WHAT IS NOT COLLABORATIVE ABOUT EARLY MODERN DRAMA IN PERFORMANCE AND PRINT?

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We often say that Shakespeare's plays are inherently collaborative because drama itself is a collective artform and that the processes of transmission by which the texts come down to us – scribal copying and printing – constitute additional layers of collaboration. On the assumption that Shakespeare welcomed or at least acquiesced to changes to his plays made by actors during rehearsal, the 1986 Oxford Complete Works edition attempted, where a choice existed, to reflect the plays as they were first performed rather than as first written. This article reconsiders the extent to which Shakespeare's plays may have been reshaped in the theatre, finding that it has recently been overstated and that his authority over his words is probably greater than is usually supposed. Howsoever they were altered in the theatre, the plays come down to us solely (with one small exception) in the form of early printed editions, and so to gauge how close we may come to Shakespeare's words we must consider what was changed in the process of printing. The idea that, like performance, textual transmission too was thoroughly collaborative rose to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s as the sociology-of-texts movement reached Shakespeare studies. This movement stressed that writers do not produce books as such on their own, but rather it takes a constellation of other individuals and institutions to constitute the necessary conditions and provide the additional contributions that result in print publication. This article argues that the collaborative nature of publication has also recently been overstated and calls for editors to return to the task of undoing the effects of scribes and compositors to recover the authorial labour.

ALTERATIONS IN THE THEATRE

The dominant editorial theory of all but the last decade of the twentieth century was the New Bibliography. Changes made to a Shakespeare play during rehearsal and in performance were, for the most part, characterized by New Bibliographers as unauthorized interference rather than collective reshaping. Despite occasional public acknowledgements that the collaborative nature of performance gives a post-rehearsal text a collective authority of its own,[1] the New Bibliographers generally privileged the author's intentions prior to rehearsal, which they treated as an activity that could only corrupt the text. New Bibliographical editors preferred as their copy text an early printed edition based on authorial papers rather than one based on a promptbook, although they derived complex rules for admitting into the modern edition readings from editions other than the copy text where these are more likely to reflect Shakespeare's original (pre-rehearsal) intentions.

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[1] John Dover Wilson, '"The Genuine Text": A Letter to the Editor', *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1737 (16 May 1935), 313; John Dover Wilson, '"The Genuine Text": A Letter to the Editor', *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1739 (30 May 1935), 348; John Dover Wilson, '"The Genuine Text": A Letter to the Editor', *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1741 (13 June 1935), 380; W. W. Greg, '"The Genuine Text": A Letter to the Editor', *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1740 (6 June 1935), 364.

In his *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, however, R. B. McKerrow frankly acknowledged the editorial consequences of the changes to Shakespeare's scripts in the theatre:

Such alterations may have been made by the author himself or, if he was not available, they may have been made by others. He may, or may not, have regarded them as improvements: he probably merely accepted them as necessary changes, and it is quite likely that he never bothered about whether they introduced inconsistencies into what was originally conceived as a consistent whole. We must not expect to find a definitive text in the sense in which the published version of the plays of a modern dramatist is definitive.[2]

It remained editorially respectable, however, to treat the theatre as a wholly corrupting influence. A notorious late example is Philip Edwards's 'At this point what one can only call degeneration began, and . . . the nearer we get to the stage, the further we are getting from Shakespeare.'[3] At the same time as Edwards was making this assertion, McKerrow's successor as editor of the proposed Oxford Shakespeare, Stanley Wells, was finalizing his adaptation of New Bibliography to accommodate the increasing respect that theatrical practice was being afforded within Shakespeare studies.[4] Wells saw promptbook-derived early printed editions as having their own authority and, when choosing the moment for a 'snapshot' of a play to be represented in the modern edition,[5] his 'new' New Bibliography favoured − where there was a choice to be made − the script not as it left Shakespeare's hand but as it was first performed. Wells's adaptation of New Bibliography took the accommodation of editorial theory to theatrical concerns about as far as it reasonably ought to go.

The acknowledgement that a Shakespeare script was subject to authorized change has, in the years since the Oxford Shakespeare of 1986, been exaggerated into a claim that it was forever in motion. In Tiffany Stern's model of theatrical production, the place of the single authorized manuscript of the play has been taken by a play decomposed not only into actors' parts, but also songs (written out separately to be sent off to a composer for setting to music), prologues and epilogues (held on separate manuscripts and reused for different plays), and property documents such as letters to be read aloud during a performance.[6] All these documents were also 'the play', yet they circulated beyond the bounds of the authorized manuscript. The result is that we must consider a play not as a unified and coherent original creation but rather as a patch-work compilation forever being reworked into new patterns of combination:

The suggestion then is that a play is a collection of fragments taken from elsewhere and loosely held together . . . there was something 'patch-like' in the very way a play was written in the first place . . . the very method of creating the play seems to be, somehow, 'patchy' . . . There was a sense at the time that plays were not whole art-works in the way that poems were. Plays had the bit, the fragment, the patch in their very natures.[7]

Stern's method '"deconstructs" the text along certain lines and then, up to a certain point, "de-authors" it'.[8] The widespread appeal of Stern's approach lies in its apparent reconciliation of theatre-historical materials with a critical-theoretical disposition towards postmodernism. That is to say, a broad spectrum of Shakespearians feel a desire − perhaps not fully consciously − for what she says to be true because it appeals to current orthodoxies in English studies that arose in Anglo-American literary criticism with the dissemination and wide acceptance of high French theory from the late 1960s.

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[2] R. B. McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford, 1939), p. 6.

[3] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Philip Edwards, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge, 1985), p. 32.

[4] Gabriel Egan, *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text: Twentieth-century Editorial Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 167–89.

[5] Stanley Wells, 'Editing Shakespeare', *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4268 (18 January 1985), 63.

[6] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009).

[7] Tiffany Stern, 'Re-patching the Play', in *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel, *Redefining British Theatre History* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 151–77, pp. 154–5.

[8] Stern, 'Re-patching the Play', p. 171.

In Stern's model, the dispersal of authorial authority was not merely conceptual but was physically embodied in dispersed pieces of paper. Unfortunately for this model, the hard evidence of early modern play licensing points in precisely the opposite direction. To be approved the play had to be presented to the state censor as a single, complete manuscript. Scripts were occasionally revised, but not routinely and seldom more than once, and revision required the script again to take a unified, singular form in order to be reassessed by the censor for a substantial fee, as we shall see. Before we explore the revision of scripts for revival, it is worth considering just how much freedom to revise was built into the parts-based system of lines-learning and preparation for first performance. We might suppose that the singularity and fixedness of the licensed script was merely a convenient fiction that the Master of the Revels and the playing companies shared in order to satisfy the official rules on theatrical regulation while proceeding with their prime objective of extracting wealth from the new industry. After all, would not actors be likely to depart from the official script whenever they saw need? Not all the evidence that has been adduced on this topic is strictly relevant, because then as now the word 'part' meant not only the document but also the human personality created by an actor, as when Shakespeare's Antonio metatheatrically calls the world a stage 'where every man must play a part' and his 'a sad one' (*The Merchant of Venice*, 1.1.78–9). With little direct evidence to go on, Stern treats every reference to a play's parts as gestures towards the physical documents and creates the impression that these were highly fluid documents that need not be closely tied to the licensed script.

Yet, sometimes 'parts' simply does mean just the portions of a whole. In April 1613 the dramatist Robert Daborne was contracted by Henslowe to write a play called *Machiavel and the Devil* (Dulwich College Manuscripts 1 Article 70)[9] and thereafter he began sending Henslowe bits of it as he completed them. On 25 June Daborne wrote to Henslowe 'for thear good & myn own J have took extraordynary payns wth the end & altered one

other scean in the third act which they have now in parts' (Dulwich College Manuscripts 1 Article 81).[10] Assuming that the third act is the object of 'which they have', what does Daborne mean by the actors having it 'in parts'? Stern reads this as meaning that the actors had divided the portions of the play they received into cuescripts (another name for actors' parts) and begun learning them.[11] Even when read in isolation this letter makes that interpretation unlikely since, as Daborne indicates, he was still making alterations while composing fresh material and he had not completed the play. It would be tiresome indeed to learn a play while it was still being written and altered. The matter is established beyond doubt and against Stern's interpretation by looking at earlier letters in which Daborne makes clear that upon completion he wanted Henslowe and Alleyn to hear him read the whole play before giving a reading to the players who would decide whether to accept it (Dulwich College Manuscripts 1 Articles 74, 75).[12] No playing company that was efficiently run would have its members learn the parts for a play before it had been collectively agreed to purchase the script and mount a production.

Just when did the actors start to learn their parts? Learning them before the censor had given a performance licence would be risky, since the licence might be refused or made upon condition of extensive cuts or alterations. Yet in a letter to Edward Knight, scribe to the King's Men, Master of the Revels Herbert seems to imply that parts were made before licensing:

Mr. Knight, In many things you have saved mee labour; yet wher your judgment 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

9 W. W. Greg, ed., *Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary* (London, 1907), pp. 67–8.

10 Greg, ed., *Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary*, p. 73.

11 Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 61–2.

12 Greg, ed., *Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary*, pp. 69, 70.

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 bee presented unto mee in any playbooke, as you will answer it at your perill. 21 Octob. 1633.[13]

Stern reads this as indicating that for a new play the actors might start learning the parts before the Master of the Revels has given his verdict on it.[14] That is not at all what is going on here. The preceding notes in Herbert's office book show that the play in question is John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed*, a sequel to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. It was first performed in 1611 and the King's Men revived it in 1633 without asking Herbert to look over the old book and give it a new licence. Hearing that it contained 'foule and offensive matters' Herbert suppressed the performance and demanded the promptbook, censored it and sent word that in future revivals must be licensed as well as new plays.[15] In such cases, 'The players ought not to study their parts till I have allowed of the booke', wrote Herbert.[16] Because the King's Men were reviving a play first performed 22 years earlier, the parts were already in existence. Herbert was warning the players not to learn their parts for a revival of an old play until he had read and relicensed the book, and this tells us nothing about what happened with new plays. Yet this piece of evidence is frequently misused to suggest that for new plays the actors might start to learn their parts before the script was licensed. We just do not know if they did, and there are obvious reasons why they should not have.

We usually assume that it was the playing company that took a newly purchased script to the Master of the Revels for licensing, but in the one firm case for which there is evidence the script was already licensed at the moment it was purchased. The details of this case strengthen our reasons for assuming that revision after licensing was firmly forbidden.[17] Early in 1603, a play by George Chapman called *The Old Joiner of Aldgate*, now lost, was performed by the boy actors at the St Paul's playhouse and it got its dramatist into trouble.[18] The story was a lightly disguised version of an ongoing legal struggle between the father of the heiress Agnes Howe and various suitors hoping to marry her. Several of the parties represented in the play were offended by the satire and accused one another of having had a hand its production. The matter got to the Star Chamber court, where Chapman admitted writing the play but insisted it was all his own invention and that no-one had given him a particular plot to follow.[19] Thomas Woodford, who bought the play on behalf of the boys' company, deposed that 'he bought one playe booke of . . . George Chapman beinge Lycencede by the Mr of our Layte Soueringe Lady the quenes maiestyes Revels he not knowing that yt touchede any person lyvinge'.[20] This phrasing makes it plain that the script was already licensed at the point of purchase, so Chapman himself or his agent must have taken the play to Edmund Tilney to get it endorsed.

Chapman was asked under oath if he altered the play after it was licensed and he flatly denied doing so. Since the play was intended to mock several well-known Londoners, including Doctor John Milward the Preacher at Christ Church, Greyfriars, it would have been safest to submit an innocuous script to Tilney and then to introduce or amplify the satire by revision before performance. At least, that would have been the safest thing to do if, as Stern believes, alterations between licensing and performance were not uncommon and were tacitly permitted. Chapman's denial that this was done for *The Old Joiner of Aldgate* was echoed by the man

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[13] N. W. Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford, 1996), p. 183.

[14] Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 63–4; Tiffany Stern, *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page*, Accents on Shakespeare (London, 2004), p. 145; Palfrey and Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts*, p. 61.

[15] Bawcutt, ed., *Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, p. 182.

[16] Bawcutt, ed., *Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, p. 183.

[17] I am indebted to the anonymous reader of an earlier version of this article for pointing me towards this case.

[18] C. J. Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 12–79.

[19] Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age*, pp. 60–2.

[20] Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age*, p. 62.

accused of commissioning it, John Flaskett, one of Agnes's thwarted suitors. Under oath, he likewise flatly denied the suggestion that after witnessing the first performance he made recommendations for the play's revision.[21] We might be tempted to treat Chapman's and Flaskett's denials with what has become known as the Rice-Davies Response: 'they would, wouldn't they?'[22] Yet if we suspect that they were lying and that the play was in fact revised after licensing, then the vehement denial of this by Chapman and Flaskett – who were prepared to perjure themselves on this point – itself constitutes strong evidence that such revision was not tacitly accepted as a routine part of the theatrical process. The licensed script really was supposed to govern what got performed.

In a study of the various kinds of revision that might be undertaken, Eric Rasmussen noted that: 'Along with adding new material to a finished script before the first production, playwrights might write additions for later revivals (see Knutson, 'Henslowe's').'[23] Where the reviser(s) was/were not the original dramatist(s), revision for revival would add a further layer of collaboration to the play. Rasmussen discussed some famous examples, but the essay by Roslyn L. Knutson that he here cited had itself concluded from the evidence in Henslowe's Diary covering the period 1592–1603 that what he described was rare: 'revision for the occasion of revival was neither commonplace nor economically necessary' and 'under normal circumstances companies did not pay for revisions of old playbooks'.[24] In a classic work on Shakespearian revision, John Kerrigan argued that we can tell authorial changes from non-authorial ones because the former tend to be 'small additions, small cuts and indifferent word substitutions' as well as larger changes, while authors revising another's work tend to insert or remove sizeable sections of text without touching the surrounding material.[25] Rasmussen denied this distinction in different revisers' interventions and he overstated the general prevalence of revision, ignoring an important reason to limit it. Revision was costly because it entailed a fee for relicensing.

With the zeal of a new appointee, Master of the Revels Henry Herbert established, upon taking up his post, that plays licensed by his predecessors would need relicensing for revival under his tenure and that he would do the work for free. On 19 August 1623 he recorded in his office book the relicensing of 'An ould play', now lost, called *The Peaceable King, or the Lord Mendall* (previously allowed by George Buc)' & because <itt was free from adition> or reformation I tooke no fee', and another 'olde play', Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (also previously allowed by Buc), for which 'the allowed book was missinge' but 'on Mr. Hemmings his worde that there was nothing profane added or reformed' Herbert relicensed it and 'returned it without a fee'.[26] On 21 August 1623 Herbert took no fee for relicensing 'An Old Play', Thomas Dekker's *Match Me in London*, first performed *c.*1611–*c.*1613 and formerly allowed by Buc, presumably because it was unaltered.[27] On 7 July 1624 Herbert took ten shillings for relicensing Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*, performed in 1620, with an additional scene and he took the same amount on 13 May 1629 for relicensing an unnamed old play with 'a new act'.[28] Herbert appears to have charged ten shillings for relicensing revised plays until the 1630s when the fee jumped to £1.

[21] Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age*, p. 68.

[22] Elizabeth Knowles, *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 7th edn (Oxford, 2009), RICE 660:3.

[23] Eric Rasmussen, 'The Revision of Scripts', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York, 1997), pp. 441–60, p. 448.

[24] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Henslowe's Diary and the Economics of Play Revision for Revival, 1592–1603', *Theatre Research International*, 10 (1985), 1–18, p. 1.

[25] John Kerrigan, 'Revision, Adaptation, and the Fool in *King Lear*', in *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare's Two Versions of* King Lear, ed. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren, Oxford Shakespeare Studies (Oxford, 1983), pp. 195–243, p. 195.

[26] Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, p. 142.

[27] Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline* Drama, p. 143.

[28] Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, pp. 153, 168.

In 1622–5 Herbert's standard fee for licensing a new play for performance was £1, for 1626–31 we have no evidence, and from 1632 it was £2.[29] Thus Herbert's fees for relicensing plays revised for revival, ten shillings and £1, are substantial and must have discouraged routine minor alteration ('re-patching') of plays when they were being revived. For plays licensed under Herbert's tenure, then, there was a powerful economic disincentive to revision, and if it was deemed desirable it might as well be substantial revision to justify the additional cost of relicensing. What about previous Masters of the Revels? We have no direct evidence, but we should not assume that they forewent the opportunity to earn extra fees that would follow from insisting that revivals-with-revision were relicensed. There is no evidence that plays would have been endlessly and haphazardly re-patched in the way that Stern supposes. Revision was costly and for that reason orderly and rare.

There are other reasons to temper the recent enthusiasm for treating Shakespeare's plays as essentially collaborations made in the theatre. Andrew Gurr's knowledge of just how theatre companies turned scripts into performances might be expected to make him scathing of the New Bibliographical preference for the authorial text over the promptbook that had supposedly been corrupted by rehearsal and performance. In fact Gurr could see merit in the New Bibliographical view, at least in the case of Shakespeare:

he, as a player in the company for which he was writing, knew exactly what he wanted to be put on stage, and that therefore his original version should prevail over the company's product after much rehearsal and modification. That suggests, though the case is not usually made that way, absolute primacy for the authorial text before the company got its hands on it and changed it . . . aiming at the author's own version must be a target unique to Shakespeare's plays, since no other writer had the same inside role in his company or financial interest in its playhouses.[30]

That is to say, it is precisely because, as extensive theatre historiographical research has established,

Shakespeare was thoroughly a man of the theatre that his pre-rehearsal texts had rather more theatrical authority than those of other dramatists, and the promptbook – whose differences from the authorial papers reflected Shakespeare's wishes being overruled – rather less. Paradoxically, much the same conclusion arises from Lukas Erne's argument, which has nowhere been effectively refuted, that Shakespeare wrote with at least half an eye on his print readership and hence was not exclusively a man of the theatre.[31]

ALTERATIONS IN PRINTING

With the exception of several pages of the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* in Shakespeare's handwriting (British Library Harley 7368), our sole access to his output is in the form of early printed editions. Since the 1970s there has emerged an argument that, like performance, publication is an inherently collaborative process. Just as the dramatist expected the actors to complete his play by adding their own labour in rehearsal and performance, so, the argument goes, he expected the printshop workers to complete his text by adding their labour in finalizing, editing and polishing it. When we inquire into the detail of just what the printers are supposed to have added, the claims are noticeably modest. In *Principles of Textual Criticism* James Thorpe wrote that 'In many cases, probably in most cases, he [the writer] expected the printer to perfect his accidentals; and thus the changes introduced by the printer can be properly thought of as fulfilling the writer's intentions.'[32] Philip Gaskell agreed: 'Most authors, in fact, expect

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[29] Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, pp. 39–40.

[30] Andrew Gurr, 'A New Theatre Historicism', in *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel, *Redefining British Theatre History* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 71–88, p. 72.

[31] Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge, 2003).

[32] James Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino CA, 1972), p. 165.

their spelling, capitalization, and punctuation to be corrected or supplied by the printer, relying on the process to dress the text suitably for publication, implicitly endorsing it (with or without further amendment) when correcting proofs.'[33] D. F. McKenzie and Jerome J. McGann extended this argument in order to claim that a printed book is entirely a collaborative (and hence in their terminology, a socialized) object.[34] Since they could not point to evidence of substantial rewriting by printers of the words of the books they produced, McKenzie and McGann had instead to argue that punctuation, spelling and (especially) layout themselves carry much more meaning than had hitherto been thought. Printers' input in those areas constitute collaboration, according to this sociology-of-text approach.

The socialized model of publication has considerable appeal for those who would valorize the artisanal labour embedded in artistic creation, but it does not in fact reflect how early modern printers thought of their work. It is often cited that in his handbook on printing Joseph Moxon characterized punctuation as the compositor's responsibility: 'As he *Sets* on, he considers how to *Point* his Work, viz. when to *Set* , where ; where : and where . where to make () and where [] ? ! and when a *Break*.'[35] The same idea about the final decisions regarding punctuation is witnessed seven decades earlier by James Binns in a study of the evidence for printshop practice surviving in books written in Latin. In 1617 an edition of Marco Antonio De Dominis's *De Republica Ecclesiastica* contained a note to other printers considering reprinting the book from this one, alerting them to its printing errors and remarking that 'They themselves can better punctuate with full stops and commas according to their own judgement.'[36] However, neither of these documents suggests that the authority for punctuation rested with the compositors. Rather the idea appears to have been that compositors should save writers from themselves when necessary.

The way Moxon put the matter is exactly how we think of it today, which is that printers do well to correct error but responsibility lies with the author and is embodied in the supplied copy:

Nor (as afore was hinted) is a *Compositor* bound to all these Circumstances and Punctilio's, because in a strict sense, the Author is to discharge him of them in his *Copy:* Yet it is necessary the *Compositers* Judgment should know where the Author has been deficient, that so his care may not suffer such Work to go out of his Hands as may bring Scandal upon himself, and Scandal and prejudice upon the Master Printer.[37]

That is, the author discharges the compositor of responsibility by providing copy, yet a good compositor fixes what he can and not for the sake of the author's reputation but for the sake of the reputation of the printshop. Editors of journals will readily recognize the lines of responsibility being drawn here.

For our purpose, the key principle to take from this is that we should not conflate the labour of agents in the chain of transmission trying to eliminate mere error (their own and the author's) with the labour of true artistic collaboration that is meant to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Or, as Gary Taylor puts it in his article in this volume, $1+1=3$.[38] If the part of the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript in Shakespeare's

[33] Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1972), p. 339.

[34] D. F. McKenzie, 'Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve', in *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert: Fünftes Wolfenbütteler Symposium vom 1 bis 3 November 1977* [*The Book and the Book Trade in Eighteenth-century Europe: Proceedings of the Fifth Wolfenbütteler Symposium November 1–3 1977*], ed. Giles Barber and Bernhard Fabian (Hamburg, 1981), pp. 81–125; Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago, 1983).

[35] Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises, Or, The Doctrine of Handy-works*, Wing M3014, 2 vols. (London, 1683), vol. 2: Applied to the Art of Printing, Hh2v.

[36] James Binns, 'STC Latin Books: Evidence for Printing-house Practice', *The Library* (=*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*), 32 (1977), 1–27, p. 7.

[37] Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises, Or, The Doctrine of Handy-works*, vol. 2: Applied to the Art of Printing, Hh4v.

[38] Gary Taylor, 'Why Did Shakespeare Collaborate?' (above, p. 17).

handwriting is typical of what his printers received then they would indeed have had to provide the punctuation, since his autograph pages are almost entirely unpunctuated. But it is now well established that for most of the plays in the 1623 Folio the printers received non-authorial literary transcripts and in these the punctuation would have followed contemporary norms.[39] For the authoritative early quartos there is some evidence – primarily idiosyncratic spellings – that these were printed from Shakespeare's own papers, but we do not know if those were as devoid of punctuation as his autograph contribution to *Sir Thomas More*. If Erne is right that Shakespeare wrote specifically with print publication in mind, presumably it was usual for him to punctuate the documents he provided for that purpose. What is at stake here is not the punctuation itself, of course, but the idea that we should consider the printers to have been partners of the writers (albeit junior ones) in the production of books. Moxon's terminology does not warrant such a view.

Just how we judge the socialization claim depends in part on how much we think punctuation matters. Greg called the word choices of a text its substantives because they 'affect the author's meaning' and called the punctuation, spelling and styling its accidentals, 'affecting mainly its formal presentation'.[40] This distinction has been criticized on the grounds that punctuation affects meaning as much as word choice does.[41] Greg's distinction was not intended as a description of language – he was scarcely so naive about punctuation – but as a tool in the practical exploration of the authority, author's or printer's, lying behind certain choices. For Greg, punctuation belonged to a different layer of authority in the printed book precisely because printers were free to alter it to an extent that they would not do in the case of words chosen by the writer. Although New Bibliography in general and Greg in particular have a reputation for being antipathetical to theatre, it is worth noting that modern actors and directors share this idea that the authority in punctuation differs from the authority in word choices. Practitioners are aware that modern editions' punctuation reflects modern rules for sentence construction and they routinely ignore it. Shakespeare's autograph pages in *Sir Thomas More* suggest that he too thought that deciding where to pause and for how long, and how to use stress to articulate the relationships between clauses, are the actor's province, not the writer's. One obvious exception, of course, must be Quince's prologue to *Pyramus and Thisbe* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.108–17), which Shakespeare presumably punctuated carefully to indicate the desired, 'incorrect', delivery. Complicating the issue, there are exceptions of the opposite kind too, where word choices are immaterial. As Taylor pointed out, the distinction between *pray thee* and *prithee* is 'entirely without semantic significance' and it is properly treated as accidental not substantive.[42]

If changes to texts made in the printshop were confined to punctuation, spelling and styling then the effects thereof would be relatively trivial. However, the limited studies so far undertaken indicate that compositors did change Shakespeare's choice of words too. For the most part, individual compositor's habits have not been established with the statistical rigour that is now rightly demanded when computational stylistics is used to establish collaborative authorship and determine the boundaries of the contributors' shares. The art has not developed sufficiently for us even to be able to say with confidence where one compositor's stint ended and another's began. Early confidence in the methods for making such distinctions derived largely from the physically impressive application of new opto-mechanical technology – especially space-age looking Hinman Collators – and from

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[39] Gary Taylor, 'Post-script', in *Shakespeare Reshaped, 1606–1623*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Jowett, Oxford Shakespeare Studies (Oxford, 1993), pp. 237–43.

[40] W. W. Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy-text', *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950–1), 19–36, p. 21.

[41] Tom Davis, 'The CEAA and Modern Textual Editing', *The Library* (=*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*), 32 (1977), 61–74; Tom Davis, 'Substantives? Accidentals?', *The Library* (=*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*), 3 (1981), 149–51.

[42] Gary Taylor, 'Copy-text and Collation (with Special Reference to *Richard III*)', *The Library* (=*Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*), 3 (1981), 33–42, p. 40.

the complexity of the evidence from which it appeared to be wringing new knowledge.[43] Confidence plummeted, however, once independent studies of the compositorial labour in one book produced wildly different divisions of stints, as happened with the 1598 edition of *Love's Labours Lost*.[44] McKenzie demonstrated that one of the so-called psycho-mechanical tests for discriminating compositors – based on choices for spacing around punctuation – is virtually worthless on its own because a compositor's practice in this regard may vary day by day.[45] Since McKenzie showed this weakness in much of the preceding scholarship, almost no-one has bothered making fresh studies in the field. MacDonald P. Jackson is a rare exception and is entirely alone in using a statistical understanding of chance to distinguish real habits from random variation in behaviour.[46]

Despite the limitations of the studies of compositorial labour, a couple of particular habits have been established beyond reasonable dispute. Paul Werstine showed that mislineation of Shakespeare's verse is far more prevalent in Folio compositor A's stints than in Folio compositor B's, so rather than attributing the resulting rough verse to the author's experiments in prosody we should assume that he lined his verse with metrical regularity that the printer occasionally wrecked.[47] The Oxford *Complete Works* editors showed that although the two expressions were equally acceptable in the period, Folio compositor B tended to modernize 'nor . . . nor' to 'neither . . . nor' even when metre required that the first word be monosyllabic.[48] The sociological model of publishing requires the modern editor to embrace these depredations as the inevitable effects of collaborative endeavour, but the correct editorial response is to undo them. Yet it is, of course, dangerous to undo them so long as the art of detecting compositorial interference remains in its infancy, and when we cannot be sure that we are not misreading interference at one stage in the process of transmission as interference at another. Ralph Crane is the only known scribe involved in the transmission of Shakespeare's texts who has left enough manuscript evidence for systematic study of his interventions to be feasible.[49] Because Crane prepared copy for the Folio, knowledge of his habits has undermined what was previously thought to be a reliable distinction between the work of compositors D and F: evidence of the apparently distinct habits of two men might really be just one compositor changing his practice when setting from a Crane transcript.[50] This possibility draws our attention to an important difference between the constructive input of players turning a script into a performance and the essentially destructive input of scribes and compositors transmitting a manuscript. The latter's agencies are detectable only by the harm they do.

When they worked to the best practices of their professions, scribes and compositors left no trace on the words we are interested in. One way to detect scribal transmission is the provision of Latinate act and scene intervals that no one in the theatre would bother to add, but these do

[43] Egan, *Struggle for Shakespeare's Text*, pp. 38–99.

[44] George R. Price, 'The Printing of *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598)', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 72 (1978), 405–34; Paul Werstine, 'The Editorial Usefulness of Printing House and Compositor Studies: Reprinted from *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* 2 (1978): 153–165 with a New Afterword', in *Play-texts in Old Spelling: Papers from the Glendon Conference*, ed. G. B. Shand and Raymond C. Shady (New York, 1984), pp. 35–64.

[45] D. F. McKenzie, 'Stretching a Point: Or, the Case of the Spaced-out Comps', *Studies in Bibliography*, 37 (1984), 106–21.

[46] MacDonald P. Jackson, 'Finding the Pattern: Peter Short's Shakespeare Quartos Revisited', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 25 (2001), 67–86.

[47] Paul Werstine, 'Line Division in Shakespeare's Dramatic Verse: An Editorial Problem', *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography*, 8 (1984), 73–125.

[48] Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford, 1987), *1 Henry VI*, 5.1.59n.

[49] T. H. Howard-Hill, 'Ralph Crane and Five Shakespeare First Folio Comedies', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1971; Virginia J. Haas, 'Ralph Crane: A Status Report', *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography*, 3 (1989), 3–10.

[50] Paul Werstine, 'Scribe or Compositor: Ralph Crane, Compositors D and F, and the First Four Plays in the Shakespeare First Folio', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 95 (2001), 315–39.

no harm to the dialogue, stage directions and speech prefixes. Crane's interventions, however, extended to: massing a scene's entrance directions at the beginning of the scene no matter when the characters enter, destroying the evidence of where the dramatist placed his entrances; expanding the dramatist's contractions – *you'de > you would* and *they're > they are* – even when this damaged the metre; and rewriting stage directions to make them more literary. Likewise, by definition, when compositors were being careful, as they were in the first editions of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* printed by Shakespeare's fellow Stratfordian Richard Field, it becomes difficult to tell them apart.[51] Once co-authorship has been discounted, certain kinds of unevenness in a text are evidence of non-authorial agencies active in its transmission, so the very foundation of the socialized model of publication – the identification of labours other than the author's – should alert us to the risk of treating corruption as collaboration.

* * *

In place of the authority of the author, recent theatre historiography and textual criticism has tended to emphasize the collaborative, socialized labours of the players, the scribes and compositors, whose effects upon the surviving script are treated as though they are nearly as important as the author's labour. Because it is difficult to differentiate these various inputs when studying their collective output in an early printed play it is sometimes said to be virtually impossible to do so. A typical example is Jeffrey Masten's insistence that attempts to attribute parts of co-written plays to their respective co-writers are bound to fail because 'the collaborative project in the theatre was predicated on erasing the perception of any differences that might have existed, for whatever reason, between collaborated parts'.[52] Developing his argument, Masten decided that just as we cannot distinguish writers' individual inputs to a printed book, so we cannot distinguish the compositors' inputs from the writers':

compositor analysis . . . insists upon a precise individuation of agents at every stage of textual production, in ways that are often strikingly anachronistic. In this way,

compositor analysis closely parallels the work of scholars like Cyrus Hoy (and more recently Jonathan Hope) who have sought to discern and separate out of collaborative texts the individuated shares of particular playwrights . . .[53]

Since Masten wrote this, extraordinary successes in the field of computational stylistics have illustrated the importance of authorship in the teeth of postmodernism's denial of it. It turns out that authorship is indeed individualistic and discernible, and not at all a post-seventeenth-century construction. Hugh Craig makes this point pithily:

In the case of authorship, statistical studies might have revealed – were free to reveal – that authorship is insignificant in comparison to other factors like genre or period. In that case the theory that authors are only secondary to other forces in textual patterning would have been validated . . . As it happens, however, authorship emerges as a much stronger force in the affinities between texts than genre or period. Unexpectedly, perhaps uncomfortably, it is a persistent, probably mainly unconscious, factor. Writers, we might say, can't help inscribing an individual style in everything they produce. We need to take account of this in a new theory of authorship.[54]

Those who wish to insist that the processes of co-authorship so thoroughly mixed the styles of the writers that they cannot be disentangled must confront the mounting evidence that we can now distinguish quantitatively between the stints of different writers in one script. Independent studies working along different lines have shown the

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[51] William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Poems*: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece *and the Shorter Poems*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and H. R. Woudhuysen, The Arden Shakespeare (London, 2007), pp. 471–89.

[52] Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*, Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture, 14 (Cambridge, 1997), p. 17.

[53] Jeffrey Masten, 'Pressing Subjects: Or, the Secret Lives of Shakespeare's Compositors', in *Language Machines: Technologies of Literary and Cultural Production*, ed. Jeffrey Masten, Peter Stallybrass and Nancy Vickers, Essays from the English Institute (New York, 1997), pp. 75–107, pp. 97–8.

[54] Hugh Craig, 'Style, Statistics, and New Models of Authorship', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 15.1 (2009–10), 41, para. 3.

measurable unevenness, even if they cannot always precisely identify the joins, produced by Shakespeare's collaborative authorship of *1 Henry VI*, *The Contention of York and Lancaster / 2 Henry VI*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *All is True / Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Sir Thomas More*, *Edward III*, *Arden of Faversham* and *The Spanish Tragedy*.[55] In making these distinctions, non-authorial revision for revival presents essentially the same methodological problems as co-authorship at the point of original composition. The conclusion to be drawn from these studies' ability to discriminate between writers is not that upon entering the theatre the scripts went into a melting pot that blurred all boundaries. Quite the opposite: plays were relatively stable works that we can, centuries later, dismantle into their constituent parts. The challenge for those working on scribal and print transmission is to emulate the statistical rigour of these studies of authorship and so discover whether the unevenness arising from the combined labours of scribes and compositors can be turned into reliable distinctions of human agency in the resulting printed editions.

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[55] Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford, 2002); MacDonald P. Jackson, *Defining Shakespeare*: '*Pericles*' *as Test Case* (Oxford, 2003); Hugh Craig and Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare, Computers, and the Mystery of Authorship* (Cambridge, 2009); Brian Vickers, 'Identifying Shakespeare's Additions to *The Spanish Tragedy* (1602): A New(er) Approach', *Shakespeare*, 8 (2012), 13–43; MacDonald P. Jackson, *Determining the Shakespeare Canon*: '*Arden of Faversham*' *and* '*A Lover's Complaint*' (Oxford, forthcoming in 2014).

Modern drama highlighted disillusionment, where displacement and ennui personify modern existence. According to Michael Goldman, "Characters in modern drama are typically haunted by a feeling of being cut off from the joy of life, or indeed from life itself, as feeling of being dead." wall' facing the audience o settings for realistic plays are often bland (deliberately ordinary), dialogue is not heightened for effect, but that of everyday speech (vernacular) o the drama is typically psychologically driven, where the plot is secondary and primary focus is placed on the interior lives of characters, their motives, the reactions of others etc. o realistic plays often see. Like many early modern plays, this text is a collaborative effort, even though it is only attributed to one person. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who made key contributions, while also acknowledging that there are many who will remain unacknowledged. Though I fully acknowledge the many hands that went into this text, any faults that it contains are, of course, my own. What this attempt at recreating the early modern playgoing experience brought home to me is that attending a play is not a natural activity; playgoing does not exist as a universal idea. It has a history, and different cultures construct playgoing differently. It is not just that these thinkers came after early modern drama, but that early modern dramatic culture never really produced anybody like them.