and homoeroticism” are recurring features in the children’s repertories and their representations as cultural figures. Field had a reputation for attractiveness as the Dulwich portrait and Jonson’s Bartholomew Fair attest. When Cokes asks the puppet master Leatherhead, “Which is your Burbage now?... Your best actor. Your Field?”, Leatherhead answers, “he that acts young Leander, sir. He is extremely beloved of the

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83 Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster, 3.2.18-19.
84 Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster, 4.6.26-7.
85 As Lamb writes, “The boys’ value as players is... located specifically in their abilities to evoke an erotic response from the audience”, in Childhood, 48.
86 Lamb, Childhood, 52.
87 Lamb, Childhood, 52.
womenkind, they do so affect his action, the green gamesters that come here". 89 Jonson’s lines imply that Field had the reputation of performing the romantic lead, complicating his role as the audience’s servant. He was desirable because of his youth, beauty, and servile position.

The master-servant relationships on stage doubled as an idealised version of the patron-actor service the boys were providing. 90 These servile relationships, in turn, were central to the running of the playhouse, particularly for players such as Field who grew up as a company apprentice. As Orman writes, “young men were desired as sources of comfort, friendship, and service in the period, and the drama of the boy companies showcases this as a central concern”. 91 In the roles he played and the characters he later wrote, Field was interested in the bonds of service, at once interrogating and idealising these relationships, all the while considering how the boys’ companies sold sexual desire. In Fortune, this interest is narrativized through Viramour’s service to his beloved lord Montaigne. Indeed, Viramour uses the very language of service repeated in churches around England to describe his relationship with his master, “I saie libertye / is bondage, yf compared wth his kinde servuice” (TLN 1394-5). Despite their difference in status, the love and desire between the two men is mutual.

Both Field and Fletcher were deeply invested in reproducing narratives either extolling or questioning same-sex friendship. Fletcher was surely dead only a few months before Fortune was revived, but prior to then, he – conceivably, if we believe John Aubrey’s gossip – shared his bed on the Bankside with a wench and Beaumont. 92 In a few years, he would be sharing his eternal resting place with Massinger. 93 If these reports are useful for anything, they evince

89 Ben Jonson, Bartholomew Fair, ed. John Creaser in the Works, vol. 4: 1611-1616, 253-428, 5.3.64.
90 Orman, “Field,” 83.
91 Orman, “Field,” 197.
92 John Aubrey’s rather salacious piece of gossip goes, “They lived together on the Banke side, not far from the Play-house, both batchelors; lay together; had one Wench in the house between them, which they did so admire; the same clothes and cloake, &c; betwene them,” Brief Lives, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898), 1:95-6. Quoted in Masten, Textual, 61.
93 Massinger’s final resting place is known from Cockayne’s “An Epitaph on Mr. John Fletcher, and Mr. Philip Massinger, who lie buried both in one Grave in St. Mary Overies Church in Southwark”: 147
Fletcher and his collaborators’ place within the period’s homosocial discourses of friendship. Indeed, Fletcher’s preferred writing practice – collaboration – is now read as a calling card for homosocial cultures and homoerotic desire in the playhouse. As Masten writes, “late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dramatic writing occurs within [the] context of collaborative homoerotics”.94

Fletcher was, however, more sceptical of discourses of philia and male friendship than his publishing afterlife lets on.95 Fortune seems like a Fletcherian play because of its bawdiness, its interest in friendship, and cross-dressing, but the elements Fletcher brought to the table worked to supplement some of the Fieldian qualities already present. The faux-revelation at the end of the play – when Viramour reveals that he is, in fact, a boy after all – is apiece with Philaster and other cross-dressing plays of the Fletcher canon. But Field already had a reputation for these roles. He played Epicoene in Jonson’s eponymous play and cross-dressing is also pivotal in his own A Woman is a Weathercock (c. 1609-12) and Amends for Ladies (c. 1611). He played these sorts of roles for the Children of the Queen’s Revels and later wrote them for the Lady Elizabeth’s Men. As Lamb writes, Field used this trope as “a further acknowledgement of the audience’s, and his own, awareness of this convention in the repertoire of the Queen’s Revels”.96 Field continued to capitalise on his reputation as desirable young man in service to the audience through his acting and later as a playwright.

In the same grave Fletcher was buried here
Lies the stage-poet Philip Massinger:
Play they did write together, were great friends
And now one grave includes them at their ends:
So whom on earth nothing did part, beneath
Here (in their fames) they lie, in spight of death.
94 Masten, Textual, 37.
95 Particularly in his collaborative works, Fletcher seems to have doused his collaborators’ vision of male friendship with cynicism. See Huw Griffiths, “Adapting same-sex friendship: Fletcher and Shakespeare’s The Two Noble Kinsmen, and Davenant’s The Rivals,” Shakespeare 11, no.1 (2015), 20-29.
96 Lamb, Children, 132.
Such as with Philaster, the King’s Men had to revise Fortune in order to make it appropriate for a new dramatic and political setting. By the end of the revision process, Knight and the anonymous stage adaptor cut 14 passages from the play, alongside a whole scene, several short phrases, and re-wrote parts of the ending. What they left in, considering the content of what was cut, is even more extraordinary. Despite all the speeches in the play excised for their political and sexual impropriety, Fortune still romanticises male friendship in service relationships. In 1613 it seems a play could satirise sodomitical desire whilst also still valorising it. However, in 1625, the King’s Men felt that the play’s satirical strains needed to be watered down. The censorship of Fortune, such as with other plays of the era, was certainly not consistent. The process of meaning making for Fortune was informed by these sometimes contradictory ties between institutional constraints, dramatic influences, and the no longer acceptable morals of a recent past. This is particularly the case in the representation of Viramour and Montaigne’s loving friendship, which is expressed freely, despite curtailing discussions of same-sex desire in the rest of the play. Their relationship appears almost as a romantic attachment, considering how the characters continually cite their love and devotion to one another. Indeed, Viramour cannot imagine a woman worthy of Montaigne, telling Lamira, “I knowe no Iuno worthye such a loue” (TLN 1416). Jove, it is useful to remember, was the god who carried off Ganymede.

The erotics of Viramour and Montaigne’s relationship is expressed through excessively physicalized language. When Montaigne arrives wounded at Lamira’s estate, Viramour speaks about his wish to physically submit himself to Montaigne:

oh that my flesh

weare balme. Infaith sir I wolld pluck it of

as readilye as this: pray you accept
my will to doe you seruice (TLN 1474-8)

Viramour here tells his master that he would gladly rip the skin off his back and wrap it around Montaigne as a form of service. Not only does Viramour wish to wrap himself around Montaigne, but he also wishes to wrap Montaigne around himself so that he “might still this burthen beare” (TLN 1520):

oh that I were a horse for halfe

an houre that I may carry you home, on my back.

I hope you will loue me still (TLN 1512-4)

In this moment of “excessive service”, Viramour blurs the boundaries between a servant’s devotion to their lord and erotic attachment. Viramour’s offer to submit himself to Montaigne frames his character in a sexualised light, offering both the physical and emotional service pages were reputed to provide. Later in the play, when Viramour begs Montaigne to be brought back into his service, he offers his body to be used as a bed, “I will laye me downe, / That in my bosome you may rest yo’ head” (TLN 1951-2). As a young man, Viramour’s body is the greatest gift he can give to his master, and to which Montaigne responds, “oh what a scoffe might men of woemen make, / yf they did knowe this boye” (TLN 1958-9). Indeed, the play asks, what good is the use of women at all when there are beautiful and loving young pages like Viramour? The representation of the page is similar to Field’s position as a young actor: he is defined by his physicality and by being the property of both the company and his audience. The impropriety of this is not questioned in the play, however, which is similar to

97 Orman, “Field,” 194.
98 Viramour’s intense desire to serve his master is part of the dynamics of voluntary servitude, “a form of subjection predicated on the willed alienation of the will, or the desire to submit”, typical of aestheticised same-sex dynamics of early modern Europe. This is particularly the case between Montaigne and his friend La Boétie. See Marc D. Schachter, Voluntary Servitude and the Erotics of Friendship: From Classic Antiquity to Early Modern France (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 3-4.
other representations of attractive boys in the early modern period. As Stephen Orgel writes, “boys were, like women – but unlike men – acknowledged objects of sexual attraction for men… the homosexual, and particularly the pederastic component of the Elizabethan erotic imagination is both explicit and surprisingly unproblematic”.99 The censorship of Fortune is a strange case indeed considering Knight and the company were collaborating to ensure that the play stayed within the bounds of sexual-political propriety without having any problem with homoeroticism itself. It appears that same-sex desire was fine on stage until the topic shifted to politics.

At great odds with Viramour and Montaigne’s idealised master-service dynamic is the courtier Laverdure’s attempted seduction of Viramour at the end of the play. The courtier Laverdure comes to believe that Viramour “is a disguised whore” (TLN 1859). Laverdure, it seems, has been attending the theatre all too frequently. Taking up the convention of the disguised page, the assumption is that a beautiful young boy in love with his master must be a woman. Laverdure attempts to compel Viramour to leave Lamira’s service by offering new clothes and lodging “in myne armes” (TLN 1877), to which Viramour responds, “lye w th you. I had rather lye w th my ladyes monkey” (TLN 1880). At this point, the play is quite openly dealing with a potentially sodomitical relationship, but the only point at which this failed seduction scene is censored is in Viramour’s line, “twas never a good world sine o’ [ffrench lordes] gallantes learned / of the Neapolitans to make theire pages their bedfellows” (TLN 1881-2). Viramour’s disgust at sex between masters and servants contradicts how he has been characterised in the play thus far, particularly his idealised physical and emotional submission to Montaigne which implies a sexual relationship between the two. Indeed, at the end of the play, when Viramour emerges on stage dressed as a woman, Montaigne openly admits that the

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two have been sleeping together, “wee haue laine together, / but by my troth I never found hir ladye” (TLN 2882-3). Although it was common for masters and servants or apprentices to sleep in the same bed, Montaigne’s statement that he “never found hir ladye”, coupled with their previous eroticised conversations could be read as an admission of either a physical relationship or its absence. If Montaigne “never found hir ladye”, then he must have already found him a boy in bed.

The company took no issue with the characters implying that they sleep together, but what is at stake here is the political reference implicit in “ffrench lorde”. Although no effort is made to remove a reference to the Italian vice, as it was known, Knight excised “ffrench lorde” and interlined “gallants”. It seems the company ignored everything else because, as Dutton writes, “Knight did not expect Herbert to bother with dubious sexual behaviour if it was no longer likely to offend persons (or friendly nations) of consequence”. It may be that the line was changed because of a “heightened sensitivity regarding slighting references to the French” seeing as James was perusing a match with the sister of the French King, Henrietta Maria, for Charles in 1625. Or, considering the potential references to Buckingham throughout the rest of the play, the company’s agents perhaps worried that the line alluded to his time in France before returning to England. Buckingham reputedly brought French sexual practices back to James’ court. The adaptors also found no issue with a reference to the punishment for sodomy. A few scenes later, when Viramour pretends to give in to Laverdine’s advances, confessing “I am a woeman” (TLN 2182), Laverdine responds ecstatically with an admission that he was pursuing the page regardless of his gender, “now wee may lawfullye

100 Orman, “Field,” 203.
101 Dutton, Buggeswords, 57.
102 Livingston, “Censorship,” 196.
103 James’ first supposed beloved, Esmé Stuart, First Duke of Lennox, was also from France. Those who were critical of James and his cousin’s relationship drew on the French’s supposed “carnal lust”. See Young, Homosexuality, 40.
come togethwer w\textsuperscript{th}out feare of hanging” (TLN 2186-7). Laverdine does not fear sex with a young man, but the possible penalty attendant upon acting on that desire.

Despite the revision process retaining passages that refer to same-sex desire, the final scene was rewritten in the manuscript surely because of its bawdiness. The scene appears both in the manuscript and the Folio, though the earlier version is stripped of the on-stage groping. In the scene, tired of Laverdine’s repeated attempts to convince Viramour that he is, in fact, a woman in disguise, Viramour decides to venture on a trick to humiliate the naïve courtier. He comes on stage, “as A woeman” (TLN 2876) declaring that he is “a poore disguisd ladye / that like a page hath followed full long, for loue good [wot] sooth” (TLN 2878-9) and has taken example “by two or three playes, that me thought conearnd me” (TLN 2886). Ironically, only half of his sentence is untrue; he may not be a woman, but he has been devoted to his lord throughout the duration of the play. The adaptors may have thought this scene could be read politically, particularly because the Beaumont and Fletcher canon tended to use the convention of cross-dressing as a way to consider power and desire, in comparison to Shakespeare’s use of the convention to consider gender. As Peter Berek writes, for plays such as Love’s Cure and Philaster, “cross-dressing often enacts anxiety about political authority as well as gender roles, as though gender served as a discussible surrogate for a less discussable topic, royal absolutism”.\textsuperscript{104} Perhaps Knight and the theatrical adapter sensed this about Fortune, and so cut out the speeches to do with upstart politics, as well as attempting to curtail the moments where Viramour is an object of homoerotic attraction, lest it unintentionally hark back to Buckingham’s rise.

Alternatively, politics aside, the company may have gathered that the ending of Fortune was too risqué for Herbert’s tastes. In the Folio version of the play, after he begins to

\textsuperscript{104} Peter Berek, “Cross-Dressing, Gender, and Absolutism in the Beaumont and Fletcher Plays,” Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 44, no. 2 (Tudor and Stuart Drama) (2004), 359-337, 360.
comprehend that he has been fooled, Laverdine asks, “are not you a woman?” and Viramour announces, “If hands and face make it not evident, you shall see more”, which results in an on-stage frisking:

Mal.

Breeches, breeches, Laverdine.

La-p.

Tis not enough, women may wear those cases.

Search further Courtier.\textsuperscript{105}

As the sailor La-Poope reckons, a woman can dress up in men’s drawers, but “a blind man by the hand / Could have discoverd the ring from the stone”.\textsuperscript{106} Mallicorn and La-Poope’s excited instructions to Laverdine to undress Viramour, coupled with bawdy language, leaves very little to the imagination. The revisers calculated that this scene was a bridge too far, and would not fit with Herbert’s antipathy towards oaths, profanity, and ribaldry. What was acceptable in the 1613 production of the play was no longer allowable in 1625, where the body of the boy actor could be eroticised in theory instead of visualised practice. Revising the play so as to censor some of its content was an obvious move for the company, as the original passages were replaced during the transcription process without Herbert’s guidance. Instead of the physical bawdy in the final scene, Knight and the theatrical adapter settled upon giving Viramour a comparatively anodyne speech about the torturous process by which Laverdine harassed him. The eroticisation of Viramour speaks to the role of boy actors, particularly ones such as Field who were considered objects of beauty and desire. Furthermore, taking into account the place of eroticised male servants in James’ court, there was a risk attendant to accidentally revealing

\textsuperscript{105} Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and tragedies, sig. Yyyyy2r.
\textsuperscript{106} Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and tragedies, sig. Yyyyy2r.
too much of the king’s private chamber. The discomfort Viramour’s character generated in 1625 could well speak to changes in dynamics of mastery and servitude, both in politics and the culture at large.

Censorial service in *The Honest Man’s Fortune* manuscript

There is no scholarly consensus on whether *The Honest Man’s Fortune* underwent censorship, or whether the changes in the manuscript were simply part of an in-house revision process. W. W. Greg argued that passages were excised or altered “by the censor or at his direction”, although R. C. Bald rejects Greg’s claim that Herbert was involved in the revision: “one can be fairly certain that the passages heavily scored out were deleted in the theatre”. 107 Hoy does not come down on either side, believing it could be both. 108 Ioppolo finds that “All these cuts point clearly towards the manuscript’s theatrical provenance”, and that it was potentially the anonymous stage-adapter who made the cuts. 109 Werstine thinks it is fairly likely that Knight was the sole reviser, “making the later cuts as well as such initial omissions, but the question of participation by the Master of the Revel’s office still remains open”. 110 However Livingston argues that Herbert “probably held *The Honest Man’s Fortune* to the same strict standards imposed on *The Woman’s Prize*, especially in the wake of the King’s Men’s repeated violations of Revels protocols in 1624”. 111 The question of whether the revisions made to the manuscript is censorship or not is dependent on where the critic sees censorship originating. If the Master of the Revels and the Privy Council ordered the cuts, then it is considered censorship, but there

110 Werstine, *Editing*, 313.
111 Livingston, “Censorship,” 186.
is a critical prevarication over whether the cuts made in the playhouse are censorship or revisions.

Unlike Buc’s style of censorship, Herbert did not leave any particularly indicative marks on manuscripts. Indeed, there is little evidence that the Master of the Revels even looked at this manuscript at all. Furthermore, despite the revision process, several indelicate passages were left in the manuscript as Ioppolo points out:

Only some portions of heavily deleted text appear to have been censored, and there are more politically dangerous passages than these throughout the play which have not been altered. More significantly, in his license Herbert did not demand any cuts, revisions, or alterations, as he did on occasion with other play-texts that he read.

Censorship does not necessarily mean a purged text. Indeed, most cases of early modern censorship were not thorough. Despite censorship during printing, *Eastward Ho!* still contained eyebrow-raising passages and Buc did not take out all the political content from *Barnavelt*. Other cases of Jacobean censorship were ad hoc, arbitrary affairs, so *Fortune* should be no different. It is also possible that Herbert did not object to every salacious line, and neither did his proxies in the company. But the company surely knew what material to cut if revisions were necessary for both censorship and staging reasons. This leads to larger questions about the nature of censorship in the playhouses. As Livingston asks about the Dyce manuscript, “can a clear distinction be made between censorship and adaptation, and can (or should?) a useful distinction be made between changes imposed by the Master of the Revels and in-house, pre-

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112 Herbert’s also tended “to make broad gestures rather than to become involved in detailed adaptation”, as is the case when he denied Massinger a license for *Believe as You List*. He also had a proclivity for burning manuscripts that he did not approve of. See Livingston, “Censorship,” 183.

113 Ioppolo, Introduction to *Fortune*, xxii.
emptive censorship?”. A distinction cannot be made between censorship and revision because in the playhouse they are two sides of the same coin. Both are part of the service the company provided to the Master of the Revels, as well as their audiences. As a servant to the King, and thereby the Master of the Revels, Knight was an appendage to the body of the state which required theatrical censorship. Part of the role of a servant was to anticipate the wishes of the master, and from Herbert’s letter to Knight, we know that the playhouse was already well attuned to Herbert’s expectations. Censorial service was sometimes part of the process of mounting a play, and therefore should not be considered separate to the playwrights, the company, or the theatres themselves.

Knight was adept at managing service relationships in the theatrical industry. His first verified appearance in the professional theatrical world is in the 1615 “Articles of Grievance and Oppression against Philip Henslowe”, where he acted as a witness. He may have been in Alleyn’s employ as a scribe or bookkeeper. Although there is a gap in his history, Knight probably joined the King’s Men sometime between 1619 and 1620 as a bookkeeper and his name appears on Henry Herbert’s list of the King’s Men employees on 27 December 1624. Unlike Crane, Knight was not the sort of scribe to intervene in a text. He did not have the same predilection as Crane for scrupulous copies and he tended not to correct his scribal errors. In his manuscript copy of Fletcher’s Bonduca, he summarised a missing scene rather than attempting to fill in the blank space with lines, suggesting that he understood his “role to be that of a conservative editor, not a composing author or a reviser, of play-texts”. Unlike Crane in the Barnavelt manuscript, Knight does not emend the text seemingly of his own volition. Instead, Knight and an anonymous stage adaptor undertook what appears to be pre-
planned cuts in *Fortune*. Livingston writes that although the owner of the second hand cannot be identified, “his changes to the text are contemporaneous with Knight’s; more than likely, he was a shareholder of the King’s Men assisting or overseeing Knight’s adaptation of the play”. Knight seems to have followed the direction of this anonymous hand so that their collaborative revision resulted in a play acceptable for the changed political circumstances.

Earlier, in 1625, when Herbert was not rigorously checking revived plays, he seems to have had an informal system with the companies where he would allow an old play in exchange for a gift, or sometimes for free. In these instances, Herbert seems to have taken the word of the company representative that nothing had been changed or added to the play. This is the case when Herbert gave a license for *The Winter’s Tale* in 1623, when John Heminges affirmed “nothing profane added or reformed”, even though the copy of the book the company provided was not the version allowed by Buc earlier in the century. Nevertheless, with no work requiring doing, Herbert simply “returned it without a fee”. Something similar seems to have happened in 1625 when the King’s Men’s company representative and actor, Joseph Taylor, brought the promptbook of *Fortune* to Herbert for approval. Herbert must have at least flicked through the manuscript to see if Knight had already done his work excising the parts considered antisocial. Satisfied, Herbert wrote on the last page, “This Play, being an olde One and the Originall Lost was reallowed by mee. This 8. febru. 1624 Att the Intreaty of Mr <Taylor>”. It is interesting to note that Herbert did not feel the need to revise the play himself.

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119 Quoted in Dutton, *Mastering*, 94.
121 Joseph Taylor was one of the play’s original actors for the Lady Elizabeth’s Men, and perhaps reprised his role for the revival.
122 Bawcutt, *Mastering*, 160, 148b. The word “Taylor” is missing from Herbert’s allowance. As Bawcutt notes, the last page of the manuscript “is badly worn, and the last word (obviously ‘Taylor’) is missing”, *Mastering*, 160, n.148b.
– or perhaps he “perused” the play by watching a rehearsal instead of reading it. Regardless, there seems to have been an understanding between the Master and the companies that the meaning of a play could change over time, necessitating a system for re-approvals. As Patterson suggests, “authors who build ambiguity into their works have no control over what happens to them later”. This system would eventually fall short. A few years later, when the King’s Men offended Herbert for The Tamer Tamed on account of its profanities and anti-Catholicism, it was precisely because the allowed copy from earlier in the century was not adequately checked beforehand.

Although Herbert allowed Fortune, he did not include his signature in the manuscript. This does not seem to have mattered much as the quasi-licence is supported by a note in Herbert’s records, “For the Kgs comp: an olde P. call: The honests (sic) mans fortune the original being lost was reallowed by me att M’ Taylors intreaty & on condition to give me a booke 8th. Feb: 1624. The Arcadia”. Taylor’s entreaties served their purpose because Herbert approved the play and accepted a gift of Sidney’s Arcadia. Considering that up until this point Herbert had been approving old plays free of charge, the Arcadia was taken as a fee or a gift on behalf of Taylor and the company. Seeing as no marks from Herbert can definitively be found in the manuscript, it appears that the book was the latter. The trust that comes from a relationship of mutual service was fundamental to the staging of Fortune. Herbert approved the play on proof of Taylor’s word and emendations made in the play in Knight’s handwriting.

123 Masters of the Revels could either read or watch a play (to “peruse” a play was to watch it) in order to allow it for performance. See Dutton, “Theatrical License and Censorship,” in A New Companion to Renaissance Drama, ed. Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 225-238, 228.
124 Patterson, Censorship, 18.
127 Philip Sidney’s The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia is an interesting choice (or request) of gift. This book is also tinged with the Renaissance politics of friendship and erotic service. Presumably Herbert was given the enlarged 1622 or 1623 edition of the Arcadia. See Bawcutt, Mastering, 160, n. 148b.
alone. Although Herbert and Taylor do not appear to have been friends, their mutual reliance resulted in a service relationship typical of the early modern theatrical industry.

The company did all it could to make the play acceptable for performance without involving Herbert. This included deleting lines too ribald for the Master of the Revels’ tastes. The attractive Viramour did not offer much seditious danger in and of himself, but the mixture of homoerotic desire and social satire could have created problems for the King’s Men if the Master of the Revels perused the manuscript. Or, perhaps not. Ultimately, we will never know what Herbert might have thought about the play, all we can ascertain is what the representatives of the King’s Men thought pertinent to self-censor. The company perhaps wanted to forestall any accusations of libel or sedition, which periodically happened when an old play was revived or printed, as with Jonson’s *Sejanus* and *The Tamer Tamed*. When the King’s Men decided to excise certain passages from the play, they thwarted any claims that the play commented on the perceived social climbing of James’ rumoured lovers, particularly on the part of Buckingham. At the time of *Fortune*’s revival, Buckingham’s stratospheric rise to power in the 1610s was amongst the list of criticisms levelled at James for his political torpidity. The fact that Buckingham was the second most powerful man in the land was seen as an insult on two fronts: it was not just that James had brought a parvenu into power, but also that the two were thought to be engaged in a sodomitical relationship.

James’ courtiers and noblemen brought their concern with sexual-nepotism to light through historical allegory. Elizabeth Carey, for example, chose to write about Edward II’s reign so as to hold up “a perfect mirror, wherein ensuing kings may see how full of danger and hazard it is, for one man’s love, to see the affections and peace of his whole kingdom”. To

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Carey, and many others, James’ and Buckingham’s relationship was troubling because of its apparent abuse of power. The King’s Men perhaps did not want to be caught using a perceived allegory. In the playhouses, including Marlowe’s Edward II, male-male desire could be read as political. Around the same time as Fortune, in 1621, The Faithful Friends promptbook also had lines censored to do with male-male desire and history.\(^{129}\) In the play, a case is made for the historical precedents of kings choosing men for their lovers, and their prerogative to do so:

{for as as their gods

there subject to their passions as theire men

Alexander the great had Lerma, not the offed,

I could produce from Courts that I have seene

more royall presidents, but ile not give

such satisfaction to detractive toungs

that publish such fowle noyse gainst aman

I know for truly Vertuous.}\(^{130}\)

The longer passage from which these lines derive was marked for deletion, although someone also bracketed and underlined the section above. Obviously, the “royall presidents” the play wants the audience to think of is King James. These lines may also be hinting at James’ own use of history as self-justification. As reported by the Spanish ambassador in 1617, James told

\(^{129}\) Although the play is putatively connected to the Beaumont and Fletcher canon and the King’s Men, in the words of Richard Proudfoot, “The Faithful Friends is connected by no link of external evidence with any specific date of composition, author, or company of players”. See Introduction to The Faithful Friends, in The Faithful Friends (The Malone Society Reprints) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), v-xx, xv.

\(^{130}\) Quoted by Hammond, Figuring, 135.
his Privy Council that his love for Buckingham was not a “defect” but doing as Jesus Christ did: just as “Christ had his John”, so too James “had his George”. [131]

James may have believed that his kingly position entitled him to live and love however he saw fit, but his choice of Buckingham was resented by the court and Jacobean society at large. His love for Buckingham, coupled with politics, resulted in a proto-homophobic eschewal of their relationship. As servants to James, the King’s Men’s attempted to avoid wading into politically charged territory by deleting parts of Fortune which considered social climbing coupled with same-sex desire. Viramour is particularly critical of upward mobility, as he explains to Lamira once Montaigne can no longer afford to keep him:

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_Doues beget Doues: and Eagles Eagles madame, a_

citizens heire tho’ left never so rich, seldom at

the best proues but a griffin gent; the son of an

Advocate, tho’ dubd like his ffather, will showe a relish

of his decent & the ffathers thriuinge practize;

as I haue heard she that of a chambermaid is

metamorphosed into a madame, will yet remember

how oft her daughter by hir mother ventered to lye

vpon the rushes, before she coo’d get in that w^ch makes

manye ladyes. (TLN 1378-87)

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[131] _Documentos inéditos para la historia de España_ (Madrid, 1936). Translated by Hammond, _Figuring_, 44.
These lines were cut from the manuscript with a double vertical line in the left hard margin. Viramour is critical of all those in court who effectively bought their positions, similar to the “thirty pound knights” of Eastward Ho! The lines also single out those who acquired their status through sex; Viramour is saying that those not born into nobility will not become courtly through unrefined deeds. Essentially, trading sex for power is seen in the play as a kind of prostitution, one which Viramour eschews in his idealised homosocial master-servant relationship with Montaigne. As the play’s “Buckingham”, so to speak, it is ironic that Viramour speaks these lines. But what was unproblematic in 1613 had the potential to land the company in hot water come 1625. The King’s Men were keen to censor all lines that could be interpreted as directly referencing those in court whose power is not equal to their class, such as James’ particular favourite.

Knight and the bookkeeper’s attentiveness to Herbert’s expectations is also vividly encapsulated in the play’s other representations of prostitution. This thread runs through several parts of play, although Fortune is more interested in male prostitution than female. After the Duke of Orleans effectively steals Montaigne’s fortune, two of his attendants, Longaville and Dubois, leave his service to look for new employment. The two realise that they do not have many options by way of new opportunities, so they come up with a plan to start a “male stewes” (TLN 724). These lines went through two rounds of revision. They were first deleted from the play with the typical horizontal and vertical marginal lines, but if this were not enough, someone else overwrote the words with a close looping pattern:

| Long:       | [wee’le Ene make vp some halfe a dozen proper men, |
|            | & set vp a male stewes, wee shold get more      |
|            | Then all yo’ female sinners]                    |
At first, Longaville plans to set up a male brothel that would draw more than just a female client base, “wee shold get more / Then all yo’ female sinners”. The implication is that the boys on offer would be so attractive that men will also be drawn to the establishment. But then Longaville worries that the neighbouring bawds will turn into witches in revenge. The lines are ambiguous, but the revenge to which the dialogue refers must be for Longaville and Dubois’ stealing the bawds’ clients – men. Livingston believes that these lines were part of the cuts “linked to the various misogynistic references that are omitted from MS”.\textsuperscript{132} Whilst these lines certainly are misogynistic, perhaps the real issue for the King’s Men is the open discussion of boys as prostitutes in a play that treads a fine line in its consideration of sodomitical desire. Knight or the anonymous adapter perhaps felt that these lines would be a step too far for Herbert and thought the safest thing would be cutting them completely.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{132} Livingston, “Censorship,” 205.
\textsuperscript{133} In the Folio, the entire passage remains except for the phrase “& set vp a male stewes”, sig. Tttt4r.
The ambiguity of *The Honest Man’s Fortune*’s case lies in the question of where theatrical revision begins and where it ends in censorship and indeed, whether there is a difference between the two. More explicitly, what the company cut from the play – ostensibly for the sake of timing – may have more to do with what is said in the material cut. If the play had to be shortened, then why not excise the lines that satirise the nobility, insult women, and encourage homoerotic desire? Knight, the bookkeeper, and Taylor perhaps made such an effort handing over a cleaned-up manuscript to Herbert because they surely knew that there were elements of the original that the Master of the Revels would not look upon kindly. The question does arise of why this scene was revised when other language that is equally ribald remains in the play. Once again, censorship reveals its capricious nature. The King’s Men realised that there was some sensitivity around sex, homosocial desire and politics. In *Fortune*, same-sex desire is left unquestioned until it is physicalized or politicised. But they sought to retain some of the bawdy and political references, without which, the rest of the play is rather prosaic. The collaborative revision process reveals the compromise at the heart of censorship and how service is central to the playhouse’s functioning. The King’s Men were the servants of two masters: they had to simultaneously push the line to maintain audiences and hold the line of those authorities they served: the Master of the Revels and the crown. The King’s Men did not want to risk offending those to whom they were indebted, and the extent to which they self-censored so as not to reflect on the King’s personal life is something upon which we can only speculate. But what is clear is that the collaborative process by which the play was revised took into account politics and propriety. By the time *Fortune* was returning to the stage in 1625, and with the instalment of Herbert as the Master of the Revels, companies became collaborators – in both sense of the word – in censorship. Revision became a type of censorship, an essential service for the playhouse to provide.
At tail end of 2015, and throughout 2016, some of Shakespeare’s lines from *Sir Thomas More* began going viral on the Internet. With titles such as, “‘Your mountainish inhumanity’: Shakespeare’s ringing defense of immigrants and refugees still resonates today”, and “Shakespeare’s plea for an end to the persecution of refugees”, these articles claimed that Shakespeare, with all his prescience, had the answer to Europe’s refugee crisis: empathy. In these pieces, Shakespeare was being appropriated to support the displaced people crossing the Mediterranean in hope of reaching the European Union. The articles all follow a similar structure. First, they give an outline of the anti-immigrant Ill May Day riots in 1517 on which part of *More* is based, and sometimes they include a brief indication of the play’s collaborative origins. They then quote part of More’s speeches to the rioting Londoners, beginning with

> Remaking Shakespeare is big business, and the commodity is revelation”

– Will Sharpe, “Authorship and Attribution”

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“Imagine that you see the wretched strangers, / Their babies at their backs”, or “You’ll put down strangers, / Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses”, as in this quotation from *Newsweek:*³

You’ll put down strangers
Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses,
And lead the majesty of law in lyam [tied up with a leash]
To slip him like a hound.
Alas, alas! Say now the King
As he is clement if th’offender mourn,
Should so much come too short of your great trespass
As but to banish you: whither would you go?
What country, by the nature of your error,
Should give you harbour?
Go you to France or Flanders,
To any German province, Spain or Portugal,
Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England:
Why, you must needs be strangers.⁴

None of the news articles mention the part of More’s speech where he criticises the rioters for undermining the authority of God and the king.

Shakespeare’s lines promoting empathy for European migrants did not go viral because *Sir Thomas More* had spent four hundred years waiting for a humanitarian crisis desperate

⁴ Lowe, “Shakespeare’s plea.”
enough for the play to gain some pertinence. *Sir Thomas More*, largely unknown by those outside academic circles until this point, was brought into the limelight because of a strange coincidence of historical factors. In fact, Shakespeare’s part in the play was made relevant to the chilling images of drowned bodies washing up on European shores because, by chance, 2016 marked the quatercentenary of Shakespeare’s death. The fervid spread of More’s speech was triggered by the British Library’s advertisements in the lead up to their exhibition celebrating Shakespeare’s life and death, “Shakespeare in 10 Acts”. After a pair of articles appeared on the British Library website on 15 March 2016, one by journalist Andrew Dickson entitled “‘Wretched strangers’: Shakespeare’s plea for tolerance towards immigrants in *Sir Thomas More*” and another anonymous article called “*The Book of Sir Thomas More*: Shakespeare’s only surviving literary manuscript”, the torrent of journalistic pieces citing Shakespeare’s pro-refugee stance began.

Since the British Library website’s articles were produced in order to draw attention to the digitisation of several early modern manuscripts that were part of the “Shakespeare in 10 Acts” exhibition, they contain facsimiles of four pages from the *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* manuscript. They display the sheet with the Master of the Revels, Tilney’s, censorial injunction to cut the first scene and the sheets which bear Shakespeare’s elusive hand. To an untrained eye, the writing is illegible. In order to ameliorate this, the curators include a modernised rendering of some of More’s speech in the article. This was of utmost use to those journalists who wrote about Shakespeare’s pro-refugee message; a simple copy and paste did

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7 I use *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* when discussing the manuscript and *Sir Thomas More* when discussing the play.
the trick. This play’s coming out of the woodwork of textual history, it seems, had less to do with the Refugee Crisis and more to do with the anniversary of Shakespeare’s death. The British Library curators’ canny idea to make Shakespeare relevant to the Refugee Crisis, whilst simultaneously advertising their exhibition celebrating the quatercentenary, is just one of the ways that Sir Thomas More has been framed to sell the idea of a singular Shakespeare.

The British Library’s website’s selection and modernisation of the lines distributed to their Internet audience, complete with an interpretive apparatus, is tantamount to an edition of Sir Thomas More. Their seemingly random selection of text, their decision as to what stays and what goes, and the positioning of Shakespeare as front and centre is not dissimilar from some editorial approaches to the play. Unbeknownst to the readers of the website, the curators even wade into an editorial quandary. The question of where Sir Thomas More lies within Shakespeare’s canon is central to different editorial approaches to this play. There are no answers to this question, but different editors have shaped More according to who they think has the greatest claim to it: Shakespeare’s collaborators, or Shakespeare himself. Although the British Library curators make reference to the other playwrights’, and even Tilney’s involvement in the creation of the manuscript, it is first and foremost, “part of the only surviving play script to contain Shakespeare’s handwriting”.8 In their presentation of some of his lines, they exclude the other person who helped shape the final version of Shakespeare’s writing: the anonymous theatrical reviser Hand C. He bears no mention at all in the article, perhaps because the writers assume non-academic readers would be uninterested. After Shakespeare wrote his addition to the play, Hand C revised it to bring it in line with the rest of More. His revision included clarifying Shakespeare’s phrasing and speech prefixes. The question of whether Hand C’s emendations should be followed in Sir Thomas More is the basis

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8 Dickson and British Library curators, “The Book of Sir Thomas More.”
of different editorial approaches to Shakespeare’s involvement in what is perhaps the most collaborative play of his career.

Simply put, Hand C has not been considered enough of an authorial figure to challenge Shakespeare’s version of the speech. Hand C should not be considered as just a theatrical functionary. Although he made seemingly small emendations to the usually quoted section of Shakespeare’s writing, Hand C’s changes reveal his understanding of how dramatic poetry is written. In the speech quoted by the British Library, Shakespeare interlined the extrametrical phrase “alas alas” after crossing out “saying” in the line which reads in the manuscript as “to slipp him lyke a hound ; [saying] [alas alas] say nowe the king”.9 Noticing that Shakespeare had added four extra syllables to the metre, Hand C crossed it out so that the line would read “to slip him like a hound; say now the king”. The British Library disregards Hand C’s revision and presents the line as “To slip him like a hound; alas, alas, say now the King”. As the curators of a particularly exceptional group of manuscripts, those involved in writing the webpage would surely have noticed Hand C’s work in the manuscript. Indeed, a particularly observant viewer of this webpage could simply zoom in on the facsimile and see with their very own eyes the points at which Hand C revised Shakespeare. To complicate things, Hand C was intervening on a particularly Shakespearean predilection.10 Shakespeare tended to add these extrametrical alas’s such as when Isabella interjects “Alas, alas!” during Claudio’s lines “To what we fear of death… Sweet sister, let me live” in Measure for Measure.11 Despite the curators’ reference to the collaborative origins of More, neglecting the textual details of the manuscript presents a vision of Shakespeare which blots out just how collaboration worked to produce this play.

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9 Greg, ed., The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore (The Malone Society Reprints 1911 and 1961) (Chippenham: Antony Rowe Ltd. For the Malone Society, 2003), Add. Iic, line 245. Further quotations from this edition will be incorporated into the body of the text.
Although the British Library articles are not textual criticism – and it is perhaps an unfair yardstick to make a point – their presentation of Shakespeare’s writing is uncannily similar to some of the editorial approaches to Sir Thomas More. In this final chapter, I consider how the idea of Shakespeare has been used to shape this collaborative, censored play and how More is sold via Shakespeare to a reading audience. In doing so Shakespearean textual authority that has been inherited by the editing tradition are interrogated. I propose that although editing the play with Shakespeare at the centre is one viable option, another productive editing strategy is to focus on censorship as an inextricable part of the collaborative process. I begin by examining Tilney’s censorship of the play and the manuscript’s textual history before considering More’s place in the Shakespeare canon. In the second part of this chapter, I compare the editorial practices of the most important editions of More. I look at the various ways the editors approach Shakespeare’s authorship and the collaborative role of Hand C. I ultimately argue that editors must take the collaborative censorship of More into account, because not to do so would obscure the full range of early modern writing practices.

**Collaborative censorship in The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore**

The manuscript The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore, MS Harleian 7368 in the British Library, could be a key text for understanding collaboratively censored plays, yet the document is still mostly understood in relation to Shakespearean textual authority. Despite the attention that the play has received because of Shakespeare’s singular presence, the play is inherently collaborative because of censorship. The Original Text of the manuscript is in Anthony Munday’s (Hand S) autograph, although he most probably wrote the first version of the play with the help of Henry Chettle (Hand A) at some point between 1592-1600.\(^1\) Edmund Tilney

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\(^1\) Scholars have traditionally dated the play around 1592-3 because it was possibly a response to the anti-alien riots in London in 1592. Most recent scholarship rejects this dating on linguistic and handwriting grounds,
refused to allow the first version of the play, particularly because he found the play’s opening riots problematic:

<Leaue out > yᵉ insurrection wholy & yᵉ Cause ther off & <b>e gin wᵗ Sᵗ Tho:
Moore att yᵉ mayors sessions wᵗ a reportt afterward[es] off his good service‘ don being’ Shriue off Londo[n] yᵛ po[n] a mutiny Agaynst yᵉ Lu[m]bard[es] only by
A shortt report & nott otherwise att your own perrilles E Tyllney. (OT n. 1-19)

Tilney’s note indicates his willingness to allow the play if the playwrights restructured it by removing the opening riot scenes. Probably because the insurrection forms the basis of a substantial part of the play, the playwrights decided to shelve More rather than re-write it. A few years later, between 1603-4, a team of theatrical professionals decided to resurrect the play.¹³ Coordinated by Hand C, the playwrights Chettle, Dekker (Hand E), Thomas Heywood (Hand B), and Shakespeare (Hand D) revised More. It is unclear who these professional dramatists were working for, although a case has been made for the King’s Men.¹⁴

More is an unorthodox outlier of Shakespeare’s canon. The play is not how we imagine Shakespeare, and yet, More instructs us on the collaborative and censorial realities of the playmaking process that Shakespeare would have been familiar with. That the only extant example of his playwriting process is in a heavily censored and fragmented document, alongside five other hands, is nothing if not ironic.¹⁵ As James Purkis writes, “Through its textual composition, More is the most disruptive play at the edge of Shakespeare’s canon”.¹⁶

suggesting that 1600 is more likely. This argument is strengthened by Jowett’s placing of More within a series of subgenre plays about Henry VIII’s chancellors from around 1600. See Jowett, “The Original Text: Date,” Appendix 4, 424-460, Sir Thomas More.
¹³ The revision dating of 1603-4 was first proposed by McMillin in The Elizabethan Theatre and The Book of Sir Thomas More (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), 94. For a discussion of the revision dates, see Jowett, Appendix 4, Sir Thomas More, 432-3.
¹⁴ For a discussion of the possible companies who owned the script of Sir Thomas More, see Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 100-3.
¹⁶ Purkis, Manuscript, 14.
More has disrupted the idea of Shakespeare as firstly, it is a manuscript rather than a printed play; secondly, that manuscript is no “fair copy”; thirdly, Shakespeare is seen to be writing collaboratively with playwrights thought to be aesthetically deficient; and finally, Shakespeare is not the plotter behind the collaboration – it is not his play. To add to this, it is only because the document was censored that it survives, and because of censorship that Shakespeare became involved in the first place.

Censorship is, however, difficult to place within editorial narratives of More because the playwrights mostly ignored Tilney’s earlier instructions during the revision process. Such as with other censored manuscripts from the period, the Master of the Revels’ authority had a profound effect on the structure of the play, but it was not totalising. Besides the riots, Tilney also took particular issue with the words “strangers” and “Frenchmen”, demanding that the writers call them “Lombard” instead.\(^\text{17}\) He did not want the play to offend the French, considering their alliance against Spain, nor did he want the play to foment tensions between Londoners and Protestant Northern European foreigners in the city.\(^\text{18}\) Furthermore, Tilney also required cuts in the scene where More refuses to sign the King’s Articles and resigns from his position as Chancellor.\(^\text{19}\) What these particular Articles are goes unmentioned, but the audience would have recognised them as the Oath of Succession which gave Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn’s heirs the right to the throne. Absolutist royal authority then, is central to the plot of the play and this is what was behind the stalling of the intended production. But whilst it is tempting to read royal authority back into the manuscript itself, as John Jowett does when he writes that More’s execution is re-enacted “in the state-inflicted damage to the text”, it is textual authority rather than royal authority that is at the crux of interpretations of this document.

\(^{17}\) For example, at iii.364 of the Original Text, Tilney crossed out “straunger” and interlined “LOMBARD”, and at iii.368, he crossed out “ffrenchemen” and again interlined “LOMBARD”. See Greg, More, OT 364, 368.

\(^{18}\) Jowett, Introduction to More, 46.

\(^{19}\) Tilney drew a diagonal line through the manuscript from 10.8-104 with an elongated cross in the left margin. He also wrote “all altr” next to the line where More resigns. See Jowett, Sir Thomas More, n. 10.80-104 and n. 10.88.
Furthermore, royal authority did not seem to count for much to the playwrights, as they did not take much notice of Tilney’s demands.\textsuperscript{20} This is probably because too much time had passed for most of Tilney’s grievances to have any relevance.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, the throne had been transferred from Elizabeth to James by the time of the revision. There was now much less risk associated in performing a play that obliquely criticised Elizabeth’s father and portrayed one of the Tudors’ challengers with reverence. In saying that, there is no evidence that the play was ever performed. Indeed, the fact that the document still survives could be an indication that it was never taken to the boards.\textsuperscript{22} But then again, there is no evidence to say that it was not performed after all, and if the play was found totally offensive, the manuscript would probably have been destroyed.

Despite the contentious subject matter, Tilney did not require the manuscript to be put to the fire. Indeed, one of the many oddities about the play is the fact that the censor did not object to the subject matter outright. In the words of Dutton, “The most striking feature of the play, in relation to the question of censorship, is that it was written at all.”\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, the original playwrights obviously believed that Thomas More was a subject worth making a play about and did not think that Tilney would reject their script. Tilney’s part in the manuscript and his decision to allow it with alterations gives weight to Dutton’s thesis that the various Masters of the Revels cooperated with the theatrical companies more than they impeded them.\textsuperscript{24} His requirements for how More should be changed shows his understanding of how plays can be structured. His restructuring plan ensured the removal of the apprentices’ riot scene and resulted in the introduction of several other playwrights to fill in the gaps.\textsuperscript{25} His request for the

\textsuperscript{20} Jowett, Introduction to \textit{Sir Thomas More}, 8.
\textsuperscript{21} Purkis, \textit{Manuscript}, 155.
\textsuperscript{22} As Bate posits, \textit{The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore} would not have survived if it was re-transcribed by the company or printed. See the General Introduction to \textit{William Shakespeare and Others}, 9-30, 23.
\textsuperscript{23} Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 81.
\textsuperscript{24} Dutton, \textit{Mastering}, 9.
\textsuperscript{25} Because of the deletion, most of the scene is lost. In Jowett’s edition, the scene is in OT1b, Appendix 1, \textit{Sir Thomas More}, 329-331.
playwrights to change the structure makes him one of the plotters of the revised More, and the role of the plotter in a collaboration should not go unnoticed. As Stern writes, “A ‘plot’ was from Aristotle onwards at the root of every play; and a talented ‘plotter’ – a writer of plots – was crucial to a play’s success whether or not he then also contributed dialogue to the text”.

Although Tilney did not sit down and write a plot, as would traditionally happen in the making of plays, we may think of his structural role in the revision is analogous to that of a plotter. Such as in Eastward Ho!, Barnavelt, and Fortune, censorship is part of More’s collaborative model of playmaking.

It is unlikely however that Tilney would ever be considered a collaborator, let alone an author, because his cultural authority is not on par with that of Shakespeare’s. Indeed, critical questions of who has authority in this play are linked to assumptions of who has the right to be called an author. Issues of authority abound in the content of the play itself. More loses his position as Chancellor of England because of the authority of the unseen Henry VIII. Outside of the playworld, Tilney, whose power is granted by Queen Elizabeth, is authorised to cut down the play so as to render it un-performable. Hand C, authorised by a company to organise the revisions, is entitled to edit Shakespeare. Shakespeare, four hundred years later, has greater cultural authority than all the others involved. Accordingly, in some editorial approaches to More, the historical authorities which affected and manipulated the manuscript are secondary to the authority attendant to the author function. Different editions of More construct authorship according to who the general editors see as the authorial centre of the single or collected edition that they are producing. This has the effect of displacing the other hands involved in More and sometimes results in a dismissal of collaboration. Although Nina Levine has argued for the importance of reading More through collaboration as “the possibilities for collaborative labor

play out in both form *and* content”, editors sometimes treat collaboration as a by-product of playwriting rather than its essence.\(^27\)

By treating collaboration as incidental to the theatrical industry critics and editors are able to centralise Shakespeare. Contrary to the critical treatment of the play, the document of *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* undermines ideas of Shakespearean singularity because it is a manuscript wherein Shakespeare is on the periphery. Shakespeare, the document tells us, was just one of the many helping hands that worked towards producing a performable play. Although he was more of a secondary rather than primary collaborator, the play has received so much attention because it contributes to the material evidence that Shakespeare from Stratford not only existed, but that it was he who wrote for the theatres. The manuscript is the ultimate trump card in the authorship controversy; it led Alfred W. Pollard to write, “if Shakespeare wrote these three pages the discrepant theories which unite in regarding the ‘Stratford man’ as a mere mask concealing activity of some noble lord… come crashing to the ground”.\(^28\) Because of the search for Shakespeare, a circular logic has evolved: Hand D proves that Shakespeare was singular and Shakespeare’s singularity proves the identity of Hand D. Purkis has called this reasoning the logic of “Shakespearean coincidences”, that is, the structure of coincidences used by New Bibliographers in order to prove the identity of Hand D.\(^29\)

Although I agree that Hand D is in fact Shakespeare, I am interested in critics’ use of the metonymical hand as evidence of Shakespearean singularity, rather than of his part in the collaboration. One of the proofs for Hand D’s identity has been Shakespeare’s spelling of *scilens* for *silence*, first touted by J. Dover Wilson and supported more recently by MacDonald

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\(^{27}\) Levine, “Citizens’ Games,” 38.


\(^{29}\) Purkis, *Manuscript*, 216. See also 145-7. Purkis is critical of how New Bibliography has shaped the reception of the manuscript and Shakespeare’s place within it, particularly the distinction made between authors and transcribers. He seeks to rectify this by calling Hand D “D(\&c)” so as to “denote the passage’s writer(s)”, thus undermining the New Bibliographer’s idea of singularity and single agency, 236.
P. Jackson. This idiosyncratic spelling is classified as very rare and found only in Hand D’s passage, the 1600 quarto of 2 Henry VI, and a few other prints from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This uncanny parallel has led critics to assume that the spelling is “distinctively” Shakespearean, though this logic occludes the fact that Shakespeare preferred the spellings silence and silens to scilens throughout the rest of his plays. Indeed, because Hand D writes scilens and Hand D is believed to be Shakespeare, then scilens becomes a Shakespearean spelling, even if he has a greater preference for other spellings. This single, rarely used word, is typified as Shakespearean. But really, it does not reveal much about how Shakespeare worked as a playwright and his involvement in the broader playmaking world. The discourse of authorship has largely shaped critical and editorial approaches to More, insofar that even a rare spelling of a word evinces Shakespeare’s singularity.

Critics have also read Shakespeare’s autograph in the manuscript section called Addition II as disconnected from the rest of the play. They have arrived at this conclusion because, simply put, the rest of the play is not thought to be particularly good. Shakespeare, then, stands out against a group of lowly hacks. This perspective is typified by John Jones when he writes, “Sir Thomas More lacks all Shakespearian self-identity, and therefore our 147 lines betray a singular Shakespearian self-consciousness”. Greg, too, differentiated Hand D from the rest of the play, even if he originally would not fully credit the idea that it was indeed Shakespeare, writing, “Yet these hasty pages of D’s have individual qualities which mark them off sharply from the rest of the play”. He then goes on to compare similarities between the writer of Addition II to the playwright who wrote the Jack Cade scenes in 2 Henry VI, a

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33 Greg, Introduction to More, xiii.
sentiment which is shared by one of More’s editors, Giorgio Melchiori. Unbeknownst to Greg and Melchiori at the time, the playwright who wrote most of the Cade scenes is probably Marlowe.

Shakespeare is also believed to have kept his hands clean by not collaborating directly with the other playwrights. For a long time, it was supposed that he wrote a single passage without considering its part within the rest of the play. As Greg wrote, Hand D had “no respect for, perhaps no knowledge of, the play on which he is working”. Evidence for this includes his lack of stage directions, his inability to prescribe the correct speech prefixes, and his re-characterisation of the rebels as foolish instead of dignified. It has been found, however, that the reversal of Lincoln’s character and his cohort was part of a collaborative effort to make the rebellion seem less dangerous. In this way, Shakespeare was conscious of meeting some of Tilney’s demands. His supposedly unique contribution might, in large part, be determined by the needs of the censorship process. Furthermore, when he was writing his part of Addition II, Shakespeare knew when and where to begin his scene and end it so that Hand C could incorporate the requisite stage directions. As Purkis argues, the manuscript evidences Shakespeare’s conscious collaboration, his is “the work of a theatre professional who knows that the lines that he writes will be incorporated into a revised manuscript shaped by the diverse practical demands of putting on a performance”. Shakespeare’s involvement did not end at this one scene, as he contributed two other speeches later in the play. Jowett has found evidence that Shakespeare wrote the soliloquies in Additions III and V, and thus “his hand cannot be

37 Purkis, Manuscript, 261.
38 Purkis, Manuscript, 271-2.
isolated chronologically from the rest of the revision”. 39 Shakespeare was involved in the script for more than just a single intervention, and therefore cannot be separated from the rest of the play or the other playwrights.

Considering that More involves Shakespeare, a heavy cultural and historical frame is usually placed around the play in order to explain and contextualise it within Shakespeare’s canon. This has the effect of shutting out the other hands in the manuscript. In particular, short shrift is usually given to the anonymous Hand C. Hand C appears as a scribe in two other manuscripts from the period, the plots of 2 Deadly Sins and Fortune’s Tennis, which connect him to the Lord Strange’s or the Chamberlain’s Men, and the Admiral’s Men respectively. 40 Considering he was working for different companies, he may have been a freelance theatrical scribe without fixed ties. 41 In the More manuscript, he acts as something more than a theatrical scribe and annotator, because he orchestrated the development of the play as he worked it towards performance. He organised stage directions and properties and shepherded the playwrights through the writing process. He also revised the play’s lines, editing five out of six of the playwrights’ Additions. 42

Hand C is not considered an “author”, however, because his hand is not attached to a dramatist. As Purkis points out, “Was this not known to be the work of a ‘bookkeeper’ or ‘theatrical scribe’”, his alterations would be seen as “typical of an author or ‘literary corrector’”. 43 Perspectives on the role of Hand C have a large influence on the way the play is edited. Holger Schott Syme in The Norton Shakespeare: Third Edition understands that “our final authority is neither Shakespeare nor any of the collaborating playwrights, but Hand C”,

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39 These scenes, in Jowett are 8.1-21 and 9.6-18. See Appendix 2, Sir Thomas More, 394.
40 Taylor and Loughnane, “Canon,” 552.
41 Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 102.
42 Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 28.
43 Purkis, Manuscript, 174.
and so chooses Hand C’s variants over Shakespeare’s draft. The New Oxford Shakespeare’s edition of “Sir Thomas More: Additions by Shakespeare” edited by Anna Pruitt, in contrast, rejects Hand C’s edits because the general editors’ basic editorial principle is “to choose the version of the work that contains the most Shakespeare”. Both of these editions choose one version of the text over the other, and these editorial choices have a profound impact on how the process of early modern playwriting is perceived. Further to this, editorial choices are also circumscribed by the publisher, who in turn impose editorial decisions upon plays. Publishers of collected editions of Shakespeare may not see the need to include the entirety of a play that Shakespeare was not totally involved with. There are, however, benefits to presenting a unified edition of the play which is Shakespeare-centric, perhaps for undergraduates or for actors and directors. However, for those interested in textual studies or the practicalities of collaboration, some editorial decisions come at a loss because few editions properly visualise what Purkis calls the “insistent materiality” of the document. Nor do many editions account for the ways in which the play resists assumptions about early modern drama.

Editorial approaches to Hand C in Sir Thomas More

The More manuscript, similar to Barnavelt and Fortune, and early modern drama more generally, are palimpsestic artefacts which offer multiple versions of a play. New Bibliographic eclectic editing attempted to reckon with this by producing idealised, amalgamated texts made up of the different quartos and manuscripts available, usually in the search for the supposed

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46 Purkis, Manuscript, 1.
“foul papers” of the playwrights. This is particularly the case for The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon edited by Fredson Bowers. The editors pick and choose their preferred variants and in doing so have wiped out all traces of censorship. More recent editing is uninterested in the mythical foul papers and has preferred single-text editing. Another editorial strategy has been the production of “Genetic Texts”, where editors attempt to show how a play reached its final state. This is the case for Shakespeare and Middleton’s Macbeth and Measure for Measure in the Oxford Thomas Middleton: Collected Works. Ultimately, the type of edition produced is up to how the editor wants a play to be read and understood. But, with a play such as More, whose material fragmentation is in service to its eventual textual unification, something is inevitably lost in critical editions. Indeed, beneath the interlineations, crossings out and pasted in layers of the More manuscript, there is a cohesive and performable play. An editor would find it difficult to present the manuscript as a “work”, however, if they privileged the fragmentation of the document. The closest compromise has been Jowett’s Sir Thomas More for The Arden Shakespeare Third Series (Arden3 hereafter). What Jowett aims to do in his edition of More is to produce a unified – Shakespearean style – edition for the reader whilst also indicating manuscript fragmentation. Whilst the edition does not offer a representation of the manuscript’s physical layout, spelling or punctuation, Jowett hopes to show instead the intentionality of the agents involved: “The revision is not so much an outcome as a collaborative process. The reader of this edition is presented with that process”. That process does not come without Jowett’s interpretation of the manuscript, however, and there are moments where Jowett must clarify the playwrights’ intentions.

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49 As Jowett writes, the manuscript “becomes more disjointed and fragmented as the play becomes more unified”, Appendix 2, Sir Thomas More, 393.
What editorial decisions for More ultimately come down to is the question of who is given textual preference: Shakespeare, or Hand C. Even though Hand C had the final word in the manuscript, most editions of More privilege Shakespeare’s copy over Hand C’s emendations in the famous Scene 6 where More confronts the rebels. In his editing of Shakespeare, Hand C cleared up some of Shakespeare’s lines which he found confusing and allocated speech prefixes to more appropriate characters. These emendations are not particularly substantial, but they are telling in that Shakespeare’s draft was not final and needed work to ready it for performance. In order to more fully understand how editors have treated collaboration in More, I consider a particularly telling instance in Scene 6 of Hand C correcting Shakespeare. In his draft of the scene where More confronts the anti-alien rebels, Shakespeare allocated lines to a mysterious “Sher”. This enigmatic speech prefix could indicate the character of Shrewsbury, More as Sheriff of London, another Sheriff altogether, or the rebel Sherwin, who does not appear again after this scene. It is ultimately unclear who Shakespeare was referring to; even Hand C could not make sense of it and so assigned the lines to characters he thought were appropriate, the Lord Mayor and Williamson. Editors, as a result, have taken it upon themselves to clarify Shakespeare’s intended meaning, which usually has the effect of rejecting Hand C’s choices.

Possibly the most widely used edition of More for those without access to the manuscript itself is Greg’s 1911 diplomatic edition for the Malone Society.51 Greg aimed to provide the reader with the closest representation of the manuscript in printed form as possible and explain the document through New Bibliographical precepts. At the time, he was still agnostic about the identity of Hand D (indeed, Greg was the first to give the elusive Shakespeare this title). He was otherwise very much concerned with the division between literary and dramatic work in the play. Greg wanted to ascertain who was a playwright and who

51 The first edition, however, was produced by Alexander Dyce in 1844 for the Shakespeare Society.
was a theatre functionary. Because of Hand C’s patching up of the various Additions, Greg divided Hand C from the rest of the hands, “As B [Dekker] seems to have had the literary, so C appears to have had the dramatic, side of the revision under his charge”. ⁵² At stake for Greg was upholding the hierarchy of work: literary skill being at the top, and playhouse labour at the bottom. He edited the play accordingly, seeing Hand C’s work as uninventive rather than authorial. ⁵³ This view of early modern theatrical manuscripts has been inherited by current editorial practices. Greg is also the only editor who has separated the Original Text of More from the Additions. This is useful to the extent that the reader can see what the first version of the play was trying to achieve, but it poses other difficulties in that the Additions hover in a structural no man’s land at the back of the edition as a result. Greg perhaps came to this editorial decision so that he could present the closest thing that came to the Original Text, perhaps even the “foul papers” Hand S was copying (seeing as he thought Munday was a scribe rather than a playwright). ⁵⁴ Despite these misgivings, Greg set the bar for the editions of More that followed; his edition is still one of the most important attempts to make the manuscript accessible to the modern reader.

Despite Greg’s best intentions to recreate the manuscript in print, his editorial decisions obfuscate Hand C’s revisions of Shakespeare’s speech prefixes. Greg attempts to convey both Shakespeare’s draft and Hand C’s revisions through brackets and capitalisation:

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[Sher] MAIOR hold in the kings name hold
Surrey frends masters Countrymen
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peace how peace I [sh] Charg yo\[sh\] keep the peace
my maisters Countrymen
The noble Earle of Shrowsbury letts hear him (Add. II (D) 148-152)

Greg shows in line 148 how “[Sher]” was crossed out by Hand C by using square brackets and placing “MAIOR” next to the original speech prefix in a smaller font. However, in line 152 he only keeps “WILLIAMSON” and does not include “[Sher]”. He writes in the notes that the first five letters of “WILLIAMSON” cover Hand D’s “Sher”, but it is unclear why he does not simply show this in the body of the text itself.\(^{55}\) Perhaps it is because it would be awkward to show the process of over-writing typographically, as he could not superimpose one word over another in his edition. Nevertheless, by not putting the second “Sher” in square brackets as well, Greg unintentionally wipes out the revision process which led to Hand C writing “WILLIAMSON”. This editorial conundrum exposes how it is perhaps impossible to replicate the manuscript in print without making certain sacrifices.

In the subsequent major critical edition of More, Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori’s Sir Thomas More: A Play for The Revels Plays (1990), the editors wanted to produce a text that is simultaneously author-centred and interested in collaboration. Gabrieli and Melchiori decided to present More as a performance text, which is what they understand the original purpose of the manuscript to be. The edition makes apparent however that it is perhaps impossible to transpose the More manuscript into both a performance text and an edition which details the collaborative process of revision. They claim to show “the process by which it acquired its final form, accounting for each single word or mark found in the manuscript”, but Hand C’s revisions and Tilney’s interventions are relegated to the Collation

\(^{55}\) Greg, More, n. 152, Add. II (D).
and Commentary sections.\footnote{Vittorio Gabrieli and Melchiori, ed., Introduction to Anthony Munday and others, \textit{Sir Thomas More: A Play} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 36. Line numbers from this edition of the play will be incorporated into the body of the text.} Furthermore, longer deleted passages are put in the Rejected or Alternative Passages at the end of the play.

Gabrieli and Melchiori do take a different tack from other editors in that they declare their edition is not Shakespeare-centric. They try to solve the void of an un-authored play by positioning Munday as the original author, considering that he was probably the one who plotted the play as well as copying the first version of it.\footnote{Gabrieli and Melchiori, Introduction to \textit{More}, 14.} Furthermore, they also consider Shakespeare to be the “weak link” in the revision process.\footnote{Gabrieli and Melchiori, Introduction to \textit{More}, 30} They reject the consensus that “the rest of the play was generally considered badly structured and written, because it did not fit in with the Shakespearian fragment”, and instead they see the Shakespeare fragment as not fitting in with the rest of the play.\footnote{Gabrieli and Melchiori, Introduction to \textit{More}, 30. Gabrieli and Melchiori’s emphasis.} They suggest that his Addition was not of the same quality of the other playwrights because the rebels are turned into clowns, thereby nullifying the effect of their protest.\footnote{Gabrieli and Melchiori, Introduction to \textit{More}, 30.} Despite their scepticism as to the artistic standard of Shakespeare’s involvement in \textit{More}, they ultimately prop up his authority as they favour an interpretation of his draft over Hand C’s interpolations in Addition II:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Sheriff}. Hold, in the king’s name hold!

\textit{Surrey}. Friends, masters, countrymen–

\textit{Mayor}. Peace ho, peace! I charge you keep the peace.

\textit{Shrewsbury}. My masters, countrymen–

\textit{Sherwin}. The noble Earl of Shrewsbury, let’s hear him. (2.3.29-33)
\end{quote}
Gabrieli and Melchiori try to make sense of Shakespeare by interpreting the two “Sher”s as a second Sheriff and Shrewsbury. They suggest that because the Mayor speaks the line “Peace ho, peace! I charge you keep the peace” two lines after “Sher”s “Hold, in the king’s name hold!”, Shakespeare must have meant another city official rather than Shrewsbury repeating himself. Furthermore, they find that the line “The noble Earl of Shrewsbury, let’s hear him” is more likely to have come from Sherwin’s mouth as a “moderate” character, instead of the “angry Williamson”. For whatever reason – probably theatrical – Hand C wanted Sherwin to be replaced by Williamson. This is perhaps because Sherwin does not appear again in the play, so Hand C decided to have one less actor onstage in this already packed scene. The editors ultimately make an unexpected editorial decision to ignore Hand C, considering their earlier dismissal of Shakespeare’s role in the revision. They ultimately privilege the New Bibliography hierarchy of dramatists before scribes in their edition. As a result, they offer their own interpretation of Shakespeare’s text rather than honouring Hand C’s logical revisions.

In his edition of More for Arden3, Jowett aims to restore the connection between text and writing that can be lost in a critical edition. This is by far the most comprehensive edition of the play to date, despite not represent the manuscript’s layout, spelling, or punctuation. Indeed, Jowett is more interested in expressing the agents’ intentions. He writes about Tilney’s crossing out, for example, “Where marks for omission are vague or inaccurate or incomplete in the manuscript, the aim is not to reproduce the exact markings but to indicate the intended effect”. He does this by presenting the play in its revised form but gesturing towards the collaborative process through line breaks to indicate when the writers change. He also presents alternative readings, such as Hand C’s revisions, through typography within the body of the text.

61 Gabrieli and Melchiori, More, n. 29, 2.3.
62 Gabrieli and Melchiori, More, n. 33, 2.3.
63 McMillin argues that one of Hand C’s major concerns in the revision process was narrowing down the large number of actors needed to perform this play. See Elizabethan, 34-51.
64 Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 8.
65 Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 126
edition. This has the effect of allowing a reader to choose a preferred reading herself. However, Jowett’s aim of working the collaborative process back into the play is somewhat undermined by its printing within a Shakespeare-centric edition. As Jowett writes, “Its presence and presentation here in the Arden series consolidates its claim to be part of the Shakespeare canon”.\(^6\) This, however, is somewhat out of Jowett’s control because the play could not be published in the Arden Early Modern Drama series because it includes writing by Shakespeare. Due to this publishing policy, More is brought inside of the Shakespeare canon. The play has up until this point, however, been on the periphery of Shakespeare’s canon, especially because Hand D was not accepted as Shakespeare until the twenty-first century. But this idea of canon is somewhat dangerous for a play such as More because canonicity could blot out the other collaborators involved, even within an edition that does more to highlight the processes of co-authorship at work. More is both within and without Shakespeare’s canon, and this is a double-edged sword: outside of the canon More helps us question Shakespearean authority, and inside the canon it helps us broaden understandings of Shakespeare’s playwriting and accept other types of collaboration in his work. Without either, early modern dramatic authorship cannot be fully understood and interrogated.

The Arden3 edition wants to have the best of both worlds by showing how collaborative playwriting worked but also by contextualising the play in relation to Shakespeare. The introductory explanatory material is very even handed, although the only part of the play transcribed from the manuscript is Shakespeare’s part in Addition II, which is placed in an appendix. Because he is editing an Arden Shakespeare edition, Jowett has to offer his own interpretation of what Shakespeare meant in Addition II. But he does this whilst simultaneously showing how Hand C intervened:

\(^6\) Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 8.
SHREWSBURY 'C'MAYOR'C'

Hold, in the King’s name, hold!

SURREY Friends, masters, countrymen –

LORD MAYOR

Peace ho, peace! I charge you keep the peace.

SHREWSBURY My masters, countrymen –

SHERWIN 'C'WILLIAMSON'C' The noble Earl of Shrewsbury!

Let’s hear him. (6.32-5)

Unlike Gabrieli and Melchiori, Jowett interprets the first Sher as Shrewsbury, rather than a second Sheriff. By cutting out the extra Sheriff, Jowett follows Hand C’s concern of having too many people on stage in what is already a crowded scene. Jowett’s method for conveying emendations in the manuscript is the use of underlining to indicate a deletion in the speech prefixes and a changed font alongside the superscript ‘C’ for Hand C’s interlineations. Jowett has the same problem as Greg when it comes to the second “Sher”, as he is also unable to show the process of writing over in a printed edition. However, he can still express Hand C’s objective through his chosen editorial procedure.

Because it is a modern spelling critical edition, and part of the Arden3 series, Jowett’s aim of expressing the manuscript in print is ultimately undermined by Shakespeare-centrism. Indeed, it is curious that More was not printed in the Arden Early Modern Drama collection but under the Arden Shakespeare imprint. Jowett recognises this conundrum, writing in his explanation of his editorial practice:

A compromise needs to be reached between two aims: to respect the disjunctions, conflicts and discontinuities of the manuscript, and to achieve
something that approaches the continuous and seamless presentation of an edition of a Shakespeare play.67

In order for the play to make sense, Jowett interprets the disjointed elements of the manuscript for the reader through acts of editorial translation. He cannot compromise on the readability of the edition as then it cannot be sold to a broader array of readers. Regardless of Arden’s financial concerns however, Jowett’s attempt to create unity in a collaborative text can be seen within the context of what is perhaps the central argument in studies of collaborative plays: did collaborative playwrights try to create a seamless text, or is collaborative writing inherently fragmented? This leads to a further question: what should be privileged in the editing of collaborative plays: singularity or fragmentation? Whilst Masten would argue for collaborative plays as unified wholes, and Taylor sees them more as fragmented compilations of different voices, neither of these binaries can really play out in a critical edition without compromise.68 Too much focus on creating the idea of seamlessness would mean sacrificing the materiality of the document, whilst an opposite focus on collaboration may mean an edition that only a certain subset of scholars would want to read. Arden’s priorities lie with the former, as they want an edition of scholarly weight, but also one that is marketable.

Thus, Jowett cannot simply print “Sher” twice without giving some indication as to what Shakespeare meant by it. He interprets the first “Sher” as Shrewsbury, made ambiguous “by a slip of the pen or idiosyncratic spelling”.69 Shakespeare does indeed use irregular spellings for Shrewsbury – he gives Shrewsbury the speech prefix “Shro.” three lines later (Greg, Add. II (D), 151). As with the spelling of scilens, idiosyncratic spelling decisions are not just important to the “Sher” textual crux but are central to the presentation and

67 Jowett, Introduction to Sir Thomas More, 121.
68 I discuss this in my Introduction, 20.
understanding of Shakespeare in editions of *More* more generally. For the second “Sher”, like Gabrieli and Melchiori, Jowett believes that Shakespeare meant Sherwin. He notes that because Shakespeare did not write the entrances and exits of the scene (Hand C did), there was no inclusion of Sherwin and Hand C did not add him in later. Shakespeare may have found the name from the earlier version of the insurrection scene.\(^70\) Jowett also includes Shakespeare’s reading when he incorporates Sherwin into the entrance of scene six, “Enter LINCOLN, DOLL, CLOWN [BETTS], GEORGE BETTS, WILLIAMSON, [SHERWIN,] others: [Citizens and Prentices, armed]” (SD6.0). Due to Jowett’s editing, the reader can follow the scene according to an interpretation of Shakespeare’s intentions or Hand C’s revisions.

The next edition of *More* to appear was in *William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays*, by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen in 2013. This collected edition is a companion to *The RSC Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (2007), where only Shakespeare’s lines in Addition II appears. *Collaborative Plays* intends to broaden out the canon that was presented in *The Complete Works* although, if the canon was so “complete”, the necessity of opening up the canon seems counterintuitive. The editors place side by side plays that have a putative connection to Shakespeare with non-canonical plays in which he had a hand. The entirety of *More* is presented with plays such as *The Spanish Tragedy, Edward III, Locrine* and *Arden of Faversham*. Some of the plays included in this edition have been known formally as part of the Apocrypha since C. F. Tucker Brooke’s 1908 collection of plays, in which he set “the boundary between the “genuine” Shakespeare plays and the Apocrypha” through the use of the word *canon*.\(^71\) Unlike some of Shakespeare’s collaborative plays, the Apocrypha are not so much on the periphery of the canon as outside of it.

Collaborative Plays positions itself in relation to the idea of the Shakespeare Apocrypha. Indeed, Collaborative Plays is the first critical, modern spelling edition of this group of plays. In the General Introduction to the collection, Bate seeks to justify the edition’s use of Apocryphal status but also to distance the edition from this idea, “In order to keep the many unresolved questions open and to avoid the quasi-biblical (and thus unhelpfully bardolatrous) associations of the word ‘apocrypha’, we call our edition William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays”.72 One does not have to search very far to find the edition’s links to the Apocrypha however, as it is all over the promotional material and referenced in the book’s blurb. This is an edition that wants to have its cake and eat it too: it includes plays that are certainly Shakespearean collaborations but does not seek to question whether these plays should be considered canonical. As Purkis writes, by using the Apocrypha rhetoric, Collaborative Plays presents “a collection that does not challenge the integrity of the established works – or, as the RSC nomenclature has it, the “completeness” of the Complete Works volume”.73

Placing More within the Apocrypha asks the reader to assume that the play is not part of Shakespeare’s canon. This is corroborated by how the play has been edited. Unlike in the editions already mentioned, Hand C’s revisions are accepted, overriding Shakespeare’s variants:

LORD MAYOR Hold! In the king’s name, hold!

SURREY Friends, masters, countrymen–

LORD MAYOR Peace, ho, peace! I charge you, keep the peace!

SHREWSBURY My masters, countrymen–

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73 Purkis, “Apocryphal Thinking,” 298.
WILLIAMSON The noble earl of Shrewsbury, let’s hear him.\textsuperscript{74}

The editors choose Hand C’s Mayor and Williamson over Shakespeare’s “Sher”s. This may be because they are editing the manuscript *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* rather than the play *Sir Thomas More*. However, they make no mention of the manuscript’s textual quandaries in the notes or the textual notes. Tilney’s marks and edicts are also given short shrift in this edition. Instead of indicating where Tilney intervened in the script in situ, the editors relegate these details to the textual notes at the end of the play. Sharpe, in his essay on “Authorship and Attribution” at the end of the collected edition, does make a brief reference to Hand C’s emendations of the speech prefixes and Tilney’s instructions when he notes the various places that the manuscript was revised.\textsuperscript{75} But placing this information in a long essay at the back of the book is not particularly useful for an edition which calls itself *Collaborative Plays*. Indeed, despite presenting the manuscript in its final form, after Hand C emended it, the editors seem to go out of their way to hide what is collaborative about this collaborative and censored play.

**Sir Thomas More at Shakespeare’s quatercentenary**

The most recent editorial offerings of *More* arrived just in time for Shakespeare’s quatercentenary. *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition* (hereafter NOS) was published in 2016 and the *Critical Reference Edition* arrived in 2017, whilst *The Norton Shakespeare: Third Edition* (hereafter Norton3) was published in 2015. All three offer radically different readings of *More* which are the result of divergent editorial practices. The monumental NOS is general edited by Taylor, Jowett, Terri Bourus and Egan. This collection

\textsuperscript{74} Bate and Rasmussen, *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, 349-420, 2.4.24-28.

\textsuperscript{75} Sharpe notes there are “alteration[s] of some speech prefixes in Addition II (in both the Heywood and Shakespeare sections)”, “Authorship and Attribution,” *Collaborative Works*, 688.
is an update of the 1986 *Oxford Shakespeare* and supplemented by a Digital Edition. More is edited by Anna Pruitt in both versions. The NOS also includes an *Authorship Companion* (2017) which seeks to explain the supposed central argument of this edition: that Shakespeare collaborated more than we thought he did. Unlike the other editions mentioned thus far, the NOS does not print the whole of *More*, but only “Additions by Shakespeare”, including More’s monologues from Additions III and V. The entire play is supposed to appear in the *Alternate Versions* edition of the NOS, although the publication date is yet to be confirmed. The logic behind this dictates that the entire play is an alternative version of Shakespeare’s additions, implying that Shakespeare’s lines are the only and the original version, whilst the rest of the play is supplementary. This sort of editorial practice would be commensurate with taking the scenes written by Middleton out of *Macbeth*. As Werstine has pointed out, “if editors left out of Shakespeare editions everything that has been thought not to be the author Shakespeare’s but some close contriver’s, the author “Shakespeare” might not be much at all”. It is accepted practice however to extricate Shakespeare from his collaborators in *More*.

The reasoning behind not printing the entirety of *More* in the first two editions is obscure. Indeed, the absence of *More* may come down to the publishers’ not wanting another full play in an already loaded book. The editors make a similar decision in their presenting of scenes from *The Spanish Tragedy* that have been found to be Shakespeare’s revisions. In contrast, *1 Henry VI* is printed in its entirety, although it is now well accepted that Shakespeare

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76 I am not looking at the Second Edition of the Oxford *Complete Works*, as the *New Oxford Shakespeare* is an updated version of that edition.
80 *The Spanish Tragedy* and *More* have similar, though ultimately different, collaboration models. Unfortunately, I do not have the scope to discuss these issues in this chapter. For details of authorship, see Taylor, “Did Shakespeare Write *The Spanish Tragedy* Additions?,” in NOS: *Authorship Companion*, 246-260.
only had a hand in a few scenes. *1 Henry VI* seems to have been included because it has been part of the Shakespeare canon for four hundred years, whilst *More* and *The Spanish Tragedy* have only just got their feet in the door. Furthermore, the editors thought to include only the sections “likely to be of most interest to readers of Shakespeare”. This is at odds with the edition’s claims that it has taken Shakespeare’s collaborative writing into proper account. Jakub Boguszak has criticised the NOS for this contradiction, questioning the point of basing a collected edition on Shakespeare’s status as a collaborator if readers are not supposed to be interested in any other writers, “The edition tries to have it both ways: it shakes and expands the canon, but it also works hard to reassure the readers that Shakespeare still stands out”. Indeed, what the edition really seems to want from the reader is to care that Shakespeare collaborated, but not to be as interested in his collaborators.

The NOS offers two different readings of Shakespeare’s and Hand C’s stage directions, divided between its *Modern Critical Edition* and *Critical Reference Edition*. For the *Modern Critical Edition*, Pruitt follows Jowett’s reading of the two “Sher”s, allocating the first “Sher” to Shrewsbury and the second to Sherwin. Pruitt gives no reason for why Shrewsbury and Sherwin have been allocated these lines, nor does the edition make any reference to the ambiguity of Shakespeare’s draft. There is, however, a vague textual note: “The manuscript reviser assigned this line to the Mayor”, and a similar one about Hand C allocating the second “Sher” to Williamson. These notes assume that readers are uninterested in the process by which a play was actually written. Furthermore, it obscures the ways Shakespeare collaborated. In the *Critical Reference Edition*, the Additions are presented in original spelling. The version of *More* the reader sees here is supposed to be the copy text for the *Modern Critical Edition*.

81 Taylor and Bourus, “Why read,” 57.
83 Shakespeare, “*Sir Thomas More*: Additions by Shakespeare,” n. Ilc.27.
In his Introduction to the *Critical Reference Edition*, Jowett writes that whilst the plays presented are closer to the copy texts than the 1986-7 Oxford Shakespeare, they are still critical editions, and thus *The New Oxford Shakespeare* “recognizes the need to emend error”. This may work for a quarto or Folio copy text, but considering that *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* is a manuscript, deleting the other hands around Shakespeare is a loaded act. Indeed, the implication is that Hand C is a type of error that needs correcting.

The presentation of the Additions begins to look like the New Bibliographic search for foul papers when the editors decide to present only what they think is Shakespeare’s first draft:

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SHER  hold in the king name hold
SURREY  frend masters Countrymen
MAYER  peace how peace I Charg yo\textsuperscript{u} keep the peace
SHRO.  my masters Countrymen
SHER  The noble Earle of Shrewsbury lett hear him\textsuperscript{85}
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The editorial apparatus around the Addition presents the idea that we are coming as close to Shakespeare’s original as possible. Indeed, the edition even includes the Folio numbers at the top left-hand corner of the page. Pruitt has also taken out the S’s in “kings” “frends” and “letts” (1107, 1108, 1111), without any indication as to why this decision has been made, nor is it included in the Disputed and Doubtful Readings. What is included, in comparison to the *Modern Critical Edition*, is slightly more detail in the notes about Shakespeare’s intended meaning in the speech prefixes. Pruitt writes, “Sher = Shrewsbury. The speaker might alternatively be a sheriff, entering with the Mayor. He is not Sherwin”, and “Sher = Sherwin.

The speech prefix form is not distinguished for ‘Sher’ at IIc.27, who is a different speaker”.  

There is no mention here of Hand C. Where Hand C does get a mention however is in Pruitt’s Introduction under the heading “The Contributions of Hand C”.  

Here she lists “IIc.27 Sher Maior” and “IIc.30 Sher williams”. This is not particularly useful for a reader who wants to see these revisions explained and in action on the page. Pruitt defends the decision to excise Hand C as part of the collected edition’s Shakespeare-centric project:

> An edition of an entire play as revised would take these alterations into account, but a text that isolates the Shakespearean revisions from other parts of the play should, by the same token, separate Shakespeare’s hand from that of the theatre annotator.

Shakespeare’s writing is understood to be so singular that his three passages can be excised from a play and still make sense. This seems contradictory when discussing a fragment of Shakespeare’s writing that only exists in the first place thanks to collaborative practices. These sorts of editorial decisions have the effect of removing Shakespeare from the collaborative processes of writing. What is really at stake here is Shakespeare’s cultural cachet: his singularity trumps collaboration.

The NOS’s editions of More also presents Shakespeare’s other two soliloquies in the play, but unlike Addition II, these do not appear in the manuscript as autograph copies. Here, the editors of the NOS cannot get around the presence of intervening agents. Hand C copied into the manuscript More’s soliloquies “It is in heaven that I am thus and thus” from Addition III and “Why, this is cheerful news. Friends go and come” from Addition V. Furthermore,

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86 Shakespeare, Moore, Add. IIc, n. IIc.27, 30.
88 Pruitt, Introduction to Moore, 1106.
89 Pruitt, Introduction to Moore, 1103.
Heywood also expanded the second soliloquy before Hand C copied it down.\textsuperscript{90} In contrast to the treatment of II, there is no way to weed out Hand C or Heywood here, and so Pruitt takes these fragments as “integral units”.\textsuperscript{91} This is also because Heywood’s lines are not extracted from the speech. Without them, the soliloquy would not make much sense at all.\textsuperscript{92} Some collaborations, it seems, are more equal than others. Although the NOS has taken many steps forward in its representation of Shakespearean collaboration, it is through the treatment of Hand C that the hierarchies inherent in Shakespeare editing make themselves apparent. Simply including Hand C’s emendations in an edition is a radical act, as Shakespeare is decentred. Most probably, if Hand C had a name attached to his handwriting, his revisions of Shakespeare’s lines would be included in more editions.

Norton3 takes a similar editorial decision to the RSC’s William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays by choosing Hand C’s variants over Shakespeare’s. Whilst the first two editions of The Norton Shakespeare were based on the Oxford Shakespeare, the newest edition goes its own way. The general textual editors, Gossett and Gordon McMullan, have chosen single-text editing for Norton3, as in the NOS. Also like the NOS, Norton3 exists in two editions, printed and digital (though a subscription to the NOS’s Digital Edition only lasts twelve months). The two collected editions diverge in that Norton3’s digital apparatus also has material to supplement the printed edition. In the Digital Edition (to which every purchaser of the book has unlimited access) the reader can find the copy texts used for the printed book, as well as the other available versions of a play. When there is more than one version of a play available, in order to choose which one appears in print and which ones only appear online, the editors chose the playtext that “is most complete and apparently most

\textsuperscript{90} See Jowett, Appendix 4, Sir Thomas More, 453-8, for a discussion of the authorship of these soliloquies.
\textsuperscript{91} Pruitt does, however, extract the few lines at the beginning of Add. V where a messenger brings news to More, as these do not seem to have been written by Shakespeare. Pruitt, Introduction to Moore, 1103.
\textsuperscript{92} Jowett provides a conjectural reconstruction of Shakespeare’s original soliloquy in Appendix 4 of his edition of Sir Thomas More, 457. Pruitt quotes this in full in her Introduction to Moore, 1102-3.
finished”. For example, the Folio text *The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus* is only present online, whilst the quarto *The Most Lamentable Roman Tragedy of Titus Andronicus* is present both in print and online. The editors want to give the reader more options to peruse, but they create a disparity between the printed and digital texts because those selected for print are implied to be superior to those shorter, “bad”, versions. These decisions also came down to the commercial pressures placed on editors. Indeed, the amount of plays in the Norton3 could be limited by the notoriously tissue-thin paper the edition is printed on. It is interesting to note, however, which plays do and do not make the cut. Despite these decisions, the editors are showing the reader the variety of forms that an early modern play could take.

The Digital Edition also contains an extensive number of documents in the appendices relating to Shakespeare and his works, particularly from his contemporaries. This is an incredibly useful teaching resource which includes nearly everything one can think of relating to Shakespeare and the theatre of his time (including the documents relating to the “Isle of Dogs” affair and even financial records from Henslowe’s *Diary*). *Sir Thomas More*, unlike in the *NOS*, is presented in full. However, the play is only available in the Digital Edition. Similar the Folio editions digitally present to supplement the printed plays, *More* appears as additional material, an add-on, outside of the canon enough not to appear in print and yet containing Shakespeare’s writing so it cannot be ignored. This is compounded by the fact that only an introduction to *More* is included in the printed edition (the same goes for *Edward III*). Gossett and McMullan write that Norton3 is “born digital”, seeming to privilege the digital over the printed edition of the plays. Although collected editions are being superseded by digital ones,

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94 For the inequality between print and digital in the Norton3, see Purkis, “Apocryphal Thinking,” 300-1.
the exclusion of More from the printed text is a reminder that Shakespeare’s most collaborative play is still not considered canonical or Shakespearean enough.

Similar to the RSC’s Collaborative Plays, Norton3 edits The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore rather than the play Sir Thomas More, which is compatible with their editorial principle “to edit the text, not the work”. Although the editors claim to be editing the text, they still begin to present The Booke as a work. As Syme admits in his Textual Introduction to the play, “In conceiving of the play as a unified text, however, we largely gloss over the composite nature of the manuscript”. This has the effect of privileging unification over collaborative disjointedness; indeed, it supposes that a good collaborative play is one where the reader cannot see the collaboration happening. Because of this editorial decision, Hand C’s emendations of Shakespeare are accepted but the revision process is not noted in situ. The commentary is however only a handy click away in the Digital Edition. Next to the point at which the text has Lord Mayor and Williamson as the speech prefixes (rather than Sheriff, Shrewsbury, or Sherwin), the reader has the option of opening a detailed textual note explaining how the speech prefix “is an instance of Hand C overriding Shakespeare”. Unlike the other editions discussed above, Syme makes it clear that Norton3 considers Hand C as something more than a collaborator or contributor, but an author:

But as a co-author, Hand C was clearly empowered to streamline and reorganize the text, no matter whose hand he altered in the process. Thus, by being somewhat less true to what Shakespeare wrote, our edition tries to remain a little more true to the way in which this play was written”.

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98 Syme, Sir Thomas More, Textual Comment 6, 2.3.30 SP.
99 Syme, Sir Thomas More, Textual Comment 6, 2.3.30 SP.
This edition takes the collaborative dramatic context in which *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* was written seriously, and accounts for it, whilst seeking to elevate Hand C to a status commensurate with the canonical author who he revised. What this edition does not do is reveal the palimpsestic nature of the document from which the play emerges because their interest is in editing a unified text. Nor does it see *More* as equal to the other collaborative plays in Shakespeare’s canon.

That Hand C is considered by the editors of Norton3 an author of *More* is a step forward in the treatment of collaborators who are not literary figures. Indeed, that Norton3 is the first to do so reveals the extent to which Shakespeare – and authorial figures more generally – are still placed at the top of a hierarchy. This is despite the field’s acceptance of the important part collaboration played in Shakespeare’s career. I am led to question whether the point of the extensive studies into Shakespeare and his collaborators is to open up the canon to more minor figures, or to keep them out. Indeed, when editors such as Jowett write that “The overall intentionality lies in the first instance with the theatre company, and more specifically with Hand C, acting on behalf of the company”, he does not mean that authorship and intentionality are the same thing.100 Furthermore, Taylor sees Hand C as collaborative but not as authorial, “Hand C usefully incarnates the commercial and intrinsically social institution of a joint-stock theatre company. His handwriting illustrates one particular kind of collaborative interaction”.101 Even though book-keeper figures such as Hand C, Knight, and Crane perform duties that are authorial in practice, there is still a major hesitancy to consider them something more than mere scribes.

Considering the great strides early modern criticism is making to accept collaborative playwriting, it is peculiar that scribes and bookkeepers and censors are still not considered

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authorial figures. This may be because figures such as Hand C are connected with the market operations of the playhouse, rather than the work of a playwright. Indeed, in the statements from Jowett and Taylor quoted above, Hand C’s authority derives from the theatre company; it is not innate in the way that Shakespeare’s is. Because scribes and bookkeepers are involved in the process by which a script becomes playable, and therefore sellable, they are lower in the artistic hierarchy. To be sure, Hand C’s work is very different from that of Shakespeare’s, but without him, More would never be a “work” but a series of disconnected scenes. Furthermore, even a critic such as Jowett – whose edition of More clearly identifies the collaborative nature of the play – still sees collaboration as beneath Shakespeare because he believes Shakespeare saw collaboration as beneath himself. In a recent article, Jowett argues that Shakespeare immersed himself in collaboration at the beginning of his career in order to develop his skills but, “Having achieved this goal, he strongly and decisively renounced this practice” because he aligned his plays with single authorship and Apollo, rather than “the Mercurial spirit of collaborative writing”.  

Considering that Shakespeare was involved in More later in his career, this play does not fit into Jowett’s narrative. Jowett here maintains the position that playwrights such as Henslowe’s “hacks” collaborated only for money, whilst playwrights such as Shakespeare had grander, authorial, ambitions.

The same treatment is levelled out to the censors: although Buc already had literary credentials and an enormous influence on the structure of Barnavelt, he is not considered one of its authors. Tilney is also not treated as an authorial figure; his instructions “are not considered part of the creative collaboration” in Norton3. There is little that is romantic about state censorship, but Tilney’s effect on the play is still collaborative. Even if most of his instructions were ignored, Tilney’s revisions required a major restructuring of the play, without

103 Syme, Textual Introduction to Sir Thomas More.
which, ironically, we would not have Shakespeare’s presence. Indeed, the only editions of the play which present Tilney’s involvement are the Arden3 and, after so many years, Greg’s for the Malone Society. This is because these are the two editions committed to presenting the materiality and textual history of the Moore document in their respective ways. It behoves editors to take the censorship of this play seriously not just because Tilney is a major part of the process by which the manuscript – and potentially the production of the play came to be – but because More allows us to rethink many critical notions about the relationship of early modern politics to theatre. Despite threats that plays discussing matters of state and religion would be disallowed, Tilney appears to have been rather more flexible than believed. Furthermore, similarly to Fortune, the manuscript shows the ways in which companies revised plays to avoid further censorship. As Clare writes, “the recast form of the insurrection serves to illuminate the kind of strategies which playwrights employed to circumvent censorship in an attempt to maintain a measure of dramatic integrity”.

Indeed, Hand C revised the play and organised who would re-write what scenes – such as Shakespeare’s rewrite of the insurrection scene of the Original Text – and delete others so as to deal with Tilney’s censorship on some level. As well as this, Heywood added Clown Betts to the insurrection scenes in order to diffuse the tension. These are all important elements of the play and the manuscript’s development and could be given more space within critical editions of More.

Going forward, there are several possible solutions to this editing conundrum. Masten’s solution is to edit across collaboration, producing a singular text that does not look for identifications and difference in order to historicise style, agency, and influence. This has largely been done already, although with a greater focus on Shakespeare rather than his collaborators. Editions are also beginning to foreground collaboration, or less canonical

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104 Clare, Censorship, 36.
105 Clare, Censorship, 57.
playwrights other than Shakespeare. Another middle point could be a unified playtext that provides more textual commentary alongside the text rather than at the end of it. What is perhaps the best solution of all, considering the developments of digital publishing, would be a dual edition of More that presents both a unified text and a more fragmented one. Through hyperlinks that open up to different variants and commentary, a reader could choose between the various options so that she can read the kind of edition that suits her interests. Hypothetically, a reader could choose Tilney’s intended version of the play, Hand C’s, Shakespeare without Hand C, the Original Text, and so forth. This could create an edition that does not have to compromise on either a readable play or its collaborative history. Much of this, however, is dependent on the publishers of these editions. At many points, editors’ hands are tied by larger financial constraints. These constraints, however, do have an effect on how collaborative censorship is treated in early modern scholarship.

Masten has rightly asked, “When we want More in a Complete Works edition of Shakespeare, what do we want?” The answer has mostly been, unfortunately, more Shakespeare and less of his collaborators. Or, to use the play as a way to consider the boundaries of Shakespeare’s canon without necessarily considering how the play blurs those authorial boundaries. Many critical editions of More have clouded the collaborative censorship of the play by obscuring early modern writing practices. It is due to this editorial process that More is simultaneously on the boundary of Shakespeare’s canon whilst also treated as an aberrance, rather than the norm, of early modern playwriting. By paying greater attention to the role of anonymous agents such as Hand C, editions and criticism can better account for the ways collaboration and censorship (re)generated plays.

Conclusion

TO THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF HONOUR AND VIRTUE
THE MOST NOBLE WILLIAM, EARL OF PEMBROKE,
LORD CHAMBERLAIN, etc.

My Lord,

While you cannot change your merit, I dare not change your title; it was that made it, and not I. Under which name I here offer to Your Lordship the ripest of my studies, my *Epigrams*; which, though they carry danger in the sound, do not therefore seek your shelter. For when I made them I had nothing in my conscience to expressing of which I did need a cipher. But if I be fallen into those times wherein, for the likeness of vice and facts, everyone thinks another’s ill deeds objected to him, and that in their ignorant and guilty mouths the common voice is (for their security) ‘Beware the poet’, confessing therein so much love to their diseases, as they would rather make a party for them than be either rid or told of them, I must expect, at Your Lordship’s hand, the protection of truth and liberty, while you are constant to your own goodness.¹

Jonson begins his book of *Epigrams* with a dedication to the man who oversaw theatrical censorship, the Lord Chamberlain William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke. Although Herbert was no stranger to literary dedications, there is something particularly anxious and direct about Jonson’s address.² Jonson was particularly nervous about the reading audience’s reception of his poems. He had, once before, attempted to forestall criticism by dedicating *Catiline* to

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² According to Brian O’Farrell, “In the early seventeenth century more works were dedicated to Pembroke than to anyone else”, *Shakespeare's Patron: William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke, 1580-1630* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 78.
Herbert. Although, in that case, Jonson wrote the dedication because *Catiline* was badly received, “Posterity may pay your benefit the honour and thanks when it shall know that you dare, in these jig-given times, to countenance a legitimate poem”. Here, as in the dedication to the *Epigrams*, Jonson was careful to cultivate his relationships with officials, and Herbert in particular offered him legitimacy, funds, and protection. Jonson wanted his poems shielded by a political authority, and so invoked his patron as an implicit request for protection. However, the dedication has a two-fold effect, as it is equally for Jonson’s readers as it is for Herbert. That is, the inscription works to remind the reader that Jonson has been authorised by a higher power. This self-authorisation is a typically Jonsonian response to his fear that the reader has more authority to determine a text’s meaning than the writer. It is in moments such as these in early modern texts where it becomes difficult to absolutely locate the authority of the author, despite Jonson’s intentions to do just that. This is because the interpretative power which legitimised meaning does not seem to come from the playwright, but from those outside looking into the text. These outside readers, Jonson knew, were not always benign.

Although I am referring to a book of epigrams, Jonson’s dedication is also instructive for the proximity between authorship and censorship in early modern drama. As someone well attuned to navigating the discourses of censorship, his address to Herbert is a manoeuvre that reminds us of the various ways that collaboratively written and censorable texts can be written and read. Although the *Epigrams* were published seventeen years after the Bishop’s Ban in which satires and elegies were outlawed, Jonson was still afraid that his poems would be seen as dangerously satirical. He hoped he could stave off any potential backlash by alerting his

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5 Not one to push a point, Jonson dedicates his first epigram “To the Reader”, “Pray thee take care, that tak’st my book in hand, / To read it well: that is, to understand”, *Epigrams*, 113.

6 Burrow, Introduction to Jonson’s *Epigrams*, 103-108, 104.
readers that though the *Epigrams* “carry danger in the sound, do not therefore seek you shelter”. Jonson is claiming that there is nothing libellous to read in this book. He was perturbed by the risk of a reader misconstruing his writing which, as he often experienced, could lead to censuring or censorship. Jonson displays here his uneasiness about his book in the hands of an ignorant or a foraging reader. And furthermore, that once a book is published, he can no longer control its reception or meaning.

Jonson’s dedication also reveals the doubleness inherent in early modern satirical texts. Despite his entreaties to his reader that there is nothing to see here, Jonson also intimates that his reader should remain vigilant for deeper meanings, “when I made them I had nothing in my conscience to expressing of which I did need a cipher”. Although he claims his epigrams are harmless, Jonson is also pointing towards a secret code embedded within the text. This is a clue enough for the discerning reader to begin looking for libellous material. In the opening pages of the *Epigrams*, Jonson uses the “hermeneutics of censorship” to simultaneously assert authority over his work, call on a political authority for protection and negate the possibility of a censorable text, whilst also asking the reader to look more deeply into the text’s politics. It is these types of readings that censored plays invite, particularly collaboratively written ones. This is because collaboration further disperses the authority that Jonson is particularly keen to keep hold of.

Reading censored collaborative plays means reading for ciphers. That is, the codes and clues embedded in the materials left behind by early modern playwrights, censors, and scribes. It is through these codes, and sometimes the lacunae, that we can understanding the extent to which censorship affected plays and the agents who were involved in writing them. Early

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7 Jonson, “TO THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF HONOUR,” *Epigrams*, 4-5.
8 For Jonson’s antagonist relationship with his reader, see Loewenstein, *Jonson*, 161-2.
10 Patterson, *Censorship*, 8-9.
modern plays should be read with these clues in mind in order to see the breadth of collaborative work in London’s playhouses and elucidate modes of authorship. Censorship, like collaboration, pervades early modern drama, although the clues are not always obvious. By paying attention to the clues embedded within the dual systems of censorship and collaboration we can better understand how theatre was generated. Indeed, we can see how the excisions necessitated by censorship sometimes led to unexpected artistic generations. Reading for collaborative censorship is to be witness to the struggles and fear, but also creative excitement that was part and parcel of dramatic regulation. Censorship was a double-edged sword: at once anxiety-rendering enough for playwrights such as Jonson to justify and protect themselves, but also a system of “cooperation” that allowed for dramatic production within early modern England. The collaborative process of censorship both generated and troubled authorial agency. Particularly the involvement of scribes and censors, which engendered authorial work in early modern plays. This does not necessitate that the author-function of playwrights is diminished, but that authorial work is more extensive than previously supposed. As a result of this process of collaborative censorship, plays betray their collaborative origins both thematically and textually.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the regulation of drama should be central to an understanding not only of dramatic production, but also of authorship and authorial identity. To investigate the extent to which censorship determines early modern authorship the chapters of this thesis have considered four early modern censored and collaboratively written plays: Eastward Ho!, Sir John van Olden Barnavelt, The Honest Man’s Fortune, and Sir Thomas More. These plays give insight into the ways authorship works in early modern drama. The attribution of blame can manifest itself in authorial identity, though a particularly collaborative identity, as is the case with Jonson, Chapman, and Marston’s Eastward Ho!. Furthermore, the

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11 Dutton, Mastering, 9.
manuscripts of Barnavelt and Fortune, as well as contemporary editions of More, reveal the relationship between censorship and authorship. That is, the figure of the singular author-playwright is decentralised because authorship roves between the various agents involved in textual production: the playwrights, the censors, and scribes.

Accounting for the collaborative nature of censorship has implications for early modern critical and editorial practices. Criticism is already alert to plays sometimes existing in different textual forms as the result of revision. It is accepted that a play with substantial differences between its quarto and folio versions constitute two texts that are related, though distinct, artefacts in and of themselves. These artefacts result in critical readings and editions particular to individual printings. This is the case for plays such as King Lear, Hamlet, and Othello, which are now often edited according to the different versions of the plays presumably prepared by Shakespeare. Censored plays have yet to receive this treatment. Indeed, it is usually the opposite: editions of censored plays present the text before censorship, rather than seeing the censored play as a complete text created for a specific function. Richard II, for example, has come down in three remarkably different versions from the period (Q1, Q4, and F). But current editorial practice merges, rather than separates, two of the texts: Q1 and F. This is because, as it is generally accepted, the first quarto of Richard II underwent some sort of censorship. This resulted in the excision of the deposition scene, which re-appeared in the Folio twenty-

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14 The two editions that buck this contemporary editorial trend is Bate and Rasmussen’s Richard II for The RSC Shakespeare: The Complete Works (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010) and the Gossett-McMullan Norton Shakespeare edition. They both use the Folio as the copy text.
five years later. Editors have sought to reunite the deposition scene from F with Q1. This is because they both supposedly originate in authoritative authorial papers, “the text closest to Shakespeare’s holograph”, as Charles R. Forker writes in his edition for Arden. This common editorial practice maintains the New Bibliographic notion that we should get as close to the Shakespearean original, perhaps even his “foul papers”, as possible.

By producing what is essentially an idealised text – rather than editing Q1 as a single text – editors are insisting that censored plays are not valuable textual objects in and of themselves. Indeed, in the NOS: Critical Reference Edition, Pruitt writes in her introduction to Richard II that “This edition does not knowingly perpetuate the effects of censorship”. Editing and presenting a censored play does not sustain twenty-first century notions of censorship but acknowledges the dramatic and textual processes that created early modern plays. Q1 was an extremely popular reading edition in its own right and probably Shakespeare’s most popular printed play of his early career. Despite this, the critical and editorial hesitancy to come to terms with Q1 reveals the stigma and misunderstanding we still have towards early modern dramatic regulation.

These sorts of editorial decisions also close us off from finding new meanings in well-known plays. As Emma Smith argues, it is false to believe that F is the more complete and radical text because, “the resultant text is more politically conservative than Q1” for its

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15 The reasons for the censorship, or if censorship happened at all, is obscure. Clare argues in “The censorship of the deposition scene in Richard II,” Review of English Studies 41, no. 161 (1990), 89-94 that the scene was censored because of the risky corollary between Richard II and the possible dethronement of Elizabeth. Clegg, however, in “‘By the choise and inuitation of al the realme’: Richard II and Elizabethan Press Censorship,” Shakespeare Quarterly 48, no. 4 (1997), 432-448, suggests that what troubled the censor was the representation of Parliament in relation to theories of social resistance.


17 As Emma Smith writes, “It seems that the ‘deposition scene’ is a term which solidifies under the auspices of New Bibliography, and one which, like other of that movement’s terms including ‘bad quarto’ and ‘foul papers’, has a moralistic edge beneath its aspirations to descriptive neutrality”, “Richard II’s Yorkist Editors,” Shakespeare Survey 63 (2010), 37-48, 41.


upholding of a sacralised king. By considering censored plays such as Q1 Richard II as an integral text, we can read for the interstices between different versions of plays so as to better understand social change, cultural norms, and politics in the Renaissance. By and large, plays are edited on the assumption that drama originates from a single individual. An alternative editing model, one which assumes that collaborative censorship was central to the production of early modern texts, could open the plays to new and significant meanings. Further to this, these sorts of readings offer a more nuanced understanding of early modern playmaking. Even singularly written plays became collaborative once they were ushered through the machine of dramatic regulation.

Literary criticism is devoted to reading the past in order to listen to the dead. Our craft is predicated on the belief that the pieces of paper we look at are not dead things, but objects containing voices that can be made concrete through inquiry. This is even more so in the case of censorship studies, where we are tasked with reading into lacunae. But it is within these gaps that we can find the most unexpected voices, ones to which we should lend our ears. Early modern studies are currently expanding their ideas of authorship, and now more than ever the field is grappling not only with who is speaking, but who we are interested in hearing. By considering censorship side by side with collaboration, we are not only tuning in to familiar voices but also listening in to those who have been unheard.

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21 Masten performs this sort of reading of the endings of the two quartos of Philaster in “Editing Boys: the Performance of Genders in Print,” in From Performance to Print in Shakespeare’s England, ed. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113-134. Griffiths also performs a similar sort of reading in “Adapting same-sex friendship”, though he reads for diachronic adaptation.
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