

The Influence and Association of Paratext in Caroline Drama

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## Thesis Abstract

This thesis is an in-depth analysis of the alliances, reputations, and meanings that were created within the Caroline dramatic community as a result of the playwrights' meticulous use of paratext. By scrutinizing the paratexts (including prologues and epilogues, commendatory verses, and dedications to patrons and readers) of three different Caroline authors (William Davenant, Richard Brome, and John Ford), I have provided a picture of the divided and conflicting political and social landscapes of the professional theatre during the reign of Charles I. Through the use of such framing material, playwrights situated themselves in coteries that promoted very distinct outlooks on the purpose and place of drama. Within the commercial theatre, the desire to please, as well as shape diverse and complicated audience tastes, was forwarded in both printed and performed ancillary material. Playwrights used paratext to attract a specific audience to their published plays and explain the motives and meanings embedded in these texts. This material, while promoting one set of values, also worked to condemn competing ideals, as authors criticized peers in order to advance their own reputations and their own plays. Paratext was included as a matter of course in the era, to explain the author's intentions in writing the play and to advertise the author in a specific and bespoke light.

The paratexts that accompanied the plays of Davenant, Brome, and Ford helped shape and expand the reputation each man tried to form for himself. It also conditioned the reading of his plays, both in terms of meaning and message, as well as in how the play reflected the attitudes each held in relation to the theatre, his contemporaries, and his own public image. Davenant, Brome, and Ford had very different ideas on the role of the theatre and drama in society. These ideas were made known in the ancillary material and paratexts that accompanied their performed and printed plays. This thesis looks at how paratext and ancillary material were used in different ways by these men to shape their authorial reputations and temper audience reactions to their plays. It analyses how important and necessary paratext became to these playwrights writing from 1625 to the close of the theatres in 1642. Through these three playwrights, a wider investigation of how paratext was used to situate playwrights in the theatrical and literary communities of the Caroline era emerges.

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## A Note on the Texts

Unless indicated, I have modernized the original spellings of v/u, i/j, vv/w in all primary texts for the reader's ease.

Italicization within quotations is an exact transcription of the authors' writings – acknowledgement being given when I add my own emphasis.

Where letters were missing or unintelligible from the original texts, I have filled in the missing letter where obvious or included a [...] where the original word is indistinguishable.

Any original text written in all capitals has been standardized with only the first letter capitalized, unless stated for a specific purpose.

Play titles have been modernized and capitalized.

When a page number or a Signature is not available for reference, or when the numbers are out of sync, I have situated the page next to other pages in the text, for example 'unpaginated page after the prologue'.

## List of Abbreviations

EMLS	<i>Early Modern Literary Studies</i>
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MP	<i>Modern Philology</i>
N&Q	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
RBO	<i>Richard Brome Online</i>
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
SEL	<i>Studies in English Literature</i>
STC	<i>Short Title Catalogue</i>
Wing	<i>Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641-1700</i>
YES	<i>Yearbook of English Studies</i>

## Introduction

Much of the drama performed and printed during the reign of Charles I, specifically from 1625 to the closure of the professional theatres in 1642, was by dramatists who were highly aware of the manipulative power of the words that accompanied their plays on stage and in print. The paratexts and ancillary material that were included alongside plays influenced audience reception of both the author and his works. The simplest and most effective way for an author to declare his preferences and intentions was through carefully written and selected paratexts that advertised his views to literary and theatrical audiences. This thesis presents an in-depth analysis of the paratexts of three of the Caroline era's most prolific and well-known dramatists: William Davenant, Richard Brome, and John Ford. Each of these playwrights used prologues, epilogues, dedications, and commendatory verses to promote themselves and their plays. This thesis examines the purpose and the usefulness of such material in the era and how it functioned in shaping identity and, in the words of Phillippe Lejeune, controlled 'one's whole reading of the text'.<sup>1</sup>

The different attitudes Caroline authors had toward the theatre and the publisher are signposted in the ancillary material and paratext that accompanied their plays on stage and in print. Likewise, the way playwrights wanted others to view them was directed in the dedications, commendatory verses, and prologues and epilogues that framed their plays in print. Brome, a staunch defender of the commercial stage, did not publish often, but when he did, paratext was included as a matter of course. It reflected a traditional view of the theatrical institution and the role of the playwright, as influenced by his mentor Ben Jonson. Brome used this material to portray himself as a humble man of the theatre, dedicated to pleasing audiences and earning a living. I believe his paratexts also display a viciousness aimed at his courtly, literary rivals that has here-to-fore gone largely unnoticed in contemporary scholarship. In comparison, Davenant's paratexts showed the author's animosity toward the commercial theatre; they attacked those audiences who he believed were unable to understand his dramatic vision or appreciate

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<sup>1</sup>Phillippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte authobriographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p. 45, quoted in Gerard Genette, *Paratext: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 7.

his literary ability. This same material established him as a gentleman author of ‘literature’, more closely associated with the amateur, courtly poets than with the professional playwrights. However, Davenant’s aim was to please the court and the commercial theatre audiences, which he tried to do time and time again, but with little success. His paratexts did not always lead to the desired outcome, but they did ultimately shape his reputation as a courtly author worthy to be Poet Laureate. Ford’s paratexts revolved around a close-knit community of members of the Inns of Court, like-minded literary peers, and inter-connected members of the gentry whom he called ‘friends’ because of their association with him and understanding of his work. His ‘friends’ helped to establish him as an artist who was dedicated to fulfilling his own personal standards and to teaching those standards to others. The paratext Ford wrote, as well as what was written for him, displayed an elevated, literary view of drama and attempted to re-establish his plays, and those of his peers, as dramatic art. It is my belief that Ford’s paratext is the most controlled and manicured in the era, and that this enabled him to advance his specific outlook on the role of the theatre in society. Through the work of each of these authors, this thesis provides a sense of how important and influential paratextual material was in shaping the diverse reputations of the authors and the meanings of their plays for their specifically chosen audiences.

My examination of Caroline drama owes a debt to the seminal work of Martin Butler. In *Theatre and Crisis: 1632-1642*, Butler deconstructs the oppositions apparent in the drama of the era, particularly between the crown and the city.<sup>2</sup> My thesis, although concerned with those same ‘issues of state [and] society’ that Butler examines, is focused on the competition between those authors who wrote for a courtly audience and those who wrote for public and private audiences at the commercial theatres. This competition encompasses questions of motivation in choosing one audience over another and what that choice meant in terms of authority and recognition for the playwright.<sup>3</sup> Equally valuable to the conception of this thesis is the contemporary scholarship of Julie Sanders and Matthew Steggle. Sanders’s examination *Caroline Drama: The Plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Brome* has established firm identities for each of these authors and the

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis: 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 281.



ideologies behind their works.<sup>4</sup> Sanders's work offers a starting point for this thesis, as it examines how these authors compared and contrasted in terms of their outlooks on the theatre and on the place and purpose of drama. Steggle's work on the second poet's war and the divisions within the theatrical institution has also been of significance. Steggle examines how individual paratexts reflected what was happening in the era at the time the wit combatants of the second poet's war were writing. My thesis looks at how paratext played a crucial role in leading to such divisions amongst playwrights over audience, medium, and meaning, as authors defined themselves before forming alliances or critiquing rivals.<sup>5</sup> Other contemporary studies of Caroline drama focus on the collected writings of individual playwrights. The works of Richard Brome in *Richard Brome Online*, the forthcoming *The Complete Works of James Shirley (1596-1666) An Edition in 10 Volumes*, and *The Complete Works of John Ford* reproduce the body of writing of these Caroline authors and offer critical interpretations and analyses of the plays, but do not show what motivated the authors to write them.<sup>6</sup> My examination of paratext shows why authors wrote, as well as what they hoped to achieve with their plays in terms of audience reception and their own financial and social rewards. More criticism is focused on playing and repertoire in the era, as is the case with Karen Britland's and Lucy Munro's studies, which are concerned with the plays in performance and the acting companies' relations with the authors.<sup>7</sup> My work incorporates studies of individual playwrights, but then takes such studies further, examining how playwrights used paratext to form reputations for themselves and dictate the meanings of their plays, and to situate themselves in the dramatic and literary landscapes of the Caroline era.

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<sup>4</sup> Julie Sanders, *Caroline Drama: The Plays of Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Brome* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> See Matthew Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641', *Renaissance Forum*, 5.2 (2001); *Richard Brome: Place and Politics on the Caroline Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); *War of the Theatres: The Poetics of Personation in the Age of Jonson* (Victoria, British Columbia: English Literary Studies, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Richard Cave, ed., *RBO*, Royal Holloway, University of London and Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield, 2010  
<<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/viewOriginal.jsp?play=AN&type=TEXT>> [accessed 23 August, 2010]; Eugene Giddens, Teresa Grant, Barbara Ravelhofer, eds., *The Complete Works of James Shirley (1596-1666) An Edition in 10 Volumes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Sir Brian Vickers, et. al. ed., *The Complete Works of John Ford* (London: Institute of English Studies, University of London, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> See Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Lucy Munro, 'Early Modern Drama and the Repertory Approach', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 42 (2003), 1-33.

An equally important position of my thesis is found within the critical examinations of the use of specific paratextual material: prologues and epilogues, commendatory verses, and dedications to patrons. The importance of paratext and the inclusion of it as a standard practice in Caroline playtexts resulted from Jonson's 1616 *Workes*. Jonson embellished his printed text to look like the ancient Greek and Latin classical, literary masterpieces. Jonson's tome established him as a literary 'poet' alongside the ancient authors and turned his collected 'Workes' into classical 'literature'. The folio, complete with an elaborate title page and extensive commendations, dedications, and addresses to the reader, gave the work an added 'literariness', at the same time, it granted him control over how the work was received and how he was viewed as the author. Jonson's reappropriation of terms such as 'workes' and 'author' established a link between his drama and the more elevated and respected literary productions of classical culture. Julie Stone Peters claims 'the dramatic edition is legacy, the immortal "Remaines" of the ever-living author'.<sup>8</sup> Jonson's authorial presence and the literariness of his plays influenced the playwrights of the Caroline era in the way they promoted themselves and their plays in their own framing material. Scott McMillin convincingly argues that Jonson was a 'dramatist who cared about literary status, and who made a campaign out of turning plays into respectable literature'.<sup>9</sup> Jonson's attempts to present his drama as literature suggest that he thought of the play 'as a reading experience rather than a theatrical experience', an idea that resonated in the Caroline era as playwrights printed their plays with greater frequency.<sup>10</sup> Drama at the theatre was a 'play', whilst drama in literary form could be considered 'poetry'; poetry had more literariness, whilst a play was a baser form of entertainment. Jonson also aimed to distinguish an intended readership for the play, appealing to 'readers over the heads of playhouse audiences'.<sup>11</sup> His choice of who should receive the play in print suggests that the author had 'final authority' over the 'authorized' version of the printed play.<sup>12</sup> Jonson's pervasive use of paratext also gave the plays literariness and the writer

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<sup>8</sup> Julie Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book 1480-1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 136.

<sup>9</sup> Scott McMillin, 'Professional Playwriting' in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 226-38 (p. 238).

<sup>10</sup> Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, p. 136.

<sup>12</sup> Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, p. 136.

authority. His use of framing material influenced many Caroline playwrights, who then used these forms to give their plays a specific and focused aim. Those dramatists that followed him emulated Jonson's strict and exacting use of such forms to craft a persona, to dictate meaning, and to address a specific audience. His addresses 'To the Reader in Ordinaire' and 'To the Reader Extraordinary' in *Catiline* (1611) demonstrate the author's exacting nature and his insistence on a specific audience.<sup>13</sup> Through such paratext, Jonson was able to create and promote an image of himself as a proud, commanding author and poet. It also allowed him to direct audiences as to how to think of and interpret his plays. Some Caroline playwrights used paratext to make the plays more accessible to the reader, whilst others adopted a Jonsonian drive towards making the play more literary. Paratext established the dramatist's credibility outside the theatre. It provided guidelines as to how the reader should read the play, without actors as interpreting intermediaries. This thesis begins by examining the shadow Jonson cast as the 'author' and controller of his plays, since this authority formed the basis for the way in which Caroline dramatists used paratext. It then analyses how such material influenced audience reception and reader response in the wake of Jonson's authorial self-creation.

In this thesis, the term 'paratext' will refer to the various singular dedications to patrons, commendatory verses, and prologues and epilogues that accompanied a playwright's printed drama. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann claim that paratext is the 'text that introduces and frames the playtext that follows'.<sup>14</sup> Whilst this definition is certainly true, it is too basic to represent the significance and complexity of this material. This thesis adheres more closely to Gerrard Genette's definition of paratext as 'the implicit contexts that surround a work and, to a greater or lesser degree, clarify or modify its significance'.<sup>15</sup> In the Caroline era, paratext could, and sometimes did, define drama by turning it from 'a play' into a more substantial piece of literature: 'a poem' or a 'work'. 'Poems' and 'Works', as forms of literature, were often considered more

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<sup>13</sup> Ben Jonson, 'To the Reader in Ordinaire' and 'To the Reader Extraordinary' in *Catiline* (London: William Stansby, 1611), Sig A3r. A more in-depth analysis of these addresses can be found in Chapter 1, pp. 37-38.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (Routledge: Abington OX, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 7.

important or artistic than mere ‘plays’.<sup>16</sup> Much of the paratext that accompanied the published plays addressed the divide between the ‘plays’ and other forms of literature, in order to situate an author’s plays alongside ‘poems’ or ‘works’. However, the extent to which the reading audience was influenced by the ‘literariness’ of published drama is unclear. Whether or not plays were read in a different manner because of direction from the paratext cannot be determined. Its continued and increased inclusion in dramatic texts suggests that it did have some influence on the reader; however, the greatest impact was on the author himself and his place in the theatrical and dramatic communities.<sup>17</sup>

It is my contention that each form of paratext has its own codes and signals embedded within it, which rely on the codes and signals of other paratextual forms in order to create a specific, unique meaning for the particular play or shape the reputation of the writer. The dedication to the patron often comments on the play’s previous reception at the theatre and the playwright’s reaction to that reception. Based on how the author felt about the play on stage, the commendatory verses are concerned with the transition of the audience from theatrical to literary; the verses praise or scold a reading and/or theatrical audience for their ability (or lack thereof) to understand the author’s meanings. The commendatory verses also promote the perception of the author, specifically his attitude toward his audience and his reason for writing. The presence of a prologue in print usually re-establishes a connection to the theatre, whilst a lack of a prologue often severs ties to a commercial theatre audience or the actors responsible for a play’s staging. The ideas that began in one form of paratext were usually carried on and solidified in those pieces that followed, which ultimately led to a focused and directed reading of the play and a portrait of the author. Thus, each piece of paratext often depended or continued on from another piece of paratext to construct a definitive image of the author and a tailored reading of his play. Over the body of a singular playwright’s paratexts, authorial attitude and reputation were most often augmented from play to play. This thesis examines what combined meanings presented by all the paratext in a play could, and did, do for the individual author’s reputation and status.

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<sup>16</sup> See Peter Berek, ‘Genres, Early Modern Theatrical Title pages, and the Authority of Print’ in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. by Marta Straznicky (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp.159-75.

<sup>17</sup> For a comprehensive list of the increase in paratextual usage from 1595 to 1642, see Appendix C, pp. 257-259.

Genette argues that the paratext ‘surround [the text] and extend it, precisely in order to present it [...] to ensure the text’s presence in the world’.<sup>18</sup> I believe that paratext was included because the play in print needed embellishing as it moved from the spectacle of the stage to the blank page. Peters comments on how the look of the printed play influenced the reader, arguing that ‘typography could highlight the differences between the performance text and the author’s text’, as was the case with Jonson’s adorned *Workes* in folio.<sup>19</sup> Caroline dramatists were increasingly controlling their new plays and printing them with paratextual advertising. Peters confirms this when she says:

By the later seventeenth century, it was generally assumed that it was dramatists, not companies, who had the right to sell their plays to publishers. This meant that that plays were often coming from the dramatists themselves and, as a result, the play-texts were far more likely to be authorial than theatrical versions.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst Peters is speaking about the period after the theatre closures in 1642, I argue such authorial control began in the Caroline era and then set a precedent of publication, which influenced later periods after the Civil War. The actual appearance of the text became an important aspect of the play that negated, to an extent, previous stage performances. The publishing author in control of the typography could stress the importance of certain names, words, or concepts with italicization or capitalization. In Caroline paratext, some terms, such as the author’s or the patron’s name, were capitalized to make them stand out in type, thereby giving that name prominence. In the paratextual material of Philip Massinger’s *The Roman Actor* (1629), the dedication to the patron is printed as: ‘To my much Honoured, and most true Friends, Sir PHILIP KNYVET, Knight and Barouet. And to Sir THOMAS IEAY, Knight. And THOMAS BELLINGHAM’.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, one of the

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<sup>18</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> See Sara Van Den Berg, ‘Ben Jonson and the Ideology of Authorship’ in *Ben Jonson’s 1616 Folio*, ed. by Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (London: Associated University Presses, 1991), pp.111-37 (p. 114); Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book 1480-1880*, p. 59, 136; Berek, ‘Genres’ in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicki, p. 167. Van Den Berg talks about the size and centrality of Jonson’s name at the centre of the title page, ‘in block letter, printed in script’, flanked by ‘two Horatian allusions’. Stone Peters argues that he ‘was self-consciously invoking the ancients (Seneca, Sophocles, and Terrence produced in like format), seeking to consecrate his works in a permanent literary monument’. Berek claims, of the *Workes*, ‘the classical arch ornamenting its title page not only proclaims the importance of the volume and its author but also implies a set of affiliations both ancient and theatrical’.

<sup>20</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> Philip Massinger, ‘To my much Honoured, and most true Friends, Sir PHILIP KNYVET, Knight and Barouet. And to Sir THOMAS IEAY, Knight. And THOMAS BELLINGHAM of N[...]wtimber in Sussex Esquire’ in *The Roman Actor* (London: Bernard Alsop and Thomas Fawcet, 1629), Sig A2r.

commendatory verses to Massinger, from John Ford, is titled: 'Upon Mr. MASSINGER His Roman Actor'.<sup>22</sup> Certain words could also be italicized to highlight their importance, as seen in Brome's printed epilogue to *The Antipodes* (1640) where the words 'Stage', 'Presentation', 'Players', 'Original', 'Cock-Pit Stage', 'William Beeston', and 'Salisbury Court' were all separated typographically from the rest of the text, and all of these words pertain to the acting of the play, not to the publication and subsequent reading of it.<sup>23</sup> Brome used paratext to remind audiences of the play's origin on stage, which reflects his image as a defender of the theatre in the 1630s. Through typography, the author was able to signify, to the reader, what was important in order to advance his own agenda.

Paratext also had the power to alter or erase the memory of the play in performance, change the reading audience's previous perception of it, or introduce and frame a whole new, literary play for the reader. The ordering of the material confirmed the literariness of the play as it followed a similar pattern as poems or newly printed classical collections.<sup>24</sup> A review of Caroline published drama shows a repeated order of paratextual material: first, a dedication established an author's intended patron as well as his attitude toward the literary or theatrical audience. Dedications were followed by commendatory verses, which often dictated how an author should be judged or a play should be read. Finally, the printed prologue, last in the paratext, reminded the reader of the play on stage. Through the different components 'the author is offering the reader an advance commentary on a text the reader has not yet become familiar with'.<sup>25</sup> Suddenly, a play that had been known on stage was unfamiliar and new - the unfamiliarity resulted from the changes in meaning that came after the reader was influenced by the paratext. The paratext was unfamiliar as it was written from the point of view of the author and his contemporaries and allies; it was not intended to entertain, but rather to introduce and elevate the play and create a more intimate bond between the reader and the author.

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<sup>22</sup> John Ford, 'Upon Mr. MASSINGER His Roman Actor' in Massinger, *The Roman Actor*, Sig A4r.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Brome, *The Antipodes* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig L4v. This epilogue will be considered in greater detail in the detailed examination of Brome's play in Chapter 3 on pp. 187-88.

<sup>24</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphosis* (Oxford: John Lichfield, 1632), Horace, *Odes of Horace* (London: John Haviland, 1638). In 1632, Ovid's *Metamorphosis* was printed in folio with an elaborate woodcut title page, an opening address to the reader entitled 'The Minde of the Frontispeece and Argument of This Worke', followed by an address to Charles, to Henrietta Maria, and finally the reader. In 1638, the odes of Horace were published with an address to the reader, a commendatory verse from Francis Beaumont, several Latin and English verses, and two verses praising the patron of the work.

<sup>25</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 237.

Terms such as ‘commercial’, ‘public’, ‘private’, and ‘professional’ will be used a great deal in this thesis and need to be clarified. The terms ‘commercial’ and ‘professional’, in reference to theatres, are used to describe those playhouses that were accessible to anyone, despite social status, who could afford admission. The *OED* defines ‘Commercial’, as ‘looking toward financial profit. Used pejoratively of any art-form, performance, artist, etc., that sets popular acclaim as measured by financial returns above artistic considerations’.<sup>26</sup> In this thesis, the Red Bull, Globe, Blackfriars, Salisbury Court, and Cockpit theatres are considered ‘commercial’ because profit drove performances. These theatres may also be referred to as ‘professional’ theatres as companies at each purchased plays from playwrights who earned their living, at least in part, from the selling of their plays. ‘Professional’ will also refer to playwrights who wrote specifically for the paying audiences at these theatres. ‘Professional’, in terms of the playwrights, will be that which most closely adheres to the *OED* definition: ‘of a person or persons: that engages in a specified occupation or activity for money or as a means of earning a living, rather than as a pastime. As contrasted with the term *amateur*’.<sup>27</sup> The *OED* definition of ‘amateur’ as ‘one who cultivates anything as a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally; hence, sometimes used disparagingly’ is a contemporary term that can be applied to those Caroline dramatists who did not sell their plays to a commercial theatre but still had them staged there.<sup>28</sup> Amateur playwrights were usually members of the gentry or connected to the court, and because of personal wealth or credit they did not have to sell their plays to earn a living wage. Amateurs were able to write on any subject and target any specific audience without jeopardizing their livelihoods, and many professional playwrights felt threatened by these writers who provided plays for favour, rather than profit.

The amateur playwright was not paid for his plays, but he did retain control of his work in terms of printing. John Suckling’s *Aglaure* is one example of Caroline amateur drama. It was played before the King and at Blackfriars in a lavish stage production,

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Commercial, a and n, 5’, in *OED*, 16 April 2007 <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50044951>> [accessed 15 August 2010].

<sup>27</sup> ‘professional, a, II 3a’ in *OED* <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50189445>> [accessed 14 October 2009].

<sup>28</sup> ‘amateur, n, 2A’ in *OED*, <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50006818>> [accessed 6 June 2010].

before being published in 1638, in an impressive folio.<sup>29</sup> The folio was paid for by Suckling himself (courtier dramatists were more likely to print elaborate, opulent editions of their plays, simply because they could afford to) and was printed with the intention of impressing an aristocratic and courtly audience.<sup>30</sup> The published play was offered with either a tragicomic or tragic ending to please the various readers, but did not contain any commendations. The lavish and elaborate folio drew criticism from the professional playwright Brome, who wrote 'Upon Aglaura printed in Folio' (1659) to protest the intrusion of the amateur playwrights into the professional sphere and criticize the emptiness of the play in print. Brome specifically attacks the folio's size, claiming it has 'More excrement then body'. Such a comment shows Brome's vitriol, as well as the competitive nature of Caroline paratext.<sup>31</sup>

Often courtly amateurs used 'private' theatres to showcase their plays to the wider public. In this thesis, 'private' refers to that which is 'restricted to or for the use or enjoyment of one particular person or group of people; not open to the public'.<sup>32</sup> It is also used as 'relating to a service provided on a paying basis'.<sup>33</sup> 'Private' refers to the theatres where admission prices were much higher and admittance was more restrictive to the wider public. Andrew Gurr lists the cost to enter the yard of the public playhouses in the 1630s as a penny, whilst 'admission prices at Blackfriars began at a basic sixpence for entry to the topmost gallery. A further shilling provided a bench in the pit. A box cost half-a-crown'.<sup>34</sup> These more costly theatres were referred to as 'private houses' in a number of published plays, such as Thomas Nabbes's 'The bride a comedie. Acted in the

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<sup>29</sup> Tom Clayton, 'Suckling, Sir John (bap. 1609, d. 1641?)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26757>> [accessed 7 June 2010]. Clayton states: 'Aglaura was staged at court and, shortly before 7 February 1638, at Blackfriars Theatre "with much Applause"; "Sutlin's Play cost three or four hundred pounds setting out, eight or ten Suits of new Cloaths he gave the Players; an unheard of Prodigiousity"'.  
<sup>30</sup> Clayton, 'Suckling, Sir John', *ODNB*. 'The whole, with all prologues and epilogues and both fifth acts, was printed at Suckling's expense "to present to the quality" when it was "acted at Court"'.  
<sup>31</sup> See Clayton, 'Suckling, Sir John', *ODNB*, and Richard Brome, 'Upon AGLAURA printed in Folio' in *Five New Playes: The English Moor, Or the Mock-Marriage, The Love-Sick Court, Or the Ambitious Politique, Covent Garden Weeded, The New Academy, Or the New Exchange. The Queen and Concubine* (London: 1659); Wing B4872, unpaginated page preceding *The Wedding of Covent Garden*. For the poem, see Appendix A on p. 256.

<sup>32</sup> 'private, adj.1, adv., and n., A I 2a in *OED* <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50188919>> [accessed 14 October 2009].

<sup>33</sup> 'private, adj.1, adv., and n., A I 2b', *OED*.

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, 4th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 195.



yeere 1638. at the private house in *Drury-lane* by their Majesties Servants’ and Davenant’s ‘The cruell brother A tragedy. As it was presented, at the private house, in the *Blacke-Fryers*’.<sup>35</sup> Ann Jennalie Cook admits that the ‘private venues offered entertainment to more elite groups, and the smaller, roofed theatres, because of their high admissions have always been regarded as orientated primarily toward a monied, if not necessarily an aristocratic, clientele’.<sup>36</sup> However, she goes on to suggest that private theatres were not just for aristocratic audiences, but rather exhibited a ‘kind of social diversity’ amongst a ‘heterogeneous rather than homogeneous group of spectators’.<sup>37</sup> James Bulman states that ‘the audiences [of the private theatres] were drawn from a mixture of privileged classes – from court, town, and city alike’.<sup>38</sup> I consider private theatres, such as the Cockpit, more inclusive because of the ‘diverse social and political views’ that were cultivated there.<sup>39</sup> The theatre catered to diversity, if only in partial opposition to the court which held critical attitudes toward the stage and the drama being written during the era. There were theatres that were more open to diverse attitudes and ideas, such as the private Cockpit or the Salisbury Court, and those that were more strict and conservative in what they would stage, such as the Blackfriars theatre.<sup>40</sup> For this thesis, the Blackfriars, Cockpit, and Salisbury Court stages will be referred to as

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<sup>35</sup> Thomas Nabbes, *The Bride* (London: Richard Hodgkinson, 1640) and William D’Avenant, *The Cruell Brother* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1630).

<sup>36</sup> Ann Jennalie Cook, ‘Audiences: Investigation, Interpretation, Invention’ in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 305-20 (p. 316).

<sup>37</sup> Cook, ‘Audiences’ in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by Cox and Kastan, pp. 316-17.

<sup>38</sup> Bulman, ‘Caroline Drama’ in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Braunmuller and Hattaway, p. 346.

<sup>39</sup> James Bulman, ‘Caroline Drama’ in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 344-71 (p. 346).

<sup>40</sup> See William D’Avenant, *Albovine* (London: Felix Kingston, 1629), and John Ford, *The Lover’s Melancholy* (London: Felix Kingston, 1629). Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama: An Historical and Critical Supplement to the Study of the Elizabethan and Restoration Stage* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 166; Andrew Gurr, ‘Singing Through the Chatter: Ford and Contemporary Theatrical Fashion’ in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Michael Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 81-96; Eleanor Collins, ‘Thomas Heywood and the Construction of Taste in the Repertory of Queen Henrietta’s Men’ in *“Divining Thoughts”: Future Directions in Shakespeare Studies*, ed. by Peter Orford, et. al (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 17-27. Davenant’s first play, *Albovine* was not staged at the Blackfriars because the actors refused to perform the play due to its controversial criticism of the court. Likewise, the experience Ford had with staging *The Lover’s Melancholy* at the Blackfriars in 1628 left him with a sour taste for the theatre. It was after this he decided move from the Blackfriars to the Cockpit, where he could have more control over his play and avoid the censorship at the Blackfriars theatre. Ford wrote the remainder of his plays for the Cockpit.

‘private’; the Blackfriars I considered the most exclusive and socially homogenous theatre, whilst the Salisbury Court and the Cockpit will be treated as ‘private’ theatres that attracted and catered to a more socially diverse audience.

In contrast to the ‘private’ theatres, the ‘citizen’ or ‘public’ theatres were commonly outdoor and popular with the lower orders. ‘Public’ theatre patrons were often considered unruly, whilst the ‘private’ theatres had a more refined and genteel audience. Gurr classifies the Globe, the Fortune, and the Red Bull as ‘public’ theatres - a classification that is also used in this thesis.<sup>41</sup> These theatres, particularly the Red Bull, largely showcased repertoire plays and housed a lower-class audience.<sup>42</sup> However, this line between popular and elite, unruly and refined, and public and private was blurry at best. Bulman explores the dichotomy between the public and private Caroline theatres and makes the case that the divide was not as rigid as previous criticism has suggested.<sup>43</sup> As with the ‘private’ theatres, there were exceptions at the ‘citizen’ theatres as well, and the Globe housed a socially and economically diverse audience.<sup>44</sup> Bulman contends that the majority of new plays written and performed in the Caroline era were intended for the private theatres, which ‘were a focal point for entertainment’.<sup>45</sup> Because of higher admission prices, the private theatre companies were able to pay playwrights more for their plays, and thus attracted the most popular dramatists. The ‘public’, ‘citizen’ theatres staged older, repertoire plays and sometimes plays that had first appeared at the more exclusive, ‘private’ theatres.

Regardless of their ‘public’ or ‘private’ status, theatres competed for the patronage of the diverse London audiences, as well as for the playwrights working in the era. Although the Blackfriars was ‘the predominant resort for the new and fashionable’ and was a ‘favourable venue for the rich’, in the 1630s, Christopher Beeston’s Cockpit was eclipsing it in popularity.<sup>46</sup> Gurr states:

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<sup>41</sup> See Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p. 149.

<sup>42</sup> See Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, pp. 264-75.

<sup>43</sup> See Bulman, ‘Caroline Drama’ in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Braummuller and Hattaway, pp. 344-71.

<sup>44</sup> See Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, pp. 266.

<sup>45</sup> Bulman, ‘Caroline Drama’ in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Braummuller and Hattaway, p. 346.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Gurr, ‘Beeston [Hutchinson], Christopher (1579/80–1638)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66593>, accessed 25 Sept 2010].

Between 1626 and his death in 1638, Beeston's Cockpit theatre staged more new plays than even the Blackfriars. For writers he took John Ford and James Shirley from the Blackfriars, and even when the young courtiers William Davenant and Thomas Carew started a fresh kind of competition by writing plays for the queen's faction at Blackfriars, he maintained a strong repertory of plays and strong companies of players.<sup>47</sup>

The author's choice of theatre demarcated a specific attitude toward the profession of playwriting. Davenant and Suckling preferred the courtly association of Blackfriars, whilst Ford, Shirley, and Brome preferred the Cockpit and theatre manager Beeston's focus on 'the art of stage playing', rather than politicking.<sup>48</sup> When Christopher Beeston's son, William, took over the Cockpit in 1638, the theatre's plays 'included almost half of the cream of the time, rivalling those of the former Shakespeare's company, the King's Men'.<sup>49</sup> Eleanor Collins makes the case that the attraction of the Cockpit, for authors and audiences alike, was the porous boundary between the 'vulgar' and the 'refined' action on stage.<sup>50</sup> The theatre featured dramatic fare that could have been found at both Blackfriars and the Red Bull, which made the Cockpit more versatile in what could be written for the stage, and thus more attractive to playwrights who catered to a more diverse, non-courtly audience.

The demand for new plays was not as great in the Caroline era, as revivals of old plays for the repertories increased. According to Gurr, 'The King's Men [...] seem to have commissioned barely four new plays a year. Under Charles, sixty-four out of the eighty-eight known plays distinguished by being staged at court were old'.<sup>51</sup> This trend carried over into the public and private theatres as well, and competition at the commercial playhouses intensified as a result. Dramatists constantly struggled to get their names heard and their plays staged. In addition to numerous revivals, professionals had to contend with courtiers and amateurs who were also writing plays and sometimes giving them away or covering the expense of having them staged.<sup>52</sup> Not only were playwrights

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<sup>47</sup> Gurr, 'Beeston [Hutchinson], William', *ODNB*.

<sup>48</sup> Gurr, 'Beeston [Hutchinson], William', *ODNB*.

<sup>49</sup> Gurr, 'Beeston [Hutchinson], William', *ODNB*.

<sup>50</sup> See Collins, 'Thomas Heywood' in *Future Directions in Shakespeare Studies*, ed. by Orford, et. al, pp. 17-21.

<sup>51</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Brome, *The Court Begger* (London: 1653), Sig S8r; Wing B4867. In the epilogue to *The Court Begger* the character Swaynwit comments: 'If it were for one of the great and curious Poets that give these

competing outright with each other, they were also not collaborating on plays in the same manner and with the same frequency practiced in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Most of the plays printed during the era were the result of a single author's efforts. With this rise in independence and individuality there was, according to Gurr, 'a greater readiness to publish plays for reasons of pride instead of money'.<sup>53</sup> He goes on to claim that the 'lowering of priority for novelty coincided with a rise in the status of plays to the level of poetic 'works' worthy of publication'.<sup>54</sup> The pride that authors felt was discernible in the paratext that was included alongside the play. Authors may have written independently, but when it came to publication, they often relied on friends and allies in the dramatic community for a laudatory verse that would increase the chances of the playtext being sold. Thus, commendatory verses, dedications to patrons, and other paratextual staples, designed to make the playtext look worthy, served as a type of collaboration. As a result, the number of verses increased and they became generic and repetitive. Commendations were still included as a matter of course, but more for the benefit of the author's reputation than the audience.

Kevin Dunn hinges notions of authorial control on the idea of 'public' in *Pretexts of Authority*.<sup>55</sup> He declares that much of the paratext that accompanies the printed play 'is a function of this same interplay between the writer and the public sphere', with the public sphere being determined by economics as well as 'a social and political [distinction] in which *public* was a designation of rank'.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, within each of the Caroline dramatists' paratexts examined in the subsequent chapters, the material offers a judgment about the rank of the various audiences based on social, political, and economic factors. I believe that the playwrights termed their printed plays either 'public' or 'private' based on their own reactions to the audiences or on the previous treatments of the plays on stage. Therefore, a play on the exclusive Blackfriars stage may have been 'private' to Brome, but the same offering to a diverse and unknown audience could be 'public' to Davenant. Marta Straznicky claims that 'unlike playgoing, play-reading as a

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Plays as the Prologue said, and money too, to have 'em acted'.

<sup>53</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Kevin Dunn, *Pretexts of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 7-8.

<sup>56</sup> Dunn, *Pretexts of Authority*, p. 7.

cultural practice could draw on two otherwise disparate sources of authority and legitimation, the elite (private) and the popular (public)'.<sup>57</sup> On stage, only a handful of people would be able to see the play, whereas in print a far wider 'public' could purchase the book and read the play whenever and however they chose. The *OED* also defines 'public' as being 'of a book, piece of writing [...] in print, published'.<sup>58</sup> The etymological origin of 'publish' derives from the 'Middle French *publier* to make public, to make known, to make famous, to announce, to proclaim'.<sup>59</sup> Print, however, was more exclusive in the sense that the number of book-buyers who could afford the price of a printed playtext was limited, as was the number of literate people.<sup>60</sup> Although what was published could be defined as 'public', in terms of availability, the restrictions imposed by the relatively high cost of purchasing printed materials excluded any sense of 'public' as considered available to all. However, the book was available to all who could pay, and thus the market set the restriction, not the availability. Although print reproduces the same words that had been represented on stage, in print those representations were restricted to the reader's (or the listener's) thoughts and reactions. Readers may have interpreted a text differently than the actors or performers had when the play was staged, even though there were no physical changes to the words themselves. Dunn makes concessions for the complications that arise from the distinction between 'public' and 'private' in the seventeenth century, when he says 'in England it is the first definition of public and private, as the division between common and the particular that became the basis for the public sphere'.<sup>61</sup> Certainly, the book was more 'particular' as it displayed one interpretation, that of the author, rather than being open to the interpretations of the

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<sup>57</sup> Marta Straznicky, 'Introduction: Plays, books, and the Public Sphere' in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, pp. 1-19, (p. 4).

<sup>58</sup> 'public a, A 1b' in *OED*, <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50191807>> [accessed 14 October 2009].

<sup>59</sup> 'publish v, 3A' in *OED*, <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50191830>> [accessed 6 June 2010]. The most apt definition for the Caroline era is: 'to prepare and issue copies of (a book, newspaper, piece of music, etc.) for distribution or sale to the public'.

<sup>60</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 171-76 quoted in Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 340. Peters quotes Cressy who states there was a 'pronounced improvement in illiteracy levels in the 1630s'. Whilst the price of a book might have proved a barrier to the public's consumption of printed plays, the literacy level of the public in the 1620s and 30s was increasing. However, the number of people who were literate in the Caroline era was by no means high, making the ability to read less a factor and thus making the book public.

<sup>61</sup> Dunn, *Pretexts of Authority*, p. 8.

various actors or the audience. If there was only one meaning to get from the book, the author's, it was private; whereas the theatrical institution as a whole, where actors and spectators influenced different interpretation, was public. What this thesis addresses is the question of how the paratexts that accompanied printed texts dictated the way a play should be read, thereby making it 'particular', restrictive, and private.

Cook states that 'the fundamental split between exclusive and inclusive groups was an important factor' in the performance of the play, but this split also applied to print.<sup>62</sup> In both cases, at the theatre and in publication, the distinction between exclusive and inclusive, and private and public, this thesis argues, was a matter of authorial point of view. Actors could change the dialogue or the action based on how the audience reacted. They could also play a scene or deliver a line in numerous different styles, regardless of how the author had intended it to sound or look. There was a noticeable difference between the play on stage and the play in print that could be stressed in paratext. A printed supplement to Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* makes amends, in his private book, for the errors in print that were not noticeable in the performance:

The generall Commendation deserved by the Actors, in their Presentment of this Tragedy, may easily excuse such few faults, as are escaped in the Printing: A common charity may allow him the ability of spelling, whom a secure confidence assures that hee cannot ignorantly erre in the Application of Sence.<sup>63</sup>

Ford's correction attempts to draw attention to the 'faults' in the printed presentation that would have gone unnoticed in the 'Presentment of this Tragedy' on stage. At the theatre, the author could depend on the actors to deliver the play without error or fault, but in print the errors would be more readily noticed and would likely be attributed to the author. This also shows that it is the author alone who is responsible for the play in print. Ford instructs the audience to practice a 'common charity' in reading, an instruction that is born out of 'a secure confidence' in his readership. Ford was very precise in his address to the audience in paratexts, and he presented a familiarity with his readers. His literary audience understood his 'Application' of words and meanings because they understood his intentions in writing. Without the actors, it is Ford's intentions, his

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<sup>62</sup> Cook, 'Audience' in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed by. Cox and Kastan, p. 307.

<sup>63</sup> John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1633), Sig K4r.

‘Application’ and his ‘Presentment’ of the literary text, that was all-important, and seemingly separated from the live presentation of the play on stage.

Peters states that ‘to be in print was to be an “author,” and to be an author was to dignify the draft of play-making’ - as Jonson had done when he re-branded himself as ‘the author’ in his 1616 *Workes*.<sup>64</sup> At the most basic level, the book was seen by ‘printers and authors’ as a construct ‘where the matter presented for reading is specifically understood as the “book” of a previously performed stage play and the result of the author’s effort rather than the actor’s’.<sup>65</sup> The ‘book’ offered more than just a printed version of a play, it gave the author the chance to take credit for the play, which had been bestowed upon the actors at the theatre. In the Caroline era, the book was largely author driven and the inclusion of paratext in printed dramatic texts redefined the playwright as an ‘author’. Jonson’s 1600 quarto of *Every Man Out of His Humour*, introduced as ‘*first* composed by the author BJ’, asserts the act of ‘composing to be the proper basis of textual authority’.<sup>66</sup> Because it was an ‘author’ writing, the text was no longer merely a ‘play’, but was instead a literary ‘work’. The development of the author as controller is addressed in Jeffrey Masten’s article, ‘Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration’.<sup>67</sup> Masten considers the collaborative nature of the play and the inability of the author to define himself without the influence, positive or negative, of other ‘discourses and practices now viewed as distinct: reproductive, textual, political, dynastic’.<sup>68</sup> I believe that in order to define himself, the playwright manipulated these discourses and practices with his paratexts to ensure they promoted a persona tailored to his specifications.

Caroline dramatic paratext predominantly functioned to promote the opinions, attitudes, and ideologies of the singular author. The more influence the author had over what was printed alongside his play, the more his authorial vision was realized. Ford was

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<sup>64</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 136, Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, *Loves Triumph through Callipolis* (London: John Norton, 1631), *The New Inn* (London: Thomas Harper, 1631), and *Bartholomew Faire* (London: J. B., 1631), *Workes* (London: Richard Bishop, 1640). The first play in the 1616 *Workes* ‘Every Man Out of His Humour’ was by ‘The Author B. J.’. *The New Inn* and *Bartholomew Faire*, printed in 1631, were also ‘By the Author’ Jonson. The majority of Jonson’s plays published during the Caroline era refer to Jonson as an ‘author’, which greatly influenced Caroline published paratext, specifically the commendatory verses.

<sup>65</sup> Straznicky, ‘Introduction’, in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 136.

<sup>67</sup> Jeffrey Masten, ‘Playwriting: Authorship and Collaboration’, in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by Cox and Kastan, pp. 357-82 (p. 369).

<sup>68</sup> Masten, ‘Playwriting’, in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by Cox and Kastan, p. 369.

very controlling over his paratexts, often directing what ‘friends’ said about him and his plays in commendations, in order to advance his specific viewpoint.<sup>69</sup> The type of collaboration defined by Heather Hirschfeld as ‘the activities of printers, patrons, and readers in shaping the meanings and significance of a text’ factored into the thinking of many Caroline dramatists (such as Ford) when they wrote and disseminated their plays.<sup>70</sup> Authors were ‘constructs of influence, of broad philosophical and religious contexts and pressures against which they knowingly and independently shaped themselves [...] the influence is always intellectual; writerly responses are always singular and, even if conflicted, self-conscious’.<sup>71</sup> Paratext presented one vision of the ‘author’ as dictated by that ‘author’.<sup>72</sup> As Wayne Chandler asserts, ‘other writers assisted the authors in [...] ensuring that works reached their intended audiences and had the desired effects thereon’.<sup>73</sup> The playwright and his friends and allies produced ‘commendatory verse for advertisement of both the particular subject work in question and the reputation of that work’s writer in general’.<sup>74</sup> I suggest, however, that the author’s reputation came first and the particular subject work came second, which then reflected the author’s reputation as it had been constructed in the paratext. Chandler suggests that it was common practice – and I believe that it was necessary – for authors to solicit praise to shape their specific and desired reputations. However, the inclusion of commendatory verses became so common and predictable in the Caroline era that they were occasionally ridiculed, particularly toward the end of the era, precisely because paratext became such a necessary part of the published playtext.

Masten’s definition of the author as ‘the person on whose authority a statement is made [...] one who has authority over others: a director, ruler, commender’ is important to the analyses in this thesis.<sup>75</sup> Based on this definition, I argue, the ‘author’ controlled

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<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 198-206.

<sup>70</sup> Heather Hirschfeld, ‘Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship’, *PMLA*, 116 (2001), 609-22, (p. 610).

<sup>71</sup> Hirschfeld, ‘Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship’, p. 611.

<sup>72</sup> See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), and Dunn, *Pretexs of Authority*. The author as a social and political construct is not something that I wish to spend time discussing.

<sup>73</sup> Wayne Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship in the English Renaissance* (Lewiston, NY: The Edward Mellon Press, 2003), p. 77.

<sup>74</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 77.

<sup>75</sup> Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*



what others wrote about him in commendatory verses. He dictated what was said about him and his play, but still worked with and relied on others to amplify his reputation.

Chandler supports the idea of the author-controlled paratext:

The evidence, then, indicates that commendatory verse was requested by the publisher and/or writer of the subject work to which it was to be affixed [...] writers and/or publishers often both suggested the content and planned the arrangement of prefatory material in general'.<sup>76</sup>

Many of the commendatory verses written in the Caroline era were addressed 'to the author' rather than to the 'playwright', which shows both the camaraderie that is born out of commendatory verse as well as the writer's own insistence on using the more authoritative term to describe himself. Paratext gave the writer authority by addressing him as 'author'. The author's name gained status and became attractive to dramatic consumers and potential patrons, which then increased dedications, proving how the different types of paratext relied on each other to construct an authoritative identity for the writer. Because of this authority, the playwright became more important than he had in previous generations. Paratext created and then advertised 'the author', and it is because of this that the number of plays containing paratextual material also increased in the late 1620s and throughout the 1630s.<sup>77</sup>

How paratext constructed the identity and the reputation of the author is a primary concern of this thesis. Paratext provided specific terms and definitions for the author and his work based on the ideology the playwright presented to the wider world, both at the theatre and in print. What was included in the paratext continued to shape the author's image as a 'poet', as an 'author', or as a 'playwright'.<sup>78</sup> I argue that these titles were defined by how the playwrights described themselves and their plays; that the paratexts

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 64.

<sup>76</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 77.

<sup>77</sup> The number of plays printed with such material is from my scrutiny of volumes one and two of W. W. Greg's *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*. See Appendix B on pp. 257-59 for a detailed table that lists the number of plays printed with paratext and what types of paratext was printed in the years between 1595 and 1642. All of the statistics in this introduction and in Chapter 1 on the numbers of plays to include paratext and the types of paratext included is drawn from the information found in this table.

<sup>78</sup> See Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. by Donald Bouchard, (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 130, and Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author' in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). Both Foucault and Barthes discuss, in detail, the place of the author in prescribing meaning to the work.

they wrote and those that were written to them advertised these specific meanings and definitions. Davenant fashioned himself as a ‘poet’. Brome defined himself as a ‘playwright’. Ford created a persona for himself as an ‘author’.<sup>79</sup> These labels were defined in relation to the author and what he hoped to achieve with his writing, and they were then announced in the individual author’s paratext. Davenant’s drive for acclaim from an elite, courtly audience and success on the commercial stage came with the title of ‘poet’. Brome’s goal of entertaining the audience and creating an egalitarian, cooperative environment at the commercial theatre was wrapped up in his own definition of ‘playwright’. Ford’s desire to educate his theatrical and literary audiences and instil moral and social values he linked with the titles of ‘author’, ‘artist’, and ‘friend’.<sup>80</sup> An ‘author’ such as Ford was more prescriptive and thus more likely to attempt to authorize the meanings of his plays with his paratext. A ‘playwright’ like Brome was more likely to leave the interpretations of his plays to the actors, audiences, or readers. Although the title of ‘author’ suggests authority and control over the work, as exemplified by Jonson in his 1616 *Workes*, the actual titles that these playwrights used to define themselves resulted from the same kind of authority, but were specific to the aims and ideals of the individual ‘poet’, ‘playwright’, and ‘author’ respectively. The writers fashioned titles for themselves based on what they believed the role of the individual dramatist was in interpreting the plays.

The ability of the author to manipulate and dictate the meanings and messages found in the paratext hinged, to a large extent, on who initiated the printing of the play and who controlled the play in print. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, plays appeared in print, largely, as the result of the theatre company’s initiative, rather than the

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<sup>79</sup> D’Avenant, *The Platonick Lovers* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1636), Sig A3r; *The Witts* (London: 1636), Sig A3r; and *The Unfortunate Lovers* (London: R. H., 1643), Sig A3r. Ford, *The Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck* (London: T. P., 1634), Sig A4v; *The Ladies Triall* (London: E. G., 1639), Sig Br; *The Lover’s Melancholy*, Sig A4v. Brome, *The Damoiselle* (London: Thomas Roycroft, 1653), Sig A2r. Davenant calls himself a poet in prologues to *The Unfortunate Lovers*, *The Witts*, and *The Platonick Lovers*. Ford calls himself an ‘author’ in the prologues to *Perkin Warbeck* and *The Ladies Trial*. Brome’s prologue to *The Damoiselle* specifically refers to him as a playwright ‘for yet he won’t be calld / Author, or Poet’.

<sup>80</sup> An in-depth study of Davenant’s *The Witts*, Chapter 2, pp. 127-40; Brome’s *The Antipodes*, Chapter 3, pp. 183-95; and Ford’s *The Lover’s Melancholy*, Chapter 4, pp. 234-48 exemplify each author’s attempts to establish a specific title for himself through paratext.

author's.<sup>81</sup> Garrett claims 'companies often (if by no means invariably) protected work from publication while it was likely to be reusable'.<sup>82</sup> However, by the 1630s, the playwright exerted more control over when and how his play was printed; it became more common for the author himself to initiate printing, despite the control that the companies wielded.<sup>83</sup> Peter W. M. Blayney discusses the content and frequency of print between 1583-1642 in 'The Publication of Playbooks', and contends that in the Caroline era 'the number of new plays per year reached its peak [...] an increased number of new texts led to a sharp decrease in the rate of reprinting'.<sup>84</sup> James Saeger and Christopher Fassler claim 'the most vigorous decade for publication of plays was 1631-1640 [...] more than 25 plays were printed on average in any given year of this decade and more than 10 of them were new plays'.<sup>85</sup> Publication was rapidly becoming a normal and even 'necessary part of the theatrical production, a natural phase in the life cycle of a play'.<sup>86</sup> According to Peters, by 'the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, audiences had come to expect that the texts of performed events – whether plays at the regular playhouses, court masques, royal entrees, or city pageants – would appear in print'.<sup>87</sup> I believe this publishing trend was solidified in the Caroline era. The playwright could cooperate with the company in publishing a text, as Brome had likely done with *The Northern Lasse* (1632), or an author could also initiate the printing of the play himself, independently of an uninterested company, as was the case with Davenant's *Albovine* (1629).<sup>88</sup> The playwright could also maintain control of the play's fate, as Ford had done with *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629).<sup>89</sup> In the Caroline era, more professionals were publishing than ever before and looking at print as an alternative to the stage. As Peters states, 'in the 1630s and 1640s, the tension between those who wished to publish independently (whether dramatists or

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<sup>81</sup> Douglass Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> Martin Garrett, 'Massinger, Philip (1583–1640)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18306>> [accessed 14 Aug 2010].

<sup>83</sup> See Berek, 'Genres' in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, pp.159-75.

<sup>84</sup> Peter W. M. Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks' in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by Cox and Kastan, pp. 383-422 (p. 387).

<sup>85</sup> James P. Saeger and Christopher J. Fassler, 'The London Professional Theatre, 1576-1642: A Catalogue and Analysis of the Extant Printed Plays', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 34 (1995), 63-109 (p. 67). See Appendix B, pp. 257-59.

<sup>86</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 44.

<sup>87</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 41.

<sup>88</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 97-105, and Chapter 3, pp. 147-58.

<sup>89</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 234-36.

publishers) and company managers who wished to retain control of the text seems to have intensified'.<sup>90</sup> The refusal of theatre companies to print some plays that the author wanted published, such as those 'condemned or suppressed, those determinedly aristocratic, those that had failed in the theatre', could have led authors to seek publication themselves when companies failed or refused to do so.<sup>91</sup> With the company unwilling or even opposed to print, authors often initiated the publication themselves rather than leaving it to the theatrical company.<sup>92</sup> The move from stage to page increased the profile and importance of the author and gave him control over what was included in the printed versions of the plays.

Through paratext, the author gained control over his own image. Barbara Mowat claims that 'the printing and selling of plays for readers made the boundary between theatre and literary culture increasingly porous'.<sup>93</sup> This fluidity enticed some playwrights to print as they could not judge, with complete confidence, the reaction of the theatregoers, nor could they wholly control what was said to the audience. At the theatre, authors had to rely on the actors to speak for them, but print allowed for more authorial freedom in the development of the authorial self-image. David Bergeron states in *Textual Patronage in English Drama 1570-1640*: 'a playwright's prefatory material in part attempts to define the position and status, secured or desired, of a writer committed to the theatre but aware of an emerging reading audience. Writers need readers'.<sup>94</sup> Reputations and self-images were altered depending on the medium and the audience the author preferred. Bergeron's term 'desired' is a primary focus of this thesis' it was the paratext that transformed the author's 'desired' position into his 'secured' status through the promotion of personal beliefs and his intentions for the play.

Douglas Brooks suggests that 'the occasion of publication has enabled the author to reassert his control over the play and restore it' to whatever state he had originally intended – outside of the influence of the actors and the live-theatre audience.<sup>95</sup> Brooks

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<sup>90</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 44.

<sup>91</sup> Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, p. 42.

<sup>92</sup> See Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book*, pp. 41-46.

<sup>93</sup> Barbara A Mowat, 'The Theatre and Literary Culture' in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by Cox and Kastan, pp. 213-30 (p. 217).

<sup>94</sup> David M. Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama 1570-1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006), p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Douglas A Brooks, 'Inky Kin: Reading in the Age of Gutenberg Paternity' in *The Book of the Play*, ed.

shows how the number of printed plays attributed to specific authors greatly increased in the Caroline era, demonstrating the importance of authorial recognition in gaining status and in repositioning plays as literature: ‘only during the last full decade of the professional stage (1631-40), when the publication of dramatic texts soars, does the number of attributed entries (ninety-one) surpass the number of anonymous entries (sixty-one)’.<sup>96</sup> Brooks further states that ‘not only had the authorship of dramatic texts become an important factor in the regulation of their publication, but also the locus of a play’s authority had shifted from the collaborative conditions of the theatre to the individualized agency of the author’.<sup>97</sup>

As print spread, and was more acceptable and utilized, the playwright found himself ‘in the midst of an emerging technology of increasing importance’.<sup>98</sup> By the start of the Caroline era, the prevalence of print meant that a playwright did not have to commit to entertaining audiences at the theatre, but could use publication to be considered a legitimate author of ‘works’, as Jonson had done. The Caroline playwrights’ affiliation with one medium or another was what shaped, in part, their identities and coloured what and how they wrote, as well as the ways in which they promoted their writing. It was increasingly common for a playwright to seek print and thus a reading audience, because a reading audience could not dismiss the play in an instant. If a reader disliked a printed play he or she simply abandoned reading, whereas at the theatre criticism was more immediate and direct. Chandler suggests that the author had a better idea of his reading audience and what they wanted than he did the theatrical audience.<sup>99</sup> He reaches this conclusion by examining commendatory verses, which he believes ‘would affect specific segments of the reading public’.<sup>100</sup> Evelyn Tribble offers a counter-argument, pointing to the ‘unknown and inchoate audience of readers’.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, with a relatively familiar audience at each of the theatres, dramatists could guess, with reasonable certainty, what would be popular and what would be criticized. However, mistakes *were* made and authors *did* get it wrong, as was the case with Davenant’s first

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by Straznicky, pp. 203-28.

<sup>96</sup> Brooks, ‘Inky Kin’ in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 213.

<sup>97</sup> Brooks, ‘Inky Kin’ in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 213.

<sup>98</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, pp. 170-71.

<sup>100</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 171.

<sup>101</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 170.

plays at the Blackfriars, which were either not staged or failures.<sup>102</sup> The delayed reaction and the unknown audience of print may have been attractive to the playwright who feared immediate censure from the theatrical audience or believed he could not satisfy the diverse tastes.

In print, the author had the chance to redefine the meanings and messages of the plays.<sup>103</sup> Through the paratext that was printed alongside the play, an author could better direct the literary audience as to how to read his play. Chandler believes that paratext directed literary audience to ‘think *this way* about the work!’<sup>104</sup> According to Berek, ‘the growing importance of print helps shape a culture’s understanding of the nature of the plays’, at the same time it promotes the nature and purpose of specific plays as determined by the author.<sup>105</sup> At the theatre, it was the actors who interpreted the play for the audience. Performed prologues focused on the actors at the theatre whose job it was to bring the play to life and entertain the audiences. This made the actors the primary marketed and marketable group at the theatre, whereas in print, paratext made the authors the more influential and saleable commodity, the agents who created the plays for the entertainment of literary audiences. This thesis accepts, as Masten asserts, that the author is found ‘in the bookshop’, which means it is the dramatist’s name, bolstered by the paratext and connections with other writers, patrons, and theatrical and dramatic agents, that sells the book.<sup>106</sup> Paratext described ‘the desirable qualities of literature and touted the subject work as exhibiting those qualities’.<sup>107</sup> The paratext thus worked to ‘prepare the reader to react positively to those qualities when he or she encounters them’ in the literary, published work.<sup>108</sup> Chandler summarizes by stating that the author’s attempts ‘at shaping interpretation take the form of justification of the subject as a work of art’.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 96-97.

<sup>103</sup> Brome ‘corrected’ *The Antipodes*, which he feels was unnecessarily shortened by the actors at Salisbury Court at the same time the commendators of Ford’s *Perkin Warbeck* had the tricky task of commending the author for his writing on such a disliked man as the 16<sup>th</sup> century impostor to the throne. Ford, incidentally, did not treat Warbeck as the vile and conniving threat that Tudor lore made him to be. Thus, his commendators helped to situate the work as fiction and as benign, thus proving Ford was not out to glorify the national villain.

<sup>104</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 11. The emphasis is Chandler’s.

<sup>105</sup> Berek, ‘Genres’ in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 162.

<sup>106</sup> Masten, ‘Playwriting’ in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by Cox and Kastan, p. 371.

<sup>107</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 11.

<sup>108</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 11.

Whilst this was not always the case with all the Caroline playwrights (certainly Brome would not see his plays as works of art or poetry), the idea of the author using paratext to justify and explain his work, and define and redefine his own reputation in relation to the work or to the audience shows how powerful and necessary paratext had become by the 1630s.

This thesis argues that one result of the definitions and parameters established in paratext was malicious competition. Paratext worked not only to shape an author's reputation, but also to criticize and condemn rivals. In 1630, Davenant's *The Just Italian* was published with a commendatory verse from Thomas Carew exalting the author's ability and criticizing the Blackfriars audience for disliking the play. Carew's commendatory verse was met with a great deal of scorn by several professional playwrights, the most vocal of whom was Philip Massinger. Massinger lashed out at Carew's poem in a revised, but unpublished prologue to *The Maid of Honour*.<sup>110</sup> Massinger was upset with Carew's commendation because *The Just Italian* had failed to please commercial theatre audiences, and he believed paratext was being used to manipulate these very audiences into accepting something that had already been proven unworthy of praise. Massinger resented courtly amateurs like Carew getting involved in professional matters. As competition was stiff at the commercial theatres, Carew's verse for Davenant's substandard play posed a threat to the professional playwrights who relied on the commercial stages for their livelihoods. Massinger's answer, also in paratext, slighted Carew's commendation. After the circulation of the revised prologue, the battle of words and wits escalated to a war: the second poet's war, which spanned almost the entire era, from the publication of Davenant's *The Just Italian* to 1641 when he was arrested for treason.<sup>111</sup> Like the first poet's war, which pitted the 'poet' Jonson against professional 'playwrights' Thomas Dekker and John Marston, the second poet's war was a series of verbal and written slanders that focused on the ideology behind a dramatist's choice of audience and his ultimate goals in writing plays. Franklin Williams called the

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<sup>110</sup> See Peter Beal, 'Massinger at Bay: Unpublished Verses in a War of the Theatres', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 10 (1980), 190-203 (p. 191).

<sup>111</sup> See Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641'; *Richard Brome: Place and Politics on the Caroline Stage; War of the Theatres: The Poetics of Personation in the Age of Jonson*; and Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 190-203. Matthew Steggle has written an impressive amount of criticism on the second poet's war and Beal's article is groundbreaking in its unearthing and publishing of Massinger's manuscripts.

practice of showering hyperbolic praise on peers and allies in commendatory verses ‘puffing’.<sup>112</sup> In this battle of wits, paratext was used to both ‘puff’ up peers and attack rivals.<sup>113</sup> This second poet’s war revolved around defending the commercial theatre and its audiences against the unwarranted criticisms of the courtly amateurs. Massinger and Brome were the chief wit combatants for the professional theatre and often took shots at Davenant in their paratexts throughout the 1630s and into the 1640s.<sup>114</sup> Nearly all the insults that were traded were done so in commendatory verses, prologue and epilogues, and dedications, which shows the importance of this material in building (or in this case destroying) reputations and alliances.

Genette observes that ‘the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies)’ comes through in the paratext.<sup>115</sup> In 1616, Jonson made paratext a crucial and necessary part of the published play by using it to rebrand his plays as ‘workes’ and to redefine himself as an ‘author’. This rebranding set an example that was followed by the Caroline era dramatists, who then used paratext much more regularly and in greater abundance than the playwrights of any previous era. Authors also used this material to shape the readings of their plays and to fashion identities and personas for themselves, their allies, and even their rivals. Thus, I believe, the Caroline era is an important turning point in terms of authorial control, which they gained through the permanence, regularity, and familiarity of prologues and epilogues, commendatory verses, and dedications to patrons.

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<sup>112</sup> Franklin Williams, ‘Commendatory Verses: The Rise in the Art of Puffing’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 19 (1966), 1-14 (p. 10). The word ‘puff’ will be used throughout the thesis as Williams intended, to describe hyperbolic praise. I will quote the term in each usage, but I will not give a reference.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas Carew, ‘To my worthy Friend, M. D’AVENANT, Upon his Excellent Play, *The Just Italian*’ in D’Avenant, *The Just Italian* (London: Thomas Harper, 1630), Sig A3v-4r; James Shirley, *The Grateful Servant* (London: B. A. and T. F., 1630), Sig A2r-A7v; Richard Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden Five New Playes: The English Moor, Or the Mock-Marriage, The Love-Sick Court, Or the Ambitious Politique, Covent Garden Weeded, The New Academy, Or the New Exchange. the Queen and Concubine* (London: 1659); *The Court Begger* (London: 1653); Wing B4867; *The Love Sick Court* in Brome *Five New Playes* (1659). Almost all of the paratext for *The Grateful Servant* references Carew’s commendation, in particular, the Address to the Reader mentions the ‘Kennell’ in which Carew had placed the Blackfriars spectators after they decried Davenant’s play. There were a number of scathing criticisms from Richard Brome throughout the 1630s. Brome satirized Davenant in his play *The Court Begger* and aimed a thinly veiled attack on the sometime professional, sometime amateur playwright in the prologue to *The Love Sick Court*, and celebrated his downfall in a revival of *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, which contained a particularly venomous prologue likening Davenant to vermin. See Chapter 3, pp. 178-81.

<sup>114</sup> Massinger’s attacks on Davenant can be found in Chapter 2, pp. 106-11 and Brome’s attacks on Davenant can be found throughout Chapter 3, pp. 166-81.

<sup>115</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 2.



Caroline paratext painted a specific picture of the author. This thesis is a full length analysis of the ways in which authorial intention and professional and amateur alliances, made manifest in the paratext used by Caroline playwrights, attempted to shape authorial identity and reputation and tried to condition the way audiences read the plays.

The first chapter looks at how paratext was broadly used, by a number of different playwrights in the era, in constructing an authorial image and in determining meaning. In this chapter, I begin by analyzing how Caroline era paratext was influenced by paratextual examples from the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, but also how it departed and grew from the forms used in the preceding decades. I analyze the form, function, and content of prologues and epilogues, commendatory verses, and dedications to demonstrate the necessity of these paratextual forms in the era. The examples provided in each section were chosen because they encapsulate era-specific foci and demonstrate how each piece of paratext was being used at the time. Paratext by Shirley, Massinger, and the 'Brome Circle' provide examples of how some of the more famous and well-known playwrights of the era were using the forms to advertise and promote specific ideas and ideologies about the role of the author and purpose of drama.<sup>116</sup> This chapter also shows how paratextual forms and ideas were borrowed and traded between literary allies, in order to further individual careers and boost the reputations and ideals of friends.

The subsequent chapters provide an overview of Davenant's, Brome's, and Ford's paratexts written and printed between 1625 and 1642. Each man held a very clear and specific idea of the purpose and place of the play, as well as the role the playwright had in determining meaning. The associations formed by these authors and advertised through this material worked to define each author in relation to the professional or courtly theatres, as well as highlighted each's preference for certain and specific audiences. This paratext also provides an insight into how the author wanted his plays to be seen, read, and ultimately judged by both audiences and his peers in the dramatic community. The chapters begin with examinations of how each playwright used paratext, from the start of

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<sup>116</sup> See Matthew Steggle, 'C, G: A Member of the Brome Circle', *Notes and Queries*, 248 (2003), 175-77 and Thomas Rawlins, *The Rebellion* (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Online, 2006) ed. by Amy Lockwood <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/iemls/renplays/rawlreb.htm>> [accessed 7 April, 2011]. In her introduction to Rawlins play, Lockwood names the 'Brome Circle' as being comprised of Rawlins, Thomas Nabbes, John Tatham, Robert Chamberlain, Richard Brome, and Humphrey Mill. Steggle adds the commender C. G. to the circle.

his career, to build a solid and uniform reputation for himself. I have chosen specific pieces of paratext for each playwright that I believe demonstrate how this material was used to shape the author's individual reputation. The paratexts chosen also show how important influence and association were, both in terms of how an author's paratexts were influenced by others and the influence they had on the careers and reputations of friends and rivals. In the latter half of each chapter, there is an in-depth analysis of one of the author's plays as viewed through the lens of his paratext. Each of the playwrights has an ample body of paratext that affects the readings of his plays and fashions a sustained view of the playwright in and out of the theatrical community. At the same time, the author's body of paratext accurately reflects his outlook on the theatrical institution and publication. Finally, each playwright has been the subject of recent scholarship that I feel requires additional information and clarification. Preconceptions about each author – who he was, what he wanted, and how he achieved his goals – need to be re-examined in light of the paratexts that he wrote. Although this material was not wholly biographical, it did help the author create a persona for himself that worked to define him in relation to the Caroline theatre and print. The author's attitude toward the theatre, the printing press, his allies, and his rivals can be glimpsed through the augmented persona that he created for himself in paratext, to reveal a more realistic vision of each author's ideology that has gone largely unnoticed in recent studies. Davenant, Brome, and Ford used paratext in different ways, but to the same end: to shape their own identities and influence the readings of their plays. Each of these men was a successful and influential playwright of the Caroline era, largely because of his ability to craft a reputation and a persona through paratext.

## Chapter 1:

### The Proliferation of Paratext

The number of Caroline plays to include paratext was significantly higher than those printed in the Jacobean or Elizabethan eras. Between 1595 and the end of James I's reign, one hundred and forty three plays were printed that contained at least one piece of paratext. By contrast, of the plays printed from the start of Charles I's reign until the close of the theatres in 1642, one hundred and sixty five out of one hundred and ninety three contained paratext.<sup>117</sup> Paratext was included, according to Genette, to re-brand the play and ensure its “reception” and consumption in the form of a book’, outside of the theatre.<sup>118</sup> An epigram by Ben Jonson suggests the manipulative value inherent in printed paratext when he, in the guise of a critic, wrote:

Pray tell me Ben, where doth the mystery lurke,  
What others call a play, you call a worke?

This critique was followed by a defensive response from an ally, but was actually written, once again, by Jonson. The defender supports Jonson's elevated status as an ‘author’ and highlights the literariness of his plays, which he calls ‘works’:

The authors friend thus for the author says,  
Bens plays are works, when others works are plays.<sup>119</sup>

As both the critic and the defender, Jonson demonstrates how the form and function of paratext shifted from merely praising the author to protecting his interests, shaping his reputation, and dictating a specific, author-driven interpretation of the ‘work’. Because Jonson's volume is a ‘worke’, it is to be read with a sense of purpose rather than a frivolous, passing eye. Genette claims: ‘the classical dedicatory epistle, by the very fact of its textual expansion, could accommodate other messages besides praise for the dedicatee’.<sup>120</sup> Many of Jonson's epigrams were posthumously printed in *Execration Against Vulcan* (1640) and demonstrate how such laudatory, self-promoting verses shaped authorial reputation and emphasized the author's aims over the course of the

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<sup>117</sup> See Appendix B, pp. 257-59.

<sup>118</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> Jonson, *Epigrams*, 270 in *Ben Jonson*, p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 123.

previous decade.<sup>121</sup> I believe that the printed paratexts became mini-texts of their own, with codes and meanings embedded in them, which were intended to promote the author's personal aims, as was the case with Jonson's epigrams. Whilst much contemporary scholarship looks at how each form of paratext functioned individually, I believe that it is necessary to look at how the forms worked together, both in a single play and across the breadth of an author's career, in order to get a sense of how vital and necessary paratext was to authorial self-fashioning in the era. To begin looking at how the different types of paratext combined to create meaning, it is necessary to first look at how each form was being used by different playwrights, with different ideologies, in the Caroline era. This chapter analyzes how each form of paratext was used in a wider framework, across social and political boundaries both inside and outside of the theatre, to create meanings and shape reputations.

In terms of tone, content, and volume, the paratext of the Caroline era owes a great deal to the influence of Jonson. Of the nine Jonson plays printed prior to the 1616 *Workes*, only two did not contain multiple pieces of paratext, whilst six contained direct references to the play in print.<sup>122</sup> Of the sixty two plays published at the end of Elizabeth I's reign (from 1595 until the end of 1602), thirty three contained paratext, but only three of these had multiple pieces of paratext. The numbers improved in the Jacobean era, but only slightly: one hundred and eighty two plays were published from 1603 to 1625, one hundred and ten of which contained paratextual staples and thirty eight of these had more than one piece of paratext. Elizabethan and Jacobean printed plays were deficient in this material because the focus was less on the printed play and more on the staged play. A disregard for the play in print meant the need for promotional forms, such as commendatory verses or dedications to patrons, was not at the forefront of the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwright's mind. In fact, the most prevalent piece of paratext in printed drama, up to 1625, was the prologue, a staple of the play on stage: eighty prologues and/or epilogues were printed in the one hundred and forty three plays that contained at least one form of paratext. Because prologues and epilogues were common

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<sup>121</sup> Ben Jonson, *Jonson's Execration Against Vulcan* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640). The subtitle of the work is: 'With divers epigrams by the same author to severall noble personages in this kingdome'.

<sup>122</sup> See Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, I (1939). *Every Man in His Humour* and *The Case is Altered* did not contain any paratext. *Everyman Out of His Humour*, *Poetaster*, *Sejanus*, *Volpone*, *Catiline*, and *The Alchemist* all contained an epistle to the reader.

features of the performed play and served as a threshold between author, actors, and audiences, the prologue in print was left over from the theatrical play and was not a new addition that attempted to sway the reader's judgement or interpretation. Paratext was not included as a matter of course in the printed plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era, in large part because the playing companies viewed the place of drama as being on stage. There was more shared authority over the play among the actors, the author, and the theatre company or manager, which meant the group responsible for printing varied, as did the focus of the ancillary material on stage or the printed paratext.

The inclusion of paratext increased as each period progressed, as did the focus on the author in such material. The influence Jonson had over what was included and what was said in paratextual forms is noticeable in Jacobean and Caroline paratext. In the address 'TO THE READER IN ORDINAIRE' in *Catiline*, he talks of his authority over the play and its interpretation:

THE Muses forbid, that I should restrayne your meddling, whom I see already busie with the Title, over the leaves: It is your owne. I departed with my right, when I let it first abroad. And, now, so secure an Interpreter I am of my chance, that neither praise, nor dispraise from you can affect mee. Though you commend the two first Actes, with the people, because they are the worst; and dislike the Oration of Cicero, in regard you read some pieces of it, at Schools, and understand them not yet; I shall finde the way to forgive you. Be any thing you will be, at your owne charge. Would I had deserv'd but halfe so well of it in translation, as that ought to deserve of you in judgment, if you have any. I know you will pretend (whosoever you are) to have that, and more. But all pretences are not just claymes. The commendation of good things may fall within a many, their approbation but in a few for the most commend out of affection, selfe tickling, an easinesse, or imitation: but men judge only out of knowledge. That is the trying faculty. And, to those workes that will beare a Judge, nothing is more dangerous then a foolish prayse. You will say I shall not have yours, therefore; but rather the contrary, all vexation of Censure. If I were not above such molestations now, I had great cause to thinke unworthily of my studies, or they had so of mee. But I leave you to your exercise. Beginne.<sup>123</sup>

The questions and concerns over judgement and interpretation that Jonson raises are related to his position as the authority over the work. Jonson acknowledges that the literary audience will judge his book, but he believes the judgement will be faulty because the reader will not have the knowledge to understand what he intended. He acts

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<sup>123</sup> Jonson, To the Reader in Ordinaire' in *Catiline*, Sig A3r.

as though he is frustrated with the reader and lumps all ‘ordinary’ readers together, claiming they, and their judgements, are indistinguishable from one another, making them meaningless to the author. The notions Jonson raises in this address, as well as his hostile attitude toward ignorant and undeserving audiences, would become a focal point for much Caroline paratext, particularly commendatory verses. Caroline authors who shared these sentiments with Jonson used the praise of their peers and their literary allies to garner acclaim and win status, rather than the judgements of the audiences for whom they wrote. To the Caroline authors, the best audiences were those who understood - those ‘extraordinary’ readers, who Jonson and his followers targeted: ‘You I would understand to be the better Man, though Places in Court go otherwise: to you I submit my selfe, and worke’. To some Caroline authors the friends, literary allies, and dramatic contemporaries who offered praise and verses were the ‘extraordinary’ readers.<sup>124</sup>

In ‘Genres, Early Modern Theatrical Title Pages, and the Authority of Print’, Berek examines ‘how what began as scripts for the popular art of playing on stages gradually takes on the status of what we would today call “literature” and how this literature was shaped by paratext’.<sup>125</sup> Berek suggests that the ‘title pages use generic terms, such as “comedy” and “tragedy”, to make plays appear to be of lasting importance’ and to ‘help printers and booksellers find a market for their wares’.<sup>126</sup> Indeed, definitions would extend far beyond the title pages and genres in the Caroline era to categorize playwrights as courtly or professional and their works as theatrical or literary. Standardized patterns of paratext that conformed to the models set by Elizabethan and Jacobean predecessors, such as Jonson, as well as other authors working and dedicating in the era, resulted in a generic tone and content that defined much of the framing material of the plays printed between 1625 and 1642. Commendations and dedications demonstrated a repetitiveness of language and tone that inadvertently showed a reliance on the previous generations of professional playwrights. Chandler’s anthology reveals that commendatory verses were overwhelmingly addressed to ‘the author’: of the one hundred and fifteen commendations between 1625 and 1640 that Chandler includes,

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<sup>124</sup> Jonson, ‘To the Reader Extraordinary’ in *Catiline*, Sig A3r.

<sup>125</sup> Berek, ‘Genres’ in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 160.

<sup>126</sup> Berek, ‘Genres’ in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 160.

fifty two call the playwright an ‘author’.<sup>127</sup> It was because of this standardization that Caroline dramatists incorporated paratext more often than any of their early modern predecessors. Due to the increased use of paratext in the era, the praise offered to authors, by their peers, could shape positive reputations, but such verses were also sometimes seen as arrogant, pandering, or even misleading about the literary abilities of certain playwrights.

Genette argues that prefatory material is ‘characterized by an authorial intention’.<sup>128</sup> His examination of the means by which paratext is able to ‘get the book read and get the book read properly’ is important for understanding how Caroline era drama was written; for the first time, printing was seen as a viable alternative to the stage and playwrights reacted to this.<sup>129</sup> Paratext became a valuable tool for the dramatist to declare his preference for the stage or the page, as well as his overall ‘statement of intent’.<sup>130</sup> Straznicky states that the paratextual material that prefaced the printed play, when read alongside the dramas, was ‘specifically understood as the “book” of a previously formed stage play’.<sup>131</sup> I argue that in the Caroline era it was the paratexts *and* the plays that created the book. When the first play (meant for a commercial theatre audience) to feature paratext was published in the era, Davenant’s *Albovine*, it was not guaranteed that a play would have first appeared on stage before being printed with this framing material. Paratext created a dramatic ‘book’ that differed from the dramatic ‘play’, and this ‘book’ was not contingent on the theatre, but instead promoted the singular author’s intentions.

Bergeron argues ‘nowhere do we hear the author’s voice more clearly or directly than in the prefatory material’.<sup>132</sup> He further explains how paratext defined the author and gave him a voice that was lacking at the theatre:

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<sup>127</sup> Wayne Chandler, *An Anthology of Commendatory Verse from the English Renaissance*, Studies in Renaissance Literature, 28 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), pp. 60-166.

<sup>128</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 197.

<sup>130</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 221.

<sup>131</sup> Straznicky, ‘Introduction’ in *The Book of the Play*, ed. by Straznicky, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 1.

The more secure the theatre as an institution becomes, the more playwrights actively seek patronage from aristocrats and friends through published texts in this system of “textual patronage.” Authors’ voices, captured in paratexts, sound out clearly at the end of this historical period in their search for status and support from patrons, whatever commercial success they may have had.<sup>133</sup>

Bergeron’s contention is that paratext distanced the play from the stage, and that Caroline authors attempted to grab the attention of readers and patrons through print, regardless of their previous success in the theatrical community. I assert paratext was used by the individual playwright to delineate his position in relation to the commercial stage. Whilst some authors played upon their place as writers for the stage, others wished to distance their plays and themselves from association with the theatre and the performance. Paratext clarified which relationships, and which medium, were the most important to the author.

Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser insist that the ‘increased use of prefatory material’, such as dedications and commendatory verses, changed the manner in which the playwright was viewed and heightened ‘the growing rivalries amongst playing companies and theatres’.<sup>134</sup> Opposing opinions were advertised in paratexts and condemnations were hurled, answered, and traded in the very same material. This practice of slighting enemies and supporting allies led to the second poet’s war. The commendatory verses to Shirley’s *The Grateful Servant* were not only responses to the criticism of this battle of wits, but also addressed the adversarial nature of commendations in the era. John Fox’s first commendation in the play, ‘To my learned friend James Shirley upon his Gratefull Servant’, lauds Shirley, attacks his critics, and praises a reading audience over a theatrical one:

Present thy worke unto the wiser few  
That can discern and judge; tis good tis new  
Thy stile is modest, sceanes high, and thy verse  
So smooth, so sweet, *Apollo* might rehearse,  
To his owne Lute, be therefore boldly wise  
And scorne malicious censures, like flies

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<sup>133</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 13.

<sup>134</sup> Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘Canons and Classics: Publishing Drama in Caroline England’ in *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern English Stage, 1625-1642*, ed. by Zucker and Farmer (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 17-41 (p. 17).



They tickle but not wound, thy well got fame  
Cannot be soild or canst thou merrit blame  
Because thou dost not swell with mighty rimes  
Audacious metaphors, like verse like times  
Let others barke, keepe thou poeticke lawes  
Deserve their envy, and command applause.<sup>135</sup>

The opening lines speak of the decision to print as being wise because the play will be accurately and fairly judged by a learned, reading audience who are better able to comprehend and appreciate his literary ‘worke’. The end of the commendation, in which Fox speaks of the ‘swell’ of ‘mighty rimes’ and ‘others barke’, references the trading of insults between Shirley’s ally Massinger and the amateur courtly writers Davenant and Carew in the second poet’s war.<sup>136</sup> While Fox claims the insults of the courtiers are weak, he does so in a commendatory verse; the same medium used by the courtly detractors to ‘puff’ up their allies and slander the professionals. The paratext functioned in the same manner for both sides, but the aims were different and dependant on who it addressed and how it shaped and reflected the author’s outlook in the context of this battle.

The second commendation to *The Grateful Servant* is by John Hall who further chides the swapping of unmerited commendations and the vitriolic criticism being staged:

Who would writ well for the abused stage  
When only swelling word do please the age  
And malice is thought wit, to make 't appeare  
They judge they mis-interpret what they heare.  
Rough Poems now usurpe the name of good  
And are admired but never understood  
Thee and thy straines I vindicate, whose pen  
Wisely disdaines t[...] iniuce lines, or men,  
Thou hast prepared dainties for each tast,  
And art by all that know thy muse embrac'd  
Let purblind critticks still endure this curse  
To see good playes and ever like the worse.<sup>137</sup>

Just as Fox speaks of the ‘swell’ of rhymes, so too does Hall reference this practice of writing exaggerated praise. Hall’s mention of those who ‘mis-interpret what they hear’ is

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<sup>135</sup> John Fox, ‘To my learned friend *James Shirley* upon his *Gratefull Servant*’ in Shirley, *The Grateful Servant*, Sig Ar.

<sup>136</sup> See Introduction, pp. 31-32, Chapter 1, pp. 69-74, and Chapter 2, pp. 106-11.

<sup>137</sup> John Hall, ‘To my knowne friend Mr *Shirley* upon his Comedy the *Gratefull Servant*’ in Shirley, *The Grateful Servant*, Sig Ar.

a likely reference to Carew, who provided long-winded and ostentatious praise, or ‘Rough Poems’, for Davenant’s play, *The Just Italian*. Davenant’s play could also been seen as another ‘Rough Poem’, printed just before Shirley’s play.<sup>138</sup> *The Just Italian* was deemed by many, including Shirley and Massinger, to be unworthy of praise and thus Carew was accused of misrepresenting Davenant’s work.<sup>139</sup> The further mention of the ‘purblind critticks’ who ‘see good playes and ever like the worse’ is likely another reference to Carew’s lauding of Davenant’s undeserving play.

What characterized Caroline paratexts was not necessarily their innovation or newness, but rather the volume of such material that was included in print. Unlike the plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, which usually contained singular paratextual forms or even singular paratextual types, this material, in the Caroline era, was used in abundance to season the image of the author himself.<sup>140</sup> The remainder of this chapter will analyze the ways in which Caroline playwrights advanced the use of commendatory verses, prologues and epilogues, and dedications to attract a specific audience, to dictate meaning, and, above all, to promote their own names. It also examines how rivals traded insults in order to malign the works and the ideals of their enemies, whilst increasing their own reputations and promoting their own plays. Finally, this chapter investigates how the different forms of paratext advanced specific authorial ideologies and helped like-minded authors create coteries that offered protection and support for the individual’s works and his reputation.

### Commendations and Commendatory Verse

Commendatory verses attempted to re-create the look and feel of private letters to the author from friends, allies, and admirers. I believe that these commendations were written in such a manner intentionally, and done so at the urging of the playwright himself.

Chandler describes how the early modern dramatist solicited commendations from

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<sup>138</sup> Greg, W. W., *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 vols (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1939), II. *The Just Italian* is number 428(a) and *The Grateful Servant* is listed as number 429(a).

<sup>139</sup> Massinger’s ‘A Charme for a Libeller’ in Beal, ‘Massinger at Bay’, 196-99, Chapter 1, pp. 69-74, and Chapter 2, pp. 106-11.

<sup>140</sup> Exceptions did occur in the Jacobean era with plays such as *Cynthia’s Revenge* and *Duchess of Malfi*. Both plays contained four verses each.

friends and peers in order to shape his reputation and his writing. He convincingly ‘finds the most compelling evidence that commendatory poems were requested’ by looking at who swapped verses and the language and intent of those verses.<sup>141</sup> The writer chose who commended him and, as he chose his friends and allies, he was able to dictate what his commendators said about him and about his work, a custom, I argue, that became more regular, accepted, and even expected in the Caroline era. Commenders referred to themselves as ‘friends’ of the writer, in order to make themselves intimate associates who were more believable to a literary audience. Of the one hundred and fifteen Caroline-era commendations chronicled in Chandler’s book, eighty were written by a ‘friend’ of the author.<sup>142</sup> A tradition of trading commendations was established during this time; a practice that could be seen as collaboration among playwrights, particularly those within a close circle who shared patrons or those who held similar ideas about the role of drama in society. Together, authors defended their attitudes and outlooks on the theatre and the nature and purpose of playwriting.

What the playwrights hoped to achieve in writing commendatory verse to their peers was the elevation of the author’s name, as well as their own. Commendatory verses, like all paratextual forms, were much more common and regular in the Caroline era than they were in the preceding eras; the number of plays containing commendatory verses was almost three and a half times as great as the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras combined. There were twelve plays printed with such verses between 1595 and 1625 (all of which came after 1603), while forty one contained commendations in the plays printed between 1625 and the closure of the theatres in 1642.<sup>143</sup> As the Caroline era progressed, the number of commendations increased, not only in the number of plays printed with such verses, but in the number of commendations included with individual, published plays.<sup>144</sup> Because of this increase, the sincerity of the commendations was sometimes seen as forced and exaggerated rather than an earnest appraisal of an author’s ability provided by impartial judges. Great and lofty commendations meant to laud the ability of

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<sup>141</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 77.

<sup>142</sup> Chandler, *An Anthology of Commendatory Verse*, pp. 60-166.

<sup>143</sup> See Appendix B, pp. 257-59.

<sup>144</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, pp. 179-80. Chandler lists all the plays that had commendatory verses attached written or translated into English before 1640. Those works he discussed were all meant for ‘the public sphere’ and thus do not include masques and ‘entertainments’. Of the 52 plays published between 1598 and 1641, 36 were printed in the Caroline era.

the author and proclaim the brilliance of the play may have had a diminished effect on the reader who saw the same exalted praise bestowed on a number of other dramatists and their plays. The tone and the language of many Caroline verses were borrowed from the verses of the previous generation's commendations. In 'To his much and worthily esteemed friend the Author' by 'B. J.' (Ben Jonson), for John Stephens's Jacobean play *Cynthia's Revenge* (1613), the commender draws attention to the printed version of the play and the necessity for the literary audience to understand and appreciate the author, rather than the author needing to please audience tastes:

Who takes thy volume to his vertuous hand,  
Must be intended still to understand:  
Who bluntly doth but looke upon the same,  
May aske, what Author would conceale his name?  
Who reads may roave, and call the passage darke,  
Yet may as blind men sometimes hit the marke.  
Who reads, who roaves, who hopes to understand,  
May take thy volume to his vertuous hand.  
Who cannot reade, but onely doth desire  
To understand, hee may at length admire.<sup>145</sup>

This commendatory verse reflects the ideas and the desires Jonson himself held dear: that it was the author who was most important figure in framing meaning for a play and who should be praised and admired. The mention of the 'Author' who 'would conceale his name' in the verse could be an allusion to Jonson's own epigram, in which he plays the part of commender and defender for his terming of the play a 'worke' and himself an 'author'.<sup>146</sup> In the commendation, Jonson imposes his own ideals and ideology on the play and on Stephens himself, a practice that would be copied by a number of Caroline dramatists who worked to shape, and then support, their own carefully crafted reputations and personas. Jonson's influence on Caroline commendatory verses was great, as was his influence on defining the author through such paratext. His Jacobean paratexts showed the aims of the individual author, in whatever form he wrote, whether for his own work or the work of others. As a result, this thesis suggests that the purpose of commendations became less about the wording used and more about who was offering them. The verses

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<sup>145</sup> B. J., 'To his much and worthily esteemed friend the Author' in John Stephens, *Cynthias Revenge: or, Maenanders Extasie* (London: 1613), Sig A4r.

<sup>146</sup> See epigram at the beginning of the chapter, p. 35.

were performative and worked as a threshold, or a transactional space, between the author, the commender, the social function the commendations served, and the play itself.

Although commendations often appeared to be private, personal exchanges between ‘friends’, these verses were always intended for print and to publicize the ability of the author to a wider, literary audience. Seemingly ‘private’ verses showed the popularity of an author among specific coteries. This deliberate strategy (by the playwrights) advertised the author and his work to certain groups and theatrical patrons. Genette believes ‘there remain two distinct types of dedicatees: private and public’, which I contend also describes commendatory verse writers.<sup>147</sup> His private dedicatee was ‘a person, known to the public or not, to whom a work is dedicated in the name of a personal relationship: friendship, kinship, or other’.<sup>148</sup> Many of the authors who wrote such praise were well-known playwrights or poets themselves. They addressed the play’s author as ‘friend’, suggesting it was written as a personal favour or with personal motivation. Genette’s ‘public dedicatee is a person who is more or less well known but with whom the author, by his dedication, indicates a relationship that is public in nature – intellectual, artistic, political, or other’.<sup>149</sup> As many of the commenders were also authors, paratextual relationships were publicly formed and maintained. Despite the private appearance, these verses were public offerings and meant to advertise the author’s friendships and associations, both professional and personal. Caroline commendations served as declarations of the author’s ability, and the commender’s affections were meant to influence the reading public.

Genette’s examination of paratext stresses that this material ‘is always a matter of demonstration, ostentation, exhibition: it proclaims a relationship’.<sup>150</sup> Many of the commendations that appeared in the era sounded the same because authors continually traded commendations with the same people and used the same language and ideas. John Tatham’s *The Fancies Theatre* (1640), a collection of poems and verses surrounding the play *Love Crownes the End*, included thirteen commendations that often resembled one another in form and content. Williams comments on the increasingly generalized

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<sup>147</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 131.

<sup>148</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 131.

<sup>149</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 131.

<sup>150</sup> Genette, *Paratext*, p. 135.

language of such verses when he states that ‘commendatory verses developed a stock of commonplaces and allusions that were repeated *ad nauseam*’.<sup>151</sup> Many of the verses in Tatham’s book were from respected dramatists who had offered similar laudatory commendations to other playwrights. Brome, Thomas Nabbes, Robert Chamberlain, and Thomas Rawlins all had plays published in 1640 that included commendatory verses of their own. These men who made up the Brome Circle were characterized by what Steggle calls ‘opposition to frivolous courtly values’ that united them against the amateurs and allowed for a free exchange of verses and ideas.<sup>152</sup> Each of their plays included a verse from a commender that overlapped with Tatham’s. C. G., who wrote ‘To his loving friend the Author, on *his Fancies Theater*’, offered a commendation to Rawlins in *The Rebellion*, wrote ‘To the Author on his Unfortunate MOTHER’ for Nabbes’s *The Unfortunate Mother*, and twice commended Brome for *The Antipodes* and *The Sparagus Garden*.<sup>153</sup> Not only did they share commendations, these authors swapped verses themselves. Brome’s address to Tatham entitled ‘To his friend the Author on his *Fancies Theater*’ was later returned by Tatham in 1652, when he wrote ‘To my Worthy Friend Master RICHARD BROME, on his excellent Play, called, *A Joviall Crew: or, The merry Beggars*’.<sup>154</sup> Rawlins wrote ‘On the Author of the *Fancies Theater*’ and Tatham reciprocated with ‘To his friend of the Author’.<sup>155</sup> Rawlins’s play also received a commendation from Chamberlain entitled ‘To his deare friend, Mr. Thomas Rawlins’, which echoed the praise Chamberlain wrote for Tatham in ‘To his good friend M. *John Tatham upon his Fancies Theater*’.<sup>156</sup> What this trading of verses shows is a group of

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<sup>151</sup> Williams, ‘Commendatory Verses’, p. 10.

<sup>152</sup> Steggle, ‘C, G: A Member of the Brome Circle’, 79.

<sup>153</sup> C. G., ‘To his loving friend the Author, on *his Fancies Theater*’ in John Tatham, *The Fancies Theatre*, (London: John Norton, 1640), unpaginated page following dedication from Thomas Nabbes; ‘To his worthy Esteemed Mr. *Thomas Rawlins* on his *Rebellion*’ in Rawlins, *The Rebellion: A Tragedy* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig A1r-1v; ‘To the Author on his Unfortunate MOTHER’ in Nabbes, *The Unfortunate Mother* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig A3v; ‘*To censuring Criticks, on the approved Comedy, The Antipodes*’ in Brome, *The Antipodes* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig A3r; and ‘To his deserving friend Mr. *Richard Brome* on his *Sparagus Garden, a Comedy*’ in Brome, *The Sparagus Garden* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig A3r.

<sup>154</sup> Brome, ‘To his friend the Author on his *Fancies Theater*’ in Tatham, *The Fancies Theatre*, unpaginated page following ‘Fancie to the Reader’, and Brome, *A Joviall Crew*, (London: J. Y., 1652), Sig A4v.

<sup>155</sup> Rawlins, ‘On the Author of the *Fancies Theater*’ in Tatham, *The Fancies Theater*, Sig A3r; and Tatham, ‘To his friend of the Author’ in Rawlins, *The Rebellion*, Sig A3r-A4v.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Chamberlain, ‘To his deare friend, Mr. Thomas Rawlins’ in Rawlins, *The Rebellion*, Sig A2r, and Chamberlain, ‘To his good friend M. *John Tatham upon his Fancies Theater*’, unpaginated page following dedication from Geo. Lynn.

like-minded playwrights with similar aims, writing to one another to promote their allies and themselves. Although advertised as a ‘friends’, these dramatists swapped verses to protect their shared and individual interests.

The regular practice of swapping with and of owing laudatory verses to ‘friends’ is scrutinized in Rawlins’s verse to Tatham:

Amongst the rest, Friend, *Tatham*, I am come,  
To doe thy *Fancies* right, and quit the summe  
I stand engag'd for: since my forward youth  
Sign'd *Love* a Bond, for currant Coyne of Truth,  
To pay at severall times the world shall be  
Thy Secretarie; and take this truth from me,  
In all thy Shop of *Fancies*, not a Line  
(I emulate thee so) but I wish mine;  
'Twill be sufficient portion for thy Name  
To live by; for *Times* Treasurer, wing'd *Fame*,  
Shall, as thy worth deserves, speake thee as high  
As any fill'd her Trump with Poesie.<sup>157</sup>

The ‘summe’ that Rawlins is speaking of is the debt he owes Tatham for his own verse to Rawlin’s play of the same year, *The Rebellion*. Although the commendation begins by talking of the friendship of the two men, the subject is one of debt and exchange, rather than genuine affection or a heartfelt desire to offer praise. The subjects of the verse, exchange and money, show how these verses were simple commodities, rather than genuine reflections of feeling. Toward the end of the era, commendatory verses were relied on as a means of selling plays and boosting an author’s name, not just praising the abilities of the author.

The sincerity of such verses was sometimes discussed in the commendations themselves. In his verse to Rawlins, Tatham writes:

So the infused comfort I receive  
By th' tye of friendship, prompts me to relieve  
My fainting spirits; and with a full saile,  
Rush 'mongst your *Argoseys* despite of haile,  
Or stormes of Critticks, Friend, to thee I come,  
I know th' ast harbour, I defie much roome:  
Besides, Ile pay thee for't in gratefull Verse,  
Since that thou art Witts abstract, Ile rehearse:

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<sup>157</sup> Rawlins, ‘On the Author of the *Fancies Theater*’ in Tatham, *The Fancies Theatre*, Sig A3r.

Nothing shall wooll your eares with a long Phraise,  
Of a sententious folly; for to raise  
Sad Pyramids of flattery, that may be  
Condemn'd for the sincere prolixity.<sup>158</sup>

Tatham emphasizes the fact that he is writing such praise as a friend first and then as an admirer of the work. Although the end of the commendation talks about the sincerity of praise and the long-winded use of such verses, it is only after several lines that Tatham states he is being sincere and not simply flattering the author. The mention of 'wit' and the notion of being unworthy to offer the right amount or quality of praise that the author deserves were standard motifs in Caroline commendatory verses. So when Rawlins returned the favour, his verse called attention to the generalness of both commendations and to the justification for such praise being included. Tatham also uses the metaphor of a ship lost at sea that can only be saved with the true and genuine praise of his friends and allies; the play is the ship and the sea is print. This metaphor would become common and familiar in the verses traded amongst the Brome Circle in 1640.

C. G.'s commendation to Tatham encapsulates the repetition common to encomiastic verses (and to the verses in Tatham's *Fancies Theater*), as well as the heavy reliance on friends for praise and acclaim:

'Tis worth enough to have so many friends,  
Who doe applaud with judgement thy faire ends  
Which raise thy Towing *Fancies* to such height,  
That ev'ry line affords us a conceit  
Farre different from the Whimzies of the time,  
Where 'tis their chiefest praise to trot in Rime,  
And thunder out their meaning in a Phrase,  
Wo'd strike a Martiall spirit in a maze:  
But let the world judge if what thou hast done,  
Deserve not good mens approbation?<sup>159</sup>

The beginning of the verse reiterates his position as a 'friend', but also talks of the common practice of having 'so many friends [...] applaud' the work. He goes on to speak of the ills, or 'Whimzies', of the time, referring not only to fickle and critical audience

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<sup>158</sup> Tatham, 'To his friend of the Author' in Rawlins, *The Rebellion*, Sig A3r-A4v.

<sup>159</sup> C. G., 'To his loving friend the Author, on his *Fancies Theater*' in Tatham, *The Fancies Theatre*, unpaginated page following dedication from Thomas Nabbes.



tastes, but to the practice of swapping commendations and ‘puffing’ up peers. He then speaks of the play’s vindication with ‘good mens’ judgements - the literary audience and his peers who are offering praise. C. G. notes that while many offer commendatory verses for printed plays, his is ‘farre different’. Unlike others, he is not ‘thunder[ing] out’ his praise in a meaningless and quickly conceived verse:

For my part, I shall deeme thee worthy praise,  
When such a troope as these extoll thy Bayes.  
When Fancie in thy *Theater* doth play,  
And wins more credit than a second day;  
When thy pure *Helicon* so high doth flow,  
It out-braves *Jordan* or the swelling *Poe*.  
Let not thy Fancie ebbe, but more and more  
Enlarge it's limits, and encroach the Shoare.  
And let the Sea-borne Goddesses ever be  
Propitious to thy straines of Poesie.  
And may'st thou in thy Verse so happy prove,  
That *Cupid* may affect thy beauteous Love  
Dearer than *Psyche*, till thou make her be  
Fairer than thine, lest he shou'd Rivall thee.<sup>160</sup>

C. G. calls attention to the birth of *Love Crownes the End* at the theatre, but suggests that it will be better received in print, where it will be given more ‘credit’ than it gained on stage. This set up a divide between performance and print. The two seemed independent of one another, and the author need not mention the stage unless he wanted to or felt it was advantageous. The commendation proclaims that the play will receive more praise and approval in print where ‘poesie’ is born and flourished. Like Tatham’s dedication to Rawlins, C. G. also invokes the metaphor of sending a printed play out to a wider, literary audience as being akin to putting a ship to sea. This nautical metaphor was used by the Brome Circle members C. G., Tatham, Chamberlain, and Robert Davenport.

The metaphor of the play at sea was not new to the Brome Circle, or to the Caroline era, but had been used in the 1612 George Chapman commendation to Nathan Field’s play, *The Woman is a Weathercock*:

O many formes, as well as many waies,  
Thy Active Muse, turnes like thy Acted woman:  
In which, disprais'd inconstancie, turnes praise;

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<sup>160</sup> C. G., ‘To his loving friend the Author, on his *Fancies Theater*’ in Tatham, *The Fancies Theatre*, unpaginated page following dedication from Thomas Nabbes..

Th' Addition being, and grace of Homers Sea-man,  
 In this life's rough Seas tost, yet still the same:  
 So turns thy wit, Inconstancy to stay,  
 And stay t' Inconstancy: And as swift Fame  
 Growes as she goes, in Fame so thrive thy Play,  
 And thus to standing, turne thy womans fall,  
 Wit turn'd to everie thing, proves stay in all.<sup>161</sup>

Chapman includes a number of the ideas, icons, and tropes that would later become common in Caroline era paratext. The notion of the play being at sea is mentioned here, but usage of the metaphor is unclear as to whether it is print that is the sea, or if the sea represents the abuse and censure of plays at the hands of inconstant, theatrical audiences. The 'formes' and 'many waies' a Muse turns represent the fickle audience tastes that can clap up or cry down a play, a notion that was included in a number of Caroline era commendations. The reference to the increase in fame, through the correction of the muse, is in relation to the play and not for the author, who would become the primary focus of fame and praise in later verses.

Davenport used the nautical metaphor nearly 30 years later to describe how and why Nathanael Richards deserves praise for his *Messallina* (1640):

Friend, y' ave so well limn'd *Messallina's* lust  
 T'were pittie that the Peece should kisse the dust  
 Of darke *Oblivion* you have (I confesse)  
 Apply'd a due *Preservative the Presse*.  
 Y' are now sayl'd forth o'th *Narrow Sea*, the Stage,  
 Into the world's wide *Ocean*, where the rage  
 Of Criticisme, it's utmost will extend  
 To buffet your new *Barke*: But feare not Friend,  
 She's so well built, so ballac't, sowell man'd  
 With *Plot*, with *Forme* and *Language* that shee'l stand  
 The *storme*; and having plough'd the Seas passion,  
 Will Anchor safe i'th Rhode of approbation:  
 Where judgements equall hand shall moare her fast,  
 And hang a Lawrell-Garland on her Maste.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> George Chapman, 'To his Loved Sonne, Nat. Field, and his Wether-cocke Woman' in Nathan Field, *A Woman is a Weathercock* (London: William Jaggard, 1612), Sig A4r.

<sup>162</sup> Robert Davenport, 'To my true Friend Mr. *Nathanael Richards* in due praise of his Tragedy of *Messallina*' in Nathanael Richards, *The Tragedy of Messallina the Roman Emperesse* (London: Thomas Cotes, 1640), Sig A6v.

Although print provided posterity for the work, it also exposed it to the full ‘*storme*’ of criticism that the play is subject to once printed. Printing plays often resulted in criticism and abuse, but print was also a way to keep a play alive and to preserve the name of the author. This made publishing a necessity in the eyes of many Caroline playwrights. Putting a play in print meant it would, almost certainly, be attacked. However, it also meant that it would almost certainly be defended by commenders and that, ultimately, a playwright would almost certainly be remembered because of the posterity the press offered. Criticism was as inevitable as the standardized commendations that were being traded, but the latter were necessary to offset the former.

The notion of the play being set to sea when it goes out to a literary audience was once more picked up by Rawlins in his dedication to Chamberlain’s play *The Swaggering Damsel* (1640). In ‘To his deserving Friend, Mr. Robert Chamberlaine upon his Swaggering Damsell’ Rawlins states:

Friend, when my Vessell from the narrow stage,  
Lanch'd to this wider Ocean, where the rage  
Of madding Censure met her, Thou didst play  
The part of a skill'd Pilot calm'st the way:  
Nor envy with her strongest winds durst stirre,  
Knowing (Skill'd Navigator) thou guid'st her;  
I dare not boast, like Art, yet hope to prove  
Commended, since I strive to quit thy love  
In the acknowledgement, and offer these  
To thy Faire *Damsell's* welfare, may she please  
Those that have judging soules; and to the rest  
That hate *Dramaticke* Lawes, as is your test  
Unto their faith, that's hatefull, for they be  
Counted in shew, not prove their puritie:  
This glory for to suffer their dull rage,  
And be cry'd up the glory of the Stage.<sup>163</sup>

Not only is the same nautical metaphor used here, but the commendation also begins with the writer admitting that he owes the author of the play a verse. Chamberlain had previously written a commendation to Rawlins for *The Rebellion*. Rawlins mentions the ‘*Dramaticke Lawes*’ that Chamberlain had previously referred to in his verse ‘To his deare friend, Mr. Thomas Rawlins’ for *The Rebellion*:

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<sup>163</sup> Tatham, ‘To his deserving Friend, Mr. *Robert Chamberlaine* upon his *Swaggering Damsell*’ in Robert Chamberlain, *The Swaggering Damsel* (London: Thomas Cotes, 1640), Sig A3v.

This above all my admiration draws,  
 That one so young should know Dramatticke Lawes.  
 'Tis rare, and therefore is not for the span,  
 Or greasie thumbes of every common man.  
 The Damaske Rose that sprouts before the Spring  
 Is fit for none to smell at, but a King.  
 Goe on sweet friend, I hope in time to see  
 Thy Temples rounded with the Daphnean Tree. <sup>164</sup>

Chamberlain's discussion of 'Dramatticke Lawes', like Rawlins's, revolves around the 'hatefull' and 'common' men who judge the play without fully understanding the author's intentions or appreciating his abilities. Chamberlain also hints that Rawlins should be crowned with the 'Daphnean Tree', or the laurel wreath, another common symbol of praise in the Caroline era.

The laurel crown, or 'the bayes', was one of the most pervasive symbols in Caroline commendations. Many playwrights 'crowned' their peers to give them and their writings great worth and value.<sup>165</sup> The 'lawrell crown' was given to both courtly and professional playwrights alike and worked to legitimize the author and the dramatic form. However, the widespread use of the term, and the perpetual crowning and re-crowning of authors, had the effect of debasing the image of the laurel wreath, making it less prestigious and more generic than dedicators had intended. Massinger's *The Roman Actor* included a commendation from Ford that asserts 'onely Hee should claime, that may weare Bayes', whilst T. J. states that 'the Lawrell crownes [Massinger's] Head'.<sup>166</sup> Massinger also received the 'lawrell' wreath from George Donne for his *The Great Duke of Florence*, even though Donne had also bestowed the 'bayes' on Ford for *The Lovers Melancholy*.<sup>167</sup> Rawlins, Nabbes, and Shirley all received 'the bayes' in the Caroline

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<sup>164</sup> Chamberlain, 'To his deare, friend Mr. Thomas Rawlins' in Rawlins, *The Rebellion*, Sig A2r-2v.

<sup>165</sup> 'laureate, a-n <sup>2</sup>' *OED*, 16 April 2007 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50130499>>. 'laurel, n <sup>2</sup>', *OED*, 16 April 2007 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50130504>> and 'bay, n <sup>3</sup>' *OED*, 16 April 2007 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50018637>> [accessed 3 July 2007]. The term 'laureate' is someone who is 'distinguished for excellence as a poet, worthy of the Muses' crown' and 'deserving to be honoured for eloquence'. The term 'laurel' became a distinction for poetic prowess in the fourteenth century 'as an emblem of victory or of distinction in poetry'. The symbol was used in the Caroline era to denote the excellence of a dramatist's writing. The 'bays', another term for the laurel wreath, were 'Leaves or sprigs of this tree, esp. as woven into a wreath or garland to reward a conqueror or poet; hence *fig.* the fame and repute attained by these'.

<sup>166</sup> Ford, 'Upon Mr. Massinger His Roman Actor' and T. J. 'To his deare Friend the Author' in Massinger, *The Roman Actor*, Sig A4r, A3r.

<sup>167</sup> George Donne, 'On his great Duke of Florence; To M<sup>r</sup>. Philip Massinger, my much esteemed friend' in

era.<sup>168</sup> Likewise, the ‘lawrell’ crown adorned the heads of Tatham, Chamberlain, Richards, and Thomas Heywood in various commendatory verses.<sup>169</sup> Ford eulogized Jonson as the official Poet Laureate and wearer of the authentic ‘bays’ in a poem written upon his death in 1637; Davenant became the unofficial Poet Laureate and owner of the laurel crown in 1638.<sup>170</sup>

The playwrights who could claim a right to the ‘lawrell’ crown because of commendatory verses seemed to have out-numbered those who never received ‘the bays’. In the dedicatory material to Richards’s *Messallina*, Stephen Bradwell bestowed the ‘Bayse’ on the author:

When I beheld this *Roman Tragedie*,  
Where the mad sinne of Lust in *Majestie*  
And pow'r I saw attir'd, triumphantly,  
Guiding the *Helme* of doating soveraignty  
To her owne *Compasse*; I was pleas'd with it,  
Cause things immodest, modestly were write.  
[...]  
But now agen, recalling what you writ,  
How well adorn'd with words, and wrought with wit  
I'll justifie the *Language* and the *Plot*  
Can neither cast aspersion nor spot  
On your cleane *Fancie*; But *Apollo's* Bayse  
Growes green upon your *Brow* to crowne your praise.  
Then for this *Tragedy*, securely rest,  
'Tis current *Coyne*, and will endure the Test.<sup>171</sup>

Bradwell uses the phrase ‘crowne your praise’ and not ‘crown your play’, suggesting that it is the author who should be commended, rather than his play. The commendation also

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Massinger, *The Great Duke of Florence* (London: Miles Flesher, 1636), Sig A4r, and Donne, ‘*To my Honour'd Friend, Master John Ford, on his Lovers Melancholy*’ in Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, Sig A3r.

<sup>168</sup> Jo. Meriell, ‘*To his Ingenious Friend Mr. Rawlins, the Author of the Rebellion*’ in Rawlins *The Rebellion* Sig A4v; R. W., ‘*To my friend the: Author*’ in Nabbes, *The Unfortunate Mother*, Sig A4r; Thomas Craford, ‘*To his deserving friend Mr Ja. Shirley upon his Gratefull servant*’ in Shirley, *The Grateful Servant*, Sig A4v.

<sup>169</sup> H. Davison, ‘*To his friend M. John Tatham on his Fancies Theater*’ in Tatham, *The Fancies Theatre*, unpaginated page before Sig Ar; H. Harris, ‘*To his worthy Friend, Mr. Robert Chamberlaine on His Swaggering Damsell*’ in Chamberlain, *The Swaggering Damsell*, Sig A3r; Robert Davenport, ‘*To my true Friend Mr. Nathanael Richards in due praise of his Tragedy of Messallina*’ in Richards, *Messallina*, A6v; Samuel King, ‘*TO HIS CHOSEN FRIEND, the learned Author Mr Thomas Heywood*’ in Thomas Heywood, *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon* (London: M. Parsons, 1638), Sig I4v.

<sup>170</sup> Ford, ‘*On the Best of English Poets, Ben Jonson, Deceased*’ in *Jonsonus Virbius: Or, The Memorie of Ben: Johnson Revived By The Friends Of The Muses* (London: E. Purlowe, 1638), pp. 50-1.

<sup>171</sup> Stephen Bradwell, ‘*To his worthy Friend, M<sup>r</sup>. Nathanael Richards, upon his well-written Tragedy of Messallina*’ in Richards, *Messallina*, Sig A6r.

praises the author's ability to portray a grand spectacle in a relatable fashion, without ostentation, show, or relying on loaded action. However, as the play had been staged, and ostentation and show were required at the live theatre, Bradwell effectively separates the published version of the play from the staged version, shifting the focus to the wording the author used rather than the action. The final lines discuss the 'current Coyne' that will make the play 'endure'. That 'coyne' comes after the talk of the 'bayes' and could suggest that it is the praise and the commendations that are the 'coyne' that will give the play such endurance. Praise as a form of exchange will benefit Richards and his play, as well as those men who offer him the praise. This shows not only how widely circulated commendations were, but also how they fluctuated in value and how easily debased such praise became. The images swapped often lost meaning and importance, but the verses were a necessary form of exchange, or currency, in the Caroline theatre, and seemingly no play could successfully 'endure' without the 'coyne' of commendation.

Bradwell's verse also introduces another widely used term that was a cornerstone of commendations in the era: 'wit'. This term was not new, nor was it exclusive to Caroline paratext. It had been used, although more sparingly, in Elizabethan and Jacobean paratexts as well. In George Chapman's verse to Field's *The Woman is a Weathercock*, the commender praises the author's wit:

TO many formes, as well as many waies,  
 Thy Actice Muse, turnes like thy Acted woman:  
 In which, disprais'd inconstancie, turnes praise;  
 Th' Addition being, and grace of Homers Sea-man,  
 In this life's rough Seas tost, yet still the same:  
 So turns thy wit, Inconstancy to stay,  
 And stay t' Inconstancy: And as swift Fame  
 Growes as she goes, in Fame so thrive thy Play,  
 And thus to standing, turne thy womans fall,  
 Wit turn'd to everie thing, proves stay in all.<sup>172</sup>

'Wit' is present in this verse, but it is not directly attributed to Field or his play; 'wit' here remained an abstract application. Wit would later become ubiquitous, and its application diverse, but the quality would almost always be directly linked to the author. Proclaiming

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<sup>172</sup> George Chapman, 'To his Loved Sonne, Nat. Field, and his Wether-cocke Woman' in Nathan Field, *The Woman is a Weathercock* (London: William Jaggard, 1613), Sig A4r. This verse also references the play being caught and 'tost' in 'life's rough Seas', another metaphor that was popular with the Caroline dramatists, particularly those in the 'Brome Circle'.

the wit of the author was another clarification Caroline authors believed they needed to make in order to distinguish themselves from rivals and prove that their reputations and their works were better than any others, past or present.

Whilst the 'bayes' and the 'lawrell crown' were recurrent images, included in paratext to acknowledge and reward the skill of the playwright, the most widespread quality that authors bestowed upon each other (and coveted for themselves), in the Caroline era, was 'wit'. Some commendations that bestowed the laurel crown on the author also praised him for his wit.<sup>173</sup> Wit sometimes meant 'that quality of speech or writing which consists in the apt association of thought and expression, calculated to surprise and delight by its unexpectedness; later always with reference to the utterance of brilliant or sparkling things in an amusing way'.<sup>174</sup> This wit was directed at the author rather than the play. According to Chandler, 'the Renaissance conception of wit' was that it was a 'congenital quality' that a writer simply possessed and then used to turn drama into 'art'.<sup>175</sup> By the Caroline era, playwrights were terming each other 'wits' with great frequency in commendatory verses, not because of the author's inherent ability, but as a result of the common practice of verse swapping. Michael Neill makes the convincing argument that wit 'became something of a blanket term of praise' among authors.<sup>176</sup> The term brought together 'the "happinesse" of natural talent with the "care" of the artificer, it is the ideal vehicle [...] for bravura demonstrations of the artist's individual genius'.<sup>177</sup> However, the widespread and ubiquitous use of 'wit' lessened the impact of the term, as the majority of playwrights could make a claim to be a 'wit' or to possess 'wit'. Tatham received the estimation in *The Fancies Theatre* from James Jones, whilst Richards, Chamberlain, Massinger, and Shirley, amongst many others, were commended as 'wits'

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<sup>173</sup> Edward Hyde, 'To his friend, Mr. Wm. D'avenant' in D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A2v; King, 'TO HIS CHOSEN FRIEND, the learned Author Mr *Thomas Heywood*' in Heywood, *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*, Sig I4v; R. W., 'To my friend the: Author' in Nabbes, *The Unfortunate Mother*, Sig A4r; C. G., 'To his worthy Esteemed Mr. *Thomas Rawlins* on his *Rebellion*' in Rawlins, *The Rebellion*, Sig A1r; Ford, 'Of this Ingenious Comedy the *Wedding* To Mr. *James Shirley* the Author' in Shirley, *The Wedding* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1629), Sig A4v.

<sup>174</sup> 'wit, n<sup>8-a</sup>', *OED*, 16 April 2007 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50286217>> [accessed 11 September 2010]. This definition holds 'for particular applications' in seventeenth and eighteenth century criticism.

<sup>175</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship in the English Renaissance*, p. 107.

<sup>176</sup> Michael Neill, ' "Wits Most Accomplished Senate": The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 18 (1978), 341-60 (p. 357).

<sup>177</sup> Neill, 'The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters', 357-58.

by their peers.<sup>178</sup> The qualities which actually made a playwright a ‘wit’ were somewhat ambiguous, as Caroline commendators and authors employed the term ‘as a compendium of all literary virtues’.<sup>179</sup> As the Caroline audiences seemed to value ‘wit’ as much as, if not more than, ‘emotional power and stylistic elegance’, playwrights were quick to pronounce themselves (in prologues) and their peers (in commendatory verses) ‘wits’ in order to please audiences who clamoured for the quality.<sup>180</sup> While the audiences preferred their playwrights to be great ‘wits’, dramatists were termed so by contemporary authors, rather than by dramatic connoisseurs.

Williams stated that general ‘stocks’ of terminology referenced the author and his writing as being worthy of tremendous praise, and the ‘puffer’ himself being unworthy of association with such genius.<sup>181</sup> One of the most general means of praising a contemporary was by exalting his abilities above those of his literary and dramatic rivals. In the 1630s, complimentary ‘puffing’ was soon supplanted by a new form of commendation whereby commendators attacked opposing playwrights and unnamed critics. According to Chandler, ‘scattered throughout the commendatory verse, a plethora of references to “envy” and “detraction” suggest an omnipresent awareness of professional backbiting’.<sup>182</sup> This ‘backbiting’ highlighted the playwright’s abilities in comparison to rival dramatists, who were then criticized for being unskilled or lacking wit. ‘Backbiting’ also worked to create close-knit groups of playwrights who ‘banded together in the face of maliciousness’.<sup>183</sup> These attacks were a form of collaboration among like-minded playwrights of a similar dramatic ideology. This collaboration increased the levels of hostility and competition between those in a distinct literary coterie and those in opposing literary groups. Not only was wit freely given in commendatory verses, but also it was annulled in others as commendators stressed the wit

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<sup>178</sup> Bradwell, ‘To his worthy Friend, Mr. *Nathanael Richards*, upon his well-written Tragedy of *Messallina*’ in Richards, *Messallina*, Sig A6r; E. B. ‘To his Deserving friend Mr. Robert Chamberlaine upon his Swaggering Damsell’ in Chamberlain, *The Swaggering Damsell*, Sig A3v; Aston Cokayne, ‘TO MY WORTHY FRIEND THE AUTHOR UPON HIS TRAGAE COMAEDY, THE MAID OF HONOUR’ in Massinger, *The Maid of Honour* (London: John Beale, 1632), Sig A4v, and Thomas Craford, ‘To his deserving friend Mr *Ja. Shirley* upon his Gratefull servant’ in Shirley, *The Grateful Servant*, Sig A4v.

<sup>179</sup> Neill, ‘The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters’, 357.

<sup>180</sup> Neill, ‘The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters’, 357.

<sup>181</sup> See Williams, ‘Commendatory Verses’, 10.

<sup>182</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship in the English Renaissance*, p. 83.

<sup>183</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship in the English Renaissance*, p. 83.



of their peers and the lack of it in competitors. While wit was a ‘blanket term’ for praise, it was also a ‘blanket term’ for ‘denigration’.<sup>184</sup> Carew’s commendation to Davenant in *The Just Italian* makes a point of stressing Davenant’s wit, but also the lack of the trait in rival playwrights: ‘Now noyse prevayles, and he is taxd for drowth / Of wit, that with the crie, spends not his mouth’.<sup>185</sup> A critic also became a wit and, as Neill claims, ‘to be a bench critic had become an essential accomplishment of any aspiring wit’.<sup>186</sup> Anyone who could pass judgement could call himself a wit, and thus, by criticising the plays and verses of others, commenders became wits.

Although ‘wit’ was still used to ‘puff’ up peers and criticize rivals, the confusion surrounding the term and what actually made a playwright a wit was commented upon by authors and commenders. Fletcher’s prologue to the late Jacobean tragicomedy *The Island Princess* (staged between 1619 and 1621 at the Globe and Blackfriars) focuses on the bastardization of the term according to the desires of the theatrical audience:

Wit is become an Antick, and puts on  
As many shapes of variation,  
To Court the times applause, as the times dare  
Change several fashions, nothing is thought rare  
Which is not new and follow'd, yet we know,  
That which was worn some thirty years ago,  
May come in grace again, and we pursue  
That Illegible word, by presenting to your view,  
A Play in fashion then, not doubting now  
But 'twill appear the same, if you allow  
Worth to their Noble memory, whose names  
Beyond all power of Death, live in their fames.<sup>187</sup>

‘Wit’ not only referred to the author and his ability, but to the theatrical audience’s response to the play as well. Fletcher defines, for the audience, what ‘wit’ is, as well as what it used to be. By defining what ‘wit’ was and is, the author could define himself as a ‘wit’ and his play as the product of ‘wit’, thereby dictating the terms by which the audience was to think of the author and his play. It became necessary for paratext to

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<sup>184</sup> Neill, ‘The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters’, 357.

<sup>185</sup> Carew, ‘To my worthy Friend, M. D’AVENANT, Upon his Excellent Play, *The Just Italian*’ in D’Avenant, *The Just Italian*, Sig A3v.

<sup>186</sup> Neill, ‘The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters’, 348.

<sup>187</sup> John Fletcher, *The Island Princess* (London: 1669), Sig A2r, and Neill, ‘The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters’, 357.

instruct both readers and viewers on what to look for in an author and in his play. Wit changed from being something an author could *be* to being something a play *contained*; the precise meaning, and the form, frequently changed from adjective to verb to noun. Because definitions changed, the author had to acknowledge what his own meanings were. As Fletcher's prologue suggests, anything and anyone could be considered a 'wit', such is the indefinable nature of 'that Illegible word'. The pervasive use of the same term in Caroline paratexts removed one specific meaning and made the term malleable to fit with each playwright's individual definition, thus promoting the individual playwright himself.

Commendations became an integral part of the published play text in the Caroline era as authors sought to separate themselves from rivals. Such verses had been less common in the previous eras and often focused more on the staged play than the printed play. William Rowley's dedication to John Webster for *The Duchess of Malfi* exemplifies this emphasis as it trumpeted the play on stage over the play in print. In his commendation, Rowley suggests that the staged play was better and more 'lively' than its printed successor:

I Never saw thy Dutchesse, till the day,  
That She was lively body'd in thy Play;  
How'ere she answer'd her low rated Love,  
Her brothers anger, did so far all proove,  
Yet my opinion is, she might speake more;  
But (never in her life) so well before.<sup>188</sup>

Whilst Caroline commendatory verses often made excuses for the play on stage in an attempt to prove that the printed play was necessary to eradicate mistakes, to clarify meanings, or to provide the author with greater success, Rowley's verse for *The Duchess of Malfi* emphasizes the play's origins at the theatre, and suggests that the reason the play was printed at all was because of the success it had achieved on the stage. Rowley's own voice and his own 'opinion' on the play are stressed, rather than those of the author. What characterized Caroline commendatory poems was the verse writers' agreement with and promotion of the author's ideologies and ideas. When commendatory verses were offered, they were often done so to support the author's published play or his decision to

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<sup>188</sup> William Rowley, 'To his friend Mr. *John Webster* Upon his Dutchesse of *Malfy*' in John Webster, *The Tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), Sig A4v.

print the play not, as Rowley had done, to praise the play's original version on the stage. By the Caroline era, the function of comparing the staged play to the printed play was more commonly a part of the dedicatory epistle and almost always favoured the play in print.<sup>189</sup> Paratextual forms were more strictly defined in terms of what they could and should do, in regard to the proper medium for the play, based on the author's ideology. The commendatory verses of the Caroline era most often praised the playwright and his decision to print.

Chandler claims the commendatory verse served three purposes: 'to advertise the book to book-buyers, to advertise the author to both patrons and book-buyers, and to influence the interpretation of the book's main text by any readers'.<sup>190</sup> He agrees with James Biester's reasoning that they were meant to 'treat the poet as miraculous, praise the poet's wit, and praise the style of a male poet as "manly"'.<sup>191</sup> Whilst these reasons are valid and integral to understanding how commendatory verse functioned in the Caroline era, equally paratexts aligned playwrights with like-minded authors and criticized rivals, promoted a message or interpretation that was specifically the author's, and distinguished the staged play from the printed play.

### Prologues

Much contemporary criticism suggests that the performed prologues of the Caroline era were concerned with winning approval from the theatrical audience and creating a relationship between the author and his actors and audience. The prologue in print could be seen as a part of the play itself, where previously it had been the threshold between the author and the audience at the theatre.<sup>192</sup> The prologue allowed the actors to influence the audience's reception of the play by asking them to kindly accept what was about to be

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<sup>189</sup> See Shirley's commendation to Henry Osborne where he refers to the play's 'second birth', pp. 81-82.

<sup>190</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 3.

<sup>191</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 3, quoting James Bister, 'Gender and Style in Seventeenth-Century Commendatory Verse', *SEL* 33 (1993), 507-522 (p. 507).

<sup>192</sup> See Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 81-119, "A small-beer health to his second day": Playwrights, Prologues, and First Performances in the Early Modern Theater', *Studies in Philology*, 101 (2004), 172-99; and Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre*. Stern's chapter, 'Prologues, epilogues, and interim entertainments' first appeared as an article in *Studies in Philology* entitled 'Playwrights, Prologues, and First Performances in the Early Modern Theatre'.

performed and telling theatregoers what the author intended. In print, the commendatory verses largely served as this threshold, introducing authorial intentions and beseeching a kind reception of the literary drama to follow. As prologues were originally meant to be delivered by the actors (or in some cases characters from the play), the author wrote them for another to speak, but with his own aims and goals in mind. The author tempered his prologues accordingly for the acting company and the theatrical audience, but in print they served as relics of the play on stage. The prologue in print showed how the paratextual form developed from being a plea for audience acceptance to a poetic, meta-dramatic explanation of the play itself. In print, the prologue communicated the authority of the playwright and the purpose of his play; at the same time it re-negotiated the advancement of the author's own cultural and economic status. The printed prologue connected the paratext with the play and repositioned it as a work of literature.<sup>193</sup>

The use of the prologue in print in the Caroline era was influenced by the use of the prologue in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. By far the most prevalent form of paratext to be found in the plays printed before 1625 was the prologue. Of the one hundred and forty three dramas printed with paratext between 1595 and 1625, seventy nine of them contained either a prologue or an epilogue, making these the most often used form of paratext. Some Jacobean plays contained 'inductions', which were more elaborate and performative than the prologue, but ultimately served the purpose of introducing the play to the audiences in order to temper their reaction and inform them of what was to come.<sup>194</sup> Prologues were written to sway a theatrical audience, whereas other forms of paratext were written to a literary audience. The number of prologues in the printed plays showed how reliant the authors were on the stage as the primary means of making their plays known. The number of printed prologues before 1625 in comparison with the number of dedicatory or encomiastic verses suggests playwrights were concerned with the play in performance, not its acceptance in print.<sup>195</sup> During the Caroline era, the number of prologues published was still higher than any other singular piece of paratext between 1625 and 1642, but the number of plays to contain only a

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<sup>193</sup> Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's theatre*, p. 34.

<sup>194</sup> Jonson's *Everyman Out of his Humour*, *Cynthia's Revels*, *Poetaster*, and *The Alchemist* all had inductions.

<sup>195</sup> See Appendix B, pp. 257-59.

prologue, without any other pieces of paratext, was greatly diminished. Of the one hundred and sixty five plays published with paratext, thirty of them contained only a prologue and/or epilogue. The authors of the Caroline era seemed much more concerned with the other pieces of paratext, which they used to advertise the literary play and the literary author, and much less concerned with promoting the theatrical play.

Prologues addressed to specific audiences (such as the prologue to the court or the prologue on the stage) showed how authors used the form in different ways: to appeal to diverse audiences and to gain influence or status. In ‘The Prologue at Court’ of *The Queene of Aragon*, the playwright William Habington stresses that the play was written ‘To make this night [the King’s] pleasure’ and the actors ‘feare twill rather be / [the King’s] patience [...] twill rise quite the wrong way’.<sup>196</sup> However, in the ‘Prologue at the Fryers’ the speaker lists all the errors of the play before stating that the audience is free to ‘Like or dislike’, but states that the decision to condemn is ‘at [their] owne perills’.<sup>197</sup> Caroline prologues often asked the audience to forgive the author because of the impossible job he had in pleasing all. The actor became the voice of the author and spoke for him to the audience. As with Habington’s dual prologues, the manner in which the actor spoke to the audience differed depending on who was in attendance. The relationship between the actors and the author changed at the commercial theatre, from seemingly cooperative to combative. *The Queene of Aragon*’s prologue spoken at court suggests the actors cooperated with the author for the pleasure of the King, while at the Blackfriars they made apologies for the author’s mistakes. Thus, this form of paratext’s aims and styles were contingent on how the author felt about the particular audience and what specific messages he wanted to send under the circumstances.

Bruster and Weimann highlight the distance between the page and the stage in *Prologues to Shakespeare’s Theatre: performance and liminality in early modern drama*, making the case that prologues specifically and paratexts more generally:

Introduce and request a position before and outside the world of the play.  
Prologues were able to function as interactive, liminal boundary-breaking entities that negotiated charged thresholds between and among, variously, playwrights,

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<sup>196</sup> William Habington, ‘The Prologue at Court’ in *The Queene of Aragon* (London: Thomas Cotes, 1640), Sig A2v.

<sup>197</sup> Habington, ‘The Prologue at the Fryers’ in *The Queene of Aragon*, Sig A2v. Both ‘The Prologue at Court’ and ‘The Prologue at the Fryers’ can be found in Appendix C, pp. 260-61.

actors, characters, audience members, playworlds, and the world outside the playhouse. Conventional prologues comment meaningfully on the complex relations of playing and the twin world implied by the resonant phrase *theatrum mundi*.<sup>198</sup>

During the Caroline era, the '*theatrum mundi*' had extended beyond the stage to the printing houses. Prologues helped playwrights negotiate the transition between the stage and the publisher by connecting the acclaim found in the commendatory verses with the drama itself, thus augmenting the 'literariness' of the play. Prologues 'become central to authorial self-fashioning in relation to the printed text'.<sup>199</sup> The prologue, which once introduced the theatre audiences to the actors, served in print to introduce the reader to the author. In print, prologues lost the immediate influence they had on audience reception. By the time the play reached the publisher, the actor was removed and the focus shifted to pleasing a literary audience, rather than a theatrical one. The author no longer needed the actor to explain the play to the audience, nor did he need the prologue to beg the audience to accept his work or forgive his mistakes, as other paratextual material set up expectations for the reader. The published prologue was a relic of the play's past on stage and served to show where the play had been; it symbolized the play's origin, but made that origin distant and obsolete. I suggest that the prologue in print was more a piece of literature, attached to and part of the play itself. It was also conditioned by the paratextual material that preceded it in the same way the play was. The influence the prologue once had on stage in dictating meaning was supplanted, in print, by commendatory verses. Although the prologue was still the dividing line between paratext and the play, it did not hold as significant a place in determining meaning as it had on stage. This, however, did not stop playwrights from including printed prologues as a matter of course in their published plays.

The prologue's function as the threshold between the actor and the audience began with the early prologues of the Elizabethan era, as did the author's promotion of his chosen theatrical audiences and how he wanted them to respond. Jonson used the prologue, like he did all other paratextual forms, to dictate the interpretation of the play, as well as what he expected from the audience. Jonson's authorial prologue to *Poetaster*

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<sup>198</sup> Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre*, p. 2.

<sup>199</sup> Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre*, p. 7.

(1602) linked the author with the players in trying to please a fickle audience, at the same time it advertised Jonson's role as the authority over the play:

Stay, Monster, ere thou sinke, thus on thy head  
Set we our bolder foot; with which we tread  
Thy malice into earth: So spight should die,  
Despis'd and scorn'd by noble industrie.  
[...]  
Whereof the allegorie and hid sence  
Is, that a well erected confidence  
Can fright their pride, and laugh their folly hence.  
Here now, put case our Authour should, once more,  
Sweare that his play were good; he doth implore,  
You would not argue him of arrogance<sup>200</sup>

Jonson's prologue comes 'armed', presumably to combat the negative judgements of the audience, but also those critics who chided Jonson's ability and 'noble industrie'. His animosity was based, in part, on his desire for control over the play and his haughty attitude toward the commercial theatre players and audiences. The prologue gives ultimate authority over the play to Jonson: the play is referred to as 'his', not the actors' or the audience's. Furthermore, it is his judgement, of his own play and of his dramatic rivals, that is the focus of the prologue. He dismisses audience judgement and the criticism of his rivals as frivolous.

Jonson's influence increased the presence of the author in later paratexts. Extant printed prologues from the Caroline era often discuss the author and his efforts in pleasing the theatrical audience. Stern makes the case that in the live performance:

The prologue [actor speaking the prologue] is visually the "author" of the play and takes on theatrical ownership of the text[...] the actual playwright, though a feature of the Prologue's address, remains unnamed because of the reauthorizing process: the theatrical "author" is more important than the real author. So the real writer, when referred to at all, is "poet", "writer", or "playmaker", a functionary without individuality.<sup>201</sup>

At the theatre, the role of the actor takes precedence in the performance and delivery of the play and prologue. However, the author's presence in the prologue reminds audiences that there was an author, even if he was unnamed. When the prologue was printed, the author's name was not re-inserted in place of 'author' or 'poet'. Re-inserting the

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<sup>200</sup> Ben Jonson, *Poetaster* (London: R. Bradock, 1602), Sig A3r.

<sup>201</sup> Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, p. 114.

playwright's name directly into the address could have been interpreted as the author singing his own praises. At the theatre, it was the actor who commented on the author and his play, serving as the mouthpiece for the author. In print, it was the writers of the commendatory verses who acted as this mouthpiece through their praise of the author. The prologue in print was conditioned by the paratext that preceded it, all of which, when combined, were designed to identify the author as the most important figure in the printed play.

As with commendatory verse, the prologues of the Caroline era often contained stock ideas. One recurring theme was that of begging the audience to like the play despite the weaknesses or offences found within. In Heywood's *A Maiden-head Well Lost* (played in 1625, printed in 1634), the prologue is concerned with the job of the actors in delivering a pleasing play to the Cockpit audience. The lines expressly state that it is the player's job to act as the mediator between the author and the audience, and to perform what the author has written:

*Prologues to Playes in use, and common are,  
As Ushers to Great Ladies : Both walke bare,  
And comely both; conducting Beauty they  
And wee appeare, to usher in our Play .  
Yet, be their faces foule, or featur'd well,  
Be they hard-favoured, or in lookes excell;  
Yet being Usher, he owes no lesse duty  
Unto the most deformed, then the choise Beautie.  
It is our case; we usher Acts and Scenes,  
Some honest, and yet some may prove like Queanes.  
(Loose and base stuffe) yet that is not our fault,  
We walke before, but not like Panders hault  
Before such cripled ware: Th'Acts we present  
We hope are Virgins, drawne for your content  
Unto this Stage: Maides gratefull are to Men,  
Our Scenes being such, (like such) accept them then.<sup>202</sup>*

It was the job of the actors to introduce and 'usher' in the play and to treat it as a 'Beautie', whatever its actual value. The actor mentions his role as an usher four times in these sixteen lines when he talks of delivering the play from the hands of the author to the

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<sup>202</sup> Heywood, *A Maiden-Head Well Lost* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1634), and *The dramatic works of Thomas Heywood: now first collected with Illustrative Notes and a Memoir of the Author in Six Volumes*, 4 vols. (London: John Pearson, 1874), IV, p. 102. The original 1634 print of Heywood's play is missing the prologue.



audience. The actor asks the audience to ignore the deformities of what was played before them, just as the author had asked the actors to do. It is the job of the actors to find the good, the beauty, and the excellence of the play, and the author uses the literary prologue to direct the reading audiences to do the same, by showing them the similar directions given to the theatrical audience who approved of the play.

Some playwrights considered the staged version of the play to be inaccurate because it was delivered by the actors who did not have as much invested in the play as the author did. Stern notes that ‘the reputation of the acting company would not suffer as a result [of a failed play]: a poet’s failure must not pull down the players’, yet the failure of the actors could pull down the poet.<sup>203</sup> Thus, the author needed to write a prologue that highlighted the ability of the actors as the deliverers of the performed play, but did not detract from his own skill as the writer. As a result, sometimes the prologues showed a bond between the actors and the author and sometimes they showed a distance. Once in print, the prologue could reflect a closeness *and* a distance between the author and the actors, depending on how the author wanted to portray his relationship with the theatre company. It referred to the play on stage, yet it removed the actor’s voice and re-established the author as the controller of the literary play. The prologue to Jasper Mayne’s *The Citye Match* (1639) begins by appropriating co-dependant roles to the actors and the author in regard to the staging of the play. However, it ends with the author distanced from both the actors and the judgement of the audience:

Were it his trade, the Author bid me say,  
Perchance he'd beg you would be good to th'Play.  
And I, to set him up in Reputation,  
Should hold a Bason forth for Approbation.  
But praise so gain'd, He thinks, were a Reliefe  
Able to make his Comoedy a Briefe.  
For where your pittie must your judgement be,  
Tis not a Play, but you fir'd houses see.  
Look not his quill, then, should petitions run;  
No Gathering's heere into a Prologue spun.  
Whither their sold Scenes be dislikt, or hit,  
Are cares for them who eat by th'stage, and wit.  
He's One, whose unbought Muse did never feare  
An Empty second day, or a thinne share;

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<sup>203</sup> Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, p. 117. Stern discusses the prologue’s role in directing audience acceptance during the first performances of plays.

But can make th'Actors, though you come not twice,  
No Losers, since we act now at the Kings price.  
Who hath made this Play publique, and the same  
Power that makes Lawes, redeem'd this from the flame.  
For th'Author builds no fame, nor doth aspire  
To praise, from that which he condemn'd to th'fire.  
He's thus secure, then, that he cannot winne  
A Censure sharper then his own hath beene.<sup>204</sup>

The actors, as the threshold between the author and the audience, are responsible for setting up the author's reputation and winning applause for him. However, the author's concern for the welfare of the play is lacking, as the speaker tells the audience the playwright is not afraid of rejection or of failing to please the Blackfriars theatregoers. The actor also states that his company will not be affected, as they are the King's Men and will be paid and protected. This sets up partitions and divisions between each faction. The author does not care for those that 'eat by th'stage', namely the actors. However, the actors also seem unconcerned about the fate of the play, as they have royal protection and patronage. Neither group seems troubled over the reaction of the commercial theatre audience who will predictably dislike the play and who cannot match the author's own critique. Neither the actors nor the author, therefore, will beg the audience for approval, in part because the writer's own thoughts about the play are more important.

Once the play goes into print, the author is still not the party responsible for begging the reading audience for praise and acceptance, which is one of the functions of the author-driven and solicited commendatory verses. The author is not writing pleas in any form to anyone. Mayne wrote: 'Look not his quill, then, should petitions run; / No Gathering's heere into a Prologue spun'.<sup>205</sup> It was the fashion to beg the audience for approval in the prologue, but this is not what Mayne intended. The idea that the play would be 'made publique' suggests that the prologue either anticipated print (the Blackfriars was called a 'private' house) or the prologue was modified when it went to the press and was 'redeem'd'.<sup>206</sup> Mayne suggests the prologue becomes a public address to all when printed, in part because he opens it up to wider criticism. Mayne made his

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<sup>204</sup> Jasper Mayne, 'THE PROLOGVE AT BLACK-FRIERS' in *The Citye Match* (London: Leonard Lichfield, 1639), Sig Br.

<sup>205</sup> Mayne, *The Citye Match*, Sig Br.

<sup>206</sup> Mayne, *The Citye Match*, Sig Br. The title page states the play was 'Presented to the King and Queene at White-hall. Acted since at Black-friers by His Majesties Servants'.

own judgements on the play, which he turned over to a reading audience in print: ‘For th’ Author builds no fame, nor doth aspire / To praise, from that which he condemn’d to th’ fire’.<sup>207</sup> The prologue speaker is suggesting that the theatrical audience, or the King and Queen for whom it was initially played, were the fire. Printing would save the play and give it new life after its demise. The inclusion of this prologue in print, however, suggests that the press is ‘th’ fire’ and the book that emerges is the phoenix that came out of this funeral pyre: a re-birth and a new incarnation of the play.

Whilst Mayne’s prologue hints at a clear divide between the page and the stage, and suggests the two incarnations of the dramatic form are completely different, prologues from the previous eras did not always insist on such a division. In the prologue to Middleton and Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl*, the speaker talks about the play in relation to the printing press and the book. He begins by discussing the readability of the play on stage:

A Play (expected long) makes the Audience looke  
 For wonders:---that each Scoene should be a booke,  
 Compos'd to all perfection; each one comes  
 And brings a play in's head with him: up he summes,  
 What he would of a Roaring Girle have writ;  
 If that he findes not here, he m[...]wes at it.  
 Onely we intreate you thinke our Scoene.  
 Cannot speake high (the subject being but meane)  
 A Roaring Girle (whose notes till now never were)  
 Shall fill with laughter our vast Theater,  
 That's all which I dare promise: Tragick passion,  
 And such grave stuffe, is this day out of fashion.  
 [...]  
 Thus her character lyes,  
 Yet what neede characters? when to give a gesse,  
 Is better then the person to expresse;  
 But would you know who 'tis? would you heare her name?  
 Shee is cal'd madde Moll; her life, our acts proclaime.<sup>208</sup>

Although the prologue was written for the theatre, it clearly acknowledges publication and the competition for audience attention and favour that the press presented. There is a definitive separation in the expectations that resulted from the different media, but the authors are quick to point out that the play itself remains unchanged. The printed book is

<sup>207</sup> Mayne, ‘THE PROLOGVE TO THE KING AND QUEENE’ in *The Citye Match*, Sig A4v.

<sup>208</sup> Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1611), Sig A4r.

meant to contain ‘high’ ‘Scoenes’, whilst the play on stage is meant to ‘fill with laughter our vast Theater’. The expectations the authors have of the play, and the desired outcome for it, differ based on the medium, and the authors make it clear that they have only the theatrical performance in mind. The allusion to the press, however, suggests that print was an option and that it was being used with more frequency, much to the worry of the playwrights. Dekker and Middleton’s prologue displays an affiliation with and an allegiance to the professional theatre. They used the prologue in performance to remind audiences that the theatre was the place for the play. In the Caroline era, the prologue would be used in print to remind audiences of the play at the theatre, but also to juxtapose the old play on the stage with the new life of the play in print. The readability of the play on stage was highlighted by Middleton and Dekker in the same manner in which the performative nature of the printed prologue was highlighted in Caroline printed prologues; in the former instance, the staged play subsumed the printed play and took precedence, whilst in the Caroline era, the play on stage seemed to anticipate the published, authorial version. Middleton and Dekker’s prologue shows the emphasis on the staged play (and prologue) in the Jacobean era, which was downplayed as print became more essential in the Caroline era. Performance became less necessary and the role of the prologue as the threshold between the author and the audience changed to the link between the paratext and the play.

Although prologues were generally written with a theatrical audience in mind, a literary audience could, and sometimes did, become the primary focus of the prologue in print, as seen with Heywood’s prologues in his collection of *Pleasant Dialogues and Drammas*.<sup>209</sup> Massinger commented on the pervasive use of the prologue and the epilogue in his dedication to the ‘old tragedy’ *The Unnatural Combat* (first staged in

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<sup>209</sup> Thomas Heywood, *Pleasant Dialogues and Drammas* (London: R. Oulton, 1637), pp. 234-35, 238-39, 242-43. The first publication of a prologue in a collection of poetry was in Thomas Heywood’s *Pleasant Dialogues and Drammas*, (1637) and in it he included a number of new and revised prologues and epilogues including: ‘A Prologue spoke before the King, when her Majesty was great with child’, ‘Another spoken at White Hall before their sacred Majesties’, ‘Spoken to the King and Queene, at the second time of the Authors Play cald Cupids Mistresse or Cupid and Psiche, presented before them. Cupid, the Prologue’, ‘A Prologue spoken at the right Honourable the Earle of Dover house in Broadstreet, at a Play in a most bountifull Christmas hee kept there; the Speaker Hospitality a frolick old fellow: A Collier of Brawne in one hand, and a deepe Bowle of Muscadell in the other’, and ‘It is to be observed that the Earle in Heraldry gives the Swan, and the Countesse the Cocke, &c. The Epilogue presented by delight’.

1621 and printed in 1639).<sup>210</sup> The dedication shows how the prologue was re-branded and re-appropriated as literature in print. In the address ‘To my much Honoured Friend, Anthony Sendliger, Of Oukham in Kent, Esquire’ Massinger proclaims:

I present you with this old Tragedie, without Prologue, or Epilogue, it being composed in a time (and that too, peradventure, as knowing as this) when such by ornaments, were not advanced above the fabricque of the whole worke.<sup>211</sup>

The prologues and epilogues were considered necessary by many of Massinger’s Caroline contemporaries to ‘meet a new style’ imposed on the play and to ‘advance the fabricque of the whole work’, which was considered incomplete without such paratextual material.<sup>212</sup> However, Massinger’s printed play did not contain a prologue or an epilogue, which suggested to his patron that the author adhered to his principles. He stated that the work should speak for itself and he removed any obstacles that hindered the audience from thinking what they would about the play. According to Bruster and Weimann, the prologue was used in print to decorate and advance the author, a self-promoting act with which Massinger, as a professional playwright, seems to have disagreed.<sup>213</sup>

Massinger’s awareness of what prologues and epilogues could do to help or hinder a playwright’s career and reputation is noticeable in some of his Caroline paratexts, as well as in how and when he chose to circulate his prologues. Many of Massinger’s printed plays did not contain prologues, suggesting he only included them to make a specific point.<sup>214</sup> One play to feature a prologue that was not included in the printed version was *The Maid of Honour*, which was staged at Blackfriars in January 1629. It circulated in manuscript form until 1980, when Peter Beal published the commendations in ‘Massinger at Bay: Unpublished Verses in a War of the Theatres’. This prologue was highly critical of Davenant and his courtier commender Carew:<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Massinger, ‘To my much Honoured Friend, ANTHONY SENTLIGER, Of Oukham in Kent, Esquire’ in *The Unnatural Combat* (London: Edward Griffin, 1639), Sig A2r-2v. *The Unnatural Combat* itself did not contain a prologue or epilogue; this form of paratext was only mentioned in the dedication to the patron.

<sup>211</sup> Massinger, ‘To my much Honoured Friend, ANTHONY SENTLIGER’, Sig A2r-2v.

<sup>212</sup> Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare’s theatre*, p. 6.

<sup>213</sup> Bruster and Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare’s theatre*, p. 6.

<sup>214</sup> Of Massinger’s twelve plays published between 1625-42, (*The Bond Man, The Duke of Millaine, The Emperor of the East, The Fatall Dowry, The Great Duke of Florence, The Maid of Honour, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, The Picture, The Renegado, The Roman Actor, The Unnaturall Combat, and The Virgin Martyr*) only *The Emperor of the East* contained a prologue. However, all of the printed plays contained commendatory verses except for *The Unnaturall Combat*.

<sup>215</sup> Beal, ‘Massinger at Bay’, 191. Beal references: ‘manuscript parliamentary journal among the Trumbull

To all yt are come hither, and have brought  
 noe expectacon beyond the thought  
 of power in our performance; that this day  
 looke for noe more, nor lesse, then a newe play  
 May give full satisfaccon for; a free  
 and happie welcome. May such ever bee  
 feasted with rarities. He well knowes  
 how much of care and vigilance that man owes  
 to such as would seeme Critiques of the age,  
 that Dares to 'expose his labours on ye stage,  
 And yt one Poeme in this kind aske more  
 invention and judgmt: then a score  
 Of Chamber Madrigalls or loose raptures brought  
 In a Mart. booke from Italy and taught  
 To speake our Englishe Diale[c]t. Nor are wee  
 soe freighted wth a single Calumny,  
 publish[d] to our Disgrace, as to confesse,  
 by beeing silent, such a Guiltinesse  
 as wee are taxt with. Any sence that hee  
 or hath or can write in our delivery  
 should loose noe lustre. But I doe forgett  
 The busines yt I came for. You are mett  
 to see and heare a play. Doe soe and then  
 Wee strongely hope, juditious Gentlemen,  
 you may report when you have look't upon her  
 shee is a Maide compos'd of worth & honor.<sup>216</sup>

Massinger's simple, straightforward prologue is highly critical of peer 'puffing'. He will not remain silent, but will attack those who abuse the system, 'publish[ing]' 'lustre'-less plays and fawning dedications to undeserving authors, much to the 'disgrace' of the commercial theatre environment and community. In this prologue, Massinger reserves the bulk of his criticism for Carew, whom he believes 'puffed' up Davenant and his play *The Just Italian* out of friendship and duty, not because the play deserved it.<sup>217</sup> Beal's footnotes signal Massinger's direct attacks on Carew through the satirising of his poetry and his links to Italy.<sup>218</sup> His mention of a 'single Calumny' seems to refer to Carew's

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papers belonging to the Marquess of Downshire. This manuscript is now deposited in the Berkshire Record Office, Reading (Trumbull Add. MS 51). The journal proper covers proceedings in Parliament from January to March 1628/9.

<sup>216</sup> Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 192-93 and *Massinger: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Martin Garrett (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 60-61.

<sup>217</sup> See Williams, 'Commendatory Verses', 1-14.

<sup>218</sup> See Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 193. Beal's commentary states: 'Carew had lived in Italy in 1613-15 as secretary to Sir Dudley Carleton, English Ambassador in Venice. A number of his lyrics were translations

commendation, rather than Davenant's play. The prologue speaker admits the author will not let him beg for approval, which is what Massinger believed Carew had done for Davenant:

Our Poet, in his owne strength Confident,  
fforbids mee to presente a bended knee  
or with one looke of servile obsequye  
to Court or grace or favour.<sup>219</sup>

Massinger stresses, through the prologue, that the play alone should be judged by the audience, not by what other authors said about it. Beal claims that 'the personal animosity and the scathing accusations in these verses' reveal the reason why this prologue was not published.<sup>220</sup> Massinger did not want to do what his rivals had done - publish his critical thoughts - instead he wanted to ensure audiences judged his play, rather than himself.

Massinger did publicize his anger at Davenant and Carew in 1632 when he included a thinly veiled attack on the courtiers and on the system of commending and what merited commendation in the paratext of *The Emperor of the East*. The play was originally staged at the Cockpit in January 1629, but was also played at court. The printed version included two prologues: one to the audience at Blackfriars and one to the court, but both bemoan the use of paratext as a means of swapping vitriolic and personal criticism and of 'puffing' up undeserving playwrights.<sup>221</sup> The prologue to the Blackfriars audience again refuses to beg for approval, but it also highlights the author's fears about what would happen without such pleading:

BUT that imperious custome warrants it,  
Our Author with much willingnes would omit  
This Preface to his new worke. Hee hath found  
(And suffer'd for't) many are apt to wound  
His credit in this kind: and whether hee,  
Expresse himselfe fearefull, or peremptorie,  
Hee cannot scape their censures who delight  
To misapplie what ever hee shall write.  
Tis his hard fate. And though hee will not sue,  
Or basely beg such suffrages, yet to you

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or imitations of Italian originals'. He also states that Massinger's mention of 'loose raptures' is a reference to Carew's most famous (or most notorious) poem *A Rapture*'.

<sup>219</sup> Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 192.

<sup>220</sup> Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 191.

<sup>221</sup> Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 190.

Free, and ingenious spirits, hee doth now,  
In mee present his service, with his vow  
Hee hath done his best, and though hee cannot glorie  
In his invention, (this worke being a storie,  
Of reverend Antiquitie) hee doth hope  
In the proportion of it, and the scope,  
You may observe some peeces drawne like one  
Of a stedfast hand, and with the whiter stone  
To bee mark'd in your faire censures. More then this  
I am forbid to promise, and it is  
With the most 'till you confirme it: since wee know  
What ere the shaft bee, Archer, or the bow,  
From which 'tis sent, it cannot hit the white  
Unlesse your approbation guide it right.<sup>222</sup>

Massinger included prologues sparingly in his printed plays because he refused to ‘basely beg’ for approval. However, by the Caroline era, they were an ‘imperious custome’, necessary to prepare and present the author. When he did include a prologue, as he had in *The Emperor of the East*, Massinger claims that ‘hee hath done his best’ and stresses his dependence on the actors. It is through the actors that his words are delivered to the audience, and through them that his reputation is affirmed:

hee doth now,  
In mee present his service, with his vow  
Hee hath done his best<sup>223</sup>

The speaker also informs the audience that the prologues of the day are designed not only to improve the reputation of the author or direct the audience to a particular interpretation, but also to allow playwrights to trade insults and criticism:

whether hee,  
Expresse himselfe fearefull, or peremptorie,  
Hee cannot scape their censures who delight  
To misapplie what ever hee shall write.<sup>224</sup>

The speaker relates the author’s belief that prologues often invite censure and criticism, rather than praise or approval, and thus Massinger is hesitant to use them. However, the prologue is a ‘custome’ that must be adhered to, despite the fact this form of paratext

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<sup>222</sup> Massinger, ‘Prologue at the Blackfriars’ in *The Emperor of the East*, Sig A4r.

<sup>223</sup> Massinger, ‘Prologue at the Blackfriars’ in *The Emperor of the East*, Sig A4r.

<sup>224</sup> Massinger, ‘Prologue at the Blackfriars’ in *The Emperor of the East*, Sig A4r.



seems to have more influence on the audiences than the actual plays themselves. Massinger's prologue to *The Emperor of the East*, whilst less scathing and direct than that of *The Maid of Honour*, is still critical of the ways in which prologues were being used, specifically decrying the attacks and insults that were included. There is a more melancholic tone, not only in relation to the vogue for insults in the prologues, but also for Massinger himself. The speaker comments 'tis his hard fate' that Massinger, a man of the theatre who is so dedicated to professionalism, should be so misrepresented, misunderstood, and 'misapplie[d]' in the paratext of his rivals.

The prologue to the court shows that *The Emperor of the East* was not as successful as the playwright had hoped and that he ultimately suffered:

And yet this poore worke suffer'd by the rage,  
And envie of some Catos of the stage:  
Yet still hee hopes, this Play which then was seene  
With sore eyes, and condemn'd out of their spleen,  
May bee by you, The supreme judge, set free,  
And rais'd above the reach of calumnie.<sup>225</sup>

The prologue to the court examines the theatrical audience's dislike of the play and suggests that such disapproval results, in part, from the vitriol aimed at him by rival 'Catos of the stage'. These 'Catos' have damaged the author's reputation and compromised the ability of the theatrical audience to accurately and fairly judge the play. It can be assumed that Massinger was conscious of how print affected careers and reputations, both of his rivals and his own, as well as the power prologues had in creating misleading representations. His decision to print the latter prologue was, according to Beal, in order to 'raise the quarrel to a defence of his art and profession', rather than to merely show 'personal animosity'.<sup>226</sup> Although Massinger disagreed with Davenant's and Carew's use of paratext, he appeared more upset with the function of the prologue in the era: to introduce the writer rather than the play. The prologue in *The Emperor of the East* was heard by audiences at the Blackfriars theatre who may have been familiar with the prologue to *The Maid of Honour* from its staging at the Cockpit. The printed and published rebuttals from Davenant and Carew had escalated the criticism from mere comments to slander among 'the amateur gentlemen poets in the court circle who tended

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<sup>225</sup> Massinger, 'Prologue at Court' in *The Emperor of the East*, Sig A4v.

<sup>226</sup> Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 191.

to patronize the fashionable Blackfriars theatre and the standards of professional writers employed by the more ‘popular’ Cockpit theatre’.<sup>227</sup> Massinger’s published, but toned-down attack on scathing prologues and his well-known, negative stance on peer ‘puffing’ would further publicize and popularize the previously traded criticism of the second poet’s war. It would also show this new function of prologues to slander, rather than introduce.

By the early 1640s, criticism of rivals and even audiences was a mainstay of the prologue, as these forms of paratext commented on the actions and motivations of different playwrights and playwriting coteries. Sir John Denham criticized the commendatory verse coteries and the author’s reliance on peer ‘puffing’ over audience approval in the prologue to *The Sophy* (1642). Issued anonymously, Denham’s prologue reflects upon and satirizes the obsequious dedications and commendations printed in the previous decade.<sup>228</sup>

Hither yee come, dislike, and so undo  
 The Players, and disgrace the Poet too;  
 But he protests against your votes, and swears  
 Hee'll not be try'd by any, but his Peeres;  
 He claimes his priviledge, and sayes 'tis fit,  
 Nothing should be the Judge of wit, but Wit.  
 Now you will all be Wits, and be I pray;  
 And you that discommend it, mend the Play:  
 'Tis the best satisfaction, he knowes then,  
 His turne will come, to laugh at you agen.  
 But Gentlemen, if yee dislike the Play,  
 Pray make nowords on't till the second day,  
 Or third be past: For we would have you know it,  
 The losse will fall on us, not on the Poet:  
 For he writes not for money, nor for praise,  
 Nor to be call'd a Wit, nor to weare Bayes:  
 Cares not for frownes or smiles: so now you'll say,  
 Then why (the Devill) did he write a Play?  
 He sayes, 'twas then with him, as now with you,  
 He did it when he had nothing else to doe.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>227</sup> Beal, ‘Massinger at Bay’, 202, and Chapter 2, pp. 106-11.

<sup>228</sup> Gerald Bentley Eades, *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare’s Time 1590-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 3 and W. H. Kelliher, ‘Denham, Sir John (1614/15–1669)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7481>> [accessed 28 May 2010].

<sup>229</sup> Denham, *The Sophy* (London: Richard Hearne, 1642), Sig A2r.

The prologue is satirical about the position of the dramatic author, what the author wanted, who he aimed to please, and how he used the paratext to achieve his goals. The speaker sarcastically portrays the author as wholly separated from and openly scornful toward the theatre audience, loyal only to his allies and commenders:

But he protests against your votes, and swears  
Hee'll not be try'd by any, but his Peeres;  
He claimes his priviledge, and sayes 'tis fit,  
Nothing should be the Judge of wit, but Wit.<sup>230</sup>

The speaker lets the audience know that the author does not consider them 'wits', and that his 'Peeres', who he viewed as the only true wits, will try him. The very notion of writing stage plays not for the stage or the audiences at the theatres seemed absurd to Denham, and yet he believed many of his contemporaries and rivals were doing just that. In fact, the speaker goes further to satirically suggest that the author actually holds contempt for the audiences at the theatre, in a similar fashion to the contempt that rival amateurs expressed about commercial theatre audiences in contemporary paratext.<sup>231</sup> Denham's speaker claims that the author will 'laugh at [them] agen', suggesting the foolishness of the audience's judgement is a common source of amusement for the amateur, courtly authors. The prologue suggests the need for audience acceptance was obsolete by the time Denham wrote his play. Only the approval of other playwrights and the author's patrons was necessary for acceptance, praise, and reward. In the prologue, the actor is not the usher for the author, but a confidant to the audience, betraying the author's indifference and begging the theatregoers not to punish the actors for the writer's haughtiness. The author writes only to please his friends or because 'he had nothing else to doe', highlighting Denham's perception of the contemporary, amateur, playwriting community and the practices and motivations driving some of his fellow dramatists. It is not for entertainment, or even to earn a livelihood, it is simply a past time to please other 'wits': his peers. There is a detached, ironic tone of laziness and apathy towards some of his dramatic contemporaries.

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<sup>230</sup> Denham, *The Sophy*, Sig A2r.

<sup>231</sup> See Introduction, pp. 31-33 and Chapter 1, pp. 40-42.

With *The Sophy*, Denham was not tried by his peers. There was no additional paratext that accompanied the published play. As a poet, Denham did not seem to covet the ‘bayes’ or seek the praise of his courtly peers, but the prologue satirized those who did.<sup>232</sup> Denham’s speaker claims that the author does not want titles or forms, possibly because commendations give them or because they are too easy to acquire. Denham mocks his fellow amateurs, whilst the lack of concern for the usual trappings and rewards for playing show just how meaningless ‘praise’, ‘wit’, or ‘bayes’ had become by 1640. This prologue exposes how meaningless paratexts could be, but also how criticism directed at rivals and the obsequious apologies that characterized the prologues did not, by the end of the era, affect the reputations of the playwrights addressing the theatre-going audience.

As the Caroline era progressed, some prologues, like those of Denham’s and Massinger’s, became critical of rival playwrights and theatrical audiences. At the same time, they were becoming increasingly venomous regarding current political and social events. They highlighted and then stressed the divisions between the actor, author, and audience, exposing how these relationships changed and how the author became more independent and self-reliant in winning praise for himself and his plays. Once again, the influence of Jonson on the paratexts of the Caroline era can be seen. *Poetaster* was a response to John Marston’s satires of Jonson, and he lashed out at ‘base detractors’ by calling Marston and his literary ally Dekker ‘illiterate apes’.<sup>233</sup> Jonson’s use of the prologue to attack his rivals demonstrated the power that paratext had from the early days of the professional theatre. Not only was Jonson able to outwardly condemn those who had previously attacked him, he was also able to dictate, to the audiences, that the play and the prologue were about his rivals. His ‘forc’t defence’ was the real purpose of the play; he felt the need to defend himself and his plays, whilst simultaneously slating his rivals.<sup>234</sup> The prologue dictated that this vindication of the author and venom for the rivals are what the audience needed to look for, as they are what inspired the writing and drove the action of the play:

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<sup>232</sup> See Kelliher, ‘Denham, Sir John’, *ODNB*.

<sup>233</sup> Jonson, *Poetaster*, Sig A3r. Marston satirized Jonson in *Histrionic* and *Jack Drum’s Entertainment*. Jonson parodied his rivals in *Cynthia’s Revels* and, more directly and prominently, *Poetaster*. Dekker responded to *Poetaster* with *Satiromastix*, which effectively ended the Poetmachie.

<sup>234</sup> Jonson, *Poetaster*, Sig A3r.

So spight should die,  
 Despis'd and scorn'd by noble industrie.  
 If any muse why I salute the stage,  
 An armed Prologue ; know, 'tis a dangerous age:  
 Wherein, who writes, had need present his Scenes  
 Fortie fold-prooffe against the conjuring meanes  
 Of base detractors, and illiterate apes,  
 That fill up roomes in faire and formall shapes.  
 [...]

How ere that common spawne of ignorance,  
 Our frie of writers, may beslime his fame,  
 And give his action that adulterate name.  
 Such ful-blowne vanitie he more doth lothe,  
 Then base dejection: There's a meane 'twixt both.  
 Which with a constant firmenesse he pursues,  
 As one, that knowes the strength of his owne muse.<sup>235</sup>

Jonson's prologue, like his other paratexts, created a specific image of the author as the victim of 'vanitie' and 'base dejection', whilst at the same time referred to his detractors as the 'spawne of ignorance'. This early prologue set a standard for paratext as being a defence of the author, at the same time it set up the use of such material as a means to attack an author's perceived enemies. Such acrimony would come to characterize a number of Caroline prologues and would inevitably lead to a second poet's war, with Jonson's apprentice and 'man', Brome, acting as the chief wit combatant against the man he viewed as a 'poetaster' and 'ape', Davenant.

At the theatre, the author was removed from the issues the prologue speaker raised on his behalf. In print, the prominence of the actor could be downplayed or removed from the prologue altogether, or the role of the author could be augmented. This increase in presence gave the author more control over the interpretation of the play, which then created a closer, more intimate relationship between the playwright and the reader. In print, the prologues were less an introduction to the play itself, but were more often meant to connect the author-driven paratexts with the play. Whilst much contemporary criticism focuses on the use of the prologue in performance, the function of these dramatic staples changed as the Caroline era progressed and print became a more

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<sup>235</sup> Jonson, *Poetaster*, Sig A3r.

common form of dramatic dissemination. What this thesis examines is how prologues negotiated the transition from stage to page and worked to establish the author's desired position in the theatrical and/or literary communities.

### Dedications

Like commendatory verses, the dedications to patrons that were included with printed plays resembled private letters, passed between an artist and his patron. These dedications were also meant to be public declarations of the author's connection to the dedicatee and showed the position and status of the writer in relation to his patron. Forming and then advertising seemingly close relationships with influential members of the gentry increased a playwright's status, aligned him with a specific coterie and offered him protection against censure or slander. By dedicating their plays to influential gentlemen and women, playwrights showed their connections to a more powerful and aristocratic society, in the process leading readers to associate the authors themselves with the upper classes or even the court. These dedications also discouraged detractors, who could see just what kinds of powerful friends or allies a playwright had and how dedicatees might intervene on behalf of an author if he was the victim of slander. Thus, the names and positions of the dedicatees themselves became as important, if not more so, than what was said to them in the actual epistles.

The social status and influence a dedicatee held factored in to the playwright's thinking, in terms of paratext, since the start of the Jacobean era. There were very few dedications to patrons between 1595 and the end of Elizabeth's reign in 1603.<sup>236</sup> However, the first play to be published under James I was *Darius* and the dedicatory epistle by William Alexander Stirling was addressed to James himself. In the verse 'to the Most Excellent, high, and mightie Prince, James the 6. *King of Scots*, my drede Soveraigne', Stirling includes many of the ideas and tropes that would become paratextual staples in the Caroline era:

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<sup>236</sup> See Appendix B, pp. 257-59. There were three dedications to patron in this time frame, two of which came in 1602.

*Did daine not (might Prince) these humble lines,  
 Though too meane musick for so noble eares.  
 Thou glorious patterne of all good ingines,  
 Whole sacred brow a two folde laurel beares,  
 To whome APOLLO his owne harpe resignes,  
 And everlasting Trophees vertue reares,  
 Thou canst afforde that which my soule affects,  
 Let thy perfections shaddowe my defects.  
 Although my wit be weake, my vowes are strong,  
 Which consecrate devoutilie to thy name  
 My muses labours, theat ere it be long  
 [...]  
 Unto the Ocean of thy worth I send  
 This little ruslet of my first attempt;  
 Not that I to augment that depth pretend,  
 Which is from all necesitie exempt.<sup>237</sup>*

Stirling's early dedication reads more like a commendatory verse and contains many of the stock images that would become staples of both dedicatory epistles and commendatory verses in the Caroline era. The mention of the 'laurel' crown that Stirling gives to James would later don the heads of the Caroline authors, rather than their patrons. He also alludes to his own 'wit', although he refers to it as 'weake'. In addition, his reference to the verse as being something that he sends out 'unto the Ocean' is a trope that was picked up by the Brome Circle in a series of commendatory verses in 1640. In this first dedication to James, Stirling focuses on the glory of the patron and his 'vertue' and 'perfections'. In the Caroline era, dedications to patrons would echo these sentiments, but the role of the author in writing something worth patronizing, or even in choosing a worthy patron, would be pushed to the fore by many of the authors of the period; Caroline dedicatees were worthy because the plays they were receiving were worthy. Stirling's early dedication contains stock ideas that would become staples of paratext, but Caroline authors would use these mainstays to trump up their plays and their own abilities, rather than just paying homage to dedicatees.

Dedications, like the commendatory verses and prologues they preceded, allowed readers to form an idea of who a playwright was, based on his associations with patrons. As the first piece of paratextual material, the dedicatory epistle established the author as

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<sup>237</sup> William Alexander Stirling, *Darius* (London: Robert Walde-grave, 1603), Sig 2r-v.

the authority over the work and made him the controller of the printed play. Bergeron says ‘such prefatory material indeed has no purpose, no reason to exist outside publication: but it has everything to do with how dramatists began to understand themselves as authors and how publication reinforced the image of author’.<sup>238</sup> Through the dedication, an author could share how he felt about the previous treatment the work had received on stage, as well as what he hoped would become of it in print. The dedication to the patron solidified the play as a printed entity, written and ultimately controlled by the author who, regardless of recipient, had the right and opportunity to give the play to whomever he chose. I contend that the importance of the dedication is less about the dedicatee and more a statement of the author’s authority over the play.

Dedications, like commendations, were widely incorporated into published Caroline drama. Chandler states that ‘by 1640 more than half of those works produced in a given year featured dedicatory epistles, patron-addressed verse, and the like’.<sup>239</sup> Bergeron demonstrates how fruitful the 1630s were in terms of publication and potential patronage: ‘more dramatic texts than ever contain epistles dedicatory, tracking the considerable spike in publication in this decade’.<sup>240</sup> In the Jacobean era, fifty five dedications were included alongside the published plays, in comparison with one hundred and nine in Caroline play texts.<sup>241</sup> The monetary, protective, or cultural exchange between patron and writer that was demonstrated through the dedicatory epistle was a regular part of published drama and was based on traditions that began with the printing press.<sup>242</sup> In the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, it was more common for patrons to receive multiple dedications from multiple authors. The Countess of Pembroke received at least three different dedications from three different authors between 1591 and 1594, and the

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<sup>238</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, pp. 3-4

<sup>239</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 53. See also Alistair Fox, ‘The Complaint of Poetry for the Death of Liberality: The Decline of Literary Patronage in the 1590s’ in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 229-57 (p. 232). Fox’s contention is that the number of dedicatory epistles declines in the years following Elizabeth I’s reign. The symbolism behind the dedication was what was important to playwrights and patrons.

<sup>240</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 185.

<sup>241</sup> See Appendix B, pp. 257-59.

<sup>242</sup> Jacobus de Cessolis, *To the right noble, right excellent [and] vertuous prince George duc of Clarence Erle of warwyk and of salisbury, grete chamberlayn of Englund [and] leutenant of Ireland oldest broder of kynge Edward by the grace of god kynge of England and of frau[n]ce, your most humble servant william Caxton amonge other of your servantes sendes unto you peas. helthe joye and victorie upon your enemies [...]* (Bruges: William Caxton, 1474).



various members of the Herbert family received numerous dedications including one in Shakespeare's folio.<sup>243</sup> By 1629, repeat dedicatees were rare (although they did occur), the names of the patrons were less recognizable, and multiple dedicatees for a single play were much more common.<sup>244</sup> One patron to have several different works addressed to him in the 1630s was the lyric poet Kenelme Digby. Abraham Cowley addressed his pastoral comedy *Loves Riddle* (1638), Joseph Rutter dedicated *The Shepherd's Holiday* (1635), and Henry Shirley made Digby the patron of *The Martyr'd Soldier* (1638).<sup>245</sup> Ben Jonson also dedicated an epigram to Digby that was first published in Jonson's posthumous 1640 *Workes*.<sup>246</sup> Digby himself was a patron of the arts and a member of the 'Tribe of Ben'.<sup>247</sup> In his dedication to Digby for *Cleopatra* (1639), Thomas May asks the gentleman for the traditional mode of protection and acceptance for the play in print:

TO THE MOST ACCOMPLISH'D Sr. Kenelme Digby.  
 Sr. That it pleased you to cast an eye of favour upon these poor Plays has given me the boldnesse, not only to publish them (which I thought not to have done) but to shelter them, though most unworthy, under that name, to which for authority and approbation the richest pieces that this nation can boast, might be proud to flie. You are to learning what learning is to others a gracefull ornament; and known not only able to receive, but fit to make that which we call literature; it being nothing else but rules and observations drawne at the first from such able natures as yours is; and by your daily conversation is better expressed, then wee by writing can define it. [...] For the defects in these two Plays, I that have already been so much obliged to your goodnesse in other matters, cannot here despaire of your forgivenessse, which is the only thing that puts confidence into *Your most obliged and devoted servant Tho. May.*<sup>248</sup>

May is concerned with how his plays will be received. The mention of printing, 'which [he] thought not to have done', and the choice of dedicatee, will make his play

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<sup>243</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, pp. 216-21.

<sup>244</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, pp. 216-21. William Cavendish was one such patron who received a number of dedications in the Caroline era as well as Kenelme Digby and Theophila Cooke. These repeat dedications did not always accompany published drama however.

<sup>245</sup> Abraham Cowley, 'To the truly Worthy, and Noble, Sir KENELME DIGBIE Knight' in *Loves Riddle* (London: John Dawson, 1638), Sig A3r-3v; Joseph Rutter, 'TO THE TRULY NOBLE Sir KENELME DIGBY' in *The Shepherd's Holiday* (London: Nicholas and Jonathan Okes, 1635), Sig A2r; Henry Shirley, 'To the right worshipfull Sir Kenelme Digby, Knight' in *The Martyr'd Soldier* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1638), Sig A2r.

<sup>246</sup> Jonson, *Workes* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig F1r-v.

<sup>247</sup> Michael Foster, 'Digby, Sir Kenelme (1603–1665)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7629>, accessed 2 June 2010].

<sup>248</sup> Thomas May, 'TO THE MOST ACCOMPLISH'D Sr. Kenelme Digby' in *Cleopatra* (London: Thomas Harper, 1639), Sig A2r-2v.

‘literature’. As Digby was in the ‘Tribe of Ben’, he would have been sympathetic to the plight of the playwright and would have supported Jonson’s attempts to make the published play ‘literature’. The choice of such a well-known and sympathetic patron allowed the dramatist a certain leeway in subject matter, expression, or criticism, as a fellow writer would be more generous and more understanding.

Playwrights of the Caroline era wrote dedications more to raise their own status, and highlight their own ideals and wants, than to praise a dedicatee. Patrons seem to have been chosen based on the author’s own ideology and how the patron matched that ideology, rather than what the patron could offer the author. Peter Hausted’s 1632 *The Rival Friends* contains a dedication ‘To the right Honourable, right Reverend, right Worshipfull, or whatsoever he be or shall bee whom I hereafter may call Patron’. He does not have a patron to dedicate his work to, but still appeals to the virtues and knowledge of a typical dedicatee:

IF thou do'st deale with the crackt *Chambermaid*,  
Or in stale *Kinswomen* of thine own do'st trade,  
With which *additions* thou do'st set to sale  
Thy *Gelded Parsonages*, or do'st prevaile  
With thy *despayring Chaplaine* to divide  
That which should be entire, for which beside  
Perhaps hee payes thee too, know that from thee  
(Beest thou *Squire, Knight, or Lord*, or a degree  
Above all these) nor I, nor yet my booke  
Does crave protection, or a gentle Looke:  
But if there be a man, (such men bee rare!)  
That 'midst so *many sacrilegious*, dare  
Be *good* and *honest*, though he be *alone*,  
With such a zeale, such a devotion,  
As th'old *Athenians* were wont to pay  
Unto their *unknowne God*, I here doe lay  
My *selfe* and *booke* before him, and confesse  
That such a *Vertue* can deserve no lesse.<sup>249</sup>

Hausted will dedicate the play to whoever will provide zealous devotion to both the author and work. He does not want to see his name divided from the play, as together they are ‘entire’; the author cannot be separated from the book, nor the book from the author. The importance of the author takes precedence over the dedicatee and Hausted

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<sup>249</sup> Peter Hausted, ‘To the right *Honourable*, right *Reverend*, right *Worshipfull*, or whatsoever he be or shall bee whom I hereafter may call *Patron*’ *The Rival Friends* (London: August Mathewes, 1632), Sig A2r.

will refuse 'Squire, Knight, or Lord' if the potential patron does not follow his desires or directions. However, the unknown face of the actual patron suggests that Hausted wants protection and recognition from *any* source, regardless of status or position. The undefined dedicatee shows just how insignificant the actual patron was and how the dedication focused on the writer and his work, not the recipient.

Hausted's dedication is written in the style of a commendation or a prologue and, as such, makes the author the focus and more important than the dedicatee. The dedication discusses the predatory atmosphere of the theatrical environment:

Reade it (faire Sir) and when thou shalt behold  
The *Ulcers* of the time by my too bold  
Hand brought to light, and *lanch'd*, and then shalt see  
Vice to his face *branded* and told *that's hee*,  
Incircled safe in thine owne goodnesse sit,  
Untouch'd by any line, and laugh at it.  
'Twas made to *please*, and had the *vicious* Age  
Beene *good* enough, it had not left the *Stage*  
Without it's *due Applause*: But since the *times*  
Now bring forth men *enamour'd* on their *crimes*,  
And those the greater number, 'twere *disease*  
To thinke that any thing that *bites* should *please*.  
Had it beene borne a *toothlesse* thing, though *meane*,  
It might have *past*, nay might have *praysed* beene:  
But being a *Satyre*--- no. Such straines of Witt  
Are lik'd the *worse*, the *better* they are writ.  
[...]  
O happy Age! O wee are fallen now  
Upon *brave times*, when my *Lords wrinckled brow*  
(Who perhaps labour'd in some *crabbed Looke*  
How to get farther into'th *silk-mans booke*,  
Not *mind*ing what was *done*, or *said*) must stand  
A *Coppy*, and his *Anticke* front command  
The *censure* of the *rest*, to *smile* or *frowne*,  
Just as his *squeesed* face cryes *up* or *downe*:  
When such as *can judge right*, and *know* the Lawes  
Of *Comaedy*, dare not *approve*, because  
My Ladies *Woman* did forget to bring  
Her Sp--- and therefore swor't a *tedicus thing*.  
But (*knowing Sir*) rancke not your selfe with these  
That *judge not* as things are, but as they *please*.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Hausted, 'To the *Patron*' in *The Rival Friends*, A2r-2v.

The bulk of the dedication attempts to secure a patron worthy to receive the play, a patron who will appreciate it and Hausted's abilities as an author. However, the patron he desires should be more like a commender than a dedicatee, someone who will offer him praise rather than protection or reward. There is also a mention of the 'Ulcers of the time' and the 'straines of Witt' that 'Are lik'd the worse, the better they are writ', notions that were familiar tropes of commendatory verse at the time. The final lines of the dedication lament the behaviour of patrons, which Hausted believes was becoming more irrelevant, critical, and censorious, like the fickle audiences. According to David Kathman:

Despite the king's presence Hausted's play was ridiculed and cried down, in contrast to Thomas Randolph's play *The Jealous Lovers*, which was received much more favourably three days later. Hausted rushed his play into print with a long, defensive 'Preface to the reader' and commendatory verses by two of the actors in the play, Edward Kemp and John Rogers. Randolph, in turn, ridiculed Hausted in his Latin speech *Oratio praevaricatoria* in July, and more subtly in the printed version of *The Jealous Lovers* later the same year.<sup>251</sup>

Since dedicatees are fickle, only the author himself can be trusted to deliver his play, and all the important meanings within, to a reading audience. Hausted wrote this dedication to no one in order to call attention to the author's complete and total authority over the paratext and the play. The practice of tailoring plays for patrons gave way to tailoring patrons for plays. Authors chose patrons who would support their points of view or represent their ideas, rather than writing to someone admired or influential. By choosing a specific dedicatee that reflected his own ideals, the author could advertise himself and his play without worrying about compromise. Thus, authors wrote dedications to friends and peers, well-known members of the gentry who were already close to the author, or on rare occasions no one at all in order to enhance the ideas and position of the author alone.

Dedications to patrons set up the play as a work of literature, evolved from the stage and given new life. Bergeron claims dedications worked to the financial advantage of the author: 'the epistles dedicatory underscore the playwright's determination to make of their writing a published book, available for purchase'.<sup>252</sup> In 'To the Worthily Honoured, Henry Osborne Esquire', James Shirley writes:

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<sup>251</sup> David Kathman, 'Hausted, Peter (c.1605–1644)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12620>> [accessed 19 February, 2010].

<sup>252</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 3.

SIR,

Till I be able to give you a better prooffe of my service, let not this oblation be despised. It is a Tragedy which received encouragement and grace on the *English* Stage; and though it come late to the Impression, it was the second birth in this kinde, which I dedicated to the Scene, as you have Art to distinguish; you have mercy and a smile, if you finde a Poem infirme through want of age, and experience the mother of strength. It is many yeares since I see these papers, which make haste to kisse your hand; if you doe not accuse the boldnesse and pride of them; I will owne the child, and beleeve Tradition so farre, that you will receive no dishonour by the acceptance; I never affected the wayes of flattery: some say I have lost my preferment, by not practising that Court sinne; but if you dare beleeve, I much honour you, nor is it upon guesse, but the taste and knowledge of your abilitie and merit; and while the Court wherein you live, is fruitfull with Testimonies of your mind, my Character is seal'd up, when I have said that your vertue hath taken up a faire lodging. Read when you have leasure, and let the Author be fortunate<sup>253</sup>

Shirley acknowledges the stage as the place where the play originated (or was first born); however, his decision to print, 'yeares' later, changes the aim of the play and the purpose of it. He does not forget or even excuse the presence of the play on stage, but replaces it with the published version, as its 'second birth'. In this 'second birth', the play takes on a whole new and different life in print that is separate from its incarnation on the stage. The printed version has its own set of conditions to follow that were dictated by the play's 'father', the author Shirley. The play is now a 'Poem' in print and not the 'Tragedy' it had been on the stage. However, Shirley does highlight the previous success of the play at the theatre, where it 'received encouragement and grace'. Since the play was popular on stage, it could be assumed that it would find success in print, and thus the protection Shirley seeks seems unnecessary. What does emerge from this dedication is a plea for the author. Shirley makes a request for the restoration of his reputation, rather than his play. When he asked Osborne for preferment, he did so for himself, not the drama. It is my belief that Caroline dedications were not predicated on the play's previous success (or failure) on stage. The author could draw attention to the theatrical play, but need not do so to get his specific message across in the dedication.

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<sup>253</sup> Shirley, 'TO THE WORTHILY Honoured, Henry Osborne Esquire' in *The Maides Revenge* (London: Thomas Cotes, 1640), Sig A2r.

The amount of influence a dedicatee could have over the work seems to have decreased throughout the Caroline era. Although women were unable to participate as actors on ‘the regular stage’, they did have influence on other dramatic endeavours. Women were performing in masques at court and Henrietta Maria was a known advocate of stage plays. Dedicating printed works to women helped to separate the printed play from the staged version and re-aligned drama with poetry, which saw a number of female dedicatees.<sup>254</sup> Bergeron suggests that women had a more indirect influence on the published drama of the Caroline era, even if the actual number of dedications to women was low.<sup>255</sup> In his address ‘To the Truly Noble Ladie Theophila Cooke’ in the translation of *The second part of the Cid*, Joseph Rutter dedicates to a woman because her kind nature and her virtue reflect what happens in the play itself:

MADAM,

IF I had no obligation to your Ladiship, which might challenge my endeavours of honouring you, a fitter or a happier name could not protect this piece, (whose subject is the preferring of Dutie, and respects before Love, as the former did Honour and courage:) which I therefore offer to your Ladiship; because in them there is none better studied than your selfe, in whom I have observ'd from the strength of Vertue, such a serenity as conducts your mind to the performance of whatsoever is fit and decent in humane life. And I remember I had the Honour to heare your Ladiship discourse of this subject, when you concluded that a perfect Lover should submit his desires to his Mistresses advancement: which made mee wish that our French Author had spoken with those Graces here in this, with which your Ladiship then did. But since it pleased his Majesty to thinke it worth the translating, and commanded it to be put into my hands, I will not censure it, though I believe, if that may carry the place which is free from deformities, without excellence before that which is here and there exceeding faire, and as much blemished, I think this may deserve it, which is rather not to be excepted to then much extold [...]<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Shirley, ‘TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, THE LADY DOROTHIE SHIRLEY’ in *The Changes or Love in a Maze* (London: George Purslowe, 1632), Sig A3r-v; John Marston, ‘TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE Lady ELIZABETH CARIE Viscountesse Fawkland’ in *The Workes of John Marston* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1633), Sig A3r-A4v; William Sampson, ‘TO THE WORSHIPFULL and most vertuous Gentlewoman Mistris Anne Willoughby Daughter of the Right Worshipfull, and ever to be Honoured Henry Wiloughby of Risley, in the County of Derby Baronet’ in *The Vow Breaker* (London: John Norton, 1636), Sig A3r-4r; John Ford, ‘To my Deservingly-honoured, IOHN WYRLEY Esquire, and to the vertuous and right worthy Gentle-woman, Mrs MARY WYRLEY his wife, This service’ in *The Ladies Trial* (London: Edward Griffin, 1639), Sig A3r-3v; Joseph Rutter, ‘TO THE TRUELY Noble the Ladie, Theophila Cooke’ in Desfontaines, Nicolas-Marc, *The Second Part of the Cid* (London: Jonathan Okes, 1640), Sig A3r-4r.

<sup>255</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, pp. 73-92, 222-28. Bergeron claims five of the ninety-nine plays dedicated to someone, whether patron or reader, were addressed to women.

<sup>256</sup> Joseph Rutter, ‘TO THE TRUELY Noble the Ladie, Theophila Cooke’ in Nicolas-Marc Desfontaines

Rutter thought the work, like the female patron, ‘exceeding faire’ and that ‘this [quality of both patron and play] may deserve’ praise and commendation. Cooke had previously discoursed on the subject of the play, making her the logical choice as its recipient, and making the role of his female patron perfunctory. Unlike the male patrons frequently chosen by playwrights in the era for their status and their name, female patrons were chosen because of the subject matter of the play or because they were associated with a particular theme. Rutter translated Nicolas-Marc Desfontaines’ work and did not dedicate his own writing to Theophila Cooke. Rutter also makes it clear that Cooke is not the first patron the work has had, when he states that ‘it pleased his Majesty’.

In a dedication to Dorothy Shirley in *The Changes*, James Shirley writes to the wife of Sir Henry Shirley and the youngest daughter of the earl of Essex. Through the dedication, the author aligns himself with a well-known and close-knit coterie of literary patrons and admirers of the arts to whom Ford also wrote. Shirley the author also addresses a woman with whom he shared a surname:

Madam, who make the glory of your blood  
No privilege at all to be less good,  
Pardon the rudeness of a comedy,  
That (taught too great ambition) would fly  
To kiss your white hand, and receive from thence  
Both an authority, and innocence.  
‘Tis not this great man, nor that prince, whose fame  
Can more advance a poem, than your name,  
To whose clear virtue truth is bound, and we,  
That there is so much left for history.  
I do acknowledge custom, that to men  
Such poems are presented; but my pen  
Is not engag’d, nor can allow too far  
A *Salic* law in poetry, to bar  
Ladies th’ inheritance of wit, whose soul  
Is active, and as able to control,  
As some t’usurp the chair, which write a style  
To breathe the reader better than a mile.<sup>257</sup>

This dedication is written in the style of a commendation, in verse form, which detracts from the dedicatee and makes it seem as though it is another prologue or laudatory verse

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*The Second Part of The Cid*, Sig A3r-4r.

<sup>257</sup> Shirley, ‘TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, THE LADY DOROTHIE SHIRLEY’ in *The Changes*, Sig A3r-v.

for the author, rather than an earnest imploration for patronage. The language that the author used is almost the same as that of an actor asking for the approval of a theatre audience. Unlike his previous dedications, James Shirley is not asking for protection, but instead ‘authority and innocence’, neither of which seem to have any real impact on the reception of the play, but do benefit the author directly. The fact that the author also shares a surname with his dedicatee allows him to praise his own name. James Shirley’s discussion of the advancement of the play because of ‘your name’ refers both to his patron and himself. The structure of the dedication to Dorothy Shirley, the talk of the ‘great man’ who writes it and the discussion of the style of writing ‘to breathe the reader’, focuses more on the writer than on the dedicatee. Even when James does refer to the dedicatee, he does so by speaking of the expectations of the author and the forms and circumstances the writer should use as a poet, rather than speaking of the privilege that Dorothy Shirley could provide.

The dedications that accompanied the published plays of the Caroline era were as calculating and strategic as any other form of paratext. Just as some prologues had been satirical in nature, written in an alienating tone in order to make a point (as with Denham’s prologue to *The Sophy*), some dedications were addressed to men who were obviously antagonistic to the author in order to show the absurdity of the opposition’s criticism. Shirley uses this strategy in his dedication to William Prynne in *The Bird in a Cage*.<sup>258</sup> In ‘To Master William Prinne’, Shirley takes the opportunity to ingratiate himself with the court by ridiculing Prynne and mocking his punishment for the slanderous comments he had made about the Queen:

The fame of your *Candor* and *Innocent Love* to Learning, especially to that Musicall part of humane knowledge *Poetry*, and in particular to that which concerns the *Stage* and *Scene* (your selfe as I heare, having lately written a *Tragedie*) doth justly change from me this *Dedication*. I had an early desire to congratulate your happy *Retirement*, but no *Poeme* could tempt mee with so faire a circumstance as this in the Title, wherein I take some delight to thinke (not without imitation of your selfe) who have ingeniously fancied such Elegant and apposite names, for your owne Compositions, as *Health's Sicknesse*, *The Unlovelinesse of Love lockes*, &c.) how aptly I may present you at this time, with *The Bird in a Cage*. A Comedy, which wanteth I must confesse, much of that Ornament, which the *Stage* and *Action* let it, for it comprehending also another

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<sup>258</sup> Shirley, ‘To Master William Prinne Utter-Barrester of *Lincolnes-Inne*’ in *The Bird in a Cage* (London: B. Alsop & T. Fawcet, 1633), Sig A2r-2v.



*Play or Interlude*, personated by Ladies, I must referre to your imagination, *The Musicke, the Songs, the Dancing*, and other varieties, which I know would have pleas'd you infinitely in the Presentment. I was the rather inclined to make this Oblation, that Posterity might read you a *Patron* to the *Muses*, and one that durst in such a *Criticall* Age bind up the Wounds which *Ignorance* had printed upon it and the Professors: Proceed (*Inimitable Mecenas*) and having such convenient leysure, and an indefatigable *Pegasus*, I meane your *Prose* (which scorneth the Roade of Common sence, and despiseth any *Stile* in his way) travell still in the pursuit of new discoveries, which you may publish if you please, in your next Booke of *Digressions*. If you doe not happen presently to convert the *Organs*, you may in time confute the Steeple, and bring every Parish to one Bell.---<sup>259</sup>

By offering up this comical verse to a man who was opposed to drama, Shirley was writing to any and all supporters of the theatre who found Prynne's treatise, *Histriomastix*, offensive, not the least of whom was Queen Henrietta Maria. Shirley goads Prynne with his mention of the 'Stage and Scene' and his reminder of female actors, one of the major contentions in *Histriomastix*.<sup>260</sup> The language that Shirley uses is almost the same as that which he had previously used for his earnest dedications. The similarity, whilst comical when ironically directed at Prynne, also undermines the sincerity of the previous dedications that sought to tempt the patron. It is only in certain instances that Shirley chides Prynne directly for his slanderous attacks on the theatre and on drama as a whole, calling him an 'Inimitable Mecenas' whose work lacks 'Common sence'.<sup>261</sup> 'Mecenas' was a popular address for poetry dedicatees in the era and the use of it here works to redefine the drama as poetry.<sup>262</sup> What Shirley is highly critical of is Prynne's consideration of drama as defiling the press and spreading vice and sin. He complains that Prynne's own treatise is not worthy of print, as it is nonsensical drivel. The decision to dedicate *The Bird in a Cage* to the imprisoned Prynne demonstrates how authors, even when doing so ironically, tailored their dedicatees to their plays.

John Marston wrote a snide and sarcastic dedication to Ben Jonson in *The Malcontent* (1604). In his dedication, Marston attempts to embarrass Jonson in much the same way Shirley's dedication was meant to shame Prynne and his hyperbolic rage

<sup>259</sup> Shirley, 'To Master William Prinne' in *The Bird in a Cage*, Sig A2r-2v.

<sup>260</sup> William Prynne, *Histriomastix the Players Scourge* (London: Edward Allde, Augustine Mathewes, Thomas Cotes and William Jones, 1633).

<sup>261</sup> Shirley, 'To Master William Prinne' in *The Bird in a Cage*, Sig A2r-2v.

<sup>262</sup> D'Avenant, *Madagascar* (London: John Haviland, 1638), p. 50, and Henry Glapthorne, *Poems* (London: Richard Bishop, 1639), p. 29. D'Avenant, *Madagascar* was dedicated to the author's 'Maecenas' Endymion Porter and Glapthorne's *Poems* was dedicated to 'The Wits Maecenas' Charles Cotton.

against the stage. However, unlike Shirley's dedication, there is more evidence to suggest that Marston's dedication was a marketing ploy in the first poet's war, designed to entice literary patrons and continue the famous Poetmachia.<sup>263</sup> The whole dedication itself is five short lines:

BENIAMINI JONSONIO  
POETAE ELEGANTISSIMO GRAVISSIMO  
AMICO SUO CANDIDO ET CORDATO  
JOHANNES MARSTON, MUSARUM ALUMNUS,  
ASPERAM HANC SUAM THALIAM DD<sup>264</sup>

Even if it was not an advertising scheme, the dedication was not as scathing and vicious as Shirley's later mocking of Prynne. Marston never actually says anything negative about Jonson, but instead calls him 'friend' and bestows qualities like honesty and elegance on the 'poet' and his writing. Coming when they did, at the end of the first poet's war, these titles were likely sarcastic, but the plaudits could also have been more honest appraisals of Jonson and his work than Shirley offered to Prynne nearly thirty years later. The first poet's war was fought over ideology and differences in opinion about the place of the play and the author's attitude toward the commercial theatre audiences. Whilst Marston and Dekker seem to have genuinely disagreed with Jonson's satire of rivals and condemnation of his audiences, the result of the verbal spars traded in plays such as *Satiromastix*, *Poetaster*, and *The Malcontent* captivated those same commercial theatregoers and brought them to the theatre. The degree to which Marston was mocking Jonson's haughty elegance or praising his ability to frame the animosity to the advantage of the playwrights cannot be wholly determined. Certainly there seemed to

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<sup>263</sup> Roslyn Knutson *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poet's War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). The first poet's war was about Jonson's claim that commercial theatre audiences were ignorant and inept. This battle could also be seen as a form of commercial collaboration as the playwrights boosted their own plays through the battle of words that ensued. Knutson and Bednarz believe that the Poetmachia was more collaborative than competitive.

<sup>264</sup> John Marston, *The Malcontent* (London: Valentine Simmes, 1604), Sig A3r. Roughly translated, this dedications reads:

Ben Jonson  
Poets of his most heavy a most elegant  
Candid to his friend with honest and well affected  
John Marston, Children of the Muses,  
This his Thalia The bitter DD

be more collaboration in terms of criticism between the combatants of the first poet's war than there was between Shirley and Prynne, or between the rivals of the second poet's war, who also used paratexts to attack one another.

Throughout the Caroline era, the dedication to the patron served, like the commendatory verses, more as an advertising strategy than a request for patronage or protection. The tone of the dedications determined what an author hoped to achieve, not what he could offer his benefactors. Dedications became literary tropes, lacking in sincerity and used merely to advertise the author and to align him with a certain faction. Thinking of print alongside the stage, the author could be more exact in what he demanded from his literary dedicatee. He used the dedications in conjunction with the rest of the play's paratexts to admit his 'true intentions' for the play, and to dictate how a patron or reader should judge the play and the playwright. Through the dedication, the author controlled both the play and, more importantly, who was worthy to receive it.

### Conclusion

In the Caroline era, authors struggled to gain control and authority over the plays they wrote. At the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre there was interdependence between the author, the actors, and the audience, which was necessary in order to ensure the survival of the play and the institution. However, relationships that were necessary at the turn of the seventeenth century to ensure the survival of the dramatic institution and the livelihood of the author changed in the Caroline era. The proliferation of print and the increased frequency of publication gave dramatists more autonomy over their works. The phrase 'Acted with Good Allowance' that appeared on title pages was used to sell plays in print, but carried with it a double meaning. If a play was 'acted with good allowance', it was assumed that it had been performed and enjoyed by theatrical audiences. Printing would change the preconceptions that had been born out of the staging and allowed the author the chance to re-assert a different, specific interpretation. The phrase 'acted with good allowance' was another line of paratext used by the author to remind audiences of the play's previous success. It also reminded them that it had been *acted* and that the printed play was a new version that should be read with the same 'good allowance'.

It was the individual playwright who became the most important agent as he faced competition, rather than cooperation, from peers for the attention of the literary reader. It was not the institution's survival that was under threat, it was the author's reputation and the interpretation of his play that was in jeopardy. Because of the increased fragmentation of the theatre into exclusive and inclusive, and public and private playhouses, playwrights competed against other dramatists for audience attention in the Caroline era. The increase in the use of paratextual material, I argue, shows that Caroline authors needed to clarify their positions in the theatrical and literary communities, as well as their preferences for audience and medium, in order to achieve success. In previous generations, print was an afterthought for the play, but by 1625, the press was a viable alternative to the stage and a means for an author to gain a distinct reputation, independent of the theatre. Whereas the paratext of previous generations introduced the performed play in a printed medium, the paratext written during the reign of Charles I was designed to separate the literary play from the performed drama and, more importantly, distinguish the literary author. The general language and ideas of previous eras' paratext became more sharp and focused in the Caroline era. Dedications focused on the author's relationship with a patron, rather than the patron's worthiness to receive the play. Commendatory verses highlighted the play's printed form and often criticized or even condemned the previous staged versions and the theatre audiences who judged them. Finally, prologues, which had been so integral to the Elizabethan and Jacobean paratextual landscape, became optional in the Caroline era, as authors chose whether or not to remind audiences of the play's connections with the stage.

The competitive struggle among the playwrights was particularly urgent, as they fought with one another for recognition and patronage. One of the biggest battlegrounds was the paratextual material that accompanied the majority of published plays in the era. Jonson had been instrumental in augmenting the importance of paratext, as he used this material to carve out an image for himself as the authority over interpretation and meaning. Jonson dictated to audiences what to think about his work, what to call his plays, and how to address him - as the 'author'. This tight control and emphasis on individual authority had a profound influence on Caroline paratext, as authors such as Davenant and Ford sought to gain more control over their works, whilst men like Brome

stated that such control was not what they sought when writing. Elizabethan and Jacobean paratext generally, and Jonson's specifically, changed the way such material was written and perceived in relation to authorial choice. Because of the examples created by dramatic predecessors, Caroline authors had to include paratext, and sharply defined and specifically focused paratext, which promoted their motivations and their identities. It was here that authors supported their friends and allies, at the same time that they slandered rivals. As a result, I believe paratext was necessary and essential in advertising the author's name and dictating the meanings found within his plays, and to defend authorial choice and control.

## Chapter 2:

### William Davenant: Dependence on the Courtly Coterie

According to Philip Bordinat and Sophia Blaydes, William Davenant was more reliant on peer association and praise than most other writers – both professional and amateur – of the Caroline era.<sup>265</sup> It is the argument of this chapter that Davenant's reputation, his elevated status at court, and the success of his plays resulted, almost entirely, from the printed paratexts that accompanied his plays. Although the paratext aimed to please all audiences regardless of medium or status, his associations with amateur courtly poets and well known courtiers put Davenant in league with the royal circle and at odds with the professional theatre community. His plays, which were often attacked as being sub-standard by professional playwrights, ranged in genre from tragedies to comedies of manners, to city comedies; a diversification he hoped would please all audiences at all public, private, and courtly theatres. As a result, he was considered a hack amongst professional playwrights, while he managed to become a 'poet' at court by writing on subjects that were of interest to the Queen (chaste love and courtly wit) and aligning himself, almost entirely through paratext, with influential men and women.

Davenant's success was built upon associations; he was first linked with William Shakespeare, who was a close friend of the family and who, it was sometimes rumoured, was the illegitimate father of Davenant.<sup>266</sup> As his literary career progressed, Davenant advertised his connections with well-known members of the Caroline court, such as Endymion Porter, John Suckling, and Thomas Carew. These men proved to be valuable allies in the author's attempt to bolster his career and shape his reputation throughout the 1630s. His close ties with these courtiers also allowed Davenant to carve out his own niche at court, where he soon became the humble 'servant' of Queen Henrietta Maria, partner to Inigo Jones, and eventually Poet Laureate in 1638. Whilst Davenant's close ties to the courtier poets (ties he formed and fostered through paratext) earned him a favoured position at court, they antagonized several professional playwrights, including Massinger and Brome. Despite this, Davenant still attempted to cultivate a career for

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<sup>265</sup> Philip Bordinat and Sophia B. Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), p. 12.

<sup>266</sup> Alfred Harbage, *Sir William Davenant: Poet Venturer 1606-1668* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), p. 8.

himself at the commercial theatre and critiqued those same themes that had won him position at court, in an attempt to please these audiences. Despite his regard for the commercial theatre, he could never win the same amount of praise that he received at court, and his admiration for the professional stage quickly turned to resentment and a desire for retribution against those who critiqued his dramas. The paratexts that Davenant included alongside his printed plays show the tension between his desire for acceptance at the commercial theatre, among the audiences and the professional playwrights, and his desire to punish these same groups for rejecting him and his plays. What this chapter analyzes is how Davenant's paratext, although aimed at the commercial theatre audiences, actually advanced his his place at court and his reputation as a skilled, courtly poet-playwright.

Previous scholarship on Davenant has portrayed him as a professional playwright who became popular at Whitehall, or as a courtly playwright who provided for the commercial stage. I believe his desire for acclaim at the commercial theatre was as great as (if not greater than) his wish to be accepted at court. This desire can be seen in the courtly-based and popular-based, sometimes-pandering and sometimes-scolding paratexts that were included alongside his printed plays. His commendatory verses, prologues, and dedications are written in such a way that they seem to come from the viewpoint or the bias of someone other than himself, allowing him to maintain a sort of neutrality between the two stages. Davenant aligns himself with the royal circle *and* the commercial theatre patrons, sometimes in the same paratextual material of a single play, in order to please all tastes. However, his alliances with the court and the resulting popularity he enjoyed there made him an associate of the amateur, courtly poets who were considered the enemies of the professional playwrights. At the same time, his continued insistence on writing for the commercial theatres shows that he wished to become a popular, professional playwright. This chapter argues that Davenant's paratext displays a man who straddles the professional-amateur divide, desiring success and acclaim on both the courtly and commercial stages.

From the very beginning of his life, Davenant's links to the literary world were based on what was said about him. Local rumours circulating around Oxford during his life held that the 'dark lady' of Shakespeare's sonnets may have been Davenant's mother,

making him the illegitimate son of the playwright.<sup>267</sup> Although the rumours surrounding Davenant's true paternity remained long after Shakespeare's death, these issues were never taken too seriously, but did still abound, in Davenant's own life.<sup>268</sup> John Aubrey commented that Davenant 'seemed contented enough to be thought his son'.<sup>269</sup> He did not disassociate himself from any of the questionable claims made concerning his true parentage, but instead used the rumours to further his own dramatic career.<sup>270</sup> Shakespeare provided a dramatic model to the aspiring author, as he had been popular with citizen theatregoers and aristocrats alike; a universal appeal, I contend, Davenant tried to achieve for himself.

When he started to write his first plays, Davenant did so from Fulke Greville's estate, where he served from 1622 until Lord Brooke's death in 1628. Greville was a prominent courtier and respected author himself, with literary ties to Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser.<sup>271</sup> He is credited with several closet dramas, philosophical poems, and political treatises, and it was in this environment that Davenant's literary tendencies were first encouraged and his associations with the court began to form.<sup>272</sup> It was at Greville's estate that Davenant seems to have developed a political consciousness that left him paradoxically critical of the court, but still closely associated with it; a theme that would permeate his dramatic paratext and his literary career.

One of his first plays, *Albovine*, a historical revenge tragedy reminiscent of *Othello*, was critical of the King and met with a great deal of controversy. *Albovine* was a politically charged play about the title king's blinding and misguided passion for a young favourite, Paradine. The resonance with Buckingham and both James I and Charles I,

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<sup>267</sup> John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. by Richard Barber (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1998), p. 90.

<sup>268</sup> See Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>269</sup> Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, p. 90.

<sup>270</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 141 and Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, pp. 90-2. Edmond claims that the growth of the 'Shakespearean Mythos' gained momentum from the start of the Restoration in 1660 and continued on throughout the nineteenth century. Davenant's links to Shakespeare did not solidify until Aubrey first wrote his biographical account and Davenant revived many of Shakespeare's plays.

<sup>271</sup> John Gouws, 'Greville, Fulke: First Baron Brooke of Beauchamps Court', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11516>> [accessed 20 May 2006]. The majority of Greville's literary works 'consisted of lengthy philosophical poems' and the dramas *Mustapha*, *Alaham*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* were written between 1595 and 1600.

<sup>272</sup> Gouws, 'Greville, Fulke', *ODNB*. Greville had been an intricate part of the court for decades, beginning in 1577. He held several high-ranking positions under Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I. Lord Brooke's place at court was not without controversy, and he often wrote critical treatises against the monarchs for their style of governance.



Alfred Harbage suggests, reflected the turbulence of emotions the author felt was circulating at court.<sup>273</sup> As a result of these similarities, the King's Men refused to stage the play. His other early plays, *The Cruell Brother* (1630) and *The Just Italian*, both of which were written at Greville's estate, also failed to impress the Blackfriars audience. These early plays resembled Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedies, histories, and tragicomedies, which show Davenant's desire for acclaim and renown as a professional playwright. When these failed, Davenant turned to print and used paratext to change audience perception and to explain the absence or failure of his dramas on stage.

Davenant initiated the printing of the unacted *Albovine*, which included an unprecedented amount of front matter for a single play.<sup>274</sup> It was also the first play printed in the Caroline era to contain commendatory verses, thus setting a standard for the inclusion of such paratext that became more regular throughout the 1630s.<sup>275</sup> It was largely through the eight peer commendations included in the printed text that Davenant established his reputation. The paratexts he included showed a desire to appeal to the professional theatre audiences, an anxiety about not being able to please them, and then frustration at their condemnation of his plays. The commendatory verses came from members of the gentry and noted literati including: Henry Blount, Edward Hyde, Richard Clerk, Robert Ellice, William Habington, Roger Lorte, Thomas Ellice, and Henry Howard. These verses set stark parameters meant for the reading audience on how to judge the author and the play, both of which had previously been misjudged. All the verses were addressed to a 'friend'; Davenant relied on favourable and seasoned associations rather than an objective audience. Since an 'objective' audience had failed him previously at Blackfriars, Davenant did not want to leave the fate of the published play to chance. Instead, he chose 'friends' who would judge kindly. Since the prologue reminded the reader of the play on stage, the printed version did not contain a prologue.<sup>276</sup> Davenant's words did not reach a theatrical audience and thus in print, he removed any semblance of the actor's voice or reference to the stage. When he printed

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<sup>273</sup> Harbage, *Cavalier Drama*, p. 166.

<sup>274</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 31

<sup>275</sup> See Chandler, *An Anthology of Commendatory Verse*, p. 294.

<sup>276</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 59-77.

the play, Davenant appealed to a new audience, completely removed from the theatre. He targeted members of the Inns of Court and amateur authors, those to whom Greville might have appealed.

Davenant dedicated *Albovine* to Robert Carr, earl of Somerset, who was in Greville's social circle.<sup>277</sup> The decision to dedicate to Carr, who had at one time been the 'most dominant figure in the royal bedchamber', but had fallen swiftly from power due to his suspected role in the Overbury murder, suggests that Davenant was not targeting royal patronage.<sup>278</sup> Carr had been ostracized from the courtly circle in the same manner the play had been ostracized from the Blackfriars stage. The dedication speaks of a sense of injustice for someone wrongly accused, but still condemned and still the target of slander and misunderstandings:

You read this *Tragedie*, and smil'd upon't, that it might live: and therein, your *mercy* was divine; for it exceeded *Justice*. My *Numbers* I not shew unto the publike *Eye*, with an ambition to bee quickly knowne; (for so I covet *noyse*, not *fame*) but that the world may learne, with what an early haste, I strive to manifest my service to your Lordship. I have imaginations of a greater height then these, which I doe also dedicate to your Lordship. And I shall live in vaine, unlesse you still continue to acknowledge [...] Your humblest Creature, *D'avenant*.<sup>279</sup>

Carr had been convicted of murder, but had been pardoned by James, meaning he had 'exceeded Justice'; however, he was still the subject of much gossip and public judgement. Davenant played on this public condemnation in his dedication, comparing himself and the judgement of his play to Carr's situation. Davenant states that he had nothing but pure intentions and wants to advertise those intentions, possibly in the same manner in which Carr had protested his innocence. In one of the commendatory verses, Edward Hyde applauds Davenant's shrewd choice of patron, saying it was the author's 'wit' that had led him to 'purchase' such a notorious figure.<sup>280</sup> He draws a link between the choice of patron and the tragedy:

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<sup>277</sup> Alastair Bellany, 'Carr [Kerr], Robert, earl of Somerset (1585/6?-1645)', ODNB, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4754?docPos=4>> [accessed 26 May 2006].

<sup>278</sup> Bellany, 'Carr [Kerr], Robert', ODNB.

<sup>279</sup> D'Avenant, 'TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARLE OF SOMMERSET' in *Albovine*, Sig A2r.

<sup>280</sup> Bellany, 'Carr [Kerr], Robert', ODNB.

Thy wit hath purchas'd such a Patrons name  
To deck thy front, as must derive to Fame  
These Tragick raptures, and indent with Eyes  
To spend hot teares, t'inrich the Sacrifice.<sup>281</sup>

It is possible Hyde is being ironic in his praise of Davenant and his choice of dedicatee as his words suggest that Carr, with such a fall from favour in the past, is the right kind of patron for a work aimed at drawing tears of pity. However, the 'Sacrifice' Hyde speaks of could have been in reference to the play, which he believes may fail again, possibly due to the choice of commender. Davenant would win 'Fame' (or possibly infamy) for his choice of dedicatee, rather than for his play.

The first commendation came from Henry Blount and mentions the author's divine fate and outstanding abilities, as well as his meriting of the 'Bayes'. The laurel crown is a motif that would appear in commendatory verses addressed to Davenant until the end of the Caroline era, but began in this very first commendation:

Our stately Tragick Scene (whose height disdaines  
Slight humble Muses) courts thy lofty straines:  
And with ambitious love doth clime thy Bayes,  
Whose ample branches her bright glory rayes:  
Whence (as from Heaven) her spacious Eye doth view  
Of storyed teares, and blood, the heavy crue,  
How low they crawl, while she (farre more Divine!)  
Sides great *Sejanus*, and fierce *Cateline*<sup>282</sup>

The mention of 'Sejanus', 'Cateline', and 'the bayes' align Davenant with the Poet Laureate, Jonson. *Albovine* was not a collection of works, as Jonson's 1616 folio had been, but it was described, in commendatory verses, in the same manner. By making the link between Davenant and Jonson, Blount is suggesting *Albovine* is literature and Davenant a poet. His comparison also suggests that Davenant is a literary artist and author who, like Jonson, should be read with a serious and sympathetic eye because what he writes is elevated literature. Jonson had previously complained that commercial theatre audiences were unsympathetic and incapable of understanding his intentions. Davenant, with *Albovine* (as well as *The Cruell Brother* and *The Just Italian*), may have

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<sup>281</sup> Edward Hyde, 'To his friend, Mr. Wm. D'avenant' in D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A2v-A3r.

<sup>282</sup> Henry Blount, 'UPON THE TRAGICK MUSE OF MY HONOUR'D FRIEND, Mr. Wm. D'AVENANT' in D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A2v.

felt the same animosity toward the Blackfriars' theatregoers. In this first published commendatory verse, Blount bestows the laurel crown upon the author before comparing him to Jonson, in order to season Davenant and his play's reception.

The second dedication was from Hyde who, like Davenant, was a young man, full of ambition and who rose to high social standing through associations. 'His interests in "polite learning and history" helped him to become involved in the circles of London intellectuals more or less closely attached to the Inns of Court, especially those around Jonson'.<sup>283</sup> Hyde's association with Jonson made his verse a logical follow up to Blount's commendation. Hyde's epistle calls attention to his position as Davenant's 'friend', at the same time it highlights the very practice of relying on friends for commendations:

Why should the fond ambition of a friend,  
With such Industrious accents strive to lend  
A Prologue to thy worth? Can ought of mine  
Inrich thy Volume? Th' hast rear'd thy selfe a Shrine  
Will out-live Piramids; Marble Pillars shall,  
Ere thy great Muse, receive a funerall<sup>284</sup>

The commender emphasizes Davenant's ability and feels compelled to comment on the play, even if his words are simply perfunctory and 'industrious'. Hyde suggests the practice of commending a 'friend' might lead others to find fault with his verse. However, as Davenant's play was the first to contain commendatory verses in the Caroline era, the excuse and questioning seems pre-emptive. Such peer 'puffing' would become the source of much contention in Davenant's career, and this verse seems to anticipate this contention. Hyde also lends Davenant a 'Prologue' in the form of his commendation. As the printed play did not contain a prologue, this verse is meant to serve the purpose of connecting the author with the literary audience and directing how they should react to the play. By calling specific attention to the lack of a theatrical prologue, Hyde distanced the play from the stage, rebranding it as a literary work, rather than a mere play.

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<sup>283</sup> Paul Seaward, 'Hyde, Edward, first earl of Clarendon (1609–1674)', ODNB, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14328?docPos=4>> [accessed 26 May 2006].

<sup>284</sup> Hyde, 'To his friend, M<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. D'avenant' in D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A2v.

Two more of Davenant's dedicators were Robert and Thomas Ellice, both members of the Inns of Court and close friends and commenders of John Ford. These men represented an important faction among the professional, dramatic community: young, leisurely audience members with substantial wealth.<sup>285</sup> Davenant was not a member of the Inns of Court and the inclusion of their dedications seem to be an attempt, by the author, to win the affections of the young, middle-class theatergoers, who were often treated better than the citizen audiences.<sup>286</sup> The verse from Robert Ellice compares Davenant to other dramatists and his work to classical tragedy:

Be then assur'd, this Tragick straine shall live  
A patterne for th' next age to imitate,  
And to the best wits of our times shall give  
Just cause of envy, for thy learned Fate.<sup>287</sup>

The ideas and images Robert Ellice uses - the 'wits' of the day, the envy of rivals, the discussion of the fame and worth of the poet's 'Name', and the play-as-poem - became standards of commendatory verse throughout the 1630s. Robert Ellice's, alongside the other encomiastic verses in *Albovine*, created templates at the same time that they used and re-introduced ancient and classical images that had previously been employed by the great 'author' and 'poet' Jonson. Although Robert Ellice suggests that Davenant's work would be imitated, what actually formed a 'pattern' was the paratext. Although the play would not be imitated, the tone and imagery of the commendations were.

Henry Howard, the future earl of Arundel and staunch defender of the King, also contributed a verse to *Albovine*. Howard, like Robert and Thomas Ellice, was a member of the gentry who had ties to Ford's circle.<sup>288</sup> His commendation sounded cliché at times, already imitating, in content, the verses that had come before.<sup>289</sup> Howard mentions the censure of the play, the playwright's ability, and the fame that should accompany the author's name for such a skilled piece of writing:

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<sup>285</sup> Ira Clark, *The Moral Art of Philip Massinger* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1993), pp. 16-17 and Mary Hobbs, 'Robert and Thomas Ellice, Friends of Ford and Davenant', *N&Q*, 21 (1974), 292-93 (p. 293).

<sup>286</sup> See Neill, 'The Audiences of the Caroline Private Theatres', 342.

<sup>287</sup> Robert Ellice, 'To my deserving Friend, the Author' in D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A3r.

<sup>288</sup> John Ford, *Honour Triumphant* (London: G. Eld, 1606), Sig A2v.

<sup>289</sup> J. T. Peacy, 'Howard, Henry Frederick, fifteenth earl of Arundel, fifth earl of Surrey, and second earl of Norfolk (1608-1652)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13915?docPos=4>> [accessed 26 May 2006].

Hast thou unmaskt thy Muse? And shall the Aire  
 Breathe on her matchlesse Fabrick? then repaire.  
 To some soft censure, lest the churlish scene  
 Of Ignorance accrues thy recompence;  
 And hudwinkt Error doe surprize the Fame  
 Due to thy Story, and Verona's name,  
 Whose limits *Plinies* and *Catullus* bred,  
 But in thy Muse her joyes are centupled:  
 For her invention, truth, rare wit, and state;  
 Copper-lac'd Christians cannot personate.<sup>290</sup>

Howard first recalls the erroneous ‘censure’ of the play and then mentions ‘Pliny’ and ‘Catullus’, which provided classical comparisons for Davenant. ‘Copper-lac’d Christians’ reminded audiences of the Elizabethan professional theatre, specifically Dekker’s *Satiromastix* from which Howard borrows the phrase:

Thou art the true arraign'd Poet, and shouldst have been hang'd, but for one of these part-takers, these charitable Copper-lac'd Christians· that fetcht thee out of Purgatory, (Players I meane) Theaterians pouch-mouth Stage-walkers.<sup>291</sup>

The term ‘Copper-lac’d Christians’ comes from Dekker’s defence of actors against a justly arraigned poet. Dekker’s ‘Copper-lac’d Christians’ (actors) offered salvation and recognition to haughty poets. In *Satiromastix*, Tucca makes a speech about the actors saving the life of the author Horace (Jonson’s representative in the play). Dekker’s account of the poor, Christian actors provided a source of abuse of the profession by Howard, in defence of Davenant. Howard’s actors, however, are simple and unable to fulfill Davenant’s vision. The actors had dismissed Davenant’s play and, as a result, his life as a professional playwright had been jeopardized. Howard suggests that the ‘Copper-lac’d Christians’ were unable to perform Davenant’s play with the reverence and justice it deserved and, therefore, they refused to act. *Satiromastix* was widely known as a critique written by a defender of the professional stage to an arrogant ‘author’ who blamed others for his failures. Davenant blamed the actors, which aligned him with the Horace/Jonson character.

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<sup>290</sup> Henry Howard, ‘To his worthy friend, M<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. D'avenant’ in *Albovine*, Sig A4r and Dekker, *Satiromastix* (London: Edward Allde, 1602), Sig I3v. ‘Copper-lac’d Christians’ appeared in *Satiromastix*. Howard’s reference to the play, which was a defense of the commercial theatre above the private theatre, aligns Davenant with the popular playwrights of the Elizabethan era.

<sup>291</sup> Dekker, *Satiromastix*, Sig I3v.

‘Wit’ was one of the most coveted and admired qualities of dramatists writing in the 1630s. When Davenant’s admirers lauded the author’s wit in the commendatory verses, it was the first instance of such praise being bestowed on a contemporary in the paratext of a Caroline era play. Five of the seven plays printed in 1629 had commendations that made reference to the author’s great ‘wit’.<sup>292</sup> However, Davenant’s was the first, and because of *Albovine*’s paratexts ‘wit’ became a staple description in Caroline front matter. Prior to 1629, wit was not lightly bestowed on authors by commenders: it was earned. Many of Jonson’s paratexts contained references to his wit. In *Sejanus*, it is ‘Cygnus’ who commended Jonson’s wit, whilst Francis Beaumont did so in *Volpone* and again in *Catiline*.<sup>293</sup> Beaumont was very conscious of ‘wit’ himself and in his dedication to Fletcher’s *Faithful Shepherdess*, he writes:

Why should the man, whose wit nere had a staine,  
 Upon the publike stage present his vaine,  
 And make a thousand men in judgement sit,  
 To call in question his undoubted wit,  
 Scarce two of which can understand the lawes  
 Which they should judge by<sup>294</sup>

While Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher were men that commanded praise for their wit, rarely did someone else receive the accolade (and thus the comparison with these men) until Davenant re-introduced the term in the paratext of *Albovine*. However, ‘wit’ meant different things to different people. Robert Ellice mentions other ‘wits’ who will envy Davenant’s writing, while Howard talks of the ‘rare wit’ of Davenant’s muse. Hyde does

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<sup>292</sup> In 1629 five plays were printed which used the word ‘wit’, in the paratext, to describe the author. J. R., ‘The Printers Epigrammaticall Epistle to the *understanding Reader*’ in Lodowick Carlell’s *The Deserving Favourite* (London: 1629), Sig A2v; Hum. Howorth, ‘To the Author, Master *John Ford*’ in Ford, *The Lover’s Melancholy*, Sig A3v; Hyde, ‘To his friend, Mr. Wm. D’avenant’ in D’Avenant, *Albovine* Sig A2v; Thomas May, ‘To his deserving Friend Mr. *Philip Massinger*, upon his Tragaedie, the Roman Actor’ in Massinger *The Roman Actor*, Sig A3v; and Ford, ‘Of this Ingenious Comedy the *Wedding To Mr. James Shirley* the Author’ in Shirley, *The Wedding*, Sig Av.

<sup>293</sup> Cygnus, ‘To the deserving Author’ in Jonson, *Sejanus* (London: 1605), Sig A2r; Francis Beaumont, ‘To my deare friend, Mr. Benjamin Jonson, up his FOXE’ in Jonson, *Volpone* (London: 1607), Sig A2r; and Beaumont, ‘To my friend Mr. Ben: Jonson, upon his *Catiline*’ in Jonson, *Catiline*, Sig A3r. ‘Cygnus’ writes: ‘when I view / The wit, the workmanship, so rich, so true’ to which he is referring to Jonson’s literary ability. Beaumont claims: ‘all sorts should equally approve the wit, / Of this thy even worke’ in *Volpone* and then commends Jonson’s supreme wit in *Catiline*: ‘And (I dare say) in it, there lies much Wit / Lost, till thy Readers can grow up to it’. These are, by no means, the only instances of ‘wit’ being used prior to the Caroline era to describe the author or his work, but the term was frequently used to describe Jonson and his works.

<sup>294</sup> Beaumont, ‘To my friend Maister John Fletcher, upon his faithfull Shepheardesse’ in Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess* (London: Edward Allde, 1610), Sig A4v.

not laud Davenant's literary 'wit' or dramatic capabilities, instead he praises the author's strategic 'wit' in choosing a patron. Davenant's commendations in *Albovine* were provided by a mix of young gentlemen, members of the Inns of Court, and literary connoisseurs - men he believed commanded respect and who he saw as 'wits'. By creating this coterie of 'wits' in his published paratext, Davenant could situate himself as a leader, at the same time that he aligned himself with Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher - the great wits of the past.

Lorte, Howard, Hyde and Blount's dedications also served to advertise the author under a new name: D'Avenant.<sup>295</sup> Davenant and his commenders' attempts to align the author with the gentry appeared in the form of an 'aristocratic apostrophe'.<sup>296</sup> Mary Edmond claims the apostrophe 'linked [him] with fanciful claims that the family had come originally from Lombardy'.<sup>297</sup> It was his way of telling the literary community and the gentry that he was well bred and worthy of acceptance into the highest social echelons. Its place in the verses demonstrated how much Davenant relied on others to promote his name and his reputation, but also to defend them. Thomas Ellice seems to be defending the apostrophe in the very same paratext that introduced it:

Let not loud Envy's sulph'rous blasts cast forth  
Venom'd aspersions, on thy noble worth:  
'Gainst saucy Criticks thou need'st no defence,  
Whose sacred lines, arm'd with sweet eloquence,  
Are prooffe against their censures, whoo'd prophane.  
With their bold breath, the glory of thy straine:  
[Wise men] shall sing the prayse of thy deserts,  
And voyce thee glorious both in Armes and Arts.<sup>298</sup>

Thomas Ellice's commendation speaks of the 'loud Envy' that was aimed at Davenant. However, the play had not been staged and, therefore, no 'loud' criticism had been heard when Thomas Ellice penned these lines. There had been no 'Venom'd aspersions' cast against this particular play by a theatrical audience. The criticism being hurled at the author's 'noble worth' suggested it was the name change and the apostrophe that Thomas

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<sup>295</sup> D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A2v-A4r. Roger Lorte addressed his verse to 'To my Friend, M<sup>r</sup>. D'avenant', Howard wrote 'To his worthy friend, Mr. Wm. D'avenant', Hyde commended 'his friend, M<sup>r</sup>. W<sup>m</sup>. D'avenant' and Blount's first verse was titled 'UPON THE TRAGICK MUSE OF MY HONOUR'D FRIEND, Mr. Wm. D'AVENANT'.

<sup>296</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 36.

<sup>297</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 36.

<sup>298</sup> Thomas Ellice, 'To his much-honour'd friend, the Author' in D'Avenant, *Albovine*, Sig A3v-4r.



Ellice was defending, rather than the play. ‘Envy’s sulph’rous blasts’ were directed at Davenant’s ‘noble worth’ and status. The ‘aristocratic apostrophe’ was designed to simulate nobility, and thus any criticism mentioned by Thomas Ellice seemed aimed at Davenant’s social climbing rather than his play. Seemingly before the name change even happened, the author and his defenders knew it would cause controversy and draw criticism. Thomas Ellice’s verse both shaped and defended Davenant’s name and his reputation as an aristocrat.

Davenant’s third play to be published, *The Just Italian*, was staged at the Blackfriars, but also failed to impress the audience, further distancing him from the professional theatre.<sup>299</sup> Like *Albovine*, the printed version of *The Just Italian* relied on Davenant’s association with well-known and influential courtiers for redemption. His dedicatee Edward Sackville, the earl of Dorset, and the courtier poets who wrote commendatory verses, William Hopkins and Thomas Carew, were chosen to save the play and give it new life in print. The dedication to Dorset continues with the sentiment that the commercial theatre audiences are ignorant and unable to comprehend the author’s genius:

The uncivill ignorance of the People, had depriv'd this humble worke of life; but that your Lordships approbation, stept in, to succour it. Those many that came with resolution to dispraise (knowing your Lordships judgement, to be powerfull, above their malice) were eyther corrected to an understanding, or modesty: And this large benefit, hath betray'd your Lordship to a Dedication. I am bold to beleeve, fancies of this composure, have beene nobly entertayn'd, by the most knowing Princes of the World: The ignorance, that begets the change in this our age, it may become your Lordships example, to correct, mee to lament; if so tame a passion, can possesse a Poet, and one, exalted with a hope to be receiv'd [...] Your Lordships humble Servant, WILLIAM D'AVENANT.<sup>300</sup>

According to David Smith, ‘Dorset spoke regularly in defence of the royal prerogative’ and was intensely loyal to Henrietta Maria.<sup>301</sup> Davenant’s suggestion that Sackville will correct or silence opponents because of his opposition to malicious ‘dispraise’ may have

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<sup>299</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 40.

<sup>300</sup> D’Avenant, ‘TO THE RIGHT Honourable, The Earle of DORSET’ in D’Avenant, *The Just Italian*, Sig A2r-2v.

<sup>301</sup> David L. Smith, ‘Sackville, Edward, fourth earl of Dorset (1590–1652)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24444>>, [accessed 5 July 2010]. Sackville did not reveal his ire for those who criticized the King and Queen until Prynne’s *Histriomastix* was printed in 1633.

been what prompted the dedication. Davenant believes the audience had come to the theatre determined to condemn his play, but Dorset's approval will silence this criticism. The dedicatee's example will make the literary audience re-consider the play and the previous critiques of it. Davenant laments 'the uncivill ignorance of the People' who 'had depriv'd this humble worke of life', which began a career-long defence against 'malice' and 'dispraise', particularly from commercial theatre audiences. However, as Edmond suggests, the dedication also resulted in hostility from the professional playwriting community over Davenant's choice 'to align himself decisively with the royalists'.<sup>302</sup> Although he was not yet fully integrated into a royal coterie, his dedication to Sackville, a member of Charles and Henrietta Maria's circle, suggested that Davenant's allegiance was moving away from the professional theatre toward the court.

The first commendation in the play was from Hopkins. Hopkins called *The Just Italian* a 'legitimate poem' and put Davenant in a different league, outside of the 'playwrights' and alongside the dramatic 'poets'.<sup>303</sup> Although Hopkins hinted at Davenant's elevated status above the professional theatrical community, it was a verse from the courtly poet Carew that drew the most attention and caused ire in the professional, theatrical community. In the verse, he chided the Blackfriars audience who condemned the play, which sparked a series of heated exchanges between professional playwrights Massinger and Brome, and courtiers Carew and Davenant. This battle of words, fought almost entirely through paratext, began with Carew's verse and defined the second poet's war:

Ile not misspend in prayse, the narrow roome  
 I borrow in this leafe; the Garlands bloome  
 From thine owne seedes, that crowne each glorious page  
 Of thy triumphant worke; the sullen Age  
 Requires a Satyre. What starre guides the soule  
 Of these our forward times, that dare controule,  
 Yet dare not learne to judge? When didst thou flie  
 From hence, cleare, candid Ingenuity?  
 I have beheld, when pearched on the smooth brow  
 Of a fayre modest troope, thou didst allow  
 Applause to slighter workes; but then the weake

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<sup>302</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 41.

<sup>303</sup> Will Hopkins, 'To my Friend M. D'AVENANT, on his legitimate Poeme' in D'Avenant, *The Just Italian*, Sig A3r.

Spectator, gave the knowing leave to speake.  
 Now noyse prevayles, and he is taxd for drowth  
 Of wit, that with the crie, spends not his mouth.  
 Yet aske him, reason why he did not like;  
 Him, why he did; their ignorance will strike  
 Thy soule with scorne, and Pity: marke the places  
 Provoke their smiles, frownes, or distorted faces,  
 When, they admire, nod, shake the head: they'le be  
 A scene of myrth, a double Comedie.  
 But thy strong fancies (raptures of the brayne,  
 Drest in Poetique flames) they entertayne  
 As a bold, impious reach; for they'l still slight  
 All that exceeds Red Bull, and Cockepit flight.<sup>304</sup>

Carew states that he would not write praise when the age needed satire; however, instead of satirizing the author, he criticizes the audience and those judging the play. He was concerned not only with Davenant's success, but also with the desires of the audiences. He implies that the Blackfriars audience is unable to correctly judge such 'candid Ingenuity'; at the same time, the spectators at the Red Bull are compared to the Cockpit audiences. Because all 'Spectator[s] judge with an 'ignorance' that will 'strike [Davenant's] soule with scorne', the author should disregard their verdict, taking praise instead from his peers. He compares Davenant with contemporary theatre greats, suggesting the audience would even criticize Beaumont and Jonson, whose collective literary genius is embodied in the writing of Davenant:

These are the men in crowded heapes that throng  
 To that adulterate stage, where not a tong  
 Of th'untun'd Kennell, can a line repeat  
 Of serious sense: but like lips, meet like meat;  
 Whilst the true brood of Actors, that alone  
 Keepe naturall unstrayn'd Action in her throne  
 Behold their Benches bare, though they rehearse  
 The tearser *Beaumonts* or great *Johnsons* verse.  
 Repine not Thou then, since this churlish fate  
 Rules not the stage alone; perhaps the State  
 Hath felt this rancour, where men great and good,  
 Have by the Rabble beene misunderstood.  
 So was thy Play; whose cleere, yet lofty strayne,  
 Wisemen, that governe Fate, shall entertayne.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>304</sup> Carew, 'To my worthy Friend, *M. D'AVENANT*' in D'Avenant, *The Just Italian*, Sig A3v.

<sup>305</sup> Carew, 'To my worthy Friend, *M. D'AVENANT*' in D'Avenant, *The Just Italian*, Sig A4r.

Like Jonson and Beaumont, Davenant had been a professional playwright who found fault with commercial theatre audiences. Jonson temporarily left the commercial stage to write masques in 1616. One of the reasons he did so was because he believed the audiences at the commercial theatres were too unappreciative and ignorant to understand his works and to give him the full credit and respect he felt he was due.<sup>306</sup> Beaumont, although a professional, did make fun of theatrical audiences for their outlandish desires and excessive demands in *Knight of the Burning Pestle*.<sup>307</sup> Carew aligned Davenant with these dramatic masters (an association that would be repeated throughout his career) to show the author's skill. This association also chided the commercial theatre audiences, who had displayed ignorance in rejecting Davenant's plays; in the same way they had offended the greats Jonson and Beaumont, so too were they foolishly rejecting Davenant.

In response to this exaggerated commendation, Massinger lashed out at Carew for offering praise for what he considered a substandard play. He claimed *The Just Italian* was deserving of the ill fate it received, and any attempt to claim otherwise was simply pandering and 'puffing'.<sup>308</sup> In a revised but unpublished prologue to *The Maid of Honour*, Massinger parodied Carew's erotic poem 'A Rapture' and set up a commercial theatre community that rejected 'hacks' such as Davenant and courtly amateurs such as Carew.<sup>309</sup> Massinger attacked Carew, rather than Davenant, because he saw Davenant as a frivolous upstart whose presence on the professional stage was to be short-lived and non-threatening. Massinger believed commercial theatre audiences were knowledgeable and discerning and would not allow talentless, out-of-touch amateurs to disparage the authors, actors, and audiences at the professional theatre; thus they rejected Davenant's play. The prologue speaks out against the unnecessary publication of such literary nonsense. Massinger himself did not initiate the publication of this prologue, to demonstrate his point about unnecessary print.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Jonson, *Bartholomew Faire*, Sig A3r. In 'The Prologue to The King's Majesty' Jonson sympathizes with the king who had to endure, what Jonson considered to be the grumbings of an uneducated populace. For the entire prologue, see Appendix D, p. 262.

<sup>307</sup> See Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1613).

<sup>308</sup> Garrett, *Massinger: The Critical Heritage*, p. 59.

<sup>309</sup> Massinger, *The Mayde of Honour* in Garrett, *Massinger*, pp. 60-61; Steggle, *War of the Theatres*, p. 113. Steggle contends that this revised prologue by Massinger and aimed at Davenant and, to a greater extent, Carew was the first major blow in the second poet's war.

<sup>310</sup> Garrett, *Massinger*, p. 59. Garrett got the prologue from Trumbull Add. MS51, Berkshire Record Office, Reading as edited by Peter Beal in 'Massinger at Bay: Unpublished Verses in a War of the Theatres',

In the opening lines of Carew's commendation he borrows 'narrow roome' in Davenant's book; he will not take up a large amount of space in commending Davenant as the work commends itself. These lines also suggest that the borrowing of 'roome', by Carew, will be returned by Davenant. A defense of Carew appeared entitled: 'To my honored friend Mr Thomas Carew at Sr: Richard Leightons house in Boswell Court'. This poem circulated in manuscript form and was an anonymous answer to Massinger's revised prologue. Beal suggests that Massinger likely knew the identity of his detractor and that there is a very strong likelihood, but no definitive proof, that it was Davenant's rebuttal.<sup>311</sup> In the poem, the defender challenges Massinger's right to criticize Carew:

[so] this Mechanicke playwright craves a parte  
in sacreet Poesey brings his flat  
dull dialogues fraught with insipit chatt  
Into the scale with thy sweete Muse, which sings  
Ditties fit only for the eares of Kings.<sup>312</sup>

The detractor views Massinger as a 'Mechanicke' playwright who writes in a perfunctory manner. The suggestion that this 'insipit chatt' is not good enough for 'the eares of Kings' separates Massinger, his play, and the playwrights of the professional theatre he represents from the amateur courtly authors and their dramas. The author of the poem suggests that Carew's writing, as well as his own, are fit for the 'eares of Kings', but not the ears of those at the commercial theatre. The notion that being a professional was menial or 'dull' is introduced; a notion that perpetuated the second poet's war and further alienated Davenant from the commercial stage.

Massinger responded to the anonymous poem with 'A Charme for a Libeller'. The verse was written to combat the growing influence the courtiers were having on the commercial stage. The belief that such authors were debasing dramatic standards and writing for their own leisure rather than the entertainment of audiences is at the heart of the poem. When he revised his prologue to *The Maid of Honour*, Massinger had not seen Davenant as a threat, but rather viewed Carew's 'puffing' as the real problem.

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*Yearbook of English Studies*, 10 (1980), 190-203. Massinger's prologue was probably included in the 1630 revival of the play, but was not included in the 1632 printed version.

<sup>311</sup> See Garrett, *Massinger*, p. 60. Garrett took the poem from Trumbull Add. MS 51, Berkshire Record Office, Reading, as edited by Peter Beal in 'Massinger at Bay', 193-95.

<sup>312</sup> D'Avenant, 'To my honored friend Mr Thomas Carew at Sr: Richard Leightons house in Boswell Court' in Garrett, *Massinger*, p. 62.

Commendations like Carew's bolstered false reputations that then affected what audiences wanted and expected. However, in 'A Charme for a Libeller', Massinger took direct aim at the 'anonymous' critic who wrote 'To my honored friend Mr Thomas Carew at Sr: Richard Leightons house in Boswell Court'. The response makes references that appear to indict Davenant as the guilty party behind the anonymous defence.<sup>313</sup> Massinger chides the unnamed poet for copying more successful poets and hiding behind commendations:

I'me in my Circle & I have thee here,  
 ragg of a Rime &, if thou dar'st, appeare,  
 son of the people, thinge without a name.  
 How shall I raise thee or wth what arte frame  
 an answeare to thy nothinge? Take what shape  
 thou can'st put on, Confirme thy selfe the ape  
 of thy admired Idoll, proude to bee  
 knowne for his parasite & profess't to bee;  
 or if soe habited thou[r]t not secure  
 Come armed wth thine owne slaunders. Ile endure  
 thy seight & teach thy ignorance reasons why  
 Thou art oblig'd to give thy selfe the lye.<sup>314</sup>

Massinger begins by talking about being in a circle, to conjure his invisible detractor and make the 'thinge without a name' appear to face his criticism. He is also in a professional, theatrical 'circle' to which the 'thinge without a name' does not belong. The courtiers in the professional circle were damaging 'art' and perpetuating false reputations with their inaccurate and unfounded commendations. Massinger believes that Carew jeopardized the integrity of the theatrical institution by writing a dedication to such a substandard play and such an undeserving playwright. He viewed Davenant's writing as parasitic and also uses the term 'ape' to expose Davenant's imitation of others, a term that had been used in the first poet's war:

Confirme thy self the ape  
 of thy admired Idoll, proud to bee  
 knowne for his parasite<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 201-02.

<sup>314</sup> Massinger, 'A Charme for a Libeller' in Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 196-99.

<sup>315</sup> Massinger, 'A Charme for a Libeller' in Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 196-99.

Massinger was eager to establish the ‘respectability of writing public plays rather than private poems’.<sup>316</sup> He also wanted to show that Davenant was wholly reliant on others and would do or say anything to further his name, including aping ‘admired Idolls’ and lying to himself about his abilities. The use of the term ‘Idolls’ suggests a falseness that is being admired and emulated, whilst the real talent of the professional playwrights was being ignored or even rejected. Davenant admired false ‘Idolls’ and modelled his plays on courtly dramas, stealing ideas from others and passing them off to commercial theatre audiences. Massinger also comments on Davenant’s feigned anonymity in writing the response to the original criticism of Carew: ‘Must I make warr against anemie / That dares not shew his face’.<sup>317</sup> He continued the theme in the ‘Charme’ when he calls Davenant the ‘thinge without a name’. Massinger believed Davenant disguised his identity and hid behind his more respected and more renowned courtly peers.

It was after the publication of *The Just Italian* that Davenant began to rely almost entirely on others to cultivate his reputation. His paratext established Davenant as a writer with strong courtly connections and separated him from the professional dramatic community. Although some of Davenant’s paratexts paid homage to staunch professionals like Dekker (such as the verse written by Robert Ellice), it was ultimately Carew’s commendations and the ensuing paratextual spars with Massinger that put Davenant in an amateur, courtly coterie and solidified professional resentment against him. His struggle in the second poet’s war was fought largely by others on his behalf, rather than with his own pen. This reliance on peers would continue throughout his career as courtly allies ‘puffed’ him up. Davenant’s success at court resulted from the men who offered commendatory verses to him and to whom he dedicated his printed plays. However, the content of his self-authored paratexts centred on the commercial theatre and the author’s desire to win acclaim from audiences at the Blackfriars. Davenant had a hard time pleasing the audiences of the commercial theatre, and when he did, he could not sustain a favourable reputation there. Rival professional dramatists, as well as commercial theatregoers, saw through the generic and misleading paratexts that were meant to portray the author as a man worthy of patronage at the Blackfriars. As a result,

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<sup>316</sup> Garrett, *Massinger*, p. 63.

<sup>317</sup> Massinger, ‘A Charme for a Libeller’ in Beal, ‘Massinger at Bay’, 196-99.

Davenant's connections, which he promoted in his paratext, earned him acclaim on the courtly stage and with the Queen.

### Davenant's Rise to Fame and Prominence

After the publication of *The Just Italian*, Davenant disappeared from both the courtly and commercial stages because of syphilis. When he returned to playwriting in 1634, he wrote his most crowd-pleasing play, *The Witts* (discussed at length at the end of the chapter), which increased his profile at both Blackfriars and Whitehall. Between 1635 and 1636 he wrote two masques, *The Temple of Love* and *The Triumphs of the Prince D'Amour*, and two plays for the commercial theatre, *News from Plymouth* and *The Platonick Lovers*. His two masques pandered to the courtly taste for platonic love and won over the Queen's affections.<sup>318</sup> The two commercial plays also reflected on Henrietta Maria's favourite subject, but were satires on the theme; a bid to win the favour of the theatrical audiences who may have found chaste love unreasonable or ridiculous.

However, his attempts to please both the courtly and commercial audiences betrayed an anxiety about being rejected by both. In *The Triumphs of the Prince D'Amour*, Davenant expressed this fear in the paratext 'To the Reader', where he criticized the judgements of the public readers and commercial theatregoers despite the masque's royal audience:

'Though some Truthes are not conveniently urg'd, this I was forc'd to say in a malignant time, when most men strive to raise themselves a reputation of witt, by Cavill and Dislike'.<sup>319</sup> The notion of raising 'a reputation of witt' through criticism was fresh in Davenant's mind after having been attacked by Massinger, who exuded both 'Cavil' and 'Dislike' for his plays. The reference to such slights in the paratext of a masque suggests the criticism hurt Davenant, who ultimately craved success at the commercial theatre.

However, Davenant relied on commendations from his courtly allies to create a reputation as a wit, which caused the animosity with professionals, such as Massinger.

While he was trying to improve his reputation at the commercial theatre, Davenant was also enticing royal favour by writing masques that were based on courtly

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<sup>318</sup> D'Avenant, *Triumphs of the Prince D'Amour* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1635), and Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 62.

<sup>319</sup> D'Avenant, 'To Every Reader' in *Triumphs of the Prince D'Amour*, Sig A3v.



themes. Davenant's first collaborative masque, *The Temple of Love*, written with Inigo Jones, was received at court with enthusiasm and earned the playwright a spot as the Queen's 'servant'.<sup>320</sup> Although it was Jones who was the driving force behind the masque, the collaboration did allow Davenant to gain a stronger foothold at court. The masque not only won him favour, it also replaced and eradicated the memory of the previous masques, which did not wholly please the Queen.<sup>321</sup> Chastity was viewed by Henrietta Maria as one of the supreme virtues and was seen as a possible cure for the sexual licentiousness running rampant at the court. She established platonic love as a game to entice doubtful courtiers into practice, thereby convincing them of its merits.<sup>322</sup> Davenant wrote on the theme to please the Queen and to criticize his masque-writing rivals. He depicted those authors who had preceded him, Carew, Shirley, and Suckling, as failed magicians.<sup>323</sup> The ideas set forth by Davenant's poetic predecessors were no longer relevant, but through this satire of his rivals, Davenant took his place as the new court poet-playwright.

Davenant satirized the theme of platonic love in his commercial play *The Platonick Lovers*, written for the Blackfriars stage in the same year as the similarly themed masque. Since his reputation at court was secure, thanks in large part to *The Temple of Love*, Davenant went back to the professional stage to try, once more, to gain a reputation as a celebrated, professional playwright. However, *The Platonick Lovers* failed to impress the Blackfriars audience and again Davenant turned to print to revive the play, using paratext to find a more accepting audience and repair his reputation. The play was dedicated to the Queen's favourite courtier Henry Jermyn. According to Anthony Adolph, Jermyn's 'close relationship and increasing influence with Henrietta Maria caused gossip as early as the 1630s and Davenant may have intended an ironic allusion to

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<sup>320</sup> The title page to *The Temple of Love* refers to Davenant as 'her Maties. Servant'.

<sup>321</sup> See Aurelian Townshend, *Tempe Restored* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1632); James Shirley, *The Triumph of Peace* (London: John Norton, 1634); Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum* (London: 1634); Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 51; and Brian Weiser, 'Sites of Cultural Stress from Reformation to Revolution: Masques' <[http://www.folger.edu/html/folger\\_institute/cultural\\_stress/court\\_masque.html](http://www.folger.edu/html/folger_institute/cultural_stress/court_masque.html)> [accessed 1 August 2010].

<sup>322</sup> Lesel Dawson, "'New Sects of Love': Neoplatonism and Constructions of Gender in Davenant's *The Temple of Love* and *The Platonick Lovers*' in *Early Modern Literary Studies* 8.1 (May, 2002), paragraphs 1-36 (paragraph 10) <<http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls>> [accessed 20 October 2004].

<sup>323</sup> In *The Temple of Love*, Davenant introduced three magicians who are likely representations of Carew, Shirley, and Suckling.

the pair in his play'.<sup>324</sup> The address to Jermyn speaks of the boldness of his dedication and possibly to Jermyn's own boldness with regard to the Queen:

I have boldly fix'd you name heere, to shew the world where I have settled my estimation and service: and expect, it should adde much to my judgement, that I have made so excellent a choice. When you have leisure, and can a little neglect your time, bee pleas'd to become my first reader. If it shall gain your liking, the severe rulers of the stage will be much mended in opinion; and then it may be justly acknowledg'd you have recover'd all the declining fame, belonging to Your Unfortunate Servant, William D'avenant.<sup>325</sup>

Davenant's mention of Jermyn's 'leisure' to read shows a more relaxed, less constrained attitude toward his dedicatee's reception. The verse is also less pandering and more self-confident in tone than other dedications. Davenant's assertion that the 'severe rulers of the stage will be much mended in opinion' suggests the courtly patron will intervene to prevent the mistakes made by the commercial theatre audiences from impacting upon the author's reputation. Davenant's belief in his own abilities, at least to please the court, is hinted at as well: 'I have settled my estimation and service: and expect, it should adde much to my judgement, that I have made so excellent a choice'. The author praised his own wit and judgement in his choice of dedicatee, rather than the virtue of the patron. Although Davenant was simply a writer at court, this dedication made him seem much closer to the royal circle.

The divides that existed among the courtly and commercial stages (and within Davenant himself) were made manifest in the paratexts of *The Platonick Lovers*. According to Lesel Dawson, 'the appeal of Davenant's play to its [commercial theatre] audience was strengthened by the esoteric nature of Platonism, and its association with the court'.<sup>326</sup> However, rather than give his audience the courtly themes that were becoming more popular on the commercial stage, he criticized the unattainable nature of platonic love. In the prologue, the speaker proclaims Davenant's bafflement at the audience's desire for such lofty, but confusing ideals:

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<sup>324</sup> Anthony R. J. S. Adolph, 'Jermyn, Henry, earl of St Albans (bap. 1605, d. 1684)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14780>> [accessed 16 Aug 2010].

<sup>325</sup> D'Avenant, 'To the most Noble Mr. Henry Jermyn' in *The Platonick Lovers*, Sig A2r.

<sup>326</sup> Dawson, "'New Sects of Love'", paragraph 11.

*'Tis worth my smiles, to thinke what inforc'd waies  
And shifts, each Poet hath to helpe his Plaies.  
Ours now believe, the Title needs must cause  
From the indulgent Court, a kind of applause,  
Since there hee learn't it first, and had command  
T'interpret what hee scarce doth understand.<sup>327</sup>*

The play satirizes platonic love and highlights the pretence of its practice. There are two sets of lovers: Theander and Eurithea, who practice chaste love, and Phylomont and Ariola, who engage in physical love. The platonic lovers are 'gradually, and humorously, disabused of their belief in the worth and even possibility of platonic love'.<sup>328</sup> The speaker reveals, to the audience, the author's disbelief in the concept of platonic love, saying he wrote on the subject to win favour with the Queen. However, the opening lines suggest Davenant will do whatever it takes to win favour - even if it's 'inforc'd'. He, like other poets, will try any 'waies and shifts' to help his 'Plaies'. The speaker also complains that the idea of platonic love sprang from the machinations of an 'indulgent Court' that is prone to foolish whims and detached from the everyday world. This phrase could also suggest that Davenant wrote the play to 'court' 'a kind of applause' from the 'indulgent' audience at the commercial theatre. The prologue comments on the city audience (rather than the courtly) who cannot understand even the title. Because of Davenant's doubt, the speaker believes the audience will ultimately reject the play and the author will, once again, fail to win the admiration he coveted.

Although Davenant appeared critical of chaste love, having written this chastising prologue, he did not wholly denounce the idea. The prologue speaker condemns the notion and ridicules the author for writing about it, which shifted the usual alignment of the actors and audience against the author to an alliance between the author and the audience against the actor. The actor 'smiles' at the attempts of the author to please his audience and win a favourable reception. As Davenant had struggled to gain acceptance at the commercial theatre, the actor acknowledges his repeated attempts to 'help his Plaies' by flattering different audiences. In this instance, Davenant tries to please the

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<sup>327</sup> D'Avenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, Sig A3r.

<sup>328</sup> David Michael Robinson, 'Pleasant conversation in the seraglio: lesbianism, platonic love, and Cavendish's Blazing World', *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 44 (2003), 133-66, online access < [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-3481801/Pleasant-conversation-in-the-seraglio.html](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-3481801/Pleasant-conversation-in-the-seraglio.html) > [accessed 29 July, 2010].

Blackfriars audience by giving them a play about a theme he himself did not understand or wholly believe:

*But all these easie hopes, I'de like t'have marr'd,  
With witnessing his Title was so hard,  
'Bove halfe our Citty audiences would be lost,  
That knew not how to spell it on the Post.*<sup>329</sup>

The prologue's criticism of platonic love also shows how little the audience comprehended the subject, even though, according to the speaker, the author himself could scarcely interpret it. There is noticeable scorn for the commercial theatre audiences who the speaker accuses of not understanding the courtly theme, yet wanting it in a child-like, jealous fashion. However, Davenant uses the voice of the prologue to chide the audience and himself, which aligns the author with the theatregoers. Davenant's reliance on others to win favour and status for him continued even in the paratexts that he wrote himself.

Davenant's critique of the audience being unable to 'spell [the Title] on the Post' seems to have come from a commendation written by Beaumont to Fletcher for *The Faithful Shepherdesse*. Beaumont's commendation talks about a judgemental audience and an author full of wit who suffers unfairly at the hands of the commercial theatregoers who rejected his play:

For this, these publicke things and I, agree  
So ill, that but to do aright to thee,  
I had not bene perswaded to have hurld  
These few, ill spoken lines, into the world,  
Both to be read, and censurd of, by those,  
Whose very reading makes verse senceles prose,  
Such as must spend above an houre, to spell  
A challenge on a post, to know it well,  
But since it was thy happe to throw away,  
Much wit, for which the people did not pay,  
Because they saw it not, I not dislike  
This second publication, which may strike  
Their consciences, to see the thing they scornd,  
To be with so much will and art adornd.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> D'Avenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, Sig A3r .

<sup>330</sup> Beaumont, 'To my friend Maister John Fletcher' in *The Faithfull Shepherdesse*, Sig A4v.

Beaumont's verse looks forward to the publication of the play, where it will be received by a kinder audience who will not only be able to 'spell' the title, but will also understand the author's message. The author will then receive the praise that he deserves, but was withheld at the commercial theatre. By referencing the Beaumont verse, Davenant aligns himself with Fletcher and Beaumont, but also includes a slight criticism of the audience for the fickle and often abrupt judgements against his plays. He too seems to look forward to the play's publication.

The epilogue to *The Platonick Lovers* departed in tone from the prologue, this time speaking about the theme of chaste love and the virtue and honour of the women who championed it. The epilogue distances Davenant from his male audience members; because they did not understand the theme, their judgements are therefore unimportant to the author:

*Unto the Masculine I can afford  
By strict Commission scarce one courteous word  
Our Author hath so little cause to boast  
His hopes from you, that hee esteemes them lost,  
Since not these two long houres among'st you all  
Hee can find one will prove Platonicall<sup>331</sup>*

The actor speaks on behalf of the author who is dejected and doubtful of the play's success. The speaker then goes on to address the women directly, appealing to their better judgements and seemingly more platonic natures, claiming, jokingly, that all women are lovers of chastity. The speaker implies that Davenant wrote the play with women in mind, but specifically one woman, the Queen:

*But these soft Ladies, in whose gentle eyes  
The richest Blessings of his Fortune lyes,  
With such obsequious homage hee doth greet,  
As hee would lay his Laurell at your feet:  
For you (hee knowes) will thinke his Doctrine good  
Though't recreate the Mind and not the Blood.<sup>332</sup>*

The speaker claims that Davenant humbled himself but remained anxious and desirous of the 'soft Ladies' kind applause. Davenant's appeal to the women resulted from his close affiliation with the Queen. As her humble 'servant', his position at court was safe, and he

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<sup>331</sup> D'Avenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, Sig L1v.

<sup>332</sup> D'Avenant, *The Platonick Lovers*, Sig L1v.

was able to mock (through the mouth of his prologue) the theme of courtly love. This mockery was done in an attempt to impress audiences and gain popularity outside of the courtly circle, and yet the author's association with the court, and the Queen, remained in the prologue. Although the speaker states that the author would lay the 'Laurell' garland at the feet of the female audience members for their acceptance, the only woman who could provide Davenant with this crown was the Queen. Davenant attempts to appeal to all women in the epilogue, but there is only one woman whose judgement truly mattered. However, Davenant does not advertise his position as the Queen's favourite, for fear of alienating those theatregoers who resisted courtly ideals, nor does he outright condemn the Queen's favourite subject, and thus offend her. Through the situating of the author with both the court and the professional stage, through the mouthpiece of the prologue speaker, Davenant attempted to win over both audiences. His reliance on others and his changeable commitment to both the courtly and professional stages show how the anxious author, desirous of pleasing all audiences, used the voice of other agents, in his paratext, to win favour.

Between 1636 and 1637, when the theatres were closed due to the plague, Davenant returned to writing for the court, bolstering his reputation there by writing two more masques with Jones - one for Twelfth Night and another for Shrove Tuesday. These two masques celebrated the opulence and conspicuous consumption of the court. The first masque, *Britannia Triumphans*, lauded the King's fierce independence and his divine leadership in making decisions for the Kingdom. Charles is represented in the masque by Britanocles, 'the glory of the Western world', who quells acts of rebellion and ignorance with his 'knowledge of all good Arts and Sciences'.<sup>333</sup> The masque, although a lavish spectacle, was dwarfed by its successor, which was commissioned by the Queen. *Luminalia*, or *The Festival of Light* was, according to Edmond, 'Inigo Jones's most elaborate aerial spectacle'.<sup>334</sup> The introduction to the masque, as printed in the 1638 edition, highlighted only Jones's role:

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<sup>333</sup> D'Avenant, 'The Subject of the Masque' in Inigo Jones, *Britannia Triumphans* (London: John Haviland, 1638), p. 2.

<sup>334</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 67.

The Queene commanded *Inigo Jones* Surveyor of her Majesties works, to make a new subject of a Masque for her selfe, that with high and hearty invention, might give occasion for variety of Scenes, strange apparitions, Songs, Musick and dancing of severall kinds; from whence doth result the true pleasure peculiar to our English Masques, which by strangers and travellers of judgement, are held to be as noble and ingenious, as those of any other nations.<sup>335</sup>

By writing this masque, Davenant became an advertiser for the nation. It was his job, along with Jones, to ‘make a new subject of a Masque’ that could reflect, on an international scale, the grandeur and ‘pleasure peculiar’ to England and the English monarchy. These masques were greeted with enthusiasm by the King and Queen and did more for Davenant’s literary career than they did for the already established and esteemed Jones. It was through the writing of these masques and his place as one of the Queen’s favourites that Davenant won the title of Poet Laureate.

The performance of the masques was what was all-important and therefore Jones’s role was the critical one, with Davenant acting merely as a facilitator for the architect’s designs. Henrietta Maria ‘commanded’ Jones to create the masque even though Davenant had, by this time, written two masques with Jones and *The Triumphs of the Prince D’Amour* on his own. Davenant appeared meek and eager to please the senior and more established courtiers, thereby becoming the humble ‘servant’ of the courtly stage. As this secondary role kept him in favour at Whitehall, Davenant was content to let Jones take the majority of the credit for the staged masques.<sup>336</sup> He seemed to have learned from the mistakes made by Jonson, who was not prepared to subordinate himself and, as a result, fell out of favour with Jones and the royal couple. As the chief masque writer after 1635, Davenant’s descriptions flattered the majesty of the royals, the court circle, and Jones. Whilst it was Davenant who was responsible for the literary masque, it is Jones who had been ‘commanded’ to write an entertainment, and thus controlled it, effectively removing any authority that Davenant had over the interpretation of the text.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> D’Avenant, *Luminalia* (London: John Haviland, 1637), p. 1.

<sup>336</sup> D’Avenant, *Luminalia*, p. 1. The first line of the paratext states: ‘The Kings Majesties Masque being performed, the Queene commanded Inigo Jones Surveyor of her Majesties works, to make a new subject of a Masque for her selfe’.

<sup>337</sup> Bordinat and Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 62.

Shortly after these masques were staged, Davenant tried, once again, to win favour with the audiences at the Blackfriars theatre. *The Unfortunate Lovers* appeared in the spring of 1638, and although it was meant for the professional theatre, the first staging was an exclusive, royal occasion. The Queen hired the theatre for the first performance and paid the actors ten pounds, the equivalent salary for a private staging at court.<sup>338</sup> It was then played again at the Cockpit at Whitehall and later at Hampton court.<sup>339</sup> Despite the royal audience, the play shared common themes with a number of broadsheet ballads and contained elements (love, misery, morality) that were popular in lyric form at the time.<sup>340</sup> Davenant again criticized chaste love, which is ultimately defeated by the malevolent schemes of devious men and women. The unfortunate lovers, Altophil and Arthiope, are the subjects of jealous plots designed to win carnal passions and to corrupt true, platonic love and steadfast reputations. In the end, only one of the six main characters (and neither lover) survives.<sup>341</sup> The misunderstandings that arise from the practice of chaste love were the subject of Davenant's criticism. He seemed determined to prove to the audiences that he was a professional playwright, capable of pleasing the diverse tastes found at the commercial theatres and not just catering to the tastes of the Queen.

By 1638 Davenant was a celebrated dramatist at court and believed that a return to the professional stage would be met with a warmer reception. The prologue to *The Unfortunate Lovers* reflected the change in Davenant's attitude toward the courtly and commercial stages. Instead of trying to win favour with commercial theatre audiences and begging for their acceptance, the author flaunted his success as the Queen's favourite. The prologue displays resentment toward the commercial theatre audiences and their right to judge. Previously the author had styled himself a professional playwright who earned at least part of his livelihood through the sale of his plays to the King's Men.

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<sup>338</sup> Bordinat and Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 17.

<sup>339</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 67.

<sup>340</sup> See Joseph H. Marshburn and Alan R. Velie, *Blood and Knavery: A Collection of English Renaissance Pamphlets and Ballads of Crime and Sin* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1973) p.12-16 and Joshua Fisher, "He is turned a ballad-maker": Broadside Appropriations in Early Modern England', *Early Modern Literary Studies* (2003), 1-21 <<http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/09-2/fishball.html>> [accessed 20 April 2005].

<sup>341</sup> Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by Henry B. Wheatley, 8 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), XIII (1905), p. 370. Pepys called *The Unfortunate Lovers* 'no extraordinary play'.



However, his ties to the court and his relationship with the Queen led the speaker, in this prologue, to style Davenant as a gentleman, amateur playwright. The judgement exercised by the Blackfriars theatregoers alienated Davenant and the prologue severs the ties between himself and the audience, thereby forcing the speaker to act as a mediator between the two:

*Were you but halfe so humble to confesse,  
As you are wise to know your happinesse;  
Our Author would not grieve to see you sit  
Ruling with such unquestion'd power his wit:  
What would I give, that I could still preserve  
My loyaltie to him, and yet deserve  
Your kinde opinion, by revealing now  
The cause of that great storme which clouds his brow,  
And his close murmurs, which since meant to you,  
I cannot thinke, or mannerly or true.*<sup>342</sup>

The prologue speaker desires to remain faithful to both the audience and the author. He exaggerates the divide, making it seem as though there is a sense of betrayal in the actors choosing either Davenant or the Blackfriars theatregoers. The speaker's mention of the 'close murmurs' of the author against the audience would be used by Davenant two years later, when he spoke of the rebellious 'murmur' of theatre audiences in the masque *Salmacida Spolia* (1640):

*Murmur's a sicknesse epidemicall;  
'Tis catching, and infects weake common eares;  
For though those crooked, narrow Alleys, all  
Invaded are, and kil'd by Whisperers.*<sup>343</sup>

These later audience 'murmurs' that denounced Davenant's commercial plays first appeared in *The Unfortunate Lovers*. The actor confides in the audience that Davenant still believes they have the power to condemn his play through their 'close murmurs'. At the beginning of the prologue, the actor thinks the audience will cry down the play, and sides with them against the poet, thus making a joke out of Davenant's concerns. The author is both anxious of such condemnation and aggrieved at the proud audiences who judge him.

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<sup>342</sup> D'Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig A3r.

<sup>343</sup> D'Avenant, *Salmacida Spolia* (London: Thomas Harper, 1640), Sig D1v.

The critical view of the author toward the commercial theatre audiences was still present in the prologue, as the speaker relates all that the playwright does for the unappreciative spectators:

*Yet I'll informe you what this very day  
Twice before witness, I have heard him say,  
Which is, that you are growne excessive proud,  
For ten times more of wit then was allow'd  
Your silly Ancestors in twenty yeere,  
Y'expect should in two houres be given you here  
[...]  
Such dull and humble-witted people were  
Even your fore-fathers, whom wee govern'd here;  
And such had you seen too hee swears, had not  
The Poets taught you how t'unweave a plot,  
And tract the winding Scenes, taught you to admit  
What was true sense, not what did sound like wit.<sup>344</sup>*

The speaker talks of the great dramatic legacy of the Blackfriars theatre, which boasted the most talented 'Poets' of the previous eras (likely Beaumont and Jonson). Davenant, the contemporary embodiment of these 'Poets', wrote his play for those true dramatic connoisseurs who could distinguish 'what was true sense' from 'what did sound like wit'. Throughout his career, he made connections between himself and the theatrical greats of the past in order to win praise from commercial theatregoers. Davenant believes the theatrical audiences of previous eras once approved of all that the author wrote, but now they are too critical. However, it also suggested the author is unable to give them what they want. A sense of respect by the actors for the author is absent, as is a sense of respect for poetry:

*I begin to be resolv'd, and let  
My melancholy tragicke Mounseieur fret;  
Let him the severall harmelesse weapons use  
Of that all-daring trifle, call'd his Muse<sup>345</sup>*

The speaker calls Davenant his 'melancholy tragic mounseieur', thereby mocking his fears of rejection. The mention of his 'harmelesse weapons' suggests an authorial impotency and inability to please the audience. He is only able to offer 'trifles' which will not please, but which the speaker will not 'fret' about. The combination of anxiety and

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<sup>344</sup> D'Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig A3r-3v.

<sup>345</sup> D'Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig A3r.

criticism over the commercial audience's acceptance of his play marks Davenant's desire for approval and his disdain for the rejection he so often faced. By allowing the speaker to voice opinions for him, Davenant is able to both align himself with and distance himself from the Blackfriars audience. He indirectly criticizes himself in hopes of gaining sympathy from the audience that he feels judge him and his plays unfairly.

The prologue praises the audiences of the past, but does so ironically as 'dull and humble-witted people' who would applaud anything. The speaker laments this by-gone era as contemporary audiences chide all they see:

*Thus they have arm'd you 'gainst themselves to fight,  
Made strong and mischievous from what they write:  
You have bene lately highly feasted here  
With two great wits, that grac'd our Theatre,  
But, if to feed you often with delight,  
Will more corrupt then mend your appetite;  
Hee vowes to use you, which he must abhorres,  
As other did, your homely Ancestors.<sup>346</sup>*

The others who have 'grac'd our Theatre' could be a reference to the courtier playwrights Lodowick Carlell and John Suckling who had their plays staged at Blackfriars in 1637, prior to *The Unfortunate Lovers*.<sup>347</sup> Carlell and Suckling also wrote their plays, *Arviragus and Philicia, part 2* and *Aglaura*, on 'courtly' themes.<sup>348</sup> Carlell's *The Passionate Lovers* is a tragicomedy about platonic love. Charles Henry Clay characterized the play as 'a triumph of idealization', in the same vein as Davenant's own *The Temple of Love*.<sup>349</sup> Suckling's *Aglaura* is a generic satire about platonic love that mirrors Davenant's *The Platonick Lovers* and even borrows lines from it.<sup>350</sup> Suckling's *The Goblins* also preceded Davenant's play on the Blackfriars stage and is similar to *The Witts*.<sup>351</sup> David Rosen described *The Goblins* as being about 'court intrigue, brothers, mistresses, lovers, and virtuous men and women',<sup>352</sup> He goes on to say that 'Suckling

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<sup>346</sup> D'Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig A3v.

<sup>347</sup> Carlell's *The Passionate Lovers* and Suckling's *Aglaura* and *The Goblins* preceded Davenant's play at the Blackfriars theatre in 1637.

<sup>348</sup> Lodowick Carlell, *Arviragus and Philicia, part 2* (London: John Norton, 1639); STC 4627 and John Suckling, *Aglaura* (London: John Haviland, 1638).

<sup>349</sup> Charles Henry Clay, *Lodowick Carlell: his life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905), p. 50.

<sup>350</sup> Robert Wilcher, *The Discontented Cavalier: The Work of John Suckling in Its Social, Religious, Political, and Literary Contexts* (Cranbury NJ: Associated University Press, 2007), pp. 212-13.

<sup>351</sup> *The Witts* is discussed in greater detail as the focused case study of this chapter, pp. 127-40.

<sup>352</sup> David Rosen, 'John Suckling' in *Encyclopaedia of British Humorists*, ed. by Stephen H. Gale (New

manages to create the language of witty gentlemen [...] The wit of his creations is ready and rash, like that of an amusing drinking companion, the dashing gentlemanly dog-about-town playing dress-up ruffian or bumpkin, being bawdy and sly'.<sup>353</sup> The subject of *The Unfortunate Lovers* departs from Carlell's and Suckling's, but still offers the audience a tragedy about platonic love. Yet the mention of those playwrights who preceded him at the theatre reminds the audience of the court and Davenant's connection to it. Davenant, and his commenders, often compared him to other playwrights and his plays to those past theatrical greats in an attempt to associate him with commercial theatre audiences. The prologue compares him to Beaumont and Jonson, whilst similarities between Davenant's plays and those of Suckling and Carlell remind the audience of his ties to the court.

The epilogue to *The Unfortunate Lovers* continues with an examination of the strife that existed between Davenant and the professional theatre factions. The speaker's opening lines hint at hostility between the playwright and the audience:

*Our Poet in his furie hath profest,  
Yet gravely too, with's hand upon his breast,  
That he will never wish to see us thrive,  
If by an unhumble Epilogue we strive  
To court from you that priviledge to day  
Which you so long have had to damne a Play  
'Las, Gentlemen, he knowes, to cry Playes downe  
Is halfe the businesse Termers have in towne;  
As they can first contemne, bee't right or wrong,  
Your wives and Countrey friends may power exact  
To finde a fault or two in every Act:  
But you by his consent most kindly shall  
Enjoy the priviledge to raile at all.*<sup>354</sup>

The actor proclaims that Davenant will do anything to discourage the actors from begging for applause. The audience members appeared proud and privileged, able to 'cry downe' a play and 'damne' it - not out of dislike, but out of practice and fashion. The speaker jokes that this play will offer no exception and the audiences 'shall' enjoy their usual privilege of crying down the author. The epilogue also points out that those most

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York: Garland, 1996), p. 1084.

<sup>353</sup> Rosen, 'John Suckling' in *Encyclopaedia of British Humorists*, ed. by Gale, p. 1084.

<sup>354</sup> D'Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig G4v.

given to criticism are the least competent to understand and appreciate dramatic prowess. Davenant suffered harsh critiques previously, but this epilogue suggests that he will one day join in with the audience in abusing poets, actors, and those on the commercial stage, once he no longer had wit enough to write:

*And he, he hopes, when age declines his wit  
From this our stage; to sit and rule i'th pit;  
Heaven willingly, shall assume a Charter firme,  
As yours, to kill a Poet every Terme.  
And though he never had the confidence,  
To tax your judgement in his owne defence,  
Yet the next night when we your money share,  
Hee'll shrewdly guesse what your opinions are.*<sup>355</sup>

The actor reminds the audience that Davenant was afraid and rueful of their habit of condemning plays. The speaker suggests that the vocal criticism of the play does not always reflect the audience's attitude, and that tomorrow, when the actors and author share the take from the performance, they will have an indication of the audience's true judgement. The financial gains showed the true worth of the playwright and often contradicted the audience's reception. In fact, the audience's vitriol seemed frivolous, and despite their criticism, theatregoers have been, and still are, unable to 'kill' the 'Poet', who had already received money for the play and built a successful reputation at court. Davenant was not bothered to 'tax [their] judgements', as he knows the audience have already paid for what he gave them and, since this is the epilogue, they have already witnessed the play. The epilogue generally asked the audience to report favourably on the play so as not to jeopardize future performances. This epilogue, however, seems to taunt the audience, suggesting the author did not care about the audience's enjoyment, only about collecting theatregoers' money. However, the author still expresses a desire to join the audience members, even if it is to judge others.

It was not until 1643, five years after it had first been performed, that *The Unfortunate Lovers* reached the publisher, but not as the result of Davenant's initiative. According to Bordinat and Blaydes, the play was published after the closure of the theatres and Davenant's imprisonment to demonstrate the continued activity of the

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<sup>355</sup> D'Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig G4v.

courtiers, despite the growing power and opposition of the Puritans in London.<sup>356</sup>

However, the paratexts flattered the professional theatrical community as much as a royal audience. There are no commendatory verses included in the published version, which suggests that none of his former courtly commenders were willing to risk their names in siding with the disgraced dramatist. The dedication to Philip Herbert was not written by Davenant, but by his former commender and close friend William Habington.<sup>357</sup> Even after his departure from the professional and courtly stages, Davenant relied on his peers to promote him and his writing. Habington, as Davenant's friend and ally, was familiar with the author's personal desires as well as his professional endeavours and was able to speak with authority on behalf of the author. A staunch royalist himself and a relative through marriage of Philip Herbert, Habington wrote:<sup>358</sup>

My Noble Lord,  
The naturall affection, which by the successive vertue of your Family you have alwayes borne to *Poetry*, engages me in the absence of the worthy Author, to present your Lordship this piece, that you, the best *Maecenas* of the age, might Patronize this best of *Playes*. Had M<sup>r</sup>. *Davenaut* himselve beene present, hee would have elected no other Patron but your Lordship, and in his absence I beseech you accept this Worke of his; whose excellence, I hope, will excuse his boldnesse, who had no other ambition in the dedication, but that he might by publicke profession be known to be that which has long time been in his private affection, The humble honourer of your Name and Family.<sup>359</sup>

This dedication is not political, nor does it criticize any of the factions at the commercial theatre. Instead, it is a plea from Habington to Herbert to accept the play and give Davenant favourable publicity, which he was lacking after having been convicted of treason. Davenant's career had been largely built on others speaking for him and his plays, and in this dedication, his intentions are again expressed by someone else. Habington states that the dedication was written only to honour Herbert; however the patron did have the ability to improve Davenant's reputation with both the court and the public. Habington hopes that re-associating the author with the distinguished and highly

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<sup>356</sup> Bordinat and Blaydes, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 20.

<sup>357</sup> David L. Smith, 'Herbert, Philip, first earl of Montgomery and fourth earl of Pembroke (1584–1650)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13042?docPos=4>> [accessed 26 May 2006].

<sup>358</sup> Robert Wilcher, 'Habington, William (1605–1654), *poet*', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11833>> [accessed 16 September 2008].

<sup>359</sup> Habington, 'To the Right Honourable Philip Earle of Pembroke and Montgomery' in D' Avenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers*, Sig A2r.

respected patron of the arts Herbert, who was a loyal patron of Massinger as well, would put Davenant back in favour.<sup>360</sup> By making a ‘publicke profession’ of Davenant’s admiration for the earl of Pembroke, Habington declares Davenant’s affiliation with both the public and the courtly stages.

After his widespread acknowledgement as the Queen’s favourite and his new, although unofficial, title of Poet Laureate, Davenant was fully established at court and no longer needed to please or win praise from any other audience. Despite this, he still wanted to conquer the professional stage. In 1638, he teamed with Suckling in an attempt to build a professional theatre like the stage at Whitehall on which his plays had been so successful and well received. His attempts demonstrated a hope of reconciling the professional and courtly stages, but with the courtly stage as the dominant influence and Davenant acting as the theatre manager. When the plan failed, he set his sights on acquiring a theatre already established, and when William Beeston ran into controversy surrounding the staging of Brome’s *The Court Begger*, Davenant took over as manager of the Cockpit in 1640. His time at the helm of Beeston’s theatre was short-lived and in 1641, Davenant was declared guilty of high treason, arrested, and put in the Tower. His professional rival Brome satirized this fall from grace in a revival of *The Weeding of Covent Garden* that same year. However, the commercial theatres closed not long after in 1642 and did not re-open again until 1660 when, ironically, Davenant became a central figure at the commercial, professional theatre.<sup>361</sup> Davenant’s career, like his paratext, moved between polar opposites of approval and scorn. His desire to be successful on both the professional and the courtly stages manifested itself in anxious and angry paratext that both scolded and begged commercial theatre audiences for approval.

### *The Witts*

In 1634, after the poor fate of *Albovine*, *The Cruell Brother*, and *The Just Italian* at the Blackfriars theatre, as well as a three-year absence from the professional playwriting community due to syphilis, Davenant returned to the commercial stage with *The Witts*.

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<sup>360</sup> Smith, ‘Herbert, Philip’, *ODNB*.

<sup>361</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 170-71 and 174-81.

The play was Davenant's first true success in the professional theatre and 'the most perfect comedy as regards plot, character, and language that appeared during the latter portion of the reign of Charles I'.<sup>362</sup> *The Witts* is not about courtly wit, but a city comedy about a young man, Pallatine the Younger, who lives and loves successfully, although impoverishedly, by his wits. His brother, the country gentleman Pallatine the Elder, comes to London to seek his fortune by duping and cajoling the citizens in order to advance in society. The elder Pallatine fails in his numerous pursuits and ends up being duped by his younger, smarter brother who is a true, honest wit. Gerald Langbaine, a Restoration biographer of pre-Civil War drama, believed the main characters in the play were based on Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *Wit at Several Weapons*.<sup>363</sup> Davenant's return to the commercial stage saw him drawing from the success of two popular Jacobean playwrights. In the play, Davenant tried to draw parallels between himself and the many factions at the professional theatre, including the great playwrights of the past as well as the commercial theatregoers who may have been dubious of the court. With the failures of his previous plays, Davenant realized he could not dupe the Blackfriars audience. Instead, he needed, like Pallatine the Younger, to use wit to impress them. The subject matter of the play champions the citizens rather than the courtiers. However, the printed version of *The Witts* (1636) contains paratexts that aligned Davenant with the court: a dedication to Endymion Porter and an address to the reader from Carew. The play and the circumstances surrounding its inception, its staging, and its printing demonstrate Davenant's fluctuating alliances and desires as regard his affiliation with the commercial and courtly stages. The paratext supported Davenant's place at court, but often contradicted and undermined his desire for acceptance on the commercial stage, which is demonstrated throughout the play.

Mirroring Davenant's own circumstances, the play focused on a young wit who is at the mercy of others and has to depend on aristocrats, the gentry, and the citizens to get what he wants. In reality, members of the gentry and the court sustained Davenant's playwriting career after the failure of his first three plays on the commercial stage. The gentlemen in the play are easily duped and made to look foolish, whilst in Davenant's

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<sup>362</sup> Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 50. Edmond is quoting 'the editors of the play'.

<sup>363</sup> Gerald Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (London: L. L., 1691), p. 216.



everyday life it was the courtiers (and Henrietta Maria herself at the time the play was printed) who upheld his reputation. Even *The Witts*, which was a success at the Blackfriars but met with controversy before it was staged, was rescued by the prominent courtier Endymion Porter, who interceded on Davenant's behalf to ensure it was played. *The Witts* provides an example of how Davenant's paratext did not always lead to the recognition he wanted or align him with his preferred audience. However, it also shows how powerful paratext was, as it made the author of a play mocking the gentry into a court favourite.

The Master of the Revels, Henry Herbert, censored the play before it was to be staged. Herbert found the play too blasphemous to be performed. The contentious words were 'faith', 'death', and 'slight' as they seemed to Herbert to be oaths rather than 'asseverations'.<sup>364</sup> However, rather than changing his play, Davenant enlisted the help of the established courtier and patron of the arts Porter, who pleaded Davenant's case to Charles to have the ruling over-turned. Charles allowed *The Witts* to be staged at Blackfriars in 1634 and even ordered it to be played at court.<sup>365</sup> Herbert noted that the first staging of the play met with 'a various fate, though the Kinge commended the language, but dislikt the plot and characters'.<sup>366</sup> Two years later, *The Witts* went to the printer with Herbert's begrudged acceptance. It included the proviso that it be printed 'as it was Acted without offence, not otherwise'.<sup>367</sup>

To thank Porter for his assistance in getting the play staged, Davenant dedicated it 'To the Chiefly Belov'd of all that are Ingenious, and Noble, Endymion Porter, of his Majeties Bedchamber'. In the dedication, Davenant acknowledges that the salvation of his name and his play was due to Porter's assistance:

Though you covet not acknowledgements, receive what belongs to you by a double title: your goodnesse hath preserv'd life in the Author; then rescu'd his worke from a cruel Faction; which nothing but the forces of your reason, and your reputation could subdue. If it become your pleasure now, as when it had the advantage of presentation on the Stage, I shall be taught, to boast some merit in

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<sup>364</sup> *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-1673* ed. by N. W. Bawcutt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 186.

<sup>365</sup> Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, p. 187. *The Witts* was acted on Tuesday 28 January 1633.

<sup>366</sup> Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, p. 73. Bawcutt claims that Charles approved these contentious words because he believed them to be 'asseverations and no oaths'.

<sup>367</sup> Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama*, p. 53.

my selfe; but with this inference; you still (as in that doubtfull day of my triall) endeavour to make shew of so much justice, as may countenance the love you beare to[...] *Your most oblig'd, and thankfull humble Servant, WILLIAM DAVENANT.*<sup>368</sup>

Although the play had been successful on the Blackfriars stage, Davenant still thanks Porter for protecting him from ‘a cruel Faction’. In this instance, Herbert could have been that ‘cruel Faction’ as he had tried to censor the play. Both the author and ‘his worke’ had been saved because of Porter’s intervention, thus Davenant thanks Porter for preserving his ‘life’ as ‘the Author’ and his play. At the same time, he challenges Herbert’s authority: ‘Nothing but the forces of [Porter’s] reason, and [...] reputation could subdue’ the criticism and censorship of the play. Because he had the protection and advocacy of someone else as powerful and connected as Porter, Davenant feels he can ‘boast some merit in [him] selfe’. Rather than trying to admonish the courtiers in the dedication, he embraces them and highlights his connection to a courtly circle.

The printed version also contained an address to the reader from Carew: ‘To the Reader of Mr. William D’Avenant’s Play’. The commender directs the reading audience to like the play because they are better judges than the theatre audiences. Carew’s commendation begins by stating:

IT hath been said of old, that Playes are Feasts,  
Poets the Cookes, and the Spectators Guests,  
The Actors Waiters: From this Similie,  
Some have deriv'd an unsafe libertie  
To use their Judgements as their Tastes, which chuse  
Without controule, this Dish, and that refuse<sup>369</sup>

Although the play had pleased the Blackfriars audience, Carew still chides the ‘Spectators’ for being unable to ‘controule’ their judgements. He believes that audiences take their roles as invited guests too far; that no one can object when choosing their own dish, but that they do not have such an option at the playhouse and, therefore, they should not hold the same attitude. Carew borrows the concept of treating the author as a cook and the audience as feasting guests from Jonson. *The New Inn* (1631) contains a similar comparison in the prologue:

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<sup>368</sup> D’Avenant, ‘To the Chiefly Belov’d of all that are Ingenious, and Noble, Endymion Porter, of his Majesties Bedchamber’ in *The Witts*, Sig A3r.

<sup>369</sup> Carew, ‘To the Reader of Mr. William D’Avenant’s Play’ in *The Witts*, Sig A3v.

You are welcome, welcome all, to the *new Inne*;  
 Though the old house, we hope our cheare will win  
 Your acceptation: we ha' the same Cooke,  
 Still, and the fat, who sayes, you sha' not looke  
 Long, for your bill of fare, but every dish  
 Be serv'd in, i'the time, and to your wish:  
 If any thing be set to a wrong taste,  
 'Tis not the meat, there, but the mouth's displac'd,  
 Remove but that sick palat, all is well.<sup>370</sup>

Jonson blames the audience for his play's theatrical failure because they were unable to understand or digest the delicacies of the plot. He places all the authority for interpretation with the author and treats the audience members as guests who are required to be polite and accepting of what the host offered. If there is a fault with the play, Jonson believes it lay with the audience, not with the author; it is the receiver, 'the mouth' (the audience), and not the offering, 'the meat' (the author's play), that is to blame if the spectators dislike what they see.

Carew, however, seems to believe the fault for *The New Inn*'s failure was with Jonson. He comments that the cook/guest analogy had been 'said of old' and thus is no longer relevant. However, it was only Jonson's most recent dramatic endeavours that had failed, and he had blamed the commercial theatre audiences for such failures. Jonson also wrote the spiteful 'Ode to Himself' in defence of his play, in which he again chided the spectators.<sup>371</sup> Jonson's ode was answered by Carew who criticizes the author for his misplaced and hyperbolic rage, in 'To Ben Jonson: Upon Occasion of Defiance Annexed to His Play of *The New Inn*'.<sup>372</sup> In the poem, Carew condemns Jonson's censure of the audience:

Why should the follies then of this dull age  
 Draw from thy Pen such an immodest rage  
 As seemes to blast thy (else-immortall) Bayes,  
 When thine owne tongue proclaimes thy ytch of praise?<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Ben Jonson, *The New Inn*, Sig A4v.

<sup>371</sup> Jonson, 'Ode to Himself' in *The New Inn*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 204-05 and Chapter 3, pp. 152-53.

<sup>372</sup> Jonson, 'Ode to Himself' in *The New Inn*, ed. by Hattaway, p. 204, and Carew, 'To Ben Jonson: Upon Occasion of Defiance Annexed to His Play of *The New Inn*' in *Poems*, pp. 108-10. Carew attacked Jonson for chiding the audience and went on to suggest Jonson's name and ability 'doth since decline / from that zenith' he had previously held.

<sup>373</sup> Carew, 'To Ben Jonson' in *Poems*, p. 109.

Carew's referencing of Jonson's prologue to the failed play draws comparisons with his own poem, at the same time rebukes the current Poet Laureate. He suggests that playwrights had to deliver pleasing plays to the audience as Davenant had done with *The Witts*. Carew had not shied away from criticizing audiences on Davenant's behalf previously (as with *The Just Italian*), but 'to Ben Jonson' and the verse to Davenant for *The Witts* were directed at Jonson's base and petty 'rage'. Jonson directly attacks his audiences as ignorant, thus tarnishing his 'Bayes'; Carew was passing comment on behalf of Davenant, thereby allowing the playwright to keep his dignity. Because of Davenant's restraint and ability, Carew effectively nominates him, in his dedication, as Jonson's replacement as Poet Laureate.

Aside from pointing out that Jonson's writing had become 'th' abortive offspring' of his 'laboured works', Carew suggests his name had been 'ship-wrackt' because of the substandard quality of the play and his subsequent over-reaction in the ode.<sup>374</sup> Carew suggests that if something is witty it cannot be judged anything but witty, and likewise, if something fails to impress an audience, it should be cried down. Although it was the fashion of the day to condemn plays, an author had to deliver well-written, crowd-pleasing plays to satisfy the varied tastes of audience members - not simply rely on his name, as Jonson had done. If an audience is unable to recognize wit, the fault *could* lie with the audience members who lacked the ability to appreciate the author's talent or it could, in fact, be the author's fault for writing a deficient play. Likewise, if something lacks wit, it cannot simply pass for wit based on the author's assertion. Davenant had written *The Witts* and had been rewarded with applause; he had proved his ability to please diverse tastes, thereby proving that he is a wit himself.

Carew's commendation both praises Davenant's wit at the same time that it warns others, including Jonson, that wit cannot be faked:

But Wit allowes not this large Priviledge,  
Either you must confesse, or feele it's edge;  
Nor shall you make a currant inference  
If you trans-fer your reason to your sense:  
Things are distinct, and must the same appeare  
To every piercing Eye, or well-tun'd Eare.  
Though sweets with yours, sharps best with my taste meet,

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<sup>374</sup> Carew, 'To Ben Jonson' in *Poems*, pp. 109-10.

Both must agree this meat's or sharpe or sweet:  
But if I sent a stench or a perfume,  
Whilst you smell nought at all, I may presume  
You have that sense imperfect: So you may  
Affect a sad, merry, or humerous Play,  
If, though the kind distaste or please, the Good  
And Bad, be by your Judgement understood<sup>375</sup>

The audience does not wholly escape Carew's criticism in the address to the reader. The 'wit' in question belongs with the author, not with the audience. If the audience cannot discern the author's wit, they should be chided for going against and crying down the author. The audience has the power to 'Affect' the play, but should they misuse this power, they will rightly 'fee' the 'edge' of Davenant's (and his commender's) 'wit'. Reason should dictate how the audience logically judges the play, as the author wished and intended, not how the fashion of the day allows the 'Priviledge' of criticism. Davenant has carefully crafted a harmonious play that should please all. The address points out that the play is both 'sweet' and 'sharpe' in perfect harmony. Carew calls upon the knowledgeable, literary audience to know when each taste is needed.

Where Jonson cries down the 'croud' in his prologue, Davenant fears a 'session and a faction at his play' that have come to judge and ultimately condemn.<sup>376</sup> Davenant's prologue is concerned with the theatrical audience and highlights the frailty of the author, both in terms of his health and his anxiety over the rejection of his plays. Having previously faced rejection from the Blackfriars audience, Davenant appears very aware and conscious of the criticism aimed at him and very fearful of the power of such criticism:

Blesse mee you kinder Stars! How are wee throng'd?  
Alas! whom, hath our long sick-Poet wrong'd,  
That hee should meet together in one day  
A Session and a Faction at his Play?  
To Judge, and to Condemne: For't cannot be  
Amongst so many here, all should agree.

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<sup>375</sup> Carew, 'To the Reader of Mr. William D'Avenant's Play' in D'Avenant, *The Witts*, Sig A3v.

<sup>376</sup> Jonson, *The New Inn*, Sig A4v.

Then 'tis to such vast expectation rais'd,  
As it were to be wonder'd at, not prais'd:  
And this, good faith Sir Poet (if I've read  
Customes, or Men) strikes you, and your Muse dead!<sup>377</sup>

The speaker proclaims that Davenant is the victim of scandalous attacks from a 'faction' and a 'session', both of which he uses to categorize the judgemental Blackfriars audience as 'a party in any community. Always with opprobrious sense, conveying the imputation of selfish or mischievous ends or turbulent or unscrupulous methods'.<sup>378</sup> In his address to Porter, Davenant had mentioned the 'cruel faction' and thanked the courtier for rescuing the play from Herbert. However, in the prologue, the 'cruel faction' is those who will not agree to enjoy the play and will condemn it merely out of fashion. Whilst Davenant views some as 'selfish' and 'mischievous', who wish to tarnish his reputation, he stresses that not all will condemn the play:

But 'bove the mischiefe of these feares, a sort  
Of cruell Spies (wee heare) intend a sport  
Among themselves; our mirth must not at all  
Tickle, or stir their Lungs, but shake their Gall.<sup>379</sup>

The matter of the play, about wits that are not truly wits, is reflected in the prologue as the speaker suggests that there are 'spies' in the audience who 'intend a sport'; to condemn the play rather than accurately and appropriately judge it. Since the Blackfriars audience had approved the play by the time it was printed, the 'cruel Faction' who attacked plays for 'sport' was replaced by Herbert. Davenant portrays himself as the innocent victim of the judgements of capricious and spiteful men - just as in the play the protagonist is often at the mercy of others who wield great power over his fate.

Toward the end of Davenant's prologue, the speaker appeals to the audience's courtesy and reiterates that there was no right or wrong way to interpret the play, as long as they use judgement when evaluating what is staged:

So this joyn'd with the rest, makes mee agin  
To say, You and your Lady Muse within  
Will have but a sad doome; and your trim Brow  
Which long'd for Wreathes, you must weare naked now;

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<sup>377</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, Sig A4r.

<sup>378</sup> 'faction, n<sup>1</sup>, 3', *OED*, <<http://0-dictionary.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk:80/cgi/entry/50081507>> [accessed 24 June 2010].

<sup>379</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, Sig A4r.

'Lesse some resolve out of a courteous pride,  
To like and praise what others shall deride:  
So they've their humor too; and wee in spight  
Of our dull Braines, will thinke each side i'th right.  
Such is your pleasant judgements upon Playes,  
Like Par'lells that run straight, though sev'rall wayes.<sup>380</sup>

The 'Par'lells' mentioned here can refer to the diverse tastes of the Blackfriars theatregoers. The fear that the audience will condemn the play mirrors the fear the author has that he will be condemned. Davenant wants his audiences to draw comparisons between himself and the action in the play. Just as the hero of the play, Pallatine the Younger, suffers disrespect and abuse at the hands of his older brother, so too, according to the speaker, will the playwright suffer rejection at the hands of the Blackfriars audience.

There are a number of parallels between Davenant and his protagonist throughout the play. The gentlewoman Lucy says to the young Pallatine:

Pall, you are as good natur'd to me Pall,  
As the wife of a silenc'd Minister,  
Is to a Monarchy, or to lewd Gallants,  
That have lost a Nose!<sup>381</sup>

The nose reference by Lucy to Pallatine the Younger draws the connection between the author and the character as Davenant had lost part of his nose because of venereal disease. The victimization of Pallatine the Younger by his older brother also resonates with Davenant. Davenant was being denied an income and was forced to live by his wits, a situation he found unfair and which he wanted to express to the audience. As the controller of the family fortune, the elder Pallatine refuses to give his brother any funds. The younger brother manipulates and tricks his brother in several matters of love and mistaken identity until Pallatine the Elder concedes that his younger brother has won the contest of wit and provides him with an income. Davenant, likewise, had to coax his first plays to the stage and/or the publisher in order to reach a sympathetic and eager audience, and thus to earn a livelihood. The young Pallatine is considered witless by his older brother, an accusation that had been hurled at Davenant by professional dramatists such

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<sup>380</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, Sig A4r.

<sup>381</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, III.i.43-46.

as Massinger. Davenant believes himself to have been abused by many at the commercial theatre: audiences, the actors who had previously refused to stage his *Albovine*, and even rival playwrights who publicly criticized him for his lack of wit.

The play covers two themes that Davenant had been struggling with since the failure of his first three plays: how far wit can take someone and who actually possesses it. The heroine, Lady Ample, discusses the power that wit can have in swaying the minds of men. However, it can also be used as a weapon to weaken others to advance her own agenda:

Thy feature and thy wit, are wealth enough  
To keepe thee high in all those vanities  
That wilde ambition, or expensive pride  
Performe in youth<sup>382</sup>

Lady Ample proclaims that Lucy could and should use wit to get what she desires. The idea that wit can get the characters whatever they want is something that Davenant relied upon in his real life. The reference to ‘wilde ambition’ and ‘expensive pride’ in youth could suggest the naïveté with which Davenant wrote when he tried to win the approval of the Blackfriars audience. When he wrote his first plays, Davenant was young and believed that his dramas would undoubtedly succeed. When he wrote *The Witts* at the age of twenty eight, he was more mature and realized that he had to rely on his ability to craft a pleasing play and thus earn ‘wealth’, just as other professional playwrights did. As he wrote the play for the Blackfriars, and based it on the play of two of the previous generation’s popular playwrights, Davenant tried to position himself with the professional, theatrical community. However, the events that led up to the staging and later the printing of the play meant that Davenant once again needed the intervention of people more powerful and influential than he was. In the same manner the young Pallatine relied on the gentlewomen Lucy and Lady Ample, Davenant sought the assistance of the courtiers in order to fulfil his play’s potential.

Pallatine the Elder is a gentleman who comes to the city to take advantage of the citizens and their wives, who he believes will be easily duped. Because the elder Pallatine was not the hero of the tale, his mistakes are meant to expose the faulty thinking that all citizens are foolish. Yet he does express this idea, an idea that might have circulated in

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<sup>382</sup> D’Avenant, *The Witts*, II.i.75-78.



the Blackfriars audience, particularly amongst those that were members of the gentry or the aristocracy. Although Pallatine the Elder impedes his younger brother, he is not a villain, and he is not wholly without sense:

Brother, I came  
To be your wise example in the Arts  
That lead to thriving glory, and supream life;  
Not through the humble ways wherein dull Lords  
Of Lands, and Sheepe doe walke; Men that depend  
On the fantastick winds on fleeting Clowds,  
On seasons more uncertaine than themselves,  
When they would hope or feare; But you are warme  
In anothers silke, and make your tame ease  
Virtue, call it content, and quietnesse!<sup>383</sup>

Pallatine the Elder tells his brother that through ‘the Arts’, thriving glory and ‘supream life’ are to be had. The elder brother is speaking of the art of duplicity that will provide him with riches and comfort; however, the ‘Arts’ are also linked to the theatre and the business of stage plays. The conniving gentleman suggests that the ‘arts’ (or plays) exist solely to earn the playwright money and fame. This mentality is being instilled in Pallatine the Younger in the same way it had been in Davenant, by the examples set by gentlemen courtiers. However, Davenant, like Pallatine the Younger, has seen and experienced what happens when the ‘Arts’ are used to manipulate:

Two that have tasted *Natures* kindnesses Arts,  
And men, have shin'd in moving Camps; have seene  
Courts in their solemne businesse, and vaine pride;  
Convers'd so long i'th towne here, that you know  
Each Signe, and Pibble in the streets; for you  
(After a long retirement) to lease forth  
Your wealthy pleasant Lands, to feed *John Crump*,  
*The Cripple*, *Widow Needy*, and *Abraham*  
*Sloath*, the *Beads-man of More-dale*? Then (forsooth)  
Perswade your selves to live here by your Wits.<sup>384</sup>

Only by truly experiencing what the citizens like and feel can he (both the younger Pallatine and Davenant) get ahead and succeed. The separation of the professional who earns his money from the country lords and aristocrats who ‘depend on the fantastick winds on fleeting Clowds’ suggests a disbelief in the foolishness of the citizens that was

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<sup>383</sup> D’Avenant, *The Witts*, I.i.421-430.

<sup>384</sup> D’Avenant, *The Witts*, I.i.407-416.

unfounded and could even lead to disgrace and embarrassment. As Pallatine the Elder believes it is easy to fool the citizens, Davenant had previously disregarded their ability to judge his plays correctly. Both the playwright and his fictional creations learned hard lessons as a result of this belief and both suffered humiliation at the hands of the citizens.

The older brother also states that he hopes to be an example for his virtuous younger brother to follow. The idea of leading the more virtuous life by wit was mirrored in the play's paratexts. Just as Jonson had believed he could write substandard drama and have it accepted because of his name, so too had Davenant borne the brunt of rejection at Blackfriars three times prior to the staging of *The Witts*. Davenant had, as his counterpart in the play warns against, believed the citizens to be foolish. He seemed to have learned his lesson, however, and speaks through the young Pallatine, when the character hints at the astute judgement of the commercial theatre audience:

Their Masters are bad *Tutors* else; well, how  
You'l worke the Ladies, and weake Gentry here  
By your fine gilded Pills, a Faith that is  
Not old may guesse without distrust. But Sirs,  
The Citty (take't on my experiment)  
Will not be gull'd!<sup>385</sup>

Davenant knew the audience would 'not be gull'd' because he had previously tried to pass off weaker dramatic fare and failed in his attempts. With his return to the commercial theatre, he created a character that respected the city audiences and even parodied those who considered them foolish. By using the likeable character to champion the city, Davenant styled himself as an admirer of the London citizens.

In the play and the paratexts there was a shifting attitude toward wit and what constituted wit. Carew had suggested that it had been the commercial theatre audiences that lacked wit when they rejected and criticized Davenant's previous plays. Carew's previous verse for *The Just Italian* had led to accusations from the professionals that Davenant was duping those dedicators and dedicatees (in the same manner the elder Pallatine tries to dupe the citizens of London) who offered him praise when he was undeserving of it. Pallatine the Elder believes wit comes from living on others and he

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<sup>385</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, I.i.397-402.

uses trickery to make ends meet. However, Pallatine the Younger believes that a 'wit' should be active and professional in such pursuits:

Now I shall laugh at those, that heap up wealth  
By lazie method, and slow rules of Thrift;  
I'm growne the Child of Wit, and can advance  
My selfe, by being Votary to change.<sup>386</sup>

The young Pallatine, like Davenant, must use his wit to gain fame and fortune, despite the suggestion that it is the more difficult path. By emulating the style of his predecessors and learning from the mistakes of Jonson, Davenant had 'growne the Child of Wit' and advanced himself through a change in his approach to the commercial theatre audiences. The change in Pallatine the Younger mirrors the change in Davenant, as the playwright wanted to be received and perceived in a new light by others. Davenant had relied on courtly connections in the past to get his plays staged and then printed, but success at the professional theatre had always been his goal. Using courtiers and amateur poets to help him conquer the stage is the 'change' Davenant made when he 'advance[d]' his plays through association, rather than through his own labour.

The notion that wit is easily given and taken away is explored in the play as well. When the elder Pallatine's schemes are about to be exposed and his fortune is in jeopardy he states:

A plague upon your courteous midnight Leaders!  
Good silly Saints, they are dividing now,  
And ministering (no doubt) unto the poore!  
This will decline the reputation of  
My Witt; till I be thought to have a lesse head  
Than a Justice o'Peace! If Morglay hear't,  
He'le thinke me dull, as a Dutch marriner!  
No med'cine now from thought? Good! 'tis design'd!<sup>387</sup>

Pallatine the Elder is worried that his reputation as a wit will be destroyed because he has been duped. Someone from the city might question his status as a wit, and that seems to have been enough to tarnish his reputation. Davenant's own wit had been called into question by the professional playwrights Massinger and Brome and had also been

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<sup>386</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, II.i.711-714.

<sup>387</sup> D'Avenant, *The Witts*, III.i.121-128.

rejected by the Blackfriars audience who had disliked his previous plays.<sup>388</sup> As a result, Davenant needed to appeal to the commercial theatregoers directly by flattering them and proclaiming their sense. Pallatine the Elder believes that wit rests in the eyes of those who judge him, rather than found within himself. The ‘design’d’ plan he had to gain a reputation as a wit seems intricate, artificial, and tenuous. The idea that wit could be medicated, and thus altered, is something that both Davenant and his character relied on in order to maintain status.

In Act IV, the elder Pallatine states what he believes living by wit should and does entitle someone to:

O to live here, I’th faire Metropolis  
Of our great Isle, a free Inheritor  
Of ev’ry modest, or voluptuous wish,  
Thy young desires can breath; and not oblieg’d  
To’th Plough-mans toyles, or lazie Reapers swet;  
To make the world thy Farme, and ev’ry Man  
Lesse witty than thy selfe, Tennant for life;  
These are the glories that proclaime a true  
Phylosophie, and Soule, in him that climbs  
To reach them with neglect of Fame and Life!<sup>389</sup>

The link between wit and reputation is solidified as Pallatine the Elder believes the only way to gain a positive reputation is to diminish the perception of others. Proclamations and words show a man to be a wit, not work, toil, or sweat; dramatists earned a livelihood through the use of words and proclamations. Professionals laboured to produce plays to be sold to companies, whilst amateur dramatists relied on favours from court or the aristocracy to meet their ‘modest or voluptuous’ desires. In either case, the job of the playwright revolved around ‘proclaim[ing] a true Phylosophie’ in exchange for a comfortable existence ‘I’th faire Metropolis’. Davenant, through an examination of both kinds of wit, the honest and laborious or the cajoling and duplicitous, as well as his self-reflecting character Pallatine the Younger and the greedy and exploitative archetypal Pallatine the Elder, reflected the playwright’s changing attitude toward the court and the professional theatre from 1634, when the play was staged, to 1636, when it was printed. A desire to please the commercial theatre audiences and a need for the intervention of

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<sup>388</sup> For Brome’s reaction to *The Witts* see Chapter 3, pp. 167-69.

<sup>389</sup> D’Avenant, *The Witts*, IV.i.93-102.

courtiers to further his career were both present throughout the playwright's career and both were exemplified in the creation, staging, and printing of *The Witts*.

### Conclusion

Despite Davenant's success across literary boundaries, many of his peers, from both the courtly and professional dramatic communities, looked on his writing as substandard. After the closure of the theatres in 1642, Davenant's skill and talent as an author and self-promoter were highly criticized by many literary peers. The loss of important allies and royal protection opened Davenant up to direct verbal assaults, which had been veiled in characterizations and innuendo prior to 1640. Where once his allies indulged his desire to be known as D'Avenant, in paratext, the decision was greeted with varying degrees of derision by many of his contemporaries after 1642 and the loss of Davenant's greatest protector, Henrietta Maria. In a collection of poems compiled by Sir John Denham, *Certain Verses written by severall of the Authors Friends* (1653), the author and his allies chided Davenant for his name:

As severall Cities made their claim  
Of *Homers* birth to have the fame;  
So, after ages will not want  
Towns claiming to be *Avenant*:  
Great doubt there is where now it lies,  
Whether in *Lombard* or the *Skies*.  
Some say by *Avenant* no place is meant,  
And that this *Lombard* is without descent;  
And as by *Bilke* men mean ther's nothing there,  
So come from *Avenant*, means from *No-where*.<sup>390</sup>

The jibes directed at Davenant over the insertion of an apostrophe in his name were not the only criticisms aimed at him. In Denham's volume there are over thirty dedications that attacked Davenant as pretentious and witless, many of which call him 'Daphne' in rebuke of the modified version of his surname.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> John Denham, 'Upon the Authors writing name (as in the Title of his Bock) D'avenant' in *Certain Verses written by severall of the Authors Friends: to be re-printed with the second edition of Gondibert* (London: 1653), p. 24.

<sup>391</sup> Nethercot, *Sir William Davenant*, p. 134. Nethercot cites the 1656 work of four of Davenant's critics calling themselves 'a Club of sparkling Wits' who issued *Sportive Wit: The Muses Merriment*, containing the satire 'How Daphne Pays his Debts'.

Denham come help me to laugh at old Daph,  
Whose fancies are higher than Chaff<sup>392</sup>

The verses appeared after Davenant's position as the court favourite was gone and showed an allied and united front against him. This coterie negated the alliances he had created prior to the Civil War with fellow courtiers like Porter, Carew, and Suckling. Davenant was no longer protected from the verbal attacks directed at him from his literary peers, and his own sense of self-importance was cut down as easily as worthless 'chaff'.

Denham's invite to others to 'come help me laugh at old Daph' off-set Davenant's courtly alliances, which he had used to further his career and his reputation. Many of the verses make reference to other playwrights who are superior to Davenant or reference a group of writers that stand in opposition to him in terms of wit and ability:

But what if Will a censure made  
O'th Poets he but did as Strada.  
So sad old Ben, our grand Wits master,  
In this Play called Poetaster.  
The odds is ours, we are the higher,  
We are Knight Lauriat, Ben the Squire.  
Upon my conscience you wrong  
Our Knight that he should hate the Tongue  
Of either Author, for 'tis fed  
Those Languages ne're hurt his head.<sup>393</sup>

Davenant's alliances are joked about in the 'answer' to Denham's verses, *The Incomparable poem Gondibert Vindicated from the Wit-combats of Four Esquires, Clinias, Dametas, Sancho, and Jack Pudding*. In this mock defence, the author aligns Davenant with literary fools and dreamers. Although he had previously used links to friends to gain influence and status, Denham's 'friends' chided Davenant as being unworthy of comparison with the men he had once considered allies. When his literary 'friends' abandoned him, Davenant became the object of ridicule by many prominent poets because of his former connections. When once he had used paratext to create and nurture a career as a prominent courtly writer, the same material was now being used to

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<sup>392</sup> Denham, 'Upon the Author' in *Certain Verses written by severall of the Authors Friends*, p. 14.

<sup>393</sup> Robert Wilde, 'On the Preface' in *The Incomparable poem Gondibert Vindicated from the Wit-combats of Four Esquires, Clinias, Dametas, Sancho, and Jack Pudding* (London: S. N., 1655), p. 6; Wing W2130.

cry him down. His career and his reputation had been built up, almost entirely, by his associations with others, which were then advertised through paratext; however, after the theatre closures, his reputation was brought down by paratextual slanders aimed at him from another coterie of writers. Davenant's reputation, both good and bad, before and after the Caroline era, was dictated by what others said about him in paratexts.

## Chapter 3:<sup>394</sup>

### Richard Brome: ‘A strayne of Wit that is not Poetrie’<sup>395</sup>

According to Michael Neill, ‘the dedications, prefaces, prologues, epilogues, and encomiastic verses with which plays [i.e. Caroline plays] are so plentifully adorned are the record of their relationships with the audience’.<sup>396</sup> Whilst Davenant’s reputation with a commercial theatre audience was antagonistic at times, as demonstrated through his paratext, the relationship Richard Brome carefully cultivated with his audiences, in his own paratextual material, was highly professional. He fashioned himself as a playwright for the commercial stage and represented and wrote for the varied audiences that were found at the public and private commercial theatres. Brome got his start in the theatre as Ben Jonson’s apprentice and his first effort as an independent playwright came in 1629, when he wrote *The Northern Lasse* for the King’s Men at the Globe and Blackfriars. Although his mentor and master, Jonson, had been writing masques, Brome wrote for the commercial stage and not the court. By the 1630s, Brome was not only an advocate of the commercial theatre, but also an out-spoken critic of those courtly, amateur dramatists who tried to impose themes popular at Whitehall on commercial theatre audiences, rather than providing them with fare that reflected city life and represented the diverse population of London. The professional relationship Brome sought to establish with his audience is glimpsed through the wording he used and the ancillary material and paratext that accompanied his plays on stage and in print. This material showed a marked opposition to the courtier dramatists; an antagonism that, I argue, Brome hoped to spread amongst his peers and his audiences. At the same time, his prologues and epilogues promoted his own humility, which Brome was constantly and almost compulsively trying to show his audiences and his literary peers. The commendatory verses that accompanied his three plays that were printed before 1642 praise the plays or critique courtier rivals, rather than highlight the author’s literary abilities. This material intensely attacks those courtly amateurs who manipulate or circumvent theatrical conventions. It is my contention that Brome’s paratext was more antagonistic than any of his Caroline rivals,

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<sup>394</sup> See Audrey Birkett, ‘Actors, Audiences and Authors: The Competition for Control in Brome’s *The Antipodes*’ in *Future Directions in Shakespeare Studies*, ed. by Peter Orford, et. al, pp. 53-68.

<sup>395</sup> Brome, *The Northern Lasse* (London: Augustus Mathewes, 1632), Sig A4v; STC 3819.

<sup>396</sup> Neill, ‘The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters’, 346.



and despite his ‘mask of humility’, Brome’s aim was to destroy his rivals and eradicate the courtly presence on the commercial stage.<sup>397</sup>

Traditional criticism of Brome begins with his association with Elizabethan theatrical culture. R. J. Kaufman claims Brome wanted to preserve the past, specifically the ‘Tudor culture’ which he saw as being under threat from the court poets.<sup>398</sup> This ‘Tudor culture’, I argue, encompasses different concepts, ideas, goals, fears, and attitudes including: mixed and varied audiences at the playhouses, plays that were exciting and adventurous, and insecurity surrounding the institution’s very survival. There was a communal feel at the commercial theatre, as playwrights worked with and as actors, and all groups trying to please the audiences. Brome’s paratext shows his devotion to the professional theatre audiences and the traditions of the commercial stage. Clifford Leech’s compelling look at Brome’s literary career emphasizes the Tudor influence even more. He claimed that Caroline dramatists - Brome in particular - were ‘men who remembered their predecessors, who obviously studied published plays, and could learn from their rivals’.<sup>399</sup> Brome’s focus remained on pleasing commercial theatre audiences and he studied his predecessors in order to entertain, not to advance his name or his position. However, as this chapter will show, Brome’s paratexts, whilst compulsively working to paint a picture of the humble playwright, also contain a great deal of venomous contempt for his amateur courtly rivals - contempt that was ultimately designed to remove completely these enemies of the commercial theatre.

Brome’s popularity resulted, in part, from his use of colloquial terminology (northern, regional accents) and his portrayal of strong, normally subverted characters, such as women and members of the lower classes, both of which Brome wrote into his first play, *The Northern Lasse*. Sanders believes Brome’s career was dominated by his position outside the courtly circle and his collaborative efforts throughout the 1630s.<sup>400</sup> These collaborations were on plays with other professional dramatists, such as *The Late*

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<sup>397</sup> Catherine Shaw, *Richard Brome* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. 32.

<sup>398</sup> R. J. Kaufman, *Richard Brome Caroline Playwright* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 3, 37-39. Kaufman suggests that Brome’s mentor Jonson was also a fierce guardian of Tudor values, which could be seen in his 1629 play *The New Inn*.

<sup>399</sup> Clifford Leech, ‘Caroline Echoes of the Alchemist’, *The Review of English Studies*, 16 (1940), 432-38. Several of Brome’s plays directly mentioned *The Alchemist* characters and others were written with the characters in mind.

<sup>400</sup> Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, p.9.

*Lancashire Witches* with Heywood, and in commendatory verses offered to him from men such as Dekker and Ford.<sup>401</sup> Through these collaborations, Brome formed a reputation as a man of the commercial theatre and as an enemy to the courtly playwrights. This chapter contends that Brome's paratexts were much more vitriolic and aggressive toward the courtly dramatists who were providing for the commercial stage than previous criticism suggests. Butler's criticism focuses on Brome's desire to undermine the power of the court and empower the lower classes by portraying a dramatic world in which the ruling powers are subverted, even to the point of embarrassing the courtiers.<sup>402</sup> It is my contention that Brome set about achieving this goal, by using paratext to viciously attack his rivals, above and beyond simply trying to embarrass them. Butler stops short of declaring Brome an anti-royalist, but highlights his desire to see more power being vested in the citizenry and less in the court, by exposing the virtues of the common man and the vices of the upper classes. Butler claims that Brome delivers a 'specifically political, potentially radical critique of Charles's government'.<sup>403</sup> However, I believe that Brome used paratexts, particularly prologues, to actively promote an anti-courtly writer sentiment. His mentor Jonson held a great deal of animosity toward what he perceived as his unfair treatment at court, and this animosity seems to have influenced Brome. Catherine Shaw states, 'although he was unpretentious, the mask of humility which he appeared to adopt for himself was deceptive'.<sup>404</sup> Indeed, Brome was better at concealing his contempt for the gentry and the court than his mentor Jonson, but his paratext still demonstrate a deep-seated aversion for amateur courtly writers who provided for the commercial stage.

Brome's comedies offered an escape for the lower and middle class characters who were often the focus of his plays. These comedies also offered escape for their real-life counterparts at the commercial theatres. For a few hours, the characters and the audiences were treated to a life that offered more freedom, wealth, or status, before everyone, characters and audience members alike, returned to reality. Brome's critiques

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<sup>401</sup> Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (London: Thomas Harper, 1634); STC 13373, Thomas Dekker, 'To my Sonne BROME and his Lasse', Sig A4r, and John Ford 'Of Mr. RICHARD BROME his ingenious Comedy, the Northern Lasse, To the Reader', Sig A3v in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*.

<sup>402</sup> See Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, pp. 214-20.

<sup>403</sup> Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 220.

<sup>404</sup> Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 32.

of society and the social orders always resulted in a return to the status quo at the end of each play; however, this return to the status quo at the end of his plays did not reflect a desire to see life continue on as usual. Instead, it seemed to reflect Brome's painstaking attention to everyday reality with the hope of changing it for the better. Although reality is restored, alternate versions of how life could (and often should) be were promoted in the plays. Brome believed that the most important elements of his drama were his ability to make a poignant and timely statement, and to expose the social conditions (both good and bad) of the day. This offered the audience relief from their everyday lives, but it also gave them a glimpse of how life could be in a more just and equal society, which won Brome the respect of commercial theatre audiences.

The first of Brome's theatrical successes, *The Northern Lasse*, revolved around the love intrigues of four characters: Mistress Fitchow, the prosperous city widow; her gentleman suitor, Sir Phillip Lucklesse; his friend-turned-love rival, Master Tridewell; and the northern lass herself, Constance, who is the spurned lover of Lucklesse.<sup>405</sup> The play is a conventional tale of unrequited love with the forsaken, eponymous lover, Constance, pining for Lucklesse in a northern accent. The novelty of the accent was designed to entertain the audiences of the Globe and Blackfriars, but also showed Brome's skill at writing everyday characters and local and common dialects.<sup>406</sup> His comedic ability and his favouritism for the common citizen made Brome's first, major, independent foray into the theatrical world a popular success.<sup>407</sup> However, it is the character Fitchow who epitomized Brome's contemporary tolerance. A strong, independent woman who is both desirous for love and resistant to weak suitors, she represents a more accurate female character, more ambiguous and complicated than had previously been portrayed on stage.<sup>408</sup> *The Northern Lasse* combined sentiment and

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<sup>405</sup> *The Northern Lasse* was staged the same year as *The Love Sick Maid*, which was also a success for Brome and the King's Men.

<sup>406</sup> Matthew Steggle, *Richard Brome: Place and Politics on the Caroline Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 24. Steggle suggests Brome uses the 'deep regional accent' of Constance not as a source of mirth as other city comedies of the time did, but instead 'sympathetically to give her words a simplicity of phrasing in pointed contrast with the courtly fustian of her interlocutor'.

<sup>407</sup> Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 34. Shaw writes 'few dramatists received the applause and critical acclaim for an early work that Richard Brome did for *The Northern Lasse*, the play that caused so much flurry when it was acted in 1629'.

<sup>408</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, pp. 21-2. The roles of the women in the play were three-dimensional and each of the four major female characters 'influence the outcome themselves and assert their individuality in

satire, but still reflected the changing, more accommodating society of the contemporary city. With this play, Brome became a versatile independent playwright who wrote for both the heterogeneous audiences that attended the Globe and the elite clientele of the Blackfriars.

As Brome had sold the play to the King's Men, it was the company's to print, and they did so after the play met with much success on stage. Brome's own part in getting the play to the publisher is questionable, but the paratexts suggest he did have input in how the play was printed and what was included with it. The dedication, commendatory verses, and printed prologue aligned Brome with the stage and praised the actors and the theatre audience, rather than the reader of the published text. These paratexts also displayed Brome's modesty about his own skill, as well as his refusal to cater to an elite audience. One of the ways in which he was able to maintain a balance between the associations offered through print and performance was to stress that it was the quality of the play itself that should be examined and not the status of the playwright. In his dedication to Richard Holford, Brome declares:

Rich Friends may send you rich Presents, while poore ones have nothing but good wishes to present you. Though I bee one of the last ranke, and therefore cannot doe like the first, yet it is my ambition to bring more then bare wishes with me, to one of whom I have received reall favours A Countrey Lasse I present you, that *Minerva*-like was a brayn-borne child; and *Jovially* begot, though now shee seekes her fortune. Shee came out of the cold North, thinly clad: But *Wit* had pittie on her; *Action* apparrell'd her, and *Plaudits* clap'd her cheekes warme. Shee is honest, and modest, though she speake broad: And though *Art* never strung her tongue; yet once it yeelded a delightfull sound: which gain'd her many Lovers and Friends, by whose good liking she prosperously lived, untill her late long Silence, and Discontinuance (to which shee was compell'd) gave her Justly to feare their losse, and her owne decay.<sup>409</sup>

This first dedication established how Brome wished to be viewed, not only by patrons, but also by theatregoers and his dramatic contemporaries: as a dedicated and humble man of the theatre. He was not materially wealthy but had received 'reall favours', such as kind applause and approval, from the commercial theatre audiences. He stresses that even the most humble and common men can be 'rich' if they possess 'Wit', 'Action', and

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different ways'.

<sup>409</sup> Brome, 'TO THE RIGHT WORTHY AND NO LESSE JUDicious then ingenious Gentleman RICHARD HOLFORD Esquire' in *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A2r-2v.

'*Plaudits*'.<sup>410</sup> These three qualities represent, for Brome, the various factions at the commercial theatre: the '*Wit*' being the ability of the author to please the audience, the '*Action*' defining the work of the actors, and the '*Plaudits*' are the audience's judgement. Praise is earned through compromise and cooperation, and Brome feels it is necessary to cater to the wants of the audiences, rather than try to impose his own desires upon them.

The dedication also portrayed Brome as a humble author who had written the play with the sole purpose of pleasing diverse audience tastes:

Wherefore shee, now, destrous to settle her selfe in some worthy service; And no way willing (like some of further breed) to returne from this Southern sunshine, back to her native Ayre; I thought it might become my care (having first brought and estrang'd her from her Countrey) to sue, with her, for Your noble *Patronage*; of Whom, shee heares, (if Flattery abuse her not) shee hath, heretofore, gotten some good opinion. Your love to witty, and pleasant Recreations of this nature hath brought her on: And Northern Spirits will soone wex bold. If you be pleased to accept of her, shee will travaile no further.<sup>411</sup>

Brome attempts to prove that those playwrights who catered to a royal audience are not more talented than the professional dramatists, but are merely louder in their proclamations of ability and outward shows. The mention of 'Flattery' as abusive comments on the negative trading of verses for substandard work that had been happening between Carew and Davenant. Brome boasts of *The Northern Lasse*'s success because it had 'gotten some good opinion', not from peers, but from the Globe and Blackfriars audiences, who should be the only source of 'good opinion' and 'plaudits'. The 'honest and modest' speech of his common 'Northern Lasse' reflects the virtues of the common man as opposed to the false and vain claims of the amateur courtly writers.<sup>412</sup> It also characterized the humble author who created her in the hopes of pleasing theatregoers.

The inclusion of commendations in *The Northern Lasse* by Jonson, Dekker, Ford, F. T., and St. Br. advertised Brome's talent and the play's greatness, thereby allowing him to maintain his modest reputation. Those who offered Brome congratulations for the success of the play commented on how he had earned his place in the theatrical pantheon by working his way through the theatre, as the servant to the highly revered Jonson, and

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<sup>410</sup> Brome, 'To Richard Holford' in *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A2r.

<sup>411</sup> Brome, 'To Richard Holford' in *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A2v.

<sup>412</sup> Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4v.

then proving himself just as skilled with his own writing. Jonson himself was the first to commend Brome on his play, saying the former student had lived up to the high standards Jonson himself had set:

I Had you for a Servant, once, *Dick Brome*;  
And you perform'd a Servants faithfull parts:  
Now, you are got into a nearer roome,  
Of *Fellowship*, professing my old Arts.  
And you doe them well, with good applause,  
Which you have justly gained from the *Stage*,  
By observation of those Comick Lawes  
Which I, your *Master*, first did teach the Age.  
You learn'd it well; and for it, serv'd your time  
A Prentise-ship: which few doe now a dayes  
Now each Court-Hobby-horse will wince in rime;  
Both learned, and unlearned all write *Playes*.  
It is not so of old: Men tooke up trades  
That knew the Crafts they had bin bred in<sup>413</sup>

Jonson's dedication does not so much offer praise to the author, but acknowledges Brome's place alongside Jonson.<sup>414</sup> The verse advertises Jonson as the man who taught his servant the 'observation of those Comick Lawes'; therefore it is he who is partly responsible for the success of Brome's play.<sup>415</sup> Although he calls Brome's play a 'work' in the title of his dedication, Jonson means it in the trade or labour sense, rather than the artistic one he used to describe his own writing.<sup>416</sup> He compares the work to that of 'the Physician' and 'Cobler', calling it a 'craft' that Brome studied and practiced in his 'Fellowship'.<sup>417</sup> To Jonson, Brome defined the mould of playwright as craftsman, one whose craft was to entertain. He made a good product and thus 'justly gains' 'good applause'.

Brome, in turn, adopted Jonson's disdain for unskilled, sycophantic courtly writers. Jonson's commendation refers to the 'Court-Hobby-horse' who can only 'wince

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<sup>413</sup> Jonson, 'To my old Faithfull Servant' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

<sup>414</sup> See Stanley Fish, 'Authors-Readers: Jonson's Community of the Same', *Representations*, 7 (1984), 26-58.

<sup>415</sup> Jonson, 'To my old Faithfull Servant' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

<sup>416</sup> 'work, n<sup>4</sup>', *OED*, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50287171>> [accessed 28 June 2007]. 'Action involving effort or exertion directed to a definite end, esp. as a means of gaining one's livelihood; labour, toil; (one's) regular occupation or employment'. Jonson's talk of Brome's role as an apprentice suggests this meaning; calling the play a 'work' rather than the more artistic sense of (n-14) 'A product of any of the fine arts (in relation to the artist)' as Jonson meant for himself in 1616.

<sup>417</sup> Jonson, 'To my old Faithfull Servant' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

in rime' because he does not know the 'Crafts they [the professional playwrights] had bin bred in'.<sup>418</sup> Jonson's own falling out at court, where he had served as the chief masque writer for over a decade, led to this vitriol aimed at his courtly rivals. The dedication to Brome became more about Jonson's own keen abilities and the injustices done to him than it was about lauding *The Northern Lasse*. Indeed, Jonson's entire verse laments a by-gone time when skill and talent were required to write successful plays and when study and learning were required to excel in the theatre. Brome remained one of Jonson's last ties to the commercial stage. The popularity he once held was diminishing, especially after the failure of *The New Inn*. The commendatory verse, rather than being about Brome or his play, reflects Jonson's own anger at being forced out of the courtly literary circle and the commercial stage, especially when he viewed many of those who remained as talentless.

Despite what his dedication said in *The Northern Lasse*, the popularity of Brome's play on stage alienated Jonson. The failure of *The New Inn* on the same stage, along with the success of his former servant, ended Brome's apprenticeship and caused friction between the two playwrights. Jonson was a 'poet' and author of 'works', to him the theatrical audience was incapable of understanding or appreciating his literary artistry. He tells the reader in the self-vindicating publication of *The New Inn*, printed the same year as *The Northern Lasse*, that:

If thou canst but spell and join my sense, there is more hope of thee than of a hundred fastidious *impertinents* who were there present the first day, yet never made piece of their prospect the right way [...] their not understanding of scene [...] And do trust myself and my book rather to thy rustic candour than all the pomp of their pride and solemn ignorance to boot.<sup>419</sup>

Jonson's disdain is aimed at the whole of the theatrical community, from the audiences who are unable to understand his intentions, to the players who are unable to aptly perform his dramatic vision, to even the playwrights who accept and perpetuate base literary standards. Because *The New Inn* had not been successful, Jonson sought print as a way to resurrect the play and to scold those he blamed for its initial failure. Brome

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<sup>418</sup> Jonson, 'To my old Faithfull Servant' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

<sup>419</sup> See Jonson, *The New Inn*, Sig (\*)2r-(\*)3r.

promoted harmony between himself and his former master, but the publication of *The Northern Lasse* solidified Brome's independence as a professional playwright.

The differing ideologies held by master and apprentice in relation to the audience are displayed in Jonson's 'Ode to Himself', written shortly after the disappearance of *The New Inn* from the stage and circulated in manuscript form.<sup>420</sup> Jonson's censure of the audiences stemmed from his disbelief that they would embrace a crude comedy written by a new playwright and reject his traditional, literary work:

Come leave the loathed stage  
And the more loathsome age  
Where pride and impudence, in faction knit,  
Usurp the chair of wit!  
Indicting and arraigning every day  
Something they call a play. [...]  
Scraps out of every dish  
Thrown forth and rak'd into the common tub,  
May keep up the Play-club:  
Broome's sweepings do as well  
As the best-order'd meal  
For who the relish of these guests will fit,  
Needs set them but the alms-basket of wit.<sup>421</sup>

The audience's acceptance of the 'sweepings' Jonson saw as literary 'scraps' that Brome had stolen from 'every dish' belonging to his more skilled and successful dramatic peers, infuriated Jonson. His reference to 'pride and impudence' seems to combine the audience (pride in what they desired and also what they rejected) and Brome (impudence for not following Jonson's literary lead directly) in an equally sordid 'faction' that disgraces the public theatre. He further criticizes the codification of staged drama as 'something they call a play'. Jonson regards such terminology as a personal insult because he called his plays 'works'.<sup>422</sup> There is an overriding sense in this ode that Jonson feels betrayed by Brome, whom he accuses of usurping, arranging, and finally begging for audience approval. The ode, rather than being a praise of Jonson himself, seems rather like an attack on Brome and the contemporary theatre, which contrasts with the laudatory commendation he wrote for *The Northern Lasse*. Michael Hattaway points out the

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<sup>420</sup> Jonson, 'Ode to Himself' in Hattaway, *The New Inn*, pp. 206 n. 27.

<sup>421</sup> See Jonson, 'Ode to Himself' in *Execration Against Vulcan*, Sig fv(F5v)-F6v.

<sup>422</sup> See Jonson's epigram at beginning of chap 1, p. 32.



original version of Jonson's 'Ode to Himself', written in 1629, contained a direct reference to 'Broome', but the published version of 1632 that accompanied *The New Inn* omitted Brome's name, substituting 'There' instead.<sup>423</sup> The commendation Jonson wrote for Brome seemed like a peace offering and a chance, on Jonson's part, to resurrect his own dramatic career by re-associating himself with his former servant who was now a popular and acclaimed playwright. When both *The New Inn* and *The Northern Lasse* appeared in print, Jonson's wrath toward his former servant had quieted and been replaced by his ire towards those 'Court-Hobby-horse[s]' who lacked talent, but still won applause.

Brome welcomed Jonson's revised praise and appeared apprehensive about severing his ties or even engaging in verbal spars with his former master. Jonson was a looming and illuminating figure in the paratext of *The Northern Lasse*, receiving pride of place as the first commender and being the muse of the prologue:

*Gallants, and Friends-spectators, will yee see  
A strayne of Wit that is not Poetrie?  
I have Authority for what I say:  
For He himselfe sayes so, that Writ the Play,  
Though, in the Muses Garden he can walke;  
And choycest Flowers pluck from every stalke  
To deck the Stage; and purposeth, hereafter,  
To take your Judgements: now He implores your laughter;  
Sayes He would see you merry; thinks it long  
Since you were last delighted with a Song.  
Your Bookes, he sayes, can shew you History;  
And serious Passages better then Hee;  
And that He should take paines in Act to show  
What you already by your Studies know  
Were a presumption. Tis a Modestie  
Un-us'd 'mongst Poets. This being onely Hee  
That boasteth not his worth; and doth subscrib  
Himselfe an under-servant in their Tribe.  
Yet though he slight himselfe, We not despaire,  
By him, to shew you what is Good and Rare.<sup>424</sup>*

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<sup>423</sup> See Hattaway, 'Introduction' in Jonson, *The New Inn*, p. 194 and Jonson, *Execration Against Vulcan*, Sig fv(F5v)-F6v. The 'Ode to Himself' was believed to have been circulated in manuscript form, so the reference to Brome would have been known. It was re-printed with 'Broomes sweepings' in the 1640 *Execration Against Vulcan*.

<sup>424</sup> Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4v.

Brome's speaker calls attention to the author's position as 'an under-servant' in the 'Tribe' of poet-playwrights. Brome does not write poetry and is not a poet because he shows 'modestie', 'un'us'd 'mongst Poets'. The rise of the Jonsonian imitators relates to the 'Tribe' that Jonson had inspired and the influence the 'author' had on other Caroline playwrights and poets.<sup>425</sup> Brome was not a part of the 'Tribe', but he was beneath Jonson, even though he had learned much from the great dramatic master. According to Shaw, Brome's 'deprecatory self-consciousness was as often a pose for the satirist as Jonson's assumption of superiority was'.<sup>426</sup> Brome cultivated this humility after being influenced by Jonson's career and his tirades against the commercial theatre. In his prologue, Brome advertises both his humility and the greatness of the play. Brome believed enough in his own writing to feel strong contempt toward those who opposed the tenants and ideologies of the commercial theatrical community. However, he used the voice of others in his paratext to attack his rivals, whereas his former master had been much more direct. Jonson's animosity had made him the target of criticism and satire, a fate Brome wished to avoid. Jonson's vigorous self-fashioning and attacks on those he felt betrayed theatrical standards were also attractive to Brome. Brome was desirous to show humility, at the same time he wished to expose and condemn his enemies, which came out, through the words of others, in the carefully crafted paratexts of the play.

The prologue begins by addressing '*Gallants and friends-spectators*', showing Brome was able and eager to appeal to any and all, as long as they were commercial theatregoers. The remaining verses to *The Northern Lasse* demonstrate Brome's widespread appeal. Whilst Jonson's dedication aligns Brome with a great, if not difficult, literary master, the dedication from Dekker placed Brome fixedly in the professional camp. Dekker, an accomplished professional playwright himself, praises Brome for following his example in writing for the citizen audiences:

Which, then of Both shall I commend?  
 Or thee (that art my Sonne and Friend)  
 Or Her, by Thee begot? A Girle  
 Twice worth the *Cleopatrian* Pearle.  
 No: 'tis not fit for Me to Grace  
 Thee, who are Mine; and to they Face.

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<sup>425</sup> Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4v.

<sup>426</sup> Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 32.

But what I bring shall crowne thy *Daughter*  
(My *Grand child*) who (though full of laughter)  
Is Chast and Witty to the Time;  
Not Lumpish-Cold, as is her Clime  
By *Phoebus Lyre*, Thy *Northern Lasse*  
Our Southern proudest *Beauties* passe:  
Be *Joviall* with thy Braynes (her Mother)  
And helpe her (*Dick*) to such Another.<sup>427</sup>

Dekker's reference to Brome as his 'Sonne and Friend' shows a shared association with the commercial stage that Dekker favoured. Like Brome, Dekker wrote city comedies, almost exclusively, that were meant for citizen audiences.<sup>428</sup> Both Dekker and Jonson, by considering Brome a 'Sonne', were claiming him for, what were in the first poet's war, different parties catering to different audiences and holding very different ideas on the theatre and the role of drama. Dekker defended the openness of the commercial theatrical community when he battled Jonson in the first poet's war, which roughly lasted from 1598 to 1601.<sup>429</sup> Dekker's commendation alongside Jonson's, thirty years later, shows Brome's universal appeal and his ability to unify the dramatic factions through his literary skill. Although he was Jonson's apprentice and 'man', Dekker's suggestion that Brome is his 'Sonne' is based more on ideas and beliefs than occupational ties. Dekker's preference for the stage, and his own aggressive defence of the citizen audiences, make him a more suitable mentor to Brome than the critical and exacting Jonson. Dekker's further reference to Brome as a 'friend' also put Brome on the same level as Dekker. Through his association with Dekker, Brome's own vitriol for the courtly and aristocratic audiences becomes more natural. Both Jonson and Dekker were out-spoken in their beliefs and very disparaging toward those who held oppositional ideas about the place and purpose of the theatre, as well as the intended audience.

The remainder of the commendations offered to Brome in the paratext came from well-known contemporaries and continued the theme of familial closeness that Jonson and Dekker had begun. Matthew Steggle questions the identity of two of Brome's

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<sup>427</sup> Dekker, 'To my Sonne BROME and his Lasse' in *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4r.

<sup>428</sup> See Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, I (1939). Dekker defended the London citizenry in many of his plays including *The Shoemakers Holiday*, *Old Fortunatus*, and *The Honest Whore*. Dekker's plays were staged primarily at public theatres including the Rose, the Fortune, the Red Bull and the Globe, which attracted the wide range of theatregoers to whom Dekker targeted his plays.

<sup>429</sup> See Knutson *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* and Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poet's War*.

commendators, one being St. Br.<sup>430</sup> St. Br. could either be Stephen Brome or Stephen Bradwell. St. Br. wrote his dedication ‘To his ingenious Brother M Rich. Brome’ and confessed himself ‘proud to have such a Brother’.<sup>431</sup> In this sense, the commender would appear to be Stephen Brome; however, Steggle believes ‘St[ephen] Br[adwell] is a plausible candidate to have written these verses’ as ‘it is unsafe to extrapolate from this poem the existence of a blood relative named St[ephen] Br[ome]’.<sup>432</sup> St. Br. refers to Richard Brome as both a brother and a father to the ‘Northern Lasse’, in much the same way Dekker called Brome his ‘Sonne’. He attributes all the good qualities of the title character to the author: ‘blithe, bonny, natural Beautie’ in ‘as faire condition’d as her Father is’.<sup>433</sup> Brome’s qualities were inherent in the writing because the play is a product of himself. Therefore the play, because it was an extension of Brome’s talent, is also a ‘natural’ beauty.<sup>434</sup>

The next dedication, from F. T., continues to discuss Brome’s familial ties with the commender. Steggle questioned not only the identity of F. T., but also the metaphorical misapplication of familial language in his commendation, which makes Brome’s rank appear higher.<sup>435</sup> I believe the familial language is likely meant to show camaraderie and closeness at the commercial theatre, amongst these professional dramatists, rather than an attempt to bolster Brome’s reputation. The dedication ‘To his approved Friend M. Richard Brome on his Northern Lasse’ sets F. T. and the author up as love rivals, locked in an intense emotional struggle over the northern lass herself. F. T.’s comments about stealing her away from Brome, who has cast her off in print, are playful and flippant, as well as potentially critical of Brome’s decision to have the play published:

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<sup>430</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>431</sup> St. Br., ‘To his ingenious Brother M RICH. BROME, upon this witty issue of his Brayne, the Northern Lasse’ in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

<sup>432</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 38. Brackets are Steggle’s.

<sup>433</sup> St. Br., ‘To his ingenious Brother’ in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

<sup>434</sup> St. Br., ‘To his ingenious Brother’ in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

<sup>435</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 37 and 42, n. 44. According to Steggle’s footnote, F. T. ‘has generally been interpreted as Francis Tucker’. However, Steggle believes this appropriation ‘seems untenable as there is no record of in *Alumni Oxonienses* of Tucker having an M.A. or any other Oxford connection’.

What! Wilt thou prostitute thy *Mistresse*, (Friend)  
And make so rich a Beauty common? What end  
Do'st thou propose? Shee was thine owne, but now  
All will enjoy her free: 'tis strange that thou  
Canst brooke so many Rivalls in thy *Lasse*,  
Whose Wit and Beauty does her Sex surpasse.<sup>436</sup>

Print left the play open to criticism and judgement from readers. The commender fears that the intermingling of the play with others in print will tarnish the reputation of not only the play itself, but also the author. Brome's taking the play away from the stage and putting it into the medium of print opens it up to a much more 'common' audience. The observation that 'tis strange' Brome had published speaks to the contradictory act F. T. believed the playwright had committed by abandoning the theatrical audience. However, F. T.'s last lines demanding that Brome 'sendst her to be seene, and see / if any be like faire, like good as *Shee*' commends his skill and sends a message to 'so many Rivalls' that the play was true 'Wit and Beauty'.

John Ford's verse shows Brome to be a contemporary man not at odds with a more elite, although still citizen-based, audience. Ford does not continue with the familial theme of the commendations in 'Of Mr Richard Brome his ingenious Comedy, the Northern Lasse, To the Reader'. In fact, Ford does not address Brome at all in his commendation. He, like Brome, believed it should be the play that received praise rather than the author. Instead, Ford refers to Brome's play in the terms found in Ford's own paratexts.<sup>437</sup> Ford's mention of '*Art's Glory*', the 'fashion for Wit', and the 'Soules language' all found in this 'well-limb'd *Pöem*' does not fit Brome's play or his authorial intentions. Brome does not envision himself as a poet or a wit and the opening descriptions of him as a '*Poet*' or '*Paynter*' who should 'atchieve Reward / By Immortality of Name' brought a new, more artistic dimension to Brome's writing that Ford believe categorized the play.<sup>438</sup> The whole of Brome's commendatory verses created a close-knit group of men who were 'Lovers and Friends', rather than mere commenders. The camaraderie Brome first established in his dedication to Holford continued in the

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<sup>436</sup> F. T. 'To his approved Friend M. RICHARD BROME on his Northern Lasse' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4r.

<sup>437</sup> Ford, 'Of Mr. RICHARD BROME' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v. Ford's commendation and more analysis of it appear in Chapter 4, pp. 214-15.

<sup>438</sup> Ford, 'Of Mr. RICHARD BROME' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

commendatory verses before being reiterated in his prologue, when the author united the actors, the author, and the ‘Friends-spectators’ in ‘what is Good and Rare’.<sup>439</sup> Each piece of paratext builds on the previous material to create a uniform picture of a playwright who has the admiration and respect of true friends in the theatrical community. Although he is painted as a humble man of the theatre, the associations created with the commendators, and their attitudes and reputations, season the view of Brome himself. The critical attitude of Jonson’s verse, as well as his reputation for vocal and scathing criticism, linked Brome, through this paratext, with a similar brand of biting censure for those who do not show proper admiration and respect for the commercial theatre audiences. The inclusion of verses from Dekker and Ford, whose well-publicized antagonism toward those who wrote for the court, placed Brome in a coterie of critics who attacked the amateur playwrights who wrote for fame and position, rather than to entertain or teach audiences. Whilst Davenant’s commendators ultimately aligned him with the court, Brome’s commendators helped to create a persona for the dramatist as a humble playwright, at the same time their very names associated him with a more militant form of criticism aimed at the amateur courtly writers.

*The Queen’s Exchange* appeared on stage the same year as *The Northern Lasse*, and when the latter was printed there is an indication that *The Queen’s Exchange* was still being played, even if only sporadically.<sup>440</sup> This play contained less emphatic declarations of Brome’s allegiance to the professional stage, but still set up the parameters by which Brome wished his career and his reputation to be defined. It also attacked those ‘Poets’ who disregarded the judgement of the theatrical audiences. The opening lines of the prologue expressed ‘The writer of this Play [...] scarce ever durst / Of Poets rank himself about the worst’.<sup>441</sup> The speaker highlights Brome’s refusal to be called a ‘Poet’ and then advertises the author’s negative beliefs about ‘poets’ being selfish and driven only by

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<sup>439</sup> Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4v.

<sup>440</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 44 and Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 94. Steggle cites the differences in dating the play by various critics, saying that ‘Kaufman conjecturally dated the play to 1629-1630, Bentley Eades and Shaw to 1631-1632: but Martin Butler suggests a date perhaps as late as 1634’, with which Steggle concurs. The prologue mentions the experience, success, and establishment of the author; however, these praises could have been added after and, as Shaw defends, the popularity of the ‘psychology of distempered love appeared in the London theatres between 1627 and 1633’.

<sup>441</sup> Brome, *The Queen’s Exchange* (London: 1657), Sig A2v; Wing B4882.

their desire for personal gain and status. Brome is a 'writer of Plays' and, as such, relies on the actors and audience for success:

Though most that he has writ has past the rest,  
And found good approbation of the best;  
He as he never knew to bow, he saies,  
As little fears the fortune of his Playes:  
He yields their right to us, and we submit  
All that they are in learning or in wit  
To your fair censure.<sup>442</sup>

The fact that he has 'found good approbation of the best' does not make him controlling or haughty, even though such comparisons and associations have given rival playwrights, such as Davenant, a false sense of pride. The reason, according to the speaker, is that Brome believes the play is no longer his when it was staged, but rather the possession of the actors to whom 'he yields their right'. The actors, in turn, submit to the audience who are considered 'fair' in their judgement, using 'learning' and 'wit'. 'Wit', 'Action', and 'Plaudits' are once again combined and dependant on one another to ensure the play is successful.

The same year *The Northern Lasse* was published, Brome continued his stage success with *The City Wit*. By this time, he was a prominent and popular figure in the theatrical community and his plays began to take on a more opinionated tone - more critical and scathing toward the amateur courtly playwrights. *The City Wit* is concerned with the very nature of wit: what constitutes wit, what the purpose of wit is, and where wit leads.<sup>443</sup> The concerns over wit are addressed in the prologue, which is delivered by the pedant Sarpego, who is more interested in seeming intelligent than in actually conveying any matter of import to the audience; characteristics Brome attributed to his amateur, courtly rivals. Sarpego speaks in Latin in order to impress upon the audience his high levels of learning and his esteemed status. Although he begs the audience to exercise

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<sup>442</sup> Brome, *The Queen's Exchange*, Sig A2v.

<sup>443</sup> Brome, *The City Wit* in *Five New Playes: The Madd Couple Well Matcht, Novella, Court Begger, City Witt, Damoiselle* (London: Thomas Roycroft, 1653); Wing B4870. While *The City Wit* established Brome's ties to the city, the moral ambiguities raised by what constitutes 'wit' in the play seem to question the newfound values adopted by the Londoners. The play centres around Crasy, an honest citizen who is duped out of money and riches by those around him, including his wife Josina and her family the Sneakups, the courtiers Ticket and Ruffit, the pedant Sarpego, and the thrifty citizen Linsy-Wolsey. Crasy is forced to adopt a sinister brand of 'wit' that these others possess in order to win back what was stolen from him.

wit and just judgement, his pleas are convoluted by his use of Latin and his muddled references and metaphors:

You see I come unarm'd among you, *sine Virga aut Ferula*, without Rod or Ferular, which are the Pedants weapons. *Id est*, that is to say, I come not hither to be an Instructor to any of you, that were *Aquilam volare docere, aut Delphinum natate*, to teach the Ape, well learned as my selfe. Nor came I to instruct the Comedians. That were for me to be *Asinus inter simias*, the fool o'the Company: *I dare not undertake them*. I am no *Paedagogus* nor *Hypodidascalus* here. I approach not hither *ad erudiendum, nec ad Corrigendum*. [...] Nay I have given my Schollars leave to play, to get a *Vacuum* for my selfe to day, to Act a particle here in a Play; an Actor being wanting that could beare it with port and state enough.<sup>444</sup>

The haughty and inadvertently foolish speech by Sarpego mocks those writers who believe themselves superior because of their learning or their associations with the court. Sarpego's sly comparison of the audience and the 'Comedians' to apes suggests a contempt for the professional theatres that was prevalent with the courtiers. Sarpego calls the audience apes because they want what the court has without caring whether or not it is entertaining. It also is reminiscent of the first poet's war and the accusations that certain untalented, hack playwrights 'aped' the styles of the more accomplished and successful playwrights.<sup>445</sup> Sarpego says he will not venture to teach the audience anything because it will not be effective; he considers the audience to be witless pupils who cannot understand his wit. Brome would not criticize or threaten his audience to convince them to like the play, as his courtly contemporaries, represented by Sarpego, had done. He wanted only to entertain. The audience judges the play, with the author and the actors succeeding or failing together. Brome makes Sarpego the 'ape' in the prologue and the enemy to the commercial theatre audiences.

Whilst the first part of the prologue is written in prose, Sarpego continues: 'A Prologue should be in Ryhme, & c. therefore I will begin agen'. The pedant follows the rigid, formulaic standards of playwriting, which demonstrate his perfunctory, although impractical knowledge of the theatre:

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<sup>444</sup> Brome, *The City Wit*, Sig A2r.

<sup>445</sup> See Massinger, 'A Charme for a Libeller' in Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 196-99.



Kind Gentlemen, and men of gentle kinde,  
 There is in that a figure, as you'll finde,  
 Because weel take your eares as 'twere in Ropes,  
 Ile nothing speak but figures, strayns & tropes.  
*Quot quot adestis Salvete salvetote.*  
 The Schoolemaster that never yet besought yee,  
 Is now become a suitor, that you'll sit,  
 And exercise your Judgement with your wit,  
 On this our Comedy, which in bold Phrase,  
 The Author sayes has past with good applause  
 In former times. For it was written, when  
 It bore just Judgement, and the seal of *Ben*.<sup>446</sup>

The pedant will use 'nothing but figures, strayns & tropes', again parading his technical knowledge, but forsaking the practical matter and application of the prologue. His dedication to 'Kind Gentlemen, and men of gentle kinde' is admittedly a trope designed to win favour with the audience and not his actual belief that he is speaking to gentlemen and women of discriminating and discerning taste. Brome's humility is questioned by Sarpego's mention of the 'bold Phrase / The Author sayes has past with good applause'. However, this was in regards to the acceptance the play had won at the theatre and from Jonson. The mention of '*Ben*' demonstrates Brome's loyalty to his old master and the traditions of the theatre in which Jonson worked.

The title *The City Wit* suggested someone who is both urban and knowledgeable - two qualities that Brome wanted from his audience, but feared were becoming frequently at odds with one another, due to the influence of the courtly playwrights. Kaufman remarked 'city types on the early seventeenth-century stage are nearly always foolish, greedy, fanatic, crass, and underbred', characteristics Brome would apply to the courtiers invading the commercial theatres.<sup>447</sup> This stereotype contradicted the audience's belief in the existence of a city wit, even though what was to come challenged this very notion of a city 'type'.<sup>448</sup> In the play, the city inhabitants are proud of their duplicity and their dishonesty, suggesting that no one can achieve success and financial stability through

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<sup>446</sup> Brome, *The City Wit*, Sig A2v-3r.

<sup>447</sup> Kaufman, *Richard Brome*, p. 49.

<sup>448</sup> Brome, *The City Wit*, l.i.157-181. 'Mr. Sneakup and I are come to live i'th City, and here we have lyen these three years; and what? for honesty? Honesty! What should the City do with honesty; when 'tis enough to undoe a whole Corporation? Why are your Wares gumm'd; your Shopes dark/ your Prizes writ in strange Characters? what, for honesty? Honesty?'

fairness. This also seemed to be Brome's contention in regards to the professional stage, where the amateur courtly poets, including Davenant, were using dishonest methods to get their plays staged and earn money from the commercial theatregoers. Pyannet, wife to the eponymous city wit Crassy's father-in-law, asks 'have we bought an Office, here, for our towardly and gracious sone and heir here, young Mr. Sneakup [...] And made him a Courtier, in hope of his honesty?' when being challenged in regards to her son's duplicity.<sup>449</sup> While Pyannet's constant railings against honesty were comically extreme, the point she laboured to make, that honesty serves no purpose in trying to elevate one's social position, is something with which Brome was concerned. The association of dishonesty with the courtiers is also a common theme that ran through Brome's plays and paratext. Brome's swipes at the citizens reflected his growing concerns over the influence the amateur courtly playwrights had on the commercial stages. He feared that the dishonesty and ruthless competition that went with jostling for a position at court were becoming apparent in the actions and attitudes of the citizens who made up Brome's audience.

The title character Crasy, like Brome, was a one-time apprentice and he too wished to maintain the values that were taught to him during his edification. Crasy is duped out of his position and his fortune by the schemes of his wife and the citizens around him. Honest Crasy begins his disgrace having little idea of how to combat such wickedness, but he quickly assumes a similar course of action to retrieve what is his and get revenge on those who wronged him. Brome's own decision to write for the more upscale theatres, despite his favouritism for the common citizens in his plays, seemed to be a necessary transgression as he furthered his position as a commercial playwright. Like Crasy, Brome entered the world that he had scorned for economic survival and to solidify an honest and diligent reputation. Brome was a city wit, trying to change what people thought and to encourage morality. The play exemplified Brome's ability to show society as it was, but also how it should be or how he wanted it to be. The status quo was represented, but so were the alternatives. Whilst Brome's popularity was far-reaching enough to allow him to write successful plays for any theatre in the city, his choice of theatre demonstrated that he too was after profit. However, just as Crasy never allows

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<sup>449</sup> Brome, *The City Wit*, I.i.157-181.

honesty and humility to completely disappear, but rather reintroduces them at the end of the play, so too did Brome maintain his criticism of the court and the courtiers through his plays and his paratext.

Brome seemed content to let the company and theatre manager control the staging and publishing of his plays, as long as they adhered to his notions of respect and equality, which characterized, for him, the professional theatre. He readily entered into theatrical contracts and relinquished control over his plays to companies. Butler states that Brome's 1635 contract with the Salisbury Court theatre was:

The only such formal contract that we know of from the pre-civil war period. Other dramatists must have had comparable agreements, but Brome's is the only one of which details survive and is more unusual still in that it binds the playwright to work exclusively for a single theatre.<sup>450</sup>

The unusualness of being contracted to a single theatre shows that Brome wanted merely to provide for the stage. He wanted to write for a theatre that was well respected and well attended, so much so that he would enter into a contract that was detrimental and constrictive to him. Although his relationship would eventually sour and Brome would break these contractual terms in favour of joining the Cockpit, he seems to have held a great deal of respect for the manager-playwright relationship, provided that relationship was nurturing and mutually respectful.<sup>451</sup> As long as he was treated fairly, his plays were staged, and his work acknowledged Brome seemed content to yield control to the theatre manager and company.

The paratexts that accompanied the plays Brome wrote under contract, as well as those he wrote after, when he was embroiled in legal proceedings with the Salisbury Court, are about his unfair treatment at the hands of the theatre manager Richard Gunnell. Brome resented the playhouse's pandering to more courtly audience tastes.<sup>452</sup> After he left the theatre, Butler claims: 'The Salisbury Court players [...] attacked Brome from their stage, reviving Thomas Goffe's *The Careless Shepherdess* with a specially

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<sup>450</sup> Martin Butler, 'Brome, Richard (c.1590–1652)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3503>> [accessed 21 Aug 2010].

<sup>451</sup> Butler, 'Brome, Richard', *ODNB*. Brome renewed his contract with the Salisbury Court despite his belief that they had dishonoured the terms of the first contract when the theatres closed.

<sup>452</sup> Butler, 'Brome, Richard', *ODNB*.

composed induction ridiculing some of the plays Brome had written'.<sup>453</sup> In the induction, Bolt, a doorkeeper at Salisbury Court, tries to please Thrift, a citizen (and caricature of Brome), who demands more money for his play. Spark, an Inns of Court man, criticizes Thrift for being lazy and greedy, suggesting that he wants to be more than a mere playwright:

But of late the Poets having drown'd  
Their brains in Sack, are grown so dull and lazy,  
That they may be the subjects of a Play,  
Rather than the Authors: They have left to invoke  
*Thalia* now, and only call on Drawers:  
They quite neglect *Apollo's* Sacred Reed  
Which warbles forth Diviner Harmony,  
And use alone the dumb Tobacco-pipe.<sup>454</sup>

Thalia was Brome's 'beloved muse', which puts him in the frame of the induction. He is attacked for slighting the upscale Salisbury Court for a more common audience.<sup>455</sup> Brome replied to this attack in the epilogue to *The Court Begger* (staged in 1640) when he wrote:

But this small Poet vents none but his own, and his by whose care and  
directions this Stage is govern'd, who has for many yeares both in his fathers  
dayes, and since directed Poets to write & Players to speak, till he traird up  
these youths here to what they are now.<sup>456</sup>

Brome makes the case that he knows his place as an author, as he had been trained in the ways the 'Stage is govern'd'. He believed the author was as important as the actors and that both groups should cooperate to please the audience. He subsequently left Salisbury Court because he felt the theatre was too genuflecting to the courtiers and took advantage of him. All of Brome's paratexts show him to be a defender of the commercial playhouses and antagonistic toward those who violate the traditional roles held by 'Poets' and 'Players', even if they are at the commercial theatres, including Salisbury Court. When the ideology of the professional theatre was compromised, Brome took direct aim at the transgressors and set out to shame them in his paratext.

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<sup>453</sup> Butler, 'Brome, Richard', *ODNB*.

<sup>454</sup> Thomas Goffe, *The Careless Shepherdess* (London: 1656), Sig Br-B4v; Wing G1005.

<sup>455</sup> Jean-Christophe Mayer, *Representing France and the French in early modern English drama* (Cranbury NJ: Associated University Presses, 2008), p. 213.

<sup>456</sup> Brome, *The Court Begger*, Sig S8r.

### Brome's Battles with the Courtier Dramatists

Michael Neill states that the courtiers no longer considered themselves 'merely artisan-playwrights, they increasingly saw themselves as artists, supplying demonstrations of their individual genius'.<sup>457</sup> To these playwrights, the commercial theatre audiences mattered little. What did matter was that all audiences appreciated and admired the courtly amateur's wit and abilities without question or compromise. Brome, by comparison, sought the opposite from his spectators. He divided the audiences into different sections, those being 'Cavaliers, Ladyes, generous sprits of the City, and witty young masters o' the Innes o' court'.<sup>458</sup> He favoured 'the newly developing independent gentry class', which was found at professional theatres, both public and private.<sup>459</sup> Gurr claims the private theatres Brome wrote for catered to a changing and more sympathetic and diversified audience taste.<sup>460</sup> According to Kaufman, 'Caroline high society was less exclusive and developed, bringing together men of a broader social and geographical differentiation. It lacked the narrow courtly homogeneity'.<sup>461</sup> The audiences Brome sought to entertain appeared to engage more readily in social discussions and the theatres he wrote for were more inclusive to citizens, across social boundaries.<sup>462</sup>

*The Novella*, performed in 1632, contained a prologue that reiterated Brome's professionalism and humility:

But first I'll tell you, that I bad commission  
From him to tell you that hee'l not petition  
To be dubb'd Poet, for he holds it fit,  
That nought should make a man a wit, but wit,  
He'll 'bide his triall, and submits his cause  
To you the Jury, so you'l judge by Lawes.  
If Pride or Ignorance should rule, he feares  
An unfaire tryall, 'cause not try'd by's Peeres.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Neill, 'The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters', 346.

<sup>458</sup> Brome, *The Court Begger*, Sig N4v.

<sup>459</sup> Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 148.

<sup>460</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, pp. 266-74.

<sup>461</sup> Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 110.

<sup>462</sup> See Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 113. Friends rather than peers increasingly populated the theatres. This meant that audiences were varied and crossed all social boundaries, making the 'environment at once public and intimate'.

<sup>463</sup> Brome, *The Novella in Five New Playes*, (1653), Sig H4v.

The speaker forcefully reiterates that Brome was not to 'be dubb'd Poet'. Those who called themselves 'wits' without being termed so by theatre audiences had corrupted the title. Again, the power of the audience is stressed as they are the judges and jury in deciding the fate of a play on stage. In Brome's opinion, no one outside the audience can judge the play or evaluate the playwright's ability. It is up to the playwright to prove he is a wit through his words and works, not through the praise of his peers. The mention of 'Pride' and 'Ignorance' by the speaker hints at a growing concern about the desires of the audience. These qualities could also refer to Brome's rival playwrights, who combined 'Pride' and 'Ignorance' in what they write and who they commend. If the audience members are proud, they will likely be ignorant and reject the play. Brome considers the wise theatregoer, who is not boastful or ignorant, to be his peer. He would rather be rejected by wise and honest commercial theatregoers than win hollow and meaningless praise from his literary peers.

In 1632, *The Weeding of Covent Garden* was likely written and staged.<sup>464</sup> The exact date of play is not wholly known, although Steggle has suggested that the play was originally written in the early 1630s, whilst other critics believe it was written toward the end of the Caroline era, as it appeared on stage in 1641.<sup>465</sup> The prologue's continuation of themes relevant to Brome's ideology suggests that the play was written in the early 1630s, when Davenant and Carew were praising each other and slandering Massinger and the professional theatre. There is a direct attack on those who relied on the judgement of peers rather than audience approval, which was Carew and Davenant at the time. The play and its vitriolic prologue could be seen as Brome's entrance into the second poet's war:

He that could never boast, nor seek the way,  
To prepare friends to magnifie his Play,  
Nor raile at's Auditory for unjust,  
If they not lik't it nor was so mistrust.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 43-44, and Bentley Eades, *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time 1590-1642*, pp. 89-91. Steggle contends that Prince Charles's men could have played the play at the Red Bull theatre and it was after this that his career at Salisbury Court began. Bentley Eades, however, provides evidence that the play was staged at Salisbury Court.

<sup>465</sup> See Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641'.

<sup>466</sup> Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden* in *Five New Playes* (1659), prologue unpaginated page following 'Upon Aglaura'.

The speaker comments that Brome never ‘had the luck to have his name / Clap’t up above this merit’, referencing the practice of his rivals in giving undue praise for unskilled writing. Brome will ‘never boast, nor seek the way, / To prepare friends to magnifie his Play’ of which Carew and Davenant had been guilty. Although the actor stresses the inoffensiveness of the play, saying ‘we shall present no Scandal or Abuse’, it mocks those men who loudly proclaimed their abilities, the courtier authors in general and Davenant specifically.<sup>467</sup> The play itself, although being about the love intrigues of the families of Crosswill and Cockbrain, is driven by the Philoblathici, or the brothers of the Blade.<sup>468</sup> In the Philoblathici, Brome characterized his rival courtier dramatists, comparing them to the roaring boys who had been the subject of satire in the theatre for generations.<sup>469</sup> According to Steggle, the similarities between the courtiers and the Philoblathici are numerous. Each group seems to be:

A lawless gang who believe they are above the authority of the magistrates: ‘I would but see the carcass of authority prance in our Quarter, and we not cut his legs off.’ (86: V.iii.23-4). They swear elaborate oaths of secrecy, and aspire to a pseudo-military discipline, although, when faced with a true threat, such as the mere arrival of the magistrates, they are unable to offer any resistance. They are betrayed by a disgruntled informer, and driven out of the place they have terrorised: an action described as ‘a special piece of service’ to ‘the Commonwealth’ (95: V.iii.264).<sup>470</sup>

The play was likely written to support Massinger and to criticize the peer ‘puffing’ that was occurring, with the Philoblathici representing the amateur courtier Carew and the would-be professional Davenant.

Brome’s vocal and strenuous criticism toward the courtier playwrights significantly increased in volume and venom when he joined the battle of words and wits of the second poet’s war. His already notable rejection of peer praise and his disdain for the amateur, courtly playwrights’ reliance on ‘puffing’ can be seen in his prologues that were highly critical of the system of glad-handing and back-slapping in which Davenant and Carew were engaged. With the staging of *The Witts* in 1634, Davenant would come,

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<sup>467</sup> Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden in Five New Playes* (1659), prologue unpaginated page following ‘Upon Aglaura’.

<sup>468</sup> See Shaw, *Richard Brome*, pp. 75-79. Shaw makes the argument that the Philoblathici are ‘blockheads’ and ‘undesirable people’ who emerge, like weeds, in new areas.

<sup>469</sup> See Kaufman, *Richard Brome*, pp. 151-68; Shaw, *Richard Brome*, pp. 68-74; Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, pp. 163-64.

<sup>470</sup> Steggle, ‘Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641’.

to Brome, to embody the self-righteous attitude of the courtier dramatist, and thus would become his primary target of satire.<sup>471</sup> Davenant's career was almost entirely built on and sustained by appraisals from his friends and allies, rather than the theatrical audiences. As a result, he became a favourite at court. Brome acted as a sort of spokesman for the commercial theatre and resented 'the amateur court dramatists giving their plays away and also wooing the jaded Caroline audiences away from professional competitors by the expensive novelty of elaborate scenery and costume'.<sup>472</sup> Some Caroline audiences desired courtly themes, such as platonic love, rather than city comedies, which were more in the vein of the Elizabethan and Jacobean plays.<sup>473</sup> It was not only Davenant's growing contempt for the commercial theatre audiences, whom he could not please despite many attempts, but also his protection from courtiers, such as Carew and Endymion Porter, that incensed Brome and led to the shaming and ridiculing of Davenant in the play and the paratext.

In response to Davenant's *The Witts*, Brome wrote *The Love Sick Court* (played in 1634 at Salisbury Court). Subtitled *The Ambitious Politique*, Brome took aim directly at the courtiers, satirizing, as Kaufman describes it, 'the silly distortions of human motive and conduct becoming conventionalized in the new courtier drama'.<sup>474</sup> Brome's prologue speaker emphasises the universal appeal of the play to 'the wit, the scholar and the poet'.<sup>475</sup> He claims that it was meant for the varied audiences at the commercial theatre: the 'Cavaliers, Ladyes, generous sprits of the City, and wity young masters o' the Innes o' court'.<sup>476</sup> Brome's design in writing the play was to entertain all groups, and the prologue speaker is confident the play will please because it does not contain any offence, nor is it lofty:

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<sup>471</sup> Kaufman, *Richard Brome*, p. 151. This second war of the theatres embodied the same arguments as the one that had raged between Jonson and Dekker and Marston, the playwright's role controlling the staged play and in determining the interpretation of the play.

<sup>472</sup> Kaufman, *Richard Brome*, (p. 151) paraphrasing Harbage, *Cavalier Drama*, p. 154.

<sup>473</sup> See Neill, 'The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters', 341-60 and Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, pp. 264-75. Neill highlights the increasing desire for courtly spectacle, with the commercial theatre-goers eager to proclaim their 'appreciation and judgement of works of dramatic art', which 'had become an essential accomplishment'. Gurr, on the other hand, looks at the place the different theatre, with the Blackfriars clearly being distinguished as 'private and courtier' as opposed to 'public and citizen'. Gurr claims the main conflict was over how the other theatres conformed to these broad generalisations.

<sup>474</sup> Kaufman, *Richard Brome*, p. 109.

<sup>475</sup> Kaufman, *Richard Brome*, p. 109.

<sup>476</sup> Brome, *The Court Begger*, Sig N4v.



A little wit, lesse learning, no Poetry  
This Play-maker dares boast: Tis his modesty.  
For though his labour have not found least grace,  
It puffs not him up or in minde or face,  
Which makes him rather in Art disclame  
Bold License, then to arrogate a Name  
Yet to the wit, the scholler, and the Poet,  
Such as the Play is, we must dare to show it  
Our judgements to but too: And without fear  
Of giving least offence to any ear.<sup>477</sup>

The prologue represents the antithesis of Davenant's attitude toward the professional stage and the court. Brome wrote 'plays' rather than 'poems', and he aimed to earn his reputation by entertaining audiences rather than relying on peers for position. The speaker points out that the play was an entertaining outlet for the audience and not a lofty piece of literary artistry. Brome asserted throughout his career that despite any other names given to the production, what was played on stage was simply a 'play', 'no Poetry'. In this form, the play was meant for the commercial theatre audience who Brome believed had sophisticated tastes and were capable of discerning the true value of a playwright's labour. He wanted to entertain his audiences, not his peers, and he aspired to gain acclaim and a reputation as a provider for the stage, not through his 'puff[ed]' up associations with well-connected, literary peers. Because of this desire, he verbally attacked any rival dramatist he felt was abusing association. In the prologue, the speaker takes direct aim at Davenant, addressing his 'arrogating a Name' and the 'Bold License' he had taken in getting *The Witts* to the stage, seeking someone with more connections to over-turn Henry Herbert's censorship. Brome's men of judgement were the commercial theatre audiences and his play, although not lavish or spectacular, is more satisfying than Davenant's empty, substance-less play.

In 1635, Brome entered into an exclusive contract with Salisbury Court to produce three plays a year over the course of the next three years.<sup>478</sup> However, the closure of the theatres in the spring of 1636, due to the plague, prevented Brome from fulfilling the terms of the contract, and gave him time to reflect on his position at

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<sup>477</sup> Brome, *The Love Sick Court* in Brome *Five New Playes* (1659), p. 89.

<sup>478</sup> See Steggle, *Richard Brome*, pp. 105-08.

Salisbury Court.<sup>479</sup> In October 1637, when the theatres reopened, Brome felt he was still owed by the theatre for the plays he had written and for the revisions he had made to other plays during the closure. Although he did not receive the compensation he felt was due to him, Brome verbally renewed his contract in the summer of 1638, shortly after which *The Damoiselle* was staged.<sup>480</sup> This time there was more anxiety implicit in the prologue over the stability of the commercial theatre and more antagonism toward the amateur, courtly authors:

Our Playmaker (for yet he won't be calld  
Author, or Poet) nor beg to be installd  
Sir *Lawreat* [...]  
He does not ayme,  
So much at praise, as pardon; nor does claime  
Lawrell, but Money; Bayes will buy no Sack,  
And therefore you may see his maine intent  
Is his owne welfare, and your merriment.<sup>481</sup>

The prologue is comically overt concerning Brome's 'maine intent' for economic rewards. Through the prologue, Brome pleads for money and disregards the 'Bayes'. The prologue suggests that the 'bayes' were mere trinkets that Brome considered to be without any real value to a professional playwright. The speaker is insistent that the author must work to earn a living and not 'beg'. Although this was meant to be humorous, it was also a smear against the Salisbury Court, at the same time it was a plea for commercial patronage after the author and actors had gone without income for so long. The desire for his audience's 'merriment' is proportional to the playwright's and his company's economic needs. The mention of the 'Bayes' also references those playwrights vying for the position of Poet Laureate, which was vacant after Jonson's death in 1637. Brome's slight was likely directed at Davenant, whose flurry of activity at the time could be seen as pandering to the court for such preferment.<sup>482</sup> Brome claimed that he did not want the position, although as Jonson's former apprentice and 'man' he

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<sup>479</sup> See Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 67.

<sup>480</sup> Butler, 'Brome, Richard', *ODNB*.

<sup>481</sup> Brome, *The Damoiselle*, Sig A2r.

<sup>482</sup> See Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 121 and Mary Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p. 64. Steggle comments directly on Davenant's 'manoeuvrings' to gain the title whilst Edmond simply lists the notable highlights of the year, which culminated in the laureateship. Davenant took over as Poet Laureate in 1638 after Jonson's death the previous year, the title was never official, but rather the post was an honorary one. Davenant did receive an annual stipend.

could be seen as the natural successor. However, the title of Poet Laureate would have meant close association with the court, an alliance Brome, as a man of the commercial theatre, did not want.

In 1639, the feud with the courtiers had escalated as Davenant and John Suckling proposed building a theatre off Fleet Street that would more closely resemble the courtly stage. Designed for 'Action, musicals, Presentments, Scenes, Dancing and the like', the plans never came to fruition and Davenant and Suckling set their sights on acquiring a theatre already established.<sup>483</sup> Brome responded with *The Court Begger*, which was written specifically for Beeston's Cockpit. It was more scathing and vicious in its satire of the fawning courtiers, who were desperate for attention, because of Beeston's own negative attitude toward the amateur courtly dramatists and the courtly stage competing with his own.<sup>484</sup> The play is centred around Sir Andrew Mendicant, an old Knight turned court beggar who seeks, through any means possible, to win a position at court. His scheme is to marry his daughter Charissa to the courtier Ferdinand, who, in turn, has gone mad with love for the Lady Strangelove, a professed widow who loves to be courted but who will not remarry. Brome exposed the foolishness that accompanied not only those already in courtly circles, but also those who wished to join such circles. In the background are three courtiers, Courtwit, Citwit, and Swaynwit, who represent different aspects of courtly fawning and obsequious pandering. The play is often considered alongside *The City Wit* in its satire of 'preferment, position, and monopoly as it was practiced in and around the Caroline court'.<sup>485</sup> In the same way *The City Wit* exposed the dishonesty of social climbing citizens, *The Court Begger* exposed the emptiness and witlessness found amongst the courtiers who politicked, rather than worked, to gain status.

In the prologue, the blunt country gentleman, Swaynwit, talks of the author's dismay at the whims of the audience in wanting courtly spectacle. He also speaks of the author's resolution to not agree to these whims:

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<sup>483</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, 160.

<sup>484</sup> See Gurr, 'Beeston [Hutchinson], William', *ODNB*. Brome's next play, *The Court Begger* was written after he had finally left the Salisbury Court in 1639. Brome was again disappointed with the contractual obligations and the slights he felt he had been subjected to at the theatre. He went to William Beeston's Cockpit, which he seems to have considered a more favourable working environment.

<sup>485</sup> Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 68. Shaw says *The Court Begger* is a political satire in which the ethic of unmerited advancement and irresponsible favouritism is attacked.

Wee've cause to fear yours, or the Poets frowne  
For of late day's (he know's not (how) y'are grown,  
Deeply in love with a new strayne of wit  
Which he condemns, at least disliketh it,  
And solemnly protest you are to blame  
If at his hands you doe expect the same;  
Hee'l tread his usuall way, no gaudy Sceane  
Shall give instructions, what his plot doth meane;  
No handsome Love-toy shall your time beguile  
Forcing your pittie to a sigh or smile.<sup>486</sup>

Swaynwit defends Brome's attitude toward the theatre as well as the play itself. He speaks like an actor rather than a character when he states: 'wee've cause to fear yours, or the Poets frowne'. The opening line hints at a divide within the commercial theatre, with the actors being torn between the increasingly disparate interests of the audiences and the authors. Brome was dismayed at the audiences' desire for courtly spectacle, which the speaker claims the author 'condemns' at the same time he 'at least disliketh' the actions and motives of the courtly writers. The prologue suggests the courtier dramatists did not intend to entertain, but rather to make a name for themselves, whilst Brome was an honest tradesman looking to be compensated for his skill in writing and ability to please an audience. There is a sense of alarm and dismay on behalf of the author that the institution was breaking up and that tastes were diverging. Brome believed that because the courtiers had abandoned the principles of the professional theatre they deserved to be criticized and satirized, as Swaynwit attests. The change from Swaynwit's defence of the professional theatre in the prologue, to his foolish quest for status in the play itself, demonstrated the corruptive change happening in the professional theatre. There was an increase in a more courtly style of writing on the professional stages, as amateurs were having their plays staged more often on at the commercial theatres and audiences were accepting of them.

Swaynwit vocalizes Brome's belief that the play and not the playwright should receive acclaim and attention. He states that the audience was only attracted to a 'gaudy' scene and suggests that courtly playwrights had been mesmerizing the commercial theatre audiences by 'forcing' and 'beguiling' them to feel false emotions. The expectations of the audiences had become exacting and covetous of a 'new strayne of

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<sup>486</sup> Brome, *The Court Begger*, Sig N4v.

wit', which was introduced to the stage by the courtier dramatist and which Brome 'condemns' and 'disliketh'. There is a fear that the city audiences have been so blinded by the spectacle the courtier playwrights offered that *The Court Begger* would fail because it contains no such ceremony. Swaynwit comments on the overly lavish productions offered by fame-hungry amateur authors:

Yet you to him your favour may expresse  
As well as unto those whose forwardnesse  
Make's them your Creatures thought, who in a way  
To purchase fame give money with the Play.  
Yet you sometimes pay deare for't, since they write  
Lesse for your pleasure than their own delight.<sup>487</sup>

Swaynwit's speech to the paying audiences of the commercial theatre stresses that the money they spend would buy entertainment and enjoyment, because it was the actors' and author's intention to entertain, not to seek recognition or title. The implication in the prologue is that Brome's courtly rivals do not write for their audience's delight, but for themselves and their own, selfish aims. They even go so far as to pay for the staging of the lavish productions, rather than have their entertainments sought after and desired by theatre managers and acting companies.<sup>488</sup> The prologue speaker's final suggestion, 'if our Poet fayle in, may he be / A Sceane of Mirth in their next Comedye', invites his rivals to satirize him if he contradicts or compromises his reputation. Such critiques were justified if the 'Poets' betrayed his own personal and professional ideas, as Brome believed his rival Davenant had done.

The epilogue is spoken by many of the characters of the play: the socially elite Lady Strangelove, Ferdinand, the servant Philomel, and the courtiers Citwit and Swaynwit. The harmonious combination of all these characters, speaking for Brome, reiterates his popularity across all social classes, as well as the openness and inclusiveness of the Cockpit theatre, where all classes could be found during a performance. Butler claims that this epilogue was a response to a satire of Brome at Salisbury Court, which he had abandoned in favour of the Cockpit.<sup>489</sup> Brome includes a variety of characters in the epilogue to show that it is the Cockpit that attracts a variety of

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<sup>487</sup> Brome, *The Court Begger*, Sig N4v.

<sup>488</sup> Brome comments on this in the epilogue to *The Court Begger*, Sig S7v-8v.

<sup>489</sup> Butler, 'Brome, Richard', *ODNB* and Goffe, *The Careless Shepherdess*, Sig Br-B4v. See also Chapter 3, pp. 163-64.

patrons and is popular, not the Salisbury Court theatre. Swaynwit speaks first and tells the audience not to be seduced by the hollow shows of the courtly stage:

Because we would ha' the best: and if it be not, why so? The Poet has shewd his wit and we our manners. But to stand beg, beg for reputation for one that has no contenance to carry it, and must ha' money is such a Pastime! --- If it were for one of the great and curious Poets that give these Playes as the Prologue said, and money too, to have 'em acted; For them, indeed, we are bound to ply for an applause.<sup>490</sup>

He appeals to the audience to applaud Brome's efforts because the play is well written and meant solely for the entertainment of the theatrical audiences, not for the benefit of the writer's reputation. Swaynwit states that only talentless, amateur authors 'beg for reputation', as he and his courtier allies do in the play. Brome would not beg for money, nor would he offer money to have his plays staged, as Swaynwit's address hints happened at the Salisbury Court theatre. Instead, this epilogue reinforced the traditional, professional outlook on the business of playing: the author wrote with wit, the actors staged the play with reverence and 'manners', and the audience judged without begging or bribery to sway them. Swaynwit claims that Brome deserves to be lauded because he has merited such acclaim and because he earned his living through pleasing the audience.

In June of 1640, Davenant used his courtly influence to seize control of Beeston's Cockpit, which was in jeopardy because of controversy surrounding *The Court Begger*.<sup>491</sup> This takeover alarmed Brome, as the future of his own company and his place in it became uncertain. In reaction, Brome initiated the printing of six of his plays, which were entered into the Stationers Register on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1640.<sup>492</sup> The six plays intended for publication were: *Christianetta*; *The Jewish Gentleman*; *A New Academy or Exchange*; *The Love Sick Court*; *The Covent Garden*; and *The English Moore or Mock Marriage*. These plays were eventually published together as *Five New Playes* in 1659; however *Christianetta* and *The Jewish Gentleman* were not included, while *The Queen and Concubine* was.<sup>493</sup> This collection eventually came six years after the publication of *Five New Playes* in 1653, which contained: *The Madd Couple Well Matcht*, *Novella*, *The*

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<sup>490</sup> Brome, *The Court Begger*, Sig S8r.

<sup>491</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 156.

<sup>492</sup> See Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, II (1951).

<sup>493</sup> Brome, *Five New Playes* (1659).

*Court Begger*, *The City Witt*, and *The Damoiselle*.<sup>494</sup> The delay in publication resulted from Brome's hope of returning his plays to the stage, because of the increasingly negative attention Davenant was attracting from Parliamentary supporters at the time. Print was the medium favoured by Brome's courtly rivals and represented an elevation of the author over others, as well as a reliance on peer praise rather than audience appreciation. However, Brome did initiate the publication of two of his more famous plays in 1640, *The Antipodes* and *The Sparagus Garden*. These plays were seemingly published to eradicate the mistakes and omissions made by Brome's previous company, Salisbury Court, and to criticize his courtly rivals, in particular Davenant.<sup>495</sup>

In *The Sparagus Garden*, Brome included two commendations from C. G. and R. W.<sup>496</sup> C. G. lauds the qualities Brome possessed in 'To his deserving friend *Mr. Richard Brome on his Sparagus Garden, a Comedy*'. The verse speaks of the criticism of Brome from the courtier rivals in both 1635, when the play was first staged, and in 1640, when it was printed. He recalls: 'the envious Criticke' who 'would recant to see / How much opprest is every virgin tree'.<sup>497</sup> C. G.'s allusion to the suffering that Brome endured at the hands of his rivals is calculated to make even the harshest critic recant his abuse. He also reinforces the worthlessness of praise, even though he is offering the same: 'But thou art modest and disdain'st to heare / A tedious, glorious, needlesse Character / Of thee and of they Muse'.<sup>498</sup> Again, the speakers promote Brome's ideology and promote his modesty.

The commendation from R. W. to Brome highlights Brome's ability to please any and all audiences, whatever their rank or social position:

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<sup>494</sup> Brome, *Five New Playes* (1653).

<sup>495</sup> See John Freehafer, 'Brome, Suckling, and Davenant's Theatre Project of 1639', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language: A Journal of the Humanities*, 10 (1968), 367-83. Davenant, Brome's chief courtier opponent, published his plays, which seemed to Brome to be a violation of professionalism. Brome again had to look to alternate methods to get his plays to the public, this time through publication.

<sup>496</sup> Richard Cave, 'The Antipodes, Textual Essay', *RBO*, and Sanders, 'The Sparagus Garden: Textual Essay', *RBO*. Cave and Sanders provide current critical guesses from Ann Haake, Butler, and Steggle as to the identity of C. G. There is no definitive answer but Cave claims that, regardless of his identity, he is 'a trained legalistic mind'.

<sup>497</sup> C. G., 'To his deserving friend Mr. Richard Brome on his Sparagus Garden, a Comedy' in Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A3r

<sup>498</sup> C. G., 'To his deserving friend Mr. Richard Brome' in Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A3r.

The wisest of the Age shall hither come,  
 And thinke their time well spent as was their summe.  
 The Sqint-ey'd Criticke that such care do's take,  
 To looke for that he loatheth to partake:  
 Now crossing his warp'd Nature shall be kind,  
 And vexing grieve 'cause he no fault can find.  
 The ignorant of the times that do delight,  
 Not in a Play, but how to wast day-light,  
 Shall resort hither, 'till that you descry,  
 With pleasure, smiling *April* in each eye.<sup>499</sup>

To R. W., Brome's writing is curative and cathartic, at the same time it is soothing and entertaining, all qualities that stage plays should exhibit. This commendation also reflects on the recent tribulations Brome experienced at the Cockpit. R. W. suggests that even in nature, there are some wicked creatures that will seek the destruction of decency. 'A Serpent in a Garden's no new thing' seems a likely reference to the amateur courtiers. As the play had been printed when Davenant and Suckling controlled the Cockpit, the comments about the serpent in the garden could refer to these two men, especially Davenant, who not only lived in Covent Garden, but was by trade a professional playwright who had aligned himself with the courtiers.

The prologue to the play sounded like another commendation, as the speaker reiterates the same qualities mentioned by C. G. and R. W., in particular the author's humility and devotion to the commercial stage:

He, that his wonted modesty retaynes,  
 And never set a price upon his Braines  
 Above your Judgments; nor did ever strive  
 By Arrogance or Ambition to atchieve  
 More prayse unto himselfe, or more applause  
 Unto his Scenes, then such, as know the Lawes  
 Of Comedy do give<sup>500</sup>

Brome's adherence to 'the lawes of comedy', which dictated that the audience was judge and jury, demonstrate his loyalty to the professional theatre.<sup>501</sup> The 'laws of comedy'

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<sup>499</sup> R. W., 'To the Author on his *Sparagus Garden*' in Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A3v.

<sup>500</sup> Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A4r.

<sup>501</sup> Jonson, *Everyman Out of his Humour* (London: Adam Islip, 1600), Sig B4v; STC 346.13, and *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London: S. N., 1641), I.vii.98; STC 14754a. The phrase had previously been used twice by his mentor Ben Jonson, once in the prologue to *Everyman Out of His Humour* and once by the chorus in speaking about the ill fate of the present commercial theatre in *The Magnetick Lady*.



reference Jonson's dedication to Brome for *The Northern Lasse*.<sup>502</sup> These 'lawes' set traditional, comedic standards that were to be followed in the professional theatre. They are again referred to in the prologue to *The Novella*, where the speaker asks the audience to judge based on these 'lawes'.<sup>503</sup> The prologue speaker of *The Sparagus Garden* attacks those amateur courtiers who did not follow these comedic 'lawes', but who 'strive by arrogance or ambition to atchieve more prayse'. Brome's actor is adamant that the author wants 'modesty' rather than acclaim. The speaker warns the audience not 'to expect high Language' because 'the *Subject* [of the play] is so low'. The lowliness of the plot and the language Brome used followed the 'lawes of comedy', which were meant to entertain the audience and put them at ease with the subject matter, not beguile them with lofty language.

Despite these entreaties to the audience to expect 'low' entertainment, the speaker referred to Brome as a 'Poet': 'as our *Poet's* free, / Pray let be so your *Ingenuity*'.<sup>504</sup> Much like R. W.'s terming of Brome as an 'Artist' in the commendatory verse, the title of 'poet' was too lofty to give to the author who had declared himself a 'playwright' who 'wonted modesty' and who wrote 'low' comedies.<sup>505</sup> The terming of Brome as a poet is repeated in the epilogue when the speaker states: 'what ere Poets write, we Act, or say, / Tis only in your hands to Crowne a *Play*'.<sup>506</sup> The title emphasises that a 'Poet' was not only found amongst the elite, courtly circles, but also worked in the professional theatre, cooperating with the actors in a bid to please the audiences. The 'poet' in this case is a humble servant of the people who sought the audience's 'justice' and 'grace' and did not 'boast'.<sup>507</sup> This ideology is also enforced in Brome's dedication to William Cavendish:

Your favourable *Construction* of my poore *Labours* commanded my *Service* to your *Honour*, and, in that, betray'd your worth to this *Dedication*: I am not ignorant how farre *unworthy* my best endeavours are of your *least allowance*; yet let your *Lordship* be pleased to know you, in this, share but the inconveniences of the most renowned Princes as you partake of their glories: And I doubt not, but it will more divulge your *noble Disposition* to the World, when it is knowne you can freely

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<sup>502</sup> Jonson, 'To my old Faithfull Servant' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3r 'By observation of those Comick Lawes / Which I, your Master, first did teach the Age'.

<sup>503</sup> Brome, *The Novella* in *Five New Playes* (1653), Sig H4v. 'Hee'll 'bide his triall, and submits his cause / To you the Jury, so you'll judge by Lawes'.

<sup>504</sup> Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A4r.

<sup>505</sup> R. W., 'To the Author on his Sparagus Garden' in Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A3v.

<sup>506</sup> Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A4r.

<sup>507</sup> Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A4r.

pardon an *Officious trespasse* against your *Goodnes*. *Caesar* had never bin commended for his *Clemency*, had there not occasion beene offered, wherein he might shew, how willingly hee could forgive: I shall thanke my Fortune, if this weake presentation of mine shall any way encrease the *Glory of your Name* among *Good Men*, which is the chiefeſt ayme and onely study of Your Honour<sup>508</sup>

As the last playwright to dedicate to Cavendish in the Caroline era, Brome's verse connects him to his mentor Jonson, as well as Massinger and Ford who also dedicated to the earl of Newcastle.<sup>509</sup> Massinger and Ford were particularly staunch advocates of the professional theatre and were vocal in their criticism of the amateur courtly dramatists infiltrating the commercial stages. Through a shared association with Cavendish, the playwrights not only gained an ally for the professional theatre, but also re-associated Cavendish as an enemy of those amateurs who subverted the ideology and ethos of professionalism that Massinger, Ford, and Brome promoted. Like Ford's, Brome's dedication to Cavendish praises the stature of the patron, whilst seeking recognition, acceptance, clemency, and protection.<sup>510</sup> The similarities between Brome's and Ford's verses to Cavendish are highlighted by Bergeron, who points out that each dedication focused on the idea of 'construction'.<sup>511</sup> Bergeron suggests that Ford's praise of Cavendish's 'noble construction' was matched by Brome's desire for 'favourable construction' from Newcastle. 'Construction' reiterates the concept of labour, which Brome believed in and adhered to as a professional, and on which he had built his livelihood and reputation as a tradesman.

In 1641, *The Weeding of Covent Garden* was likely revived on the Cockpit stage.<sup>512</sup> Steggle believes this play was possibly Brome's most topical and timely play, which uniquely commented on the political and social landscape of both the early 1630s and the early 1640s.<sup>513</sup> The threat from the courtiers was greater toward the end of the era

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<sup>508</sup> Brome, 'To the Right Honourable William Earle of New-Castle, &c. Governour to the Prince his Highnesse' in Brome, *The Sparagus Garden*, Sig A2r-2v.

<sup>509</sup> See Sanders, 'The Sparagus Garden: A Textual Essay', *RBO*.

<sup>510</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 193.

<sup>511</sup> See Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, pp. 192-93. Ford, 'To The Rightly Honourable William Cavendish, Earle of New-Castle, Viscount Mansfield, Lord Boulfouer and Ogle' in *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A2r. Ford ends the dedication: 'I dare not professe a curiositie; but am onely studious, that your Lord will please, amongst such as best honour your Goodnesse, to admit into your noble construction'.

<sup>512</sup> See Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641'.

<sup>513</sup> See Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641'.

and the revived play attacked these amateurs, specifically Davenant, who had recently been ousted from Covent Garden.<sup>514</sup> Davenant's plan to overthrow Parliament through military force was believed to have been hatched in Covent Garden with the help of his ally Suckling.<sup>515</sup> The Army Plot, as it was called, was foiled by one of their co-conspirators and both Davenant and Suckling fled to avoid punishment for treason. Beeston regained control over the Cockpit, and a re-staging of this play would have been a way for both playwright and manager to ridicule Davenant. The inclusion of much military action and fighting in the final act of the play could be seen as a satire of the expulsion of Davenant and Suckling, after their failed coup. In the play, the Philoblastici are also foiled by their co-conspirator, which suggests the play was possibly re-written to reflect the failed circumstances of Brome's rivals in 1640.

The 1658 printed version of *The Weeding of Covent Garden* contains two prologues and two epilogues, both of which appear to have a large time gap between them. The first prologue was written by Brome and espouses the anger and resentment the playwright felt toward the amateur courtly dramatists. It attacked the alliance of writers who bolstered their false reputations by flattering one another, thereby hiding their own shortcomings and inabilities. Brome's prologue attacks those rivals who used others to propagate their names, rather than their own abilities or audience preference to gain fame:

HE that could never boast, nor seek the way,  
 To prepare friends to magnifie his Play,  
 Nor raile at's Auditory for unjust,  
 If they not lik't it nor was so mistrust.  
 Ful ever in himself, that he besought  
 Preapprobation though they lik't it not.  
 Nor ever had the luck to have his name  
 Clap't up above this merit. Nor the shame  
 To be cried down below it. He this night  
 Your faire and free Attention does invite.  
 Only he prays no prejudice be brought  
 By any that before-hand wish it nought.

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<sup>514</sup> See Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641'. The basic structure of the play seems to have been the same in 1633 and 1641, but it is possible that Brome included more references to the military and strengthened his satirical attack on the courtiers for the later revival. According to Steggle, the paratext included with the published 1658 version looks back to the revival in the early 1640s by making mention of phrases, contemporary literature, and current events after the play had been restaged.

<sup>515</sup> See Steggle, 'Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641'.

And that ye all be pleas'd to heare and see,  
 With Candor suiting his Integritie.  
 That for the Writer. Something we must say,  
 Now in defence of us, and of the Play  
 We shall present no Scandal or Abuse,  
 To vertue or to honour. Nor traduce  
 Person of worth. Nor point at the disgrace  
 Of any one residing in the Place,  
 On which our Scene is laid, nor any Action shew,  
 Of thing has there been done, for ought we know.  
 Though it be probable that such have been.  
 But if some vicious persons be brought in.  
 As no new Buildings, nor the strongest hold  
 Can keep out Rats and Vermine bad and bold.  
 Let not the sight of such be ill endur'd;  
 All sores are seen and search't before th' are cur'd.  
 As Ruffian, Bawd, and the licentious crew,  
 Too apt to pester Scituations new.<sup>516</sup>

In 1632, this prologue would have condemned the peer 'puffing' of Davenant by Carew in *The Just Italian*. In the revival of 1641, the criticism was also directed at Davenant and his tendency to blame the audience for his failures ('Abuse'), the failed attempt to build a new theatre and the subsequent loss of the Cockpit ('no new Buildings, nor the strongest hold / Can keep out Rats and Vermine bad and bold'), and the Army Plot that cost Davenant his freedom ('the disgrace / Of any one residing in the Place'). Steggle insists that 'in the light of the events of May 1641, Brome did have cause to crow a little about his apparent ability to prophesy about what the play 'so happily [...] foretold'.<sup>517</sup> Whenever the prologue was written, the sentiments in it expressed a uniform belief in the commercial theatre and disdain for courtly amateurs who doubted audience understanding and influence - a belief that lasted for the duration of Brome's career in the Caroline era. Through the speaker, Brome asks that audiences judge the play with 'faire and free Attention' and that 'no prejudice be brought / By any that before-hand wish it nought'.<sup>518</sup> Brome is careful to maintain the humility for which he was known, his

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<sup>516</sup> Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden in Five New Playes* (1659), prologue unpaginated page following 'Upon Aglaura'.

<sup>517</sup> Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden in Five New Playes* (1659), V.iii.264.

<sup>518</sup> Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden in Five New Playes* (1659), prologue unpaginated page following 'Upon Aglaura'.

speaker asks the audiences to like the play because of its 'vertue' and 'honour', not because Brome is the author.<sup>519</sup>

Even after Davenant's removal from the professional theatre, Brome continued to celebrate the popular tastes of the traditional, commercial stage. His final play, *A Jovial Crew*, combined many elements of the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline theatres and ended in harmony as the old and the new, the rich and the poor, and the court and the country were combined. The play concerns Springlove, a steward to the ancient esquire Oldrents who left his master's estate every spring to beg and to reconnect with nature and remain humble. When Springlove leaves for his annual begging term, he is followed by Oldrents's nieces Rachel and Meriel and their lovers Vincent and Hilliard. These young aristocrats wished to temporarily abandon their upper-class heritage and learn how the poorer members of society live. The status quo is suspended for a time in order for the characters to see how things could be different, before returning to their normal, everyday existence. The company of beggars they join are comprised of, amongst others, a soldier, a lawyer, a courtier, and a poet. Both Brome and Springlove, the speaker of the prologue, attempted to restore harmony among the different factions of the professional theatre and the wider society.

Springlove's position as the humble harmonizer, loyal companion, and supporter to both rich and poor, and old and young mirrors what others had said about Brome throughout his career. Brome wants his audience to see him as a simple man who wants to be with the common, humble people, but is equally appealing to the gentry. In the prologue, Springlove looks forward to joviality whilst simultaneously lamenting the loss of 'Mirth' in contemporary society and the contemporary theatre:

The Title of our *Play*, *A Joviall Crew*,  
May seem to promise Mirth: Which were a new,  
And forc'd thing, in these sad and tragick daies,  
For you to finde, or we expresse in *Playes*.  
We wish you, then, would change that expectation,  
Since Joviall Mirth is now grown out of fashion.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Brome, *The Weeding of Covent Garden in Five New Playes* (1659), prologue unpaginated page following 'Upon Aglaura'.

<sup>520</sup> Brome, *A Jovial Crew*, Sig A6r.

Springlove emphasizes the catharsis of the theatre, as he sees it as a cure for ‘these sad and tragick daies’ when laughter and mirth are scarce, due to the influence of the courtier playwrights who were so vocally critical of the establishment. The fact that the commercial theatre audiences bought into the courtly spectacle was also lamentable. However, just as Springlove returned to nature to cleanse his palate, so too will Brome restore the professional culture of the commercial theatre.

Springlove’s prologue, rather than lamenting the loss of the theatre, goes on to commemorate the author’s loyalty to the professional stage. The prologue emphasized the cathartic potential the play has on the theatrical community, as well as the whole of society. It is through entertainments like *A Jovial Crew* that happiness and mirth will be restored, just as in the play it is through acting the part of beggars that the aristocratic youths discover love, personal conviction, humility, and equality:

Our Comick Writer finding that *Romances*  
Of Lovers, through much travel and distresse,  
Till it be thought, no Power can redresse  
Th’ afflicted Wanderers, though stout Chevalry  
Lend all his aid for the delivery;  
Till, lastly, some impossibility  
Concludes all strife, and makes a Comedie.<sup>521</sup>

The language of finality with which Springlove speaks (‘delivery’, ‘lastly’, ‘concludes’) expresses a sense of foreboding regarding the survival of the professional theatre if such division and strife continued. With *A Jovial Crew*, Brome attempted to re-establish an older, more egalitarian version of the commercial theatre. He delivered a crowd-pleasing comedy akin to those that had attracted theatre patrons at the Globe and the first Blackfriars. With what would become his final play, Brome restored a pastoral comedy that has its roots firmly in the Elizabethan, comedic tradition, but also exposed the contemporary struggles for class and status. The coming together of the gentry with the beggars, through drama, heralded the end of Brome’s verbal sparring with the courtiers. Despite the defeat of Davenant and Suckling, Brome seemed to want the two factions to be at peace, possibly even joined together to create a professional theatrical community that was more accepting and tolerant of the varying audiences and styles of the time. The play suggested a hopeful future where, despite insurmountable odds, the simple and

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<sup>521</sup> Brome, *A Jovial Crew*, Sig A6r.

traditional way of life is saved and a 'Comedie' is the end result. Not long after *A Jovial Crew* was staged, the theatres closed permanently, ending both Brome's career as a playwright and the 'Age of Drama' that had begun with those men whom Brome admired and emulated.

### *The Antipodes*

*The Antipodes* reflects the economic, social, and political turmoil the commercial theatre was increasingly mired in throughout the 1630s. Opposition to the professional theatre increased, both from within the dramatic community itself and from different religious and political factions in the wider society. The competition for audience favour led to somewhat hostile relations and derogatory slander among the playhouses and the actors and writers associated with them. The citizen theatres received the harshest treatment, whilst playwrights writing for the Blackfriars decried all other theatres as being too crude and vulgar, with 'shoemakerly spectators' or 'th'untun'd Kennell'.<sup>522</sup> Professional playwrights also had to defend themselves against the slights of the amateur courtier poets who were writing, with more frequency, for the commercial stage. The pressure on professional playwrights was further compounded by acts of God, as plague closures threatened to put an end to the public, theatrical institution in 1636-1637, and Puritan factions were mounting opposition toward the ribaldry they associated with the London playhouses. Publication was also becoming an increasingly attractive option for playwrights, who did not want to relinquish the rights to their plays after selling them to companies to be staged. *The Antipodes* directly addresses all of these threats in turn. Brome criticizes one style of professional theatre, whilst praising another. He turns the scrutiny of the Puritans and the courtiers back on themselves, at the same time diminishing the threats posed by illness. In a play that is based on opposites and

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<sup>522</sup> See Collins, 'Thomas Heywood and the Construction of Taste in the Repertory of Queen Henrietta's Men', pp. 17-18; Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 182; Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, pp. 270-71; and Carew 'To my worthy Friend, M. D'AVENANT' in D'Avenant, *The Just Italian*. Butler discusses the popular tradition at the theatres, which includes a description of the Red Bull and its patrons in the chapter 'The survival of the popular tradition' (pp. 181-250). Gurr discusses the hostility that was displayed by various Caroline playwrights who used theatrical affiliation to criticize peers.

reversals, Brome highlights the threats to the real-life London theatre by demonstrating what the alternatives may be in the upside-down world of ‘the Antipodes’.

When Brome originally wrote *The Antipodes* he intended it not for his own theatre, Salisbury Court, but for rival theatre manager William Beeston’s Cockpit.<sup>523</sup> There had been contractual disputes between Brome and Salisbury Court in 1636 leading up to Brome’s writing of the play. One such dispute was over Brome’s right to initiate the publication of any of the plays that he wrote for the theatre, regardless of whether or not they had been staged.<sup>524</sup> When the theatres closed, Salisbury Court suspended Brome’s wages, forcing him to seek alternative means of income, which he found at the Cockpit.<sup>525</sup> Despite selling the play to Beeston, it was never staged at the Cockpit. Salisbury Court reclaimed *The Antipodes* and staged it in 1638, against Brome’s wishes, adding to the playwright’s discomfort regarding the theatre to which he was contracted. This reclamation motivated Brome to publish the play in 1640, after he had moved permanently to the Cockpit and severed all ties with Salisbury Court. The play likely underwent three noticeable incarnations and was disseminated in three different and distinct versions: the 1636 version for Beeston, the 1638 reclaimed but altered Salisbury Court version, and the 1640 revised version for print. Through the different versions, the author, the actors, and the theatre manager leave their own distinct marks, which brings into question who held final authority over the play. Brome asserted his ownership when he gave the play to Beeston for performance at the Cockpit. Beeston then demonstrated his control over the play by selling it. The vigorous reclaiming of the play from Beeston’s Cockpit by Salisbury Court suggests that the company, Queen Henrietta’s Men, was eager to establish authority over the play and thus over Brome himself, who was legally contracted to the theatre. Finally, the publication of the play, complete with paratexts, amendments, and corrections restored authority back to Brome.

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<sup>523</sup> See Steggle, *Richard Brome*, pp. 105-08. Brome was paid 10 pounds by Beeston for *The Antipodes*. Beeston was then later paid 6 pounds for it when Salisbury Court bought it back.

<sup>524</sup> See Steggle, *Richard Brome*, pp. 105-08.

<sup>525</sup> See Steggle, *Richard Brome*, pp. 105-08. The major source of contention was Brome’s failure to meet the agreements of the contract. According to the company, he only produced five of the nine plays that he owed. However, Brome contends he had written six and the work he had done in revising and editing other plays more than made up for the remaining three.



Brome adopted a slightly detached attitude toward the theatre in *The Antipodes*. His insistence on writing the play for the Cockpit, a stage that he was not affiliated with, and his breaking of contractual obligations, detracted from the notion that the stage came first, even before the author. Brome spent his career criticizing the courtier poets who tended to write for the most exclusive theatres, and yet when writing *The Antipodes*, Brome intended it to be staged in a theatre that was not his own. His further decision to publish the play also contradicted the reputation he had established for himself as a writer for the stage. Despite all of these contradictions, it seemed that Brome's aim was not to boost his name or his position, but rather to combat the encroaching enemies of the commercial theatre. The opening lines to the play itself are critical of Salisbury Court:

To me, and to the City, Sir, you are welcome,  
And so are all about you: we have long  
Suffer'd in want of such faire Company  
But now that Times calamity has given way  
(Thanks to high Providence) to your kinder visits,  
We are (like halfe pin'd wretches, that have lain  
Long on the planks of sorrow, strictly tyed  
To a forc'd abstinence, from the sight of friends)  
The sweetlier fild with joy.<sup>526</sup>

Brome slights the Salisbury Court theatre and references the recent plague closures that had stunted his professional status as a playwright. The greed of the Salisbury Court theatre, as exemplified by the ill treatment of Brome, is immediately present in the play and its paratexts.

*The Antipodes* is about the therapeutic nature of the theatre and its ability to restore the natural order. The play centres on Peregrine, a young man who has gone mad from reading too many travel narratives. To combat his son's illness, the gentleman Joyless hires a doctor to cure Peregrine's delusions. The doctor arranges an elaborate play, 'The Antipodes', to be staged so that Peregrine can act out his dreams of travelling and purge this particular desire that is damaging his everyday life. It is at Lord Letoy's private theatre that the spectacle is staged and Peregrine travels to 'the Antipodes', a world that mirrors his own. By showing Peregrine the opposite of what he's accustomed to, the doctor creates an environment that is both remarkably similar and exceptionally

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<sup>526</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, I.i.1-9.

alien to the patient, in the process demonstrating the benefits of the real society from which he has been alienated. Both the fictional play and Brome's real play end with a return to the normal, 'real' world, where the characters are restored to their natural places and states.

Brome championed the theatre as a place for catharsis and therapy and through comedy he could combat 'melancholy, his age's pervasive disease'.<sup>527</sup> The parallels between the plot of the play and its staging (both intended and actual) could not have been lost on Brome, who was, by 1636, one of the most popular professional playwrights. Although he maintained a prominent position in the commercial theatre, writing *The Antipodes* for an alternative commercial stage mirrored the plot of the play, as the characters seemingly travel to a place that is very like their home, but different and at times more accommodating and agreeable. However, just as Peregrine, Joyless, and Diana must return to their everyday lives, so too the curative effects of the theatre are temporary. A return to normality and the status quo are expected and inevitable, even though a lesson is learned when the play ends and the patrons, actors, and authors leave. After writing the play, Brome renewed his contract with Salisbury Court. However, when conditions did not change for the better, he defected to the Cockpit. The purpose of the play, both in reality and in the fictional setting of Letoy's house, was to improve the natural conditions to which the characters and the playwrights were to return. It worked in the fictional 'Antipodes' but not at Salisbury Court, where the comedy was staged.

Brome's growing anger and disillusionment toward the professional theatre and the Salisbury Court is seen through what he included in the paratext of the published version. The dedication 'TO THE RIGHT Honourable WILLIAM Earle of Hertford, &c.' explains Brome's need for publication:

If the publicke view of the *world* entertain it with no lesse welcome, then that private one of the *Stage* already has given it, I shall be glad the *World* owes you the *Thanks*: if it meet with too severe Construction, I hope *your* Protection. What hazards soever it shall justle with, my desires are it may pleasure your *Lordship* in the perusal, which is the only ambition he is conscious of, who is My *Lord, Your Honour's humble devoted*: Richard Brome.<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> John S. Nania, 'Richard Brome', *DLB*, 58, ed. by Fredson Bowers (Detroit: Gale Cengage, 1987), pp. 26-36 (p. 27).

<sup>528</sup> Brome, 'TO THE RIGHT Honourable WILLIAM Earle of Hertford, &c.' in Brome, *The Antipodes*, Sig A2r-2v.

Brome's terming of the stage as 'private' and his belief in the 'publicke' domain of the printed book ran contrary to the previous notions he displayed in his plays and prologues. Even the prologue to *The Antipodes* itself decries publication as the primary means of transmission for a play: 'Workes, that must ever live upon the Stage'.<sup>529</sup> To Brome, the stage had always been the place for a play and it was important that anyone and everyone had access to drama in performance. Furthermore, the price of books and the relatively low literacy levels meant that only a certain (often higher status) patron could purchase and read printed play texts.<sup>530</sup> Because the play had been staged at Salisbury Court, Brome could be criticizing the exclusivity of the theatre. However, the Cockpit was not an open, public theatre, but rather enjoyed a very privileged clientele. Brome's detractors claimed the author's audiences were too wealthy and elite for a man who fashioned himself as a servant of the theatrical institution.<sup>531</sup> When the Salisbury Court failed him, Brome took steps to make sure the play was made available on a wider scale, to the 'publicke view of the *World*'. His further declaration that he hoped the play would receive Hertford's 'Protection' was a boastful assertion that it was above reproach, a contrast to the humble attitude Brome adopted in the past, where he asked audiences for a kind reception. This assertion made Brome sound more like the courtier dramatists that he opposed, especially when he declares his 'only ambition' is to please Hertford, not to entertain the audience. He finally declares himself Hertford's '*humble*' devotee, which affirmed Brome's humility, but conflicted with his past declarations of subservience to the commercial theatre audiences alone. The dedication gave authority over the play to Hertford and took it away from the theatre where it had previously been known. However, Brome's decision to give it to Hertford re-established his own control over *The Antipodes*. It was his to give away, rather than the possession of the 'private' theatre company that had already 'given it' judgement.

The epilogue that Brome added to the published version of *The Antipodes* does little to clarify his attitude toward the professional theatre, or demarcate the ultimate

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<sup>529</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, Sig A3v.

<sup>530</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 121-22. Cressy maps out literacy levels across social borders. It is amongst the upper classes that literacy levels are higher.

<sup>531</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 20.

authority over the play. Whilst he gave ownership to Hertford in the dedication, Brome gives possession of the play to Beeston in the epilogue:

You shal find in this Booke more then was presented upon the *Stage*, and left out of the *Presentation*, for superfluous length (as some of the *Players* pretended) I thought good al should be inserted according to the allowed *Original*; and as it was, at first, intended for the *Cock-pit Stage*, I the right of my most deserving Friend Mr. *William Beeston*, unto whom it properly appertained.<sup>532</sup>

Brome gives the play to Beeston ‘unto whom it properly appertained’. However, as the play was in published form and not a staged presentation, ownership seems questionable, with Brome, Hertford, the literary audience, and Beeston all able to claim ownership and authority over it. Brome stresses the ‘Booke’ is the most important item, as it contains all that he had intended for the stage. As such, it would be the reader who exerted complete control over the literature. At the same time, Brome clearly states that it was Beeston who is the controlling agent, as he is the person for whom the play had been intended from the start. However, Brome’s switching of authority again made him the ultimate controller of the play and dictator of its fate. The one group that he did not allocate any form of authority to, however, was the players. He begrudges their previous attempts to assert authority over the play, which is demonstrated in the printed epilogue. Steggle states that Brome decided to print the play with blatant criticism of the Salisbury Court theatre and the actors there.<sup>533</sup> The italicization of the words ‘*Stage*’, ‘*Presentation*’, ‘*Players*’, ‘*Original*’, ‘*Cock-pit Stage*’, and ‘*William Beeston*’ suggests Brome initiated the printing of the play because he had been particularly upset with how it had been staged. Brome is upset with the initial ‘stage’ ‘presentation’, which he felt had been ruined by the ‘players’. He had intended the ‘original’ to be played at the ‘Cock-pit Stage’, under the direction of ‘William Beeston’.

The complications that arose from the competition for control between the actors, the authors, and the audiences are demonstrated in the play as the different characters battle for control. Letoy, the owner of the small, private theatre, controls the overall action and direction of ‘The Antipodes’ at the same time that he influences the response of Joylesses, his captive audience. Although the theatre in this play is private and very

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<sup>532</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, Sig L4v.

<sup>533</sup> Steggle, *Richard Brome*, p. 123.

exclusive, the conflicts within the theatrical institution are demonstrated, and the play becomes an examination of the interactions between the different factions and the problems that plagued each group in the 1630s. Letoy is also the author of the play, and thus exerts even more influence and control over the actors. He states that he ‘must looke to all’, implying that every single aspect of the play is his to manipulate.<sup>534</sup> However, the insertion of Peregrine into the play as an unknowing actor alters the circumstances to the point that the original plot is dramatically changed and Letoy’s power is diminished as the actors react to the participant. Although the outcome, Peregrine’s cure, remains the same, the direction in which it is realized is largely determined by Peregrine himself in his interactions with the acting Antipodeans. Whilst Letoy plays the role of both author and manager, it is the actors who control the direction of the play as they react to Peregrine’s whims and fancies. The whole play is staged for the benefit of the Joylesses, who want their son’s health restored. Although Joyless’s wishes are not always followed, his reactions, and those of his wife, remain the driving force. The controlling desires of the stage manager seemed unavoidable, yet Letoy’s overall desire is the improvement of his audience – the cure of Peregrine and the reconciliation of Joyless and Diana. Although Letoy is a demanding and controlling manager, he is not so overbearing that he prevents his actors from following the most natural progression of the play and pleasing the audience. As Brome intended the play for Beeston, it is a reasonable to assume that Letoy represents Beeston.

Letoy asserts his authority over the play by asserting his authority over the actors that he employs. He owns his own private theatre and keeps a private troupe on hand at all times for his entertainment:

Stage-playes, and Masques, are nightly my pastimes,  
And all within my selfe. My owne men are  
My Musique, and my Actors. I keepe not  
A man or boy but is of quality:  
The worst can sing or play his part o'th' Violls,  
And act his part too in a Comedy,  
For which I lay my bravery on their backs;  
And where another Lord undoes his followers,  
I maintaine mine like Lords. And there's my bravery.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, II.ii.11.

<sup>535</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, I.v.62-70.

Letoy claims that the actors belong to him and that they are his ‘followers’. His conceit highlights the abilities of the players, but more importantly shows the greatness of Letoy himself; ‘his’ men are the best and therefore ‘his’ theatre is the best. His insistence that his actors are of the highest ‘quality’ speaks of the high levels of competition amongst the theatres and the boastfulness of managers in attracting audiences with the promise of the most talented players. According to Gurr, Beeston’s Cockpit staged ‘almost half of the cream of the time, rivalling those of the former Shakespeare company, the King’s Men’.<sup>536</sup> If Letoy represented Beeston, the hubris exhibited by the manager is due, in part, to the talent he has personally collected. ‘Followers’ signalled the close-knit community Beeston created at the Cockpit, and it is because of this community that Brome moved to Beeston’s stage.

Despite Letoy’s admittance of the importance of the players, he is still anxious to maintain strict control over the direction of the play. He is very dictatorial about what should be staged and how it is to be acted:

Trouble not you your head with my conceite,  
But minde your part. Let me not see you act now,  
In your Scholasticke way, you brought to towne wi’ yee<sup>537</sup>

Letoy’s advice to his actors sounds very much like Hamlet’s advice to the travelling players who have come to Elsinore. Letoy suggests that his own troupe is lately come from the country and therefore do not fully understand how a play should be acted in ‘towne’. His reference to ‘Scholasticke’ acting methods also suggests that the actors could have come from a university troupe and that they are unaware of what is expected on the London stages.<sup>538</sup> His directions to ‘trouble not you your head with [his] conceite’ shows the tenuous balance of power that exists between himself and his actors. He tells the actors to disregard his ‘conceite’, but then dictates to them how they should act, saying he will have it no other way in ‘his house’.

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<sup>536</sup> Gurr, ‘Beeston [Hutchinson], William’, *ODNB*.

<sup>537</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, II.ii.15-17.

<sup>538</sup> Frederick S. Boas, *An Introduction to Stuart Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 401-10). University plays were ‘another source of entertainment for the Stuart royalties’. Many were written in Latin and contained matters of love. Under Charles, the plays were more frequently in English and they were strongly influenced by Platonic idealism, Henrietta Maria’s favourite subject. The university plays were very similar to the performances at White Hall. Inigo Jones designed a set for the 1636 play *The Royal Slave*. Letoy’s order that the players do not play in a ‘scholasticke’ manner suggests that he is adverse to the courtly style of playing.

In a later exchange with the actors, Letoy concedes some of the control he has previously claimed by giving the actors license to interpret what he wrote for them:

Take license to your owne selfe, to adde unto  
Your parts, your owne free fancy; and sometimes  
To alter, or diminish what the writer  
With care and skill compose'd: and when you are  
To speake to your coactors in the Scene,  
You hold interloquutions with the Audients.<sup>539</sup>

In this speech to his actors, Letoy bestows the power to alter what is scripted as the actors see fit, trusting their abilities and their discretion. Letoy is sure to remind them of the importance of his own careful wording, but he admits that the power to convey the messages ultimately rests with the players.

Letoy's final command, to acknowledge the 'Audients', demonstrates that ultimately the play is written to be acted and viewed. The players hold a great deal of power, but it is the interaction between the players and the audience that drives the play and makes it successful. Letoy betrays his own belief in the critical role the players have on audience acceptance when he states:

[...] Ile none of these, absurdities in my house.  
But words and action married so together,  
That shall strike harmony in the eares and eyes  
Of the severest, if judicious Criticks.<sup>540</sup>

Letoy himself seems to be the most 'judicious Critick' of all. He influences the reception of the plays to the small, intimate audience he hosts, controlling, to a degree, how the play is viewed - ultimately compromise and cooperation are needed for success.

Letoy does what he can to influence the action of the players and the reception of the audience. As an effective manager, Letoy coaxed the various groups at the theatre, depending on what reaction or emotion was needed at any given time. The back and forth control he used to both dominate and liberate the actors was also used on the audience in order to elicit a certain reaction. As he is positioned alongside the viewers, he is able to manipulate their responses to his ends:

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<sup>539</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, II.ii.42-47.

<sup>540</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, II.ii. 68-70.

And for my Actors, they shall speake, or not speake  
As much, or more, or lesse, and when I please,  
It is my way of pleasure, and ile use it.  
So sit: They enter.<sup>541</sup>

The control the audience exerted over the play is very limited in both the actual *The Antipodes* and the fictional 'The Antipodes'. Letoy orders the audience to 'sit' and respect the entrance of the actors, who now command more attention and reverence than the viewers. Joyless and Diana are subject to Letoy's will as he manipulates the couple and their reactions to what is being staged for their benefit. Joyless several times expresses a desire to leave the theatre and Letoy's house, but he is repeatedly denied and ends up a prisoner in the final act. Byplay warns him to 'take your dungeon Sir', suggesting that Joyless is not acting of his own free will, but is subservient to the actors and Letoy.<sup>542</sup>

It is when Letoy emphasises his position as the author that the most conflicted view of the playwright is seen. Letoy underscores his status as the owner of the theatre (and subsequently the owner of the actors), but is more forceful in exerting that role than he is the role of the author. In fact, both Letoy and the actors are quick to denounce 'the poet' and the privileged position held by the writers in the fictional 'Antipodes':

For I am none of those Poeticke furies,  
That threatens the Actors life, in a whole play,  
That addes a sillable, or takes away.<sup>543</sup>

Although Letoy is proud that he is the author of the play, he will not refer to himself as a poet. He views poets as 'furies' intent on destruction rather than on creation. The anti-poet slant portrayed in 'The Antipodes' is a likely reflection of Brome's disdain toward the amateur courtly playwrights who termed themselves poets. In 'The Antipodes', Letoy claims 'all their Poets are Puritanes', which would seem to reconcile the two enemies who were normally so at odds with one another. However, as both the courtier dramatists and the Puritans were adversaries of the professional stage, with each faction wanting to eradicate the commercial theatre, the comparison makes the two extremes seem very much alike.

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<sup>541</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, III.i.16-19.

<sup>542</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, V.i.5.

<sup>543</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, II.i.23-25.



The critique of ‘poets’ continues as Letoy scripts them as professional and austere; characteristics Brome seems to have completely disassociated with the ‘poets’ working during his own time. The poets in ‘The Antipodes’ are industrious and professional, as opposed to their lazy, real-life counterparts, as stated by Letoy:

Yes, Poetry is good ware  
In the Antipodes, though there be some ill payers,  
As well as here; but Law there rights the Poets.<sup>544</sup>

The poets are professionals in the Antipodes, selling their ‘wares’ for financial gain rather than reputation and acclaim. Furthermore, the law protects these poets, which is opposite to the slights the professional playwrights faced in Brome’s real London. Brome’s troubles with Salisbury Court played a part in developing this critical attitude toward the professional dramatic community. He viewed himself as unprotected from the injustices inflicted on him by the theatre and begrudged the protection that his courtly counterparts enjoyed. It was this mentality that led Brome to write the play for Beeston. The ‘ill payers’ was a likely reference to the Salisbury Court, which refused to pay Brome’s wages during the plague closure, suggesting Brome believed he was considered inferior to the manager. In Brome’s ideal world, the treatment of the poet was reversed and the playwright had as much protection as his theatrical counterpart, if not more.

In reality, Brome and his professional counterparts should be ‘poets’, but the term has been bastardized. In the fictional ‘Antipodes’, the poet is seen negotiating with a lawyer and, in their final discussion, the poet tries to force money on the lawyer for his counsel: ‘The counsaile and the comfort you have given / Me, requires a double fee’.<sup>545</sup> The notion of a poet paying for anything, including counsel, is portrayed as outrageous and completely alien. There seemed to be a prevalent belief that the courtier poets did not pay for anything and, in fact, ran up large debts that they then relied on their aristocratic allies to protect them from.<sup>546</sup> The poets are defenders of professionalism in the upside down world, whereas they are enemies of it in the real London. While Letoy distances

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<sup>544</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, III.14-20.

<sup>545</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, III.ii.95-96.

<sup>546</sup> See Edmond, *Rare Sir William Davenant*, p 27. Brome’s chief rival, Davenant, had been embroiled in a lawsuit with a tailor over the non-payment of fees, a case that was dismissed due to Davenant’s courtly connections. Brome had many chances to complain about the privileged treatment many of the courtier poets received throughout the reign of Charles I.

himself from the title of ‘poet’, suggesting that the writer is the least authoritative agent in dramatic production, the actors become more powerful as they gain more control over what occurs on stage. Peregrine’s participation in the play means they have to act and react according to his behaviour, which Letoy directs the actors to do:

I see th'event already, by the ayme  
The Doctor takes, proceed you with your play,  
And let him see it in what state he pleases.<sup>547</sup>

Peregrine’s unknowing part as an actor gives his fellow thespians control over the production, as he is the central concern of the fictitious play. Despite Letoy’s supposed advanced knowledge of how Peregrine will react to the events and circumstances around him, the actors cannot follow exactly what is put down for them in the script, as they are working with an unpredictable actor and participatory audience:

Hoyday! The rest will all be lost, we now give over  
The play, and doe all by *Extempore*,  
For your sonnes good, to sooth him into's wits.  
If you'l marre all, yon may. Come nearer cocks-combe,  
Ha you forgotten (puppy) my instructions  
Touching his subjects, and his marriage?<sup>548</sup>

Allowing the players to act ‘extempore’ means that Letoy now holds no power over what is to happen next. He tries to maintain control by speaking harshly to his lead actor Byplay. Byplay takes control of the situation when he is asked by Peregrine what is happening, effectively stripping any control that Letoy, the ‘poet’, may still have held:

*Peregrine*      What voyce was that?  
*Byplay*         A voyce out of the clouds, that doth applaud  
                     Your highnesse welcome to your subjects loves.  
*Letoy*            So, now ho's in. Sit still, I must goe downe  
                     And set out things in order.<sup>549</sup>

Byplay’s reference to Letoy as merely ‘a voyce out of the clouds, that doth applaud’, makes him a spectator and not the controlling agent of the play. As ‘The Antipodes’ continues, and the actors work extemporaneously, Letoy loses more control. It is only in the manipulation of the audience watching, Joyless and Diana, that he is still able to

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<sup>547</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, III.v.41-43.

<sup>548</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, IV.ix.146-151.

<sup>549</sup> Brome, *The Antipodes*, IV.ix.153-157.

wield any influence. The actors now possess all the authority on the stage and are the only ones who can bring about the desired effect on Peregrine. Although he desires to maintain control, Letoy realises that he must 'give over' in order for the play to continue and its effect to be realized. Brome gave over the play to Beeston with the belief that it would be staged at the Cockpit rather than at Salisbury Court. However, by giving over the play, Brome, like the fictional Letoy, lost the ability to control the direction of his play. When he did reclaim control over the play with print in 1640, the playwright, the dedicatee, the manager, and the literary audience were all able to claim authority over it.

The result of the fictional 'The Antipodes' is a return to how things should be, with restorations of health and family providing the happy outcome. Control over the play rested, in the end, with Letoy who held the most authority; it was his wishes and desires that were attained in the end, but with benefit to all. The real play, however, proved to be much more divisive than its fictional namesake - not only in terms of the conflicts that it referenced, but also in terms of the way Brome portrayed the affiliations within the professional theatre. Throughout his career, Brome had carefully developed a reputation as a defender of the professional theatre. He was an out-spoken opponent of the amateur courtier dramatists who he felt threatened the traditions and inclusiveness of the commercial theatre, yet in *The Antipodes* he conveyed a conflicted view of that very theatrical branch. The lack of cohesion and the growing opposition against Brome, as demonstrated by courtier rivals and the company at the Salisbury Court, seems to have left him with a bitter taste in his mouth. Whilst he had never previously demonstrated a possessive attitude toward his plays, the events surrounding the performance and publication of *The Antipodes*, as well as the matter contained within the play itself, highlighted the lack of the author's control, which distinguished the commercial theatrical community late in the Caroline era.

### Conclusion

Brome's career as a professional dramatist was marked by the associations he made in his early days. As Jonson's apprentice and Dekker's ideological son, Brome began to ply his trade by learning from those who were masters of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. As

such, he carried with him a distinct notion of the theatre that all groups - the actors, authors, and audiences - shared responsibility in making a play a success. He defended this idea by attacking those rivals who ignored or even defied it. Shaw claims that his friends 'Thomas Heywood, John Ford, and Robert Chamberlain' supported him, as did 'James Shirley and John Tatham who also respected Brome and wrote verses commending the quality of his drama'.<sup>550</sup> What these men also had in common was an aversion to the frivolous courtly values that they believed were infiltrating the professional theatres and influencing the expectations of the audiences. It was because of this, and his shared alliances with like-minded authors, that Brome was so scathing and negative in his paratext toward those amateur courtiers providing for the commercial stage. He believed men such as Davenant used the professional theatres to build a reputation at court and disregarded the audiences of the public and private theatres in order to further personal ambitions and their own reputations. As a result, Brome vehemently attacked his courtly rivals in his paratext and elicited the help of others who shared his animosity in commendatory verse. His relationship with the Beestons was founded on admiration and respect between playwright and managers, but I believe the relationship was strongest when William Beeston was involved in directly attacking and criticizing the failures and mishaps of his rivals, as was the case with Davenant's disgrace and exile.<sup>551</sup> Brome's final plays at the Cockpit and the prologues that accompanied them ridiculed the downfall of his rivals and showcased Brome's vitriol. These final plays, particularly *The Court Beggar* and the revival of *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, also showed his desire to form a coterie of critical adversaries who would promote animosity toward Davenant and those who opposed Brome's professional ideology in regard to the professional theatres. Brome's paratext, whilst painting a picture of him as a humble man, actually encouraged criticism and slander aimed at the courtly amateur writers.

Brome's widespread appeal across the literary community ranged from actors, authors, and even courtly poets and showed that his desire to entertain everyone, from 'Cavaliers, Ladyes, generous spirits of the City and wity young Masters o' the Innes o' court', was successful. This desire, which was manifest in the printed and performed

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<sup>550</sup> Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 20.

<sup>551</sup> Shaw, *Richard Brome*, p. 28.

paratext and ancillary material of Brome's plays, also set up a boundary whereby groups were included or, as was the case with Davenant and his courtly allies, excluded. When groups were excluded, Brome used his paratext to attack them in the hopes of eradicating rivals from his professional sphere; an animosity that would seem to contradict the humble persona he also promoted, but which did coexist with the criticism in his carefully crafted paratext.

## Chapter 4:

### John Ford: Artistry Through Alliance

Whilst little is known about the circumstances of John Ford's life outside the dramatic community, according to Lisa Hopkins, 'a considerable amount is known about the people he moved among', both within and outside of the literary world.<sup>552</sup> Ford's literary and professional outlook was largely shaped by those people with whom he was most closely associated: his literary patrons and allies. The men and women to whom Ford dedicated his drama and poetry were interconnected through birth or marriage and were mostly respected members of the gentry.<sup>553</sup> Ford's choice to dedicate to members of the 'Essex circle' 'must have seemed controversial in certain court circles, as well as being peculiarly provocative to some members of his own family'.<sup>554</sup> However, it was not political affiliation that Ford admired, it was individual ethics and stoicism that characterized his close, intimate associates. His literary allies shared, with Ford, a common belief that drama needed to meet a high artistic standard set by literary and theatrical audiences, not literary peers or others within the dramatic community. Butler states, 'Ford's plays, published with verses, marginal comments and, in one instance, an anagram instead of a name on the title page, suggest a context of intimates with literary-dramatic interests'.<sup>555</sup> Ford's paratexts were concerned with being an artist, a title he believed was earned through an adherence to personal beliefs (as his dedicatees exhibited) and literary prowess (as his dramatic allies demonstrated), rather than through loose alliances based on common acquaintances. Ford felt the bastardization of dramatic 'art' resulted from unwarranted peer praise and 'puffing' and, as a result, was critical of some of his rival playwrights, particularly the amateur courtly playwrights who relied on the commendations of others for their reputations. This dislike of peer entitlement and his desire for literary artistry were the primary concerns of the paratexts that accompanied Ford's published plays. It is my belief that most of this material, including the

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<sup>552</sup> Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>553</sup> Neill, 'Ford, John (bap. 1586, d. 1639x53?)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9861>> [accessed 14 Aug 2010].

<sup>554</sup> Neill, 'Ford, John', *ODNB*.

<sup>555</sup> Butler, *Theatre and Crisis*, p. 113. The anagram 'Fide Honor' appeared on the title page of *Perkin Warbeck*.

commendatory verses, conformed to Ford's distinct vision and matched his own literary technique. As an author, he made sure that those who offered him verses adhered to his unique style of writing and aims. This chapter contends that Ford, perhaps more than any of his Caroline peers, controlled and manipulated the paratexts that accompanied his plays in order to advance his specific definition of dramatic art and his belief in the role of the dramatist-as-teacher. Ford's paratext seems to have presented a more realistic and biographical picture of the author as he was in real life, rather than the constructed persona that Davenant and Brome displayed in their own paratext.

Ford demanded reasoned and knowledgeable judgement from the audience to recognize what was skilled and artistic writing. The audience's ability to read, discern, and understand the writer's intentions was as important as the playwright's responsibility to deliver an entertaining and informative play. Plays were meant to entertain audiences, but also to showcase what was 'art' and what drama could teach the individual about moral behaviour. Ford believed playwriting required imitation of the most skilled authors, and that contemporary dramatists needed to learn what constituted literary artistry from their predecessors. Ford believed artistry could be acquired and learned, it was not just a natural ability only few possessed. He included those who learned the trade from theatrical masters, such as Brome, in the category of 'artists'. The author's ability to learn and incorporate what was taught to him by accomplished playwrights, combined with a natural talent for writing, equalled artistry. Ford's definition would suggest that art can be learned through diligent practice and careful study, but only if the author wholly dedicated himself. The ability to learn also appertained to the audiences. Ford believed that audiences needed to recognize an author's intentions and interpretations to understand and appreciate the dramatic artist and what the author was trying to accomplish and teach. In the paratext of his first play, *The Lover's Melancholy*, Ford outlines what qualities he wants and expects from his stoic audience and his literary allies: wisdom, silence, and modesty.<sup>556</sup> Authors had to practice their 'art' and

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<sup>556</sup> See Ford, 'To my truest friend, my worthiest Kinsman, John Ford of Grayes-Inne, Esquire' in *Loves Sacrifice*, Sig Ar-v, and pp. 218-19 in this chapter.

audiences had to listen to appreciate, understand, and learn. This belief in such cooperation and inter-dependence among theatrical factions put him in the professional camp of playwrights.

Ford's admiration for stoicism and his own resolute attitude toward drama and the theatre were born out of the fractionalized Caroline dramatic community. He was caught between the demands of audiences (some of whom desired courtly themes on the commercial stage), his 'fondness for tropes and forms which were distinctly Caroline in appearance, not the least the masques and dances so favoured by Charles's court', and the traditional modes, forms, and dramatic styles of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres (traditional genres such as revenge tragedies set in Italy and the revival of the history play), all of which were still being incorporated on the stage.<sup>557</sup> Dorothy Farr refers to him as the 'last of the Jacobean poet-dramatists'<sup>558</sup> and Sanders contends that 'Ford's language is steeped in images and tales derived from classical mythology'.<sup>559</sup> Although he used Caroline tropes and styles in his plays, the genres he chose and the characters he created were influenced by an earlier dramatic era from which Ford drew the majority of his inspiration.<sup>560</sup> Ford's paratexts are concerned with what he viewed as a decline in dramatic standards at the theatre. In the prologue to *The Lover's Melancholy*, Ford's speaker laments that poetry is becoming 'a trade'.<sup>561</sup> Authors were trading commendations and 'puffing' up each other, even if such praise was not merited. Ford believed that art could be sold, but sold virtuously to receptive, knowledgeable, and appreciative audiences. Poetry was not sold to further the name of the author, but sold to advertise the ideals of the author and the artistry of the work. Professional playwrights sold, rather than traded, their art, which was noble and provided integrity for the work and the author.

The paratexts Ford included alongside his published plays indicated that 'there were those in the audience who understood what he meant and also knew how to listen to good poetry when they heard it in the theatre'; these were the patrons to whom he aimed

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<sup>557</sup> Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, p. 24.

<sup>558</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 1.

<sup>559</sup> Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, p.12.

<sup>560</sup> Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, p. 24.

<sup>561</sup> Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, Sig A4V.



his plays, those who appreciated what he provided for the stage.<sup>562</sup> Ford wrote for a discerning audience who understood an author's intentions and tried to learn from the plays. His dedicatees, most of whom held strong Catholic affiliations, displayed a fortitude and sobriety in their political and even their religious associations. Hopkins characterizes the group as having 'a pronounced interest in certain aspects of Catholicism'.<sup>563</sup> They did not advertise or actively promote their beliefs or their criticisms, but they did adhere to distinct religious and political views. Whilst Hopkins suggests that Ford had sympathies with Catholic coteries, I believe that his sympathies were not based on religious affiliation, but resulted from an adherence to personal convictions.<sup>564</sup> I argue that Ford's scathing attacks on Catholicism, particularly in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, suggest that it was not an affiliation with a religious denomination that enticed him to a group of patrons, but the manner in which his dedicatees conducted themselves in the face of criticism or opposition. The beliefs and actions of the brother and sister Giovanni and Annabella, although shocking to theatrical audiences, were stoically influenced. They were true to their own beliefs and died for their love, regardless of the judgement of outsiders. Ford's view of the Catholic coterie, whether he agreed with the religious tenants or not, was based on how the members of this circle conducted themselves and acted on their own principles, outside of social or political influence. Ford's admiration for personal conviction is evidenced in the dedications he wrote to his patrons, as well as to whom he addressed in his plays and his verses. Although he did not always agree with the ideals and ideologies of his dedicatees or even his dramatic contemporaries, he did praise those who held firm to and defended their personal beliefs.

Neill claims Ford wrote for an 'influential segment of the play-going public, especially at the elite "private theatres" for which Ford's plays were almost exclusively written'.<sup>565</sup> The paratexts that accompanied his published play, including carefully chosen and rehearsed commendations, reflected not only his displeasure at slipping standards at the commercial theatre, but also his approval of the skilled professional theatre factions:

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<sup>562</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 5.

<sup>563</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre*, p. 4.

<sup>564</sup> See Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre*, pp. 3-29. Hopkins points out that Ford's criticism in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was aimed at the Pope and Jesuits.

<sup>565</sup> Neill, 'Ford, John', *ODNB*.

those talented writers who inspired and cooperated with the capable actors and the indulgent audience members who understood his intentions. Ford's paratext portrays him as a purposeful writer who wished to educate audiences. The men and women he dedicated to and who provided verses for him adhered to a stoic and moral code of conduct that Ford believed led to the creation of art in drama. This chapter shows how Ford's paratext reflected a traditional theatrical style that he infused with his own definition of artistry, based on moral principles. Thus, his paratext aimed to correct what he viewed as a slip in authorial standards and audience apathy, both infecting the professional theatre, by providing dramatic artistry and teaching audiences how to respond to what was offered. The paratexts that Ford wrote for others, such as Brome and Massinger, praised an adherence to stoic beliefs and personal convictions that was demonstrated in the plays of his contemporaries. These were the same ideals for which others praised Ford in the paratexts that accompanied his own plays, demonstrating how Ford used paratext to not only teach audiences what was of value in a play, but also to demonstrate to other playwrights what they should value and how they should act.

#### Ford's High Audience and Associate Expectation

The associations for which Ford was first known came through the poetic dedications he wrote twenty years prior to his first independent play. Ira Clark states that 'Ford courted nobility long before he showed any plays'.<sup>566</sup> Most of the men and women to whom he addressed his poems, Hopkins confirmed, 'do as a whole form a remarkably homogeneous grouping with a strong set of links between them'.<sup>567</sup> Penelope Devereux, the Earls of Pembroke, Montgomery, Arundel, Northumberland, Peterborough, and Newcastle, along with the Duke of Lennox and the Viscount Doncaster all shared familial ties and religious backgrounds, along with a quiet disdain aimed toward the court of Charles I.<sup>568</sup> Although Clark contends Ford wrote for a 'sometimes courtly audience',

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<sup>566</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights: Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Brome* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992), p. 73.

<sup>567</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre*, p. 6.

<sup>568</sup> See Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre*, pp. 3-6. Hopkins lists the numerous connections between the primary dedicatees for whom Ford wrote. Most had ties to the Earl of Essex and were probably Catholics.

what largely characterized his patrons was a distance from the King.<sup>569</sup> This could suggest that Ford held similar beliefs concerning the ‘aristocratic opposition to Charles I’ that the majority of his dedicatees exhibited.<sup>570</sup> Although they opposed Charles and his court, Ford's dedicatees did so quietly, unlike the earl of Essex, a distant relative of many of his patrons and a noted political dissident.<sup>571</sup> However, the themes found in Ford’s poetry, and later in his plays, do not reflect an outward critique of the Crown. Rather, as Julie Sanders persuasively states, ‘Ford is essentially respectful of the divinely sanctioned position of the ruler; it is rather the individual abuses of the role that he chastizes’.<sup>572</sup> What Ford admired, seemingly more than anything else, was the code of reserved conduct that his dedicatees epitomized in relation to Charles. According to Hopkins, Ford desired ‘the restoration of older styles and codes of living closely associated with the lost glories of chivalry’, and that the writer himself ‘can be securely situated in the context of these coterie values’.<sup>573</sup> It is my belief that Ford wrote for an audience who reflected the values he held dear, regardless of status, class, or religion. In his dramatic career, he wrote for audiences and ‘friends’ he could teach to appreciate his version of art.

Although Ford was first aligned with a very distinct and defined coterie of patrons, the reasons for him seeking the patronage of such well-known and genteel figures remains questionable. Donald Anderson claims that Ford’s pamphlet *Honour Triumphant* was ‘an obvious bid for recognition and patronage’ in which Ford ‘strives for cleverness rather than conviction’.<sup>574</sup> However, Ford’s own dedications reflected the ideals that he held and, as such, did not appear to be bids for fame. The men and women to whom Ford dedicated a number of writings offered him the protection and financial support typical of the writer-dedicatee relationship in the early 1600s.<sup>575</sup> Bergeron’s account of Ford’s motives, a desire ‘to be admitted to a patron’s sphere, made up of his largess, protection, and good will’, supports the notion that he stuck to the traditional

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<sup>569</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 75.

<sup>570</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theatre*, p. 4.

<sup>571</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theatre*, pp 3-6.

<sup>572</sup> Sanders, *Caroline Drama*, p. 24.

<sup>573</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theatre*, p. 4.

<sup>574</sup> Donald K Anderson, *John Ford* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc, 1972), p. 21.

<sup>575</sup> See Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship in the English Renaissance*, pp. 49-56. Chandler discusses, in depth, the system of literary patronage in the Early Modern period and the changes that occurred between the reigns of Elizabeth I and Charles I.

style of patronage when ‘in an earlier era, one might have been admitted to the patron’s house and household’.<sup>576</sup> The choice of these particular men and women, combined with Ford’s principled style of writing, suggests the choice of patron was more deliberate and complicated than merely choosing those who could provide financial support. Hopkins suggests that ‘we cannot always be certain of the extent to which Ford’s choice of dedicatees was in fact determined by necessity’.<sup>577</sup> Ford needed to earn a living, but not at the expense of his personal values and ideals. Clark states that Massinger, whose outlook on literature and patronage was similar to Ford’s, ‘had two useful traditions: a model of patronage based on gratitude that offered potential reform of the commonwealth’s domestic problems and a mode of entertaining presentation that offered reconciliation of divisive socio-political problems’.<sup>578</sup> Massinger’s outlook seems to have influenced Ford’s own ideas on choosing patrons. Barbara Lauren makes it clear that Ford is not writing solely to an aristocratic audience, but rather his ‘stylized code is not class-bound’, which led him to the professional theatre in the late 1620s.<sup>579</sup>

Ford’s early poetry, aside from demarcating his desired audience and what qualities they should possess, also set out his aims and goals as an author. Concerns over audience understanding and true literary artistry were present in all his paratexts, both poetic and dramatic, and he used them to give explicit instructions on how to read and interpret his writing. Ford’s aim was not to cater to mass audience tastes by incorporating contemporary, literary trends popular at the time, but rather to emphasize his reliance on aptitude and skill. In the address to the reader of the poem *Honor Triumphant*, Ford outlines what he expects of his literary audience:

READER,

I intend not to make any tedious apologie. If thou be my friend, thou wilt censure friendly; if a stranger, indifferently; if an enemie, I esteeme thee not. Then thus:---

*I write not to content each cavelling braine,  
But eyes of noblest spirits: he that loves mee  
Will thanke my labours, and commend my veyne;  
For any others envy, least it moves mee.*<sup>580</sup>

<sup>576</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 192.

<sup>577</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theatre*, p. 6.

<sup>578</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 38.

<sup>579</sup> Barbara Lauren, ‘John Ford: A Caroline Alternative to Beaumont and Fletcher’ in *Modern Language Studies*, 5 (1975), 53-66 (p. 64).

<sup>580</sup> Ford, ‘To Every Sundry Opinioned Reader’ in *Honor Triumphant*, Sig A4r.

Ford dedicated the poem to members of the gentry and expects them and their allies to make up the bulk of the readership, and thus be his ‘friends’. To be a ‘friend’ was also to be a ‘noblest spirit’, someone who understood Ford’s intentions and adhered to a personal code of conduct, not simply a member of the nobility. These ‘friends’ will be kind to him and ‘censure friendly’ because they know him, will have a seemingly personal relationship with him, and will understand him and the intentions of his writing. This address attempts to create a coterie as Ford invites his ‘friends’ – those who will understand – into his circle, but excluded all others. Those readers who do not know Ford or understand his writing are either ‘strangers’ or ‘enemies’, outside his circle and therefore of no importance to him. Ford will not beg his readers for acceptance, but challenges them, forcing them to accept his writing if they are to be ‘friends’. Ford’s creation of a coterie of understanding ‘friends’ is integral to this chapter and, I believe, defined his career and paratext. Although ‘friend’ was a common address, Ford’s ‘friends’ held distinct views and wrote and judged his plays in specific ways, based on his ideology.<sup>581</sup>

In another verse written for *Honour Triumphant*, Ford reiterates that his writing is not meant for just any reader, but rather for those he believes are deserving of his literary artistry and who will understand and judge it with measured reason:

*He who will strive to please each curious eye  
Must freeze in silence; but I care not I:  
Let better favours favour mine indeavour,  
The vulgar tauntings shall affright me never.  
May it please you, to whom it is intended,  
'Tis glory to deserve, though not commended.*<sup>582</sup>

Ford’s readers will not be the ‘vulgar’ sort who ‘taunt’ the writer; rather, they will be refined and understanding readers who appreciate his adept literary skill and will accordingly commend him. Ford will not accept praise from ‘each curious eye’ and insists his readers are knowledgeable and have a desire to understand what he has to say. He will not accept praise as a ‘favour’, as he hints some others will. The final line of this verse, ‘Tis glory to deserve, though not commended’, reveals Ford’s strong belief in earning praise by demonstrating ability through literary skill. He insisted, early in his

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<sup>581</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 42-45.

<sup>582</sup> Ford, ‘Conclusion’ to ‘Perfect Lovers are Onely Wise’ in *Honour Triumphant*, Sig E4v.

career, that the work should be commended before the author; ‘friends’ and allies could praise him, but only if his writing merited praise. The idea that glory should be deserved, not demanded, would follow him to the professional theatre in the late 1620s and early 1630s. He believed that the desire to gain acclaim for writing that had failed to impress audiences was a problem plaguing the commercial stages. Davenant was often criticized by professionals, such as Massinger and Brome, for dedicating his plays to certain aristocratic patrons in a shameless bid for fame, rather than focusing on perfecting his writing abilities. Ford too shared this criticism and counted Brome and Massinger as ‘friends’, but seems to have considered Davenant an enemy who ‘commended’ praise, but did not understand what constituted artistry.

Clark claims that Ford’s dramatic career was marked by his ‘active relations with other authors’, and at the start of Ford’s dramatic career, these ‘other authors’ were professional playwrights, not poets or artists.<sup>583</sup> Although Ford’s beginnings as a poet aligned him closely with an elite set of patrons, his beginnings in the dramatic community found him collaborating with a more inclusive and professional-minded group. Farr suggests that Ford began collaborating with Dekker and ‘other established playwrights’ in the years between 1612 and 1625, when he was still actively producing poetry. Farr explains that Ford’s venture into drama resulted from a desire to test his skill as an author. He was influenced by Dekker and the natural humanity and expertise he included in his plays.<sup>584</sup> Ford’s first dramatic endeavour, written with Dekker and Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton* (staged in the early 1620s and printed in 1658), marked a decisive turn away from the stoic and dignified themes he incorporated into his poetry to more popular and timely forms of widespread entertainment. However, it did not mark a turn away from an alliance with stoic and dignified men of the commercial theatre.<sup>585</sup> Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* decried threats to public and political stability, *The Whore of Babylon* defended Protestantism against growing threats from Catholics, and *The Honest Whore* showed the morality of the lower classes against the immorality and

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<sup>583</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 86.

<sup>584</sup> Dorothy Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1979), pp. 10, 117-18.

<sup>585</sup> See T. M. Parrott, ‘A Note on John Ford’, *MLN*, 58 (1943), 247-53. Parrott contends Ford’s alliance with Dekker and Rowley on *The Witch of Edmonton* was the first time he attempted playwriting. Parrot also calls specific attention to the fact Dekker was, by this time, past his prime.

insincerity of the aristocracy. Dekker's attack on Catholicism in *The Whore of Babylon* gives further evidence to Ford's admiration for personal stoicism and conviction, rather than political or religious affiliation. Dekker was a staunch defender of the public theatre and the cultural leanings of the common men.<sup>586</sup> Ford was attracted to Dekker because of his popularity and his adherence to a specific code of professional conduct from which he would not waiver. T. M. Parrott made the case that Dekker intentionally sought Ford out to assist him in writing a play based on current events because of Ford's strong adherence to 'a very genuine sympathy for unhappy mortals'.<sup>587</sup> This sympathy would encourage an air of compassion from the audience and detract from some of the roughness associated with Rowley and his style of writing.<sup>588</sup> It was because of this allegiance to the 'unhappy' and his strengths in writing stoic poetry that led H. J. Oliver to suggest the more experienced writers, Dekker and Rowley, divided the play so that Ford was responsible for the 'tragic scenes'.<sup>589</sup> The Dekker and Rowley collaboration also helped Ford to raise his own dramatic profile amongst the wider, professional, theatrical community.<sup>590</sup>

The prologue to *The Witch of Edmonton* was likely not written by the veteran Dekker and not by the novice Ford.<sup>591</sup> It contained neither the superior language Ford incorporated into his poetic dedications, nor did it directly address the need for skill in writing that would characterize his later, independently written paratexts. However, the epilogue to the play is much more Fordian in style, as it concentrated on marrying authorial choice and audience acceptance. It is written from the point of view of Winnifride, the only truly virtuous character:

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<sup>586</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (London: Valentine Sims, 1600); STC 6523, *The Whore of Babylon* (London: 1607); STC 6532, and *The Honest Whore* (London: Valentine Sims, 1604); STC 6501.

<sup>587</sup> Parrott, 'A Note on John Ford', 251 and David Gunby, 'Rowley, William (1585?-1626)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24227?docPos=1>> [accessed 10 July 2007]. Gunby states that 'as a poet and playwright Rowley has major limitations. His verse is generally rough and awkward and his character depiction unsophisticated, with individuals commonly represented in terms of a single dominating trait. But working in collaboration [...] he could surmount these limitations to a remarkable degree'.

<sup>588</sup> Parrott, 'A Note on John Ford', 251 and Gunby, 'Rowley, William', *ODNB*.

<sup>589</sup> H. J. Oliver, *The Problem of John Ford* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1955), p. 28-9.

<sup>590</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, pp. 287-98. The majority of Dekker's plays in the Jacobean era were played at Paul's, the Red Bull, and the Fortune. Rowley's plays were staged at the Red Bull and the Cockpit.

<sup>591</sup> Clifford Leech, *John Ford and the Drama of his Time* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), pp. 95-6. Ford's tragic characters were not as 'stretched and tormented' as Webster's who 'have no natural inclination to passivity: they are full of passion and initiative'. It appears as though the veteran Dekker wrote the prologue as he had more experience than either man.

I Am a Widow still, and must not sort  
A second choice, without a good report;  
Which though some Widows finde, and few deserve,  
Yet I dare not presume, but will not swerve  
From modest hopes. All noble tongues are free;  
The gentle may speak one kinde word for me.<sup>592</sup>

‘The gentle’ in this case could mean noble born, but is more likely a reference to kind hearted audience members. The ‘noble’ here were seemingly those same ‘noble spirits’ from *Honor Triumphant* who accepted the play because they understood the meanings intended by the playwrights. Through this acceptance, the audience will applaud the authors and actors, once again proving themselves to be ‘friends’ to the writers and the theatrical community, but only because the play ‘deserve[s]’ ‘good report’. Ford worked hard to establish friendships in the professional theatre with audiences and fellow playwrights. These friendships later situated him in a dramatic coterie with Massinger and Shirley, at the same time they produced a series of commendatory verses to and from like-minded authors.

The commendatory verses Ford wrote for others came after 1625, when he began working as a solo dramatist. He aligned himself with more aristocratic playwrights than Dekker and Rowley. Ford’s first commendation was to Shirley for *The Wedding*, published in 1629:

The Bonds are equall, and the Marriage fit,  
Where judgement is the *Bride*, the *Husband* wit;  
Wit hath begot, and judgement hath brought forth  
A noble issue, of delight, and worth,  
Growne in this Comedy to such a strength  
Of sweete perfection, as that not the length  
Of dayes, nor rage of mallice, can have force  
To sue a nullity, or worke divorce  
Betweene this well trim'd *Wedding*, and loud Fame,  
Which shall in every age, renew thy Name.<sup>593</sup>

Ford’s commendation emphasizes all the qualities in Shirley that Ford himself valued: judgement, nobility, wit, and an adherence to personal convictions. In the verse, the combination of ‘judgement’ (on the part of the audience) and ‘wit’ (from the author)

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<sup>592</sup> Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton*, Sig I4v.

<sup>593</sup> Ford, ‘Of this Ingenious Comedy the *Wedding*. To Mr. James Shirley the Author’ in Shirley, *The Wedding*, Sig A4v.



produces ‘a noble issue’. Ford’s mention of ‘loud Fame’ stems from his scorn for those who relied on their peers for reputation, rather than earning it through literary skill. Although he is claiming Shirley will receive such ‘loud Fame / Which shall in every age, renew thy Name’, he is suggesting this fame is due entirely to the ‘well trim’d’ play he has written. Ford’s discussion of the day’s ‘rage’ and ‘mallice’ toward writing which should deserve praise and acclaim sheds light on his own belief in giving due praise for well-written works, not trumping up sub-standard drama with meaningless words. *The Wedding* had been entered into the Stationer’s Register in 1629, just after *Albovine* had been published with laudatory verses proclaiming the genius of Davenant, despite his play’s absence from the professional theatre stage.<sup>594</sup> The ‘loud Fame’ seemed to directly critique Davenant and the eight commendators who supported his play with verses, two of whom were Ford’s own Inns of Court allies, Robert and Thomas Ellice. Shirley’s writing, unlike Davenant’s, is worthy of praise, and Ford gives it because Shirley can demonstrate that he has natural, literary talent.

Shirley returned the favour to Ford in 1633, in a commendation to *Love’s Sacrifice*. In his verse, Shirley defended Ford’s play and the author’s timelessness and ingenuity, even though he did not address the commendation to Ford. Instead, Shirley took aim at the staunch Puritan and enemy of the theatre, William Prynne, who claimed to be a defender of morality in an age he believed was without scruples. In 1633, the same year Ford’s play was printed, Prynne published *Histrionomastix*, a weighty tome attacking all that was immoral, including the theatre. Shirley’s verse to Ford is actually aimed at Prynne and it slanders the Puritan for his lack of understanding and his vitriol toward drama:

Unto this Altar, rich with thy owne spice,  
I bring one graine, to thy *Loves Sacrifice*:  
And boast to see thy flames ascending, while  
Perfumes enrich our Ayre from thy sweet Pile.  
Looke here *THOU* that hast *malice* to the Stage,  
And *Impudence* enough for the whole Age;  
*Voluminously-Ignorant!* be vext  
To read this Tragedy, and thy owne be next.<sup>595</sup>

<sup>594</sup> Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, II (1951). *Albovine* was listed as the 422 entry and *The Wedding* was the 425.

<sup>595</sup> Shirley, ‘To my friend M<sup>r</sup>. John Ford’ in Ford, *Loves Sacrifice* (London: John Beale, 1633), Sig A2r; STC 11164.

The capitalization of ‘THOU’ marked the commendation out as being meant for only Prynne and not for Ford. Shirley declares Prynne to have ‘*Impudence* enough for the whole Age’, at the same time he calls the Puritan ‘*Ignorant*’ for his attack on the stage, without considering the drama on a case-by-case basis. Shirley implies that Ford’s work is of such a high quality that it does not deserve to be considered alongside the hack writing Prynne is railing against. With the absence of Prynne, the theatre will thrive and the ‘Ayre’ will be perfumed, rather than stifling. Shirley hopes that Ford’s writing foreshadows the demise of Prynne who deserves a tragic end because of his extreme ‘*malice* to the Stage’. The reference to ‘*malice*’ also mimics Ford’s previous commendation to Shirley for *The Wedding* (and Prynne certainly demonstrated ‘rage of mallice’), suggesting the two may have collaborated on the content of the verses.<sup>596</sup> In that same year, Shirley wrote a satirical dedication to Prynne in *The Bird in a Cage*.<sup>597</sup> Shirley focused on his own beliefs in the commendation to his ally, something that Ford would do throughout the 1630s: dedicating to others in his own terms, despite how his contemporaries wished to be seen in their paratexts. Both Ford and Shirley’s plays will overcome ignorance and ‘*malice*’ to oust the professional theatre’s harshest critics.

Shirley and Ford not only shared a common philosophy toward the theatre, which resulted in swapped commendations, but they also shared the patronage of William Cavendish, earl of Newcastle.<sup>598</sup> Ford catered to a more sophisticated audience, and Newcastle was often at the centre of these audiences.<sup>599</sup> An amateur dramatist himself, Newcastle was patron to many writers and poets, the majority of whom were professional playwrights, including Shirley, Brome, and Jonson.<sup>600</sup> Ford’s dedication to Newcastle in

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<sup>596</sup> Ford, ‘Of this Ingenious Comedy the *Wedding*.’ in Shirley, *The Wedding*, Sig A4v.

<sup>597</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 88-90.

<sup>598</sup> Ford, ‘TO THE RIGHTLY HONOURABLE, WILLIAM CAVENDISH, Earle of New-Castle, Viscount Mansfield, Lord Boulfouer and Ogle’ in *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A2r, and Shirley, ‘TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, WILLIAM CAVENDISH, Earle of New-Castle, Viscount Mansfield, Lord Bouldouer and Ogle’ in *The Traylor*, Sig A2r.

<sup>599</sup> Lynn Hulse, ‘Cavendish, William, first duke of Newcastle upon Tyne’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4946?docPos=1>> [accessed 21 February 2008]. Cavendish was a supporter of the Crown. He spared no expense in trying to woo the King and Queen’s affections, including putting on lavish banquets in their honour, costing between four and five thousand pounds for a weekend’s entertainment.

<sup>600</sup> Hulse, ‘Cavendish, William’, *ODNB*. The play that Shirley first assisted Newcastle with was *The Varietie* and was played by the King’s Men at Blackfriars in 1639-40. ‘In 1641 Shirley was paid for ‘several reformatations’ made to *The Varietie* and may have had a similar hand in *The Country Captaine*. For example, the lyric ‘Come let us cast the dice’ was first printed in Shirley’s *Poems &c* (1646)’. Jonson’s A

*Perkin Warbeck*, his 1634 history play, states: ‘the custom of your Lordship's entertainments, even to strangers, is rather an example than a fashion’.<sup>601</sup> Ford admired Newcastle’s convictions and his adherence to a polite and civilized form of conduct. Although Cavendish supported the monarchy, he did admit, at a later date, that the Civil War was due to ‘the King’s failure to maintain ceremony and degrees of honour,’ but he kept his disdain for Charles quiet whilst the King was in power.<sup>602</sup> It seemed Cavendish blamed Charles’s downfall on “mean People” close to the royal couple who jeered’, probably in reference to the courtiers who persistently clung to the power and fame associated with the royal couple.<sup>603</sup> Newcastle’s personal convictions and his disdain for feigned affection to the court, alongside his deep and renowned appreciation for literature and poetry, were the qualities Ford admired in others and what led to the dedication.

On the body of available evidence, it would appear that Ford’s greatest ally and closest companion within the professional dramatic community was Massinger. Hailing from a similar, semi-genteel background and having made his way through the Inns of Court, Massinger’s plays and his professional attitude appear to have influenced Ford’s own writing.<sup>604</sup> According to Doris Adler, ‘Massinger seems less fawning and obsequious in his expressed gratitude to barons, gentlemen of the Inns of Court, and other substantial gentlemen of the realm addressed in his dedications’.<sup>605</sup> He showed, in the words of Clark, a ‘deep appreciation of his network of relatives and associates. Massinger was close friends with Shirley and wrote with Dekker in the 1620s, around the time when Ford was first beginning in the theatre’.<sup>606</sup> He, like Dekker, Brome, and Ford, believed the professional theatre should be based on mutual respect and cooperation between the actors, the authors, and the audiences.

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*Tale of a Tub* was probably inspired by Newcastle as it ‘upholds rural hospitality, traditional customs, and country sports’, qualities for which Cavendish was famed and admired.

<sup>601</sup> Ford, ‘TO THE RIGHTLY HONOURABLE, WILLIAM CAVENDISH’ in *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A2r.

<sup>602</sup> Hulse, ‘Cavendish, William’, *ODNB*.

<sup>603</sup> Hulse, ‘Cavendish, William’, *ODNB*.

<sup>604</sup> See Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip’, *ODNB*. Massinger’s family was fairly well-connected and established. Like Ford, his religious leanings were unclear and Garrett states ‘a tradition grew up in the nineteenth century that he was a Roman Catholic. There is no strong evidence for this; the tradition was based mainly on the presence of Catholic characters and contexts in two of his plays with Mediterranean settings—*The Maid of Honour* and *The Renegado*—and a third, *The Virgin Martyr*, which was set at the time of the early church. Massinger also had a number of Catholic friends or associates, including Sir Aston Cokayne and the playwright James Shirley, but this in itself proves little’.

<sup>605</sup> Doris Adler, *Philip Massinger* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), p. 77.

<sup>606</sup> Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip’, *ODNB*.

Massinger wrote plays for both public and private theatres, including the Cockpit, Blackfriars, and the Red Bull. Martin Garrett claims that ‘by 1625, Massinger was well established as a playwright. Payments for plays and pensions or gifts from well-connected patrons meant that he may also have become fairly prosperous’.<sup>607</sup> However, no matter how successful or rich he became from playwriting, Massinger remained a defender of the professional theatre, ‘rallying to the defence of the Phoenix actors and playwrights’ when their reputations and livelihoods were in jeopardy.<sup>608</sup> Massinger believed that the place of the play was first and foremost on the stage and that paratext should promote the professional theatre.<sup>609</sup> *The Roman Actor*, printed in 1629 just after *The Lover’s Melancholy* and Shirley’s *The Wedding*, contained a dedication from Ford declaring his admiration for Massinger’s exceptional, professional ethos and literary ability:

To write, is growne so common in our Time  
 That every one, who can but frame a Rime  
 However monstrous, gives Himselfe that praise  
 Which onely Hee should claime, that may weare Bayes  
 By their Applause whose judgments apprehend  
 The weight, and truth, of what they dare commend.  
 In this besotted Age (friend) 'tis thy glory  
 That Heere thou hast out-done the Roman story.  
*Domitians* pride; His wives lust unabated  
 In death; with *Paris*, meerly were related  
 Without a Soule, Untill thy abler Pen  
 Spoke them, and made them speake, nay Act agen  
 In such a height, that Heere to know their Deeds  
 Hee may become an Actor that but Reades.<sup>610</sup>

Ford’s concern in the dedication is with the ailing theatrical standards of the era and the ambivalent attitude of contemporary playwrights and audiences. *The Roman Actor* was a

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<sup>607</sup> Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip’, *ODNB*.

<sup>608</sup> Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip’, *ODNB*.

<sup>609</sup> Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip’, *ODNB*. Garrett makes the link between publication and popularity and suggests that if Massinger wanted more from his plays, he would have sought publication as a means of gaining more notoriety. ‘If non-publication is indeed a sign of continuing theatrical viability it may be significant that only two of Massinger’s hitherto unpublished plays were printed between 1633 and his death in 1640: *The Great Duke of Florence* in 1636 and *The Unnatural Combat* in 1639’.

<sup>610</sup> Ford, ‘Upon Mr. MASSINGER His Roman Actor’ in Massinger, *The Roman Actor*, Sig A4r. That same year, Robert Ellice wrote a commendation to Davenant for his *Albovine* in which he referred to ‘thy abler Pen’. Ellice was a repeat commender and spoke of ‘thy abler pen’, of Ford, in *The Lover’s Melancholy*. Because of the closeness of Ford and Robert Ellice, it is possible that Ford gave the phrase to Ellice to use in his dedications to other authors.

‘debate on the very premises of drama’ and in his dedication, Ford ‘stresses the appropriate Roman dignity of the work’.<sup>611</sup> Ford also stresses that ‘every one who can but frame a Rime [...] gives Himselfe that praise’ is ‘monstrous’ and an ailment on ‘this bestotted Age’. Massinger deserves the ‘Bayes’ and ‘Applause’ because his play deserves to be commended.

Prior to Massinger’s play being published, Davenant’s *Albovine* appeared in print. There was much concern from Massinger about the publication of the play and the commendatory verses that accompanied it. Ford believed that commendations could be inherently false because praise in commendatory form had to be earned by the playwright for demonstrated skill, not for association. Ford saw a tension between truth and fiction in the commendatory verses that clapped up or cried down a playwright, regardless of his ability or the artistry of his play. Ford believed that unless the play taught audiences to appreciate artistry or the merit of drama in society, the author did not deserve praise from commenders. Ford’s criticism rested around the notion, put forward by many commenders, that anyone who can ‘rime’ is considered a ‘poet’ worthy to ‘weare Bayes’. Likewise, audience acceptance of these ‘puffed’ up dramatists had led to a ‘besotted age’, which only a short time ago had been the golden age of drama. Ford hoped Massinger’s pen would revive the spirit of the golden age and teach audiences what they should expect and desire from the dramatic form. In fact, Ford claims that Massinger’s play is so skillful that ‘Hee may become an Actor that but Reades’. The suggestion bestows ultimate power on the author himself, above the actors who, according to this verse, could be anyone who reads the play. Through this commendation, Ford revealed that it was the responsibility of the playwright to write something good for all parties: actors, audiences, and the author himself. When certain factions did not display the appropriate cooperation, it was up to the author to enforce artistry and raise up the actors and the audience.

Another of Ford’s verses to Massinger, in *The Great Duke of Florence*, extols both the work and the author’s adherence to the strict codes of artistry:

*Action* gives many Poems right to live,  
*This Piece* gave life to *Action*; and will give  
For state, and language, in each change of Age,

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<sup>611</sup> Garrett, ‘Massinger, Philip’, *ODNB*.

To Time, delight; and honour to the stage.  
 Should late prescription faile which fames that Seat,  
 This Pen, might style The Duke of Florence *Great*.  
 Let many Write; Let much be Printed; read,  
 And censur'd; Toyes; no sooner-hatch't, then dead.  
 Here, without blush to Truth of commendation,  
 Is prov'd, how Art hath out-gone Imitation.<sup>612</sup>

Ford proclaims Massinger to be a genuine artist who does not need to imitate the styles of a dramatic master or even his peers, as other playwrights of the era had done. Instead, he is worthy of being imitated by others. Ford believes there is much being written, 'printed', 'read', and 'censur'd', but they are pale imitations of art and not genuine. Ford assumed two artistic principles common to the Caroline professionals: 'an author imitates models and an author makes the imitation his own'.<sup>613</sup> It was not enough to imitate, but an author also needed to put his own stamp on his writing if he was to be truly great, as Massinger was. Massinger had proven himself to be an artist by becoming a skilled playwright in his own right, who others should imitate and emulate in terms of work and attitude toward the professional theatre.

In 1632, Ford commended Brome's *The Northern Lasse*, stressing the playwright's writing abilities were noble and artistic. Ford's commendation praises Brome's incorporation of poetic language and the playwright's adherence to personal standards and ideals, which are not compromised or influenced by the current fancies of rival playwrights and theatrical audiences:

Poets and Paynters curiously compar'd  
 Give life to Fancie; and atchieve Reward  
 By Immortality of Name: So thrives  
 Art's Glory, that All, wheat it breathes on, lives.  
 Witnesse this Northern Piece. The court affords  
 No newer fashion, or for Wit, or Words.  
 The Body of the Plot is drawne so faire,  
 That the Soules language quickens, with fresh ayre,  
 This well-limb'd Poem, by no Rate, or Thought  
 Too dearely priz'd, being or sold, or bought.<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Ford, 'To the deserving memory, of this worthy Worke, and the Author, M<sup>r</sup>. PHILIP MASSINGER' in Massinger, *The Great Duke of Florence*, Sig A4v.

<sup>613</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 87.

<sup>614</sup> Ford, 'Of Mr. RICHARD BROME his ingenious Comedy, the Northern Lasse, To the Reader' in Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A3v.

Brome's dramatic career was marked by his refusal to term his drama 'poetry'. However, Ford believed plays could be poetic and in this commendation, he imposes his own ideals on Brome who, although aligned to a professional ethos of his own, was not driven by the same desire for artistry and authorial influence as Ford. In the prologue to *The Northern Lasse*, Brome stresses, through the mouthpiece of the actor, that his play is 'a strayne of wit that is not Poetrie'.<sup>615</sup> Despite Brome's own advertised stance concerning the purpose of drama, Ford wrote a commendation that expressed his views about the play and the author; he refers to the play as a 'Poem' and hints that the author is a 'Poet' and a 'Paynter'/artist. Ford never directly mentions Brome, as both men believed that playwrights too often got the renown that should have been reserved for their plays. Art should be praised first and the artist lauded only if his poem is great. It is 'Art's Glory, that All [...] lives'. Although Brome's ideals differed from Ford's, at least in terms of the role of drama, it was Brome's strict adherence to his own personal beliefs and his defence of those beliefs that Ford admired and commended.

The great majority of Ford's commendatory verses to others focused on the artistry of the author or his play, or the author's refusal to either court fame or to compromise his artistic aims with the fancies of the day. They also hint at a timelessness that will lead to an 'immortality of name', which is only achieved through literary talent, not through peer 'puffing'. Ford believed that what was written should be praised rather than who wrote it. However, since good writing was to be emulated, there came a point where a writer should be commended and that point was when the author became an artist. In his dedication to Massinger, Ford had written 'art hath out-gone Imitation', suggesting that Massinger no longer imitates others because his works are good enough to be imitated; therefore his plays are 'art' and he is an 'artist'.<sup>616</sup> According to Neill, Ford's artistry came through his attempts to 'defamiliarize the appropriated [source] material by exposing it to disconcerting switches of tone and context, combining it in unexpected ways with adaptations from quite disparate sources, or exposing it to strange generic dislocations'.<sup>617</sup> Thus, Ford's own practice was to use familiar tropes and stories

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<sup>615</sup> Brome, *The Northern Lasse*, Sig A4v

<sup>616</sup> Ford, 'To the deserving memory, of this worthy Worke' in Massinger, *The Great Duke of Florence*, Sig A4v.

<sup>617</sup> Neill, 'Ford, John', *ODNB*.

and make them unfamiliar with his own interpretation. Although most of his allies held different views as to the purpose and place of the play (Massinger aimed to entertain, Brome defended the professional theatre, and Cavendish wrote for the gentry), each of them understood the inspired value of drama and tried to uphold the high standards set by previous generations of playwrights. Imitation led to understanding, which led to intimate relationships, which provided acceptance and protection against those whose ideologies differed entirely, such as the courtier writers. As Chandler states, ‘the chance to write a commendatory poem for another also provides the writer a forum to proclaim those qualities that a reader should cherish in literature – especially if those are the same qualities with which the writer has attempted to imbue his or her own work’.<sup>618</sup> Although Ford’s style of commendation seemingly represented his own views and desires, rather than reflected those for whom he wrote, he did offer commendations to those he felt were steadfast in their personal beliefs and adhered to a personal code of conduct in regard to the theatre. These men were literary artists to be emulated and imitated in their writing and their attitudes toward the professional theatre, which also made them ‘friends’.

What paratext was included alongside Ford’s own plays drew attention to the artistry of his writing. Criticism of peer ‘puffing’ can be found in many of the verses of praise offered to Ford, as well as in the prologues and dedications he wrote. In the catalogue of Ford’s plays, the commendatory verses and prologues seem almost interchangeable. *Love’s Sacrifice* and *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore* both contain only a single commendation and no prologue. *The Broken Heart* and *The Ladies Trail*, on the other hand, do not have commendations, but do have prologues. Dedications to patrons were the most regular part of Ford’s published paratext. Six of his seven plays published during the Caroline era contained a dedication to a patron.<sup>619</sup> Ford’s first independently written drama, *The Lover’s Melancholy*, included a dedication ‘To my Worthily Respected Friends, Nathaniel Finch, John Ford, Esquires; Mt Henry Blunt, Mr. Robert Ellice, and all the rest of the Noble Society of *Grayes* Inne’. His colleagues from the Inns of Court comprised an ‘important contingent in his primary audience, the privileged playgoers who had sufficient wealth, leisure, and the opportunity to regularly patronize

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<sup>618</sup> Chandler, *Commendatory Verse and Authorship*, p. 106.

<sup>619</sup> Only *The Fancies Chaste and Noble* did not contain an dedicatory verse.



early Stuart theatres'.<sup>620</sup> The tone of the dedication to his Gray's Inn colleagues supports the idea that Ford was writing primarily to those 'friends' who know him personally, know his intentions, and can effectively judge skilled writing:

The account of some leisable houres, is here summ'd up, and offered to examination. *Importunity* of Others, or *Opinion* of mine owne, hath not urg'd on any confidence of running the hazard of a censure. As plurality hath reference to a Multitude, so, I care not to please Many: but wh[e]re there is a Parity of condition, there the freedom of construction, makes the best musicks. This concord hath equally held betweene *YOU THE PATRONES*, and *ME THE PRESENTOR*. I am cleer'd of all scruple of dis-respect on your parts; as I am of too slacke a Merit in my selfe. My presumption of comming in Print in this kind, hath hitherto been un-reprooveable. *This Piece*, being the *first*, that ever courted Reader; and it is very possible, that the like complement with Me, may soone grow out of fashion. A practice of which that I may avoid now, I commend to the continuance of *your Loves*, the memory of *HIS*, who without the protestation of a service, is readily your Friend, JOHN FORD<sup>621</sup>

Ford attempts to secure a positive reception for his first printed play by dedicating to those 'friends' he knew would not criticize him. In the dedication he states, 'I care not to please Many', but sets up a 'concord betweene YOU THE PATRONES, and ME THE PRESENTOR', highlighting the importance of those for whom he was specifically writing, as well as his own important position alongside his patrons as the 'presenter' of such a work. The defining of a clear and distinct coterie continues in the dedication as he confessed his 'presumption of comming in Print in this kind, that hitherto been un-reprooveable. *This Piece*, being the *first*, that ever courted Reader'. Up to this point, Ford's dramatic record was completely untarnished, having only printed poems that were previously 'un-reprooveable'. He hoped that by dedicating to his 'friends', as he had previously done with his poetry, his writing will be met with the same positive response. He called attention to the writing as being the result 'of some leisable houres' and he himself being 'too slacke a Merit' for 'dis-respect' on the part of his friends' judgements. He says there is no disrespect in dedicating to the men he knows will respect the work offered, thereby displaying confidence in his own merit as a writer. Ford told his dedicatees that he wrote to them to gain 'the continuance of your Loves [...] without the

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<sup>620</sup> Clark, *The Moral Art of Philip Massinger*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>621</sup> Ford, 'TO MY WORTHILY RESPECTED FRIENDS, NATHANIEL FINCH, JOHN FORD, Esquires; Mt. HENRY BLUNT, Mr. ROBFRT ELLICE, and all the rest of the Noble Society of Grayes Inne' in Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, Sig A2r-2v .

protestation of a service'. Ford is seemingly not out for praise or fame, but for the enjoyment of his 'friends'. Ford used his contacts at Gray's Inn to form a suitable frame, around the play, that reflected exactly what he wanted and established his authorial control.<sup>622</sup>

In the dedication to his kinsman and Inns of Court colleague John Ford, in *Love's Sacrifice*, Ford the playwright thanks his friend for supporting him and his work, and also for maintaining the stoicism and modesty that he, as an author, so admired:

THE Title of *this little worke* (may good Cozen) is in sence but the argument of a Dedication; which being in most writers a *Custom*, in many a *complement*, I question not but your cleere knowledg of my intents, will in me read as the *earnest of affection*. [...] The contempt throwne on *studies of this kinde*, by such as dote on their owne singularity, hath almost so out-fac'd *Invention*, and prescrib'd *Judgement*; that it is more safe, more wise, to be *suspectedly silent*, then *modestly confident* of opinion, herein. Let me be bold to tell the severity of *censurers*, how willingly I neglect their practise, so long as I digresse from no becomming thankfulness.<sup>623</sup>

At the start of the commendation, Ford the author talks about the common practice of dedicating works out of custom, rather than 'earnest' intention. His dedication is different and more sincere, because his kinsman has a 'cleere knowledg of [Ford the author's] intents', because he is a 'friend'. It is this understanding, rather than his connections or his status, that led to the author's display of 'earnest affection'. Ford's desire for understanding exceeds all other reasons for dedicating. The author is pleased to offer this play to his kinsman John Ford because his dedicatee practiced 'prescrib'd Judgement' and is 'wise', 'silent', and 'modest', three stoic qualities that Ford required in artists and in audiences alike. He writes about the 'contempt' shown by critics who say such verses have 'out-fac'd Invention' or any semblance of originality and artistry. There is also a lack of 'prescrib'd Judgement' as commenders blame others, rather than looking to the author's own ability or talent.

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<sup>622</sup> Gurr, 'Singing Through the Chatter: Ford and Contemporary Theatrical Fashion' in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Neill, p. 93. Because Beeston allowed the printing of the play, it is surmized that Ford was the controlling agent. The play and the dedication are discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter, pp. 234-48.

<sup>623</sup> Ford, 'To my truest friend, my worthiest Kinsman, John Ford of Grayes-Inne, Esquire' in *Loves Sacrifice*, Sig Ar-v.

In the dedication ‘To the truly Noble, John, Earle of Peterborough, Lord Mordant, Baron of Turvey’ in *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, Ford writes of the patron’s nobility, honour, and merit. He also reiterates his leisure in writing the play and in dedicating it, as he had done in *The Lover’s Melancholy*:

Here a Truth of *Meritt* hath a generall warrant, There *Love* is but a *Debt*,  
*Acknowledgement a Justice*. Greatnesse cannot often claime *Virtue* by  
Inheritance; Yet in this, YOURS appeares most Eminent, for that you are not  
more rightly Heyre to your *Fortunes*, then Glory shalbe to your *Memory*.  
Sweetnesse of disposition ennobles a freedome of Birth; in BOTH, your lawfull  
Interest adds Honour to your owne Name, and mercy to my presumption. Your  
Noble allowance of *These First Fruites* of my leasure in the Action, emboldens  
my confidence, of your as noble construction in this Presentment: especially since  
my Service must ever owe particular duty to your Favours, by a patticular  
Engagement. The Gravity of the *Subject* may easily excuse the leightnesse of the  
*Title*: otherwise, I had beene a severe Judge against mine owne guilt. Princes have  
vouchsaf’t Grace to trifles, offred from a purity of Devotion, your Lordship may  
like wise please, to admit into your good opinion, with these weake endeavours,  
the constancy of Affection from the sincere *Lover* of your Deserts in Honour  
JOHN FORD.<sup>624</sup>

It is because Mordant possessed ‘lawfull Interest’, which ‘adds Honour to [his] owne Name’, that Ford was eager to dedicate to him and celebrate his ‘virtue’. The plot of the play was controversial, centring on incest, therefore, it was vital that Ford choose a patron that would judge the play with measure and reason and not react to the subject matter with unchecked emotion. Mordant was the son of a conspirator in the Gunpowder Plot, but still held a diminished role in Charles’s court.<sup>625</sup> It seemed to Ford that Mordant had ‘nobly constructed’ himself and his reputation with Charles, in the same manner that Ford had constructed a play that could be seen as offensive from the outside. The idea of building a reputation based on hard work and talent, rather than ‘puffing’, resonated not only with Ford, but across the commercial theatre as well.<sup>626</sup> Again, it was vital that understanding and reasoned judgement dictate the reading of the play, in the same way that Mordant’s status and reputation were also judged with reason and measure.

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<sup>624</sup> Ford, ‘To the truly Noble, John, Earle of Peterborough, Lord Mordant, Baron of Turvey’ in *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1633), Sig A2r-v; STC 11165.

<sup>625</sup> Victor Stater, ‘Mordaunt, Henry, second earl of Peterborough (bap. 1623, d. 1697)’, *ODNB*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19163>> [accessed 14 Aug 2010].

<sup>626</sup> See Chapter 3, 164-83. Brome was particularly vocal in his criticism of peer ‘puffing’.

Whilst Ford wrote verses for contemporaries and allies that reflected his own dramatic ideologies, those who offered Ford commendations tailored their verses, possibly through Ford's own influence, to fit the beliefs he held. Ford seemed to control the publication of his plays and subsequently who offered commendations.<sup>627</sup> He resisted fawning praise from commenders who were using paratexts to advertise their own names and not to credit the writing. The selection of commenders and their social standing suggest that Ford was meticulous in choosing who would be included in his printed works of 'art'. Ford carefully constructed his reputation by using his association with 'friends', both in and outside the professional theatrical and literary communities. The overriding concern in nearly all the verses to Ford is with the literary aesthetics and artistry that he incorporated in his drama. The commendatory verses to Ford lauded the particular style and language of his plays as being the ultimate signifiers of exceptional literature. According to the commendations, Ford's language and his personal convictions set his writing apart from his contemporaries and made him a literary artist.

In 1633, Thomas Ellice offered praise for *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. This was the only commendation in the printed version of the play. Ellice, a self-styled 'Friend' of the author, wrote a conventional verse praising the play and Ford's abilities as a playwright. The commendation contained familiar motifs found previously in commendations written by and for Ford:

With admiration I behel'd *This Whore*  
 Adorn'd with Beauty, such as might restore  
 (If ever being as *Thy Muse* hath fam'd)  
 Her *Giovanni*, in his love unblam'd:  
 The ready *Graces* lent their willing ayd,  
*Pallas her selfe* now playd the Chamber-maide  
 And help't to put her Dressings on: secure  
 Rest Thou, that *Thy Name* herein shall endure  
 To th'end of Age; and *Annabella* bee  
 Gloriously *Faire*, even in her *Infamie*.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Neill, 'Ford, John', *ODNB*. 'Ford's most important' plays were all published in the Caroline era 'beginning with *The Lover's Melancholy* in 1628 and ending a decade later with *The Ladies Triall* (1638). Between the staging of these two tragicomedies Ford published three tragedies, *Loves Sacrifice*, *'Tis Pitty Shee's a Whore*, and *The Broken Heart* (all in 1633), a chronicle history, *Perkin Warbeck* (1634), and a romantic comedy, *The Fancies, Chast and Noble* (1638). Another play attributed to Ford, *The Queen* was 'published anonymously in 1653'.

<sup>628</sup> Thomas Ellice, 'To my Friend the Author' in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Sig A3r.

Ellice's concern is not with the matter of the play; he claims it is 'adorn'd with beauty' because of the way Ford wrote it. Instead, Ellice congratulates Ford on his writing and proving his name worthy of renown. The endurance of the author's 'Name', due to the skill he exhibits in writing, and the belief this will carry his name 'to th'end of Age', is the primary concern of the verse. The focus is on Ford's skill and his ability to artfully represent the 'age' in which he is writing. The commendation also hints at an anxiety Ford may have felt about the acceptance of his play, when Ellice tells Ford to 'Rest'. Despite the subject matter of the play being taboo and a legitimate cause for concern, this play and the author's artistry will prove his worth and merit as a writer.

Just as Ford put his own ideals and desires into the mouths of others, in the commendatory verses published alongside his plays, so too does he centre his prologues on these ideals. Unlike other contemporary, professional authors, such as Brome, Ford was not humble in promoting his dramatic art or what he wanted from the theatrical or literary audiences. Ford's literary 'friends' and allies asked for certain qualities (wisdom, judgement, and modesty) in the commendatory verses that accompanied his plays. Ford demanded these same qualities directly in his addresses to patrons and indirectly through the mandates he wrote for the actors to deliver in the prologues. The prologue is sometimes the threshold between the author and the audience, but in Ford's case, it is often more of a directive on how to accept the play. Unlike other contemporary Caroline dramatists, Ford did not incorporate pleas for audience acceptance for the actors or even for himself. Instead, he emphasized, through the mouthpiece of the actors, the artistry of his plays and that anyone who was willing to judge without bias and to look for the author's meaning was a 'friend'. The prologues he wrote, such as that to *The Broken Heart*, search for these audiences:

Our Scene is *Sparta*. HE whose best of Art  
Hath drawne *this Peece*, calls it the *Broken Heart*.  
The Title lends no expectation here  
Of apish laughter, or of some lame jeere  
At place or persons, no pretended clause  
Of jest's fit for a brothell Courts' applause  
From vulgar admiration: such low songs  
Tun'd to unchast eares, suit not modest tongues.  
The Virgin Sister then deserv'd fresh bayes  
When *Innocence* and *Sweetnesse* crown'd their layes

Then vices gasp'd for breath, whose whole Commerce  
Was whip'd to Exile by unblushing verse.  
This law we keep in our Presentment now,  
Not to take freedome more then we allow;  
What may be here thought a *fiction*, when Times youth  
Wanted some riper yeares, was knowne *A Truth*:  
In which, if words have cloath'd the subject right,  
You may pertake, a Pitty, with Delight.<sup>629</sup>

Not only are the actors meant to maintain the sense of decorum and dignity commanded by Ford's writing, distanced from the ribald and rowdy plays that have been staged in the past, but also the audience is to expect such artistry and applaud it. The speaker conveys a real sense of anger and disdain with the current state of the commercial theatre. His warning that the play will contain nothing that would win the 'brothell Courts' applause / From vulgar admiration' tells the audience that they will not be seeing something that is fit for a 'vulgar' setting. However, the reference could also allude to the court itself. The capitalization of the word brings to mind the court of Charles I and the pandering, obsequious playwrights who were writing to please the King and Queen, rather than for the entertainment of the audience or to expand the boundaries of artistry. The combination of the 'brothell' and the 'Court' suggests that rival authors are selling themselves and their talents to receive the privilege and favour of the crown. This notion continues with the prologue speaker talking of 'vices gasp'd for breath, whose whole Commerce / Was whip'd to Exile by unblushing verse'. The idea that bad, 'unblushing verse' should be exiled from the 'commerce' of the professional stage was one that Ford encouraged. To be art, a play had to be of high quality and entertaining; the author or his commendars could not simply state that a play was of high quality or entertaining. The notion of selling poetry and art is again made manifest in this prologue. The writers who are selling themselves are not ashamed, as they should be, of prostituting their plays and their reputations.

In the prologue to *The Ladies Trial*, the speaker emphasizes the qualities that make Ford a true literary artist in comparison with many of his playwriting peers. It outlines what is important in Ford's writing and what he hopes audiences will pay attention to, 'wit' and 'mirth', all the while entertaining and teaching audiences

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<sup>629</sup> Ford, *The Broken Heart*, A3r.

something of value. The prologue also directs that audiences should ‘understand’ at the same time that they should experience ‘delight’:

Language and matter, with a fit of mirth,  
That sharply savours more of aire than earth,  
Like Midwives, bring a Play to timely birth.  
But wheres now such a one? In which these three,  
Are hansomely contriv'd? or if they bee,  
Are understood by all who heare or see.  
Wit, wit's the word in fashion, that alone  
Cryes up the Poet, which though neatly showne,  
Is rather censur'd often-times than known.  
He who will venture on a jest, that can  
Raile on anothers paine, or idley scan  
Affaires of state, oh hee's the onely man.  
A goodly approbation, which must bring  
Fame with contempt, by such a deadly sting,  
The Muses chatter, who were wont to sing.  
Your savours in what we present to day,  
Our fearlesse Author boldly bids me say,  
He tenders you no Satyr, but a play.  
In which, if so he have not hit all right,  
For wit, words, mirth, and matter as he might,  
A' wishes yet a' had for your delight.<sup>630</sup>

The first and penultimate lines of the prologue are reminiscent of the final line of the prologue to *The Witch of Edmonton*, where the speaker tells the audience ‘here is Mirth and Matter’.<sup>631</sup> In the prologue to *The Ladies Trial*, the sentiments are the same, but Ford places ‘language’ above both ‘matter’ and ‘mirth’. Ford’s notion of ‘wit’ stemmed from language and matter, not from what others said about the playwright. Contrived, authorial ‘wit’ was being offered at the professional theatre and comprising the bulk of what the audiences viewed. The authors and poets needed to write ‘language and matter’ that were not made of ‘aire’. The actor’s cry of ‘Wit, wit’s the word in fashion, that alone / Cryes up the Poet’, reminds the audience of rival playwrights of using the term, even though they do not have Ford’s wit. The continuation of talk about censoring wit suggests that Ford feels there are some undue restrictions being placed on the writing of his professional allies. At the same time, he hints that other authors (such as Davenant) relied

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<sup>630</sup> Ford, *The Ladies Trial*, A4v.

<sup>631</sup> Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton*, Sig A2r. ‘Since (Gentlemen) we flatter / No expectation: here is Mirth and Matter’.

on their peers for title, despite being unable to ‘neatly’ show any real aptitude. In this instance, the author is probably referring to *The Witts*, which had circumvented Herbert’s censorship, thanks to Davenant’s courtly connections with Endymion Porter.<sup>632</sup>

When *The Ladies Trial* was published in 1639, Davenant was enjoying fame and outwardly attacking the professional theatre, largely because of his position as Poet Laureate, which he won through his courtly connections. Ford’s distaste for other authors who acquired fame through praise, rather than skill, and his contempt for trading ‘wit, words, mirth, and matter’ for position rather than education, is suggested when the prologue speaker continues: ‘some of late have made / The Noble use of Poetry a Trade’. As a professional, Ford sold his plays to theatres in order to advertise art and artistry to a wider audience. He did not simply sell his art for money or trade praise with his contemporaries to boost his name. He is not trading his plays for favours or for title, but instead does so out of a sense of duty in promoting a set of values and beliefs, as well as showing what constituted true literary aptitude. Although Ford sold his literary wares, he was a professional who adhered to producing the highest quality drama possible, rather than compromising something ‘noble’ for the sake of profit or position.

#### Ford’s Paratext and Politics

One of the two plays to contain numerous, different forms of paratext was *The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck*, Ford’s history play. It is because of the sensitive and controversial subject matter that Ford included so many pieces of paratext, which served to temper the reading of the play and deflect criticism, censorship, or personal bias from the author. The political nature of the play, based around the famous historical challenger to the throne of Henry VII, would suggest that Ford did hold distinct views on the monarchy. However, *Perkin Warbeck* demonstrates the ambiguous and indefinable affiliations of the playwright toward the political sphere around him. Ford refused to take a marked political stand, but instead altered the historical facts, whilst balancing the treatment of the two major, opposing characters.<sup>633</sup> Hopkins suggests that every major

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<sup>632</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 128-30.

<sup>633</sup> See Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, pp. 110, 115.



character, on both sides, is treated with dignity and respect.<sup>634</sup> This is attributed to the fact that ‘almost every major character in *Perkin Warbeck* is in fact a direct ancestor of a Ford dedicatee or a member of their family’.<sup>635</sup> The subject matter of the play could have aligned Ford with the anti-Caroline faction who questioned Charles’s right to the throne. However, the equal treatment of both the king and the impostor prevented Ford from being associated with one side and made him an impartial artist recreating a historical event. As was the case with *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, the actions of the play may have been despicable in the eyes of many theatregoers, but Ford created a character in Warbeck that could be defined as a hero, and certainly was not portrayed as a villain, because of his convictions.

The paratext of *Perkin Warbeck* showed the author’s close relationships with his peers, as well as the extent to which others (both past and present) influenced his writing and attitudes. The historical genre of the play, very much out of fashion on the Caroline stage is, as Roy Booth contends, ‘the Shakespearean form’ and shows the influence the previous generations had on Ford.<sup>636</sup> Shakespeare’s history plays were largely concerned with the struggle for power and the sympathy shown by the writer is contingent on the competitor’s right to power.<sup>637</sup> Unlike Shakespeare, Ford disregards (to a point) the audience’s reaction to the hero or heroine and instead focuses on his own intentions and sympathies. The influence of the society on the author is one of the most important contributing factors to the differences between Ford and Shakespeare. Clifford Leech contends that ‘Shakespeare had written for all men, [...] but Ford wrote for men and women who might dream of dying with upper-class dignity’.<sup>638</sup> The Elizabethan playwrights, Shakespeare included, largely critiqued social archetypes rather than political events, which became the fashion after 1603, when interest in courtly news began to swell.<sup>639</sup> Ford did not write about specific events, but, like Shakespeare, focused

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<sup>634</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theatre*, p. 40.

<sup>635</sup> Hopkins, *John Ford’s Political Theatre*, p. 40.

<sup>636</sup> Roy Booth, ‘Caroline Theatre’ in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 556-64 (p. 557).

<sup>637</sup> See Ian Robson, *The Moral World of John Ford’s Drama* (Slazburg: Slazburg Studies in English Literature, 1983), p. 187 and Leech, *John Ford and the Drama of his Time*, p. 13.

<sup>638</sup> Leech, *John Ford*, p. 94.

<sup>639</sup> See Malcolm Smuts, ‘Court-Centred Politics and Roman Historians’ in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1994), pp. 21-43. From the end of the Elizabethan era, the public interest in courtly news and the ‘shifting balance of factions

on character traits and how personal beliefs shaped individual fates. However, Leech claims Shakespearean heroes and villains held ‘simpler attitudes to human conduct’.<sup>640</sup> In *Perkin Warbeck*, the hero and the villain are interchangeable.<sup>641</sup> Ford instils stoicism and personal belief in his title character, leading him to die a ‘martyrdom of majesty’, whilst the king, the true hero, appears, at times, weak, spiteful, and paranoid.<sup>642</sup> Ford’s reserved idea of what drama should entail is also on display, as it is not ‘fertile Rage In Action’, but a play of ‘noble mention, knowne, Famous and true’.<sup>643</sup> It is Ford’s unique, moral outlook on drama, and indeed on life, that separates him from both contemporary and past dramatists like Shakespeare, although the influence of both is noticeable in the play. Ford’s history play and the paratexts that surround it, like his attitude toward drama, are concerned with character and an adherence to personal beliefs.

In the dedication ‘To The Rightly Honourable, William Cavendish’, Ford sought a patron who held a similar attitude toward reserved judgement:

Out of the darknesse of a former Age, (enlighten'd by a late, both learned, and an honourable pen) I have endeavoured, to personate a great Attempt, and in It, a greater Daunger. In *other Labour's*, you may reade Actions of Antiquitie discourst; In *This Abridgement*, finde the Actors themselves discoursing: in some kinde, practiz'd as well *What* to speake; as speaking *Why* to doe. Your Lord is a most competent Judge, in expressions of such credit; commissioned by your knowne Abilitie in examining; and enabled by your knowledge in determining, the monuments of Time. Eminent Titles, may indeed informe, *who*, their owners are, not often *what*: To your's, the addition of that information, in BOTH, cannot in any application be observ'd flattery; the Authoritie being established by TRUTH. I can onely acknowledge, the errors in writing, mine owne; the worthinesse of the *Subject written*, being a perfection in the Story[...]<sup>644</sup>

Ford’s choice of dedicatee reflects his hope that the subject matter and the controversial title character would not overshadow his patron and his intentions. The opening lines speak of the danger in writing a play based on the villain Warbeck. However, because he knows that Cavendish will read it with ‘competent’ judgement and ‘Abilitie in examining’, Ford believes that the play will be seen as practice in ‘perfection in the

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at Whitehall’ led playwrights to satirize individuals to satisfy ‘newsmongering’ audiences.

<sup>640</sup> Leech, *John Ford*, p. 96

<sup>641</sup> Leech, *John Ford*, p. 96.

<sup>642</sup> Leech, *John Ford*, p. 96.

<sup>643</sup> Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A4v.

<sup>644</sup> Ford, ‘TO THE RIGHTLY HONOURABLE, WILLIAM CAVENDISH’ in *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A2r-2v.

Story', rather than a political commentary. Ford wrote a history play with controversial subject matter in the hopes of showing that 'What to speake' is as important as 'speaking Why to doe', rather than who spoke. Titles spoke of 'who', but not of 'what', and Ford's play and its title character prove that the name did not make the man, but rather what a character did and how he behaved shaped 'the worthinesse of the Subject', as did the dedicatee.

The distance Ford creates between himself and his subject matter is best seen in the prologue. The prologue speaks for a silent author and claims, for him, that the play is true:

But such *This Authour's* silence best befit's,  
 Who bidd's Them, be in love, with their owne witt's:  
 From *Him*, to cleerer Judgement's, wee can say,  
 Hee shew's a Historie, couch't in a Play:  
 A Historie of noble mention, knowne,  
 Famous, and true: most noble, 'cause our owne.  
 Not forg'd from *Italie*, from *Fraunce*, from *Spaine*,  
 But Chronicled at *Home*; as rich in strayne  
 Of brave Attempts, as ever, fertile Rage  
 In Action, could beget to grace the Stage.  
 Wee cannot limitt *Scenes*, for the whole Land  
 It selfe, appeard too narrow to with-stand  
*Competitors for Kingdomes*: nor is heere  
 Unnecessary mirth forc't, to indeere  
 A multitude; on *these two*, rest's the Fate  
 Of worthy expectation; *TVH* and *STATE*.<sup>645</sup>

The prologue sets up a coterie of those 'owne' people who can lay claim to the play, at the same time it criticizes rival playwrights. The prologue speaker comments on the 'silence' of the author as an answer to peer 'puffing' and as a silent overseer of the audience's reaction to the play. Ford, as the author, will not chide his rivals who are 'in love with their owne witt's', but will remain stoically silent as he watches this self-congratulating happening in the theatre. Charles's rule was characterized by what Kevin Sharpe referred to as 'animated silence', in other words a belief that a natural ruler 'need not speak but simply be'.<sup>646</sup> As Ford was writing a play about the nature of kingship and

<sup>645</sup> Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A4v.

<sup>646</sup> Kevin Sharpe, 'The King's Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England' in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, pp. 117-38 (p. 134).

the right to the throne, the reference to silence in the prologue could have been aimed at Charles himself, the creator of England's destiny. Just as Ford had not chided his rivals or judged the audience, he will not judge the king (Charles I and Henry VII) or Perkin Warbeck. The idea that he has written a 'famous' and 'true' 'Historie' allowed Ford to remain silent. The events were facts and there was no need to judge or critique, just recount.

Ford's ideology on the theatre and drama is reiterated throughout the commendatory verses as the author remained silent, allowing his 'friends' to vocalize his thoughts and beliefs for him.<sup>647</sup> As the subject matter was controversial, Ford relied on others to contextualize the play for him. Although he had taken steps in the paratext that he himself wrote - the dedication to Cavendish and the prologue - the need for others to validate Ford's play and negate the play's subversiveness was necessary. The first commendation was from George Donne, who had previously written a verse for *The Lover's Melancholy*.<sup>648</sup> Donne professes that the quality of Ford's writing will cure the illness of the age in which audiences do not appreciate good writing:

They, who doe know mee, know, that I  
(Unskil'd to flatter)  
Dare speake *This Piece*, in words, in matter,  
A WORKE: without the daunger of the *Lye*.  
Beleeve mee (friend) the name of *This*, and *Thee*,  
Will live, *your Storie*:  
Bookes may want Faith, or merit, glorie;  
THIS, neither; without Judgement's Lethargie.  
When the Arts doate, then, some *sicke Poet*, may  
Hope, that his penne  
In new-stained-paper, can find men  
To roare, *HE* is THE WIT'S; His NOYSE doth sway.<sup>649</sup>

Donne's verse highlights all those things that Ford held in highest esteem: artistry, sound judgement, skilled language and writing, and a sort of timelessness that transcended the

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<sup>647</sup> Each verse addresses Ford as a 'friend' in the title, implying a conditioned and measured understanding of the play as directed by Ford.

<sup>648</sup> David Colclough, 'Donne, John (1572–1631), poet and Church of England clergyman', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7819?docPos=1>> [accessed 21 February 2008] and George Donne, 'On his great Duke of Florence; To Mr. PHILIP MASSINGER, my much esteemed friend in Massinger *The Great Duke of Florence*, Sig A4r. George Donne was John's son and an ally of both Massinger and Ford.

<sup>649</sup> George Donne, 'To my owne friend, Master *John Ford*, on his Justifiable Poem of *Perkin Warbeck*, This Ode' in Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A3r.

current dramatic trends. He is not, like many of his rivals, publishing without thought of quality, on ‘new-stained-paper’, anything that will gain praise from his peers. These sentiments are echoed in the opening lines of the prologue as the speaker laments the state of the Caroline theatre:

Studyes have, of this Nature, been of late  
So out of fashion, so unfollow'd; that  
It is become more Justice, to revive  
The antick follies of the Times, then strive  
To countenance wise Industrie: no want  
Of Art, doth render witt, or lame, or scant,  
Or slothfull, in the purchase of fresh bayes;  
But want of Truth in Them, who give the prayse  
To their self-love, presuming to out-doe  
The *Writer*, or (for need) the *Actor's* too.<sup>650</sup>

The similarities between the prologue and Donne’s verse suggest that Ford had influence over what Donne wrote to him, possibly even dictating to his ‘owne friend’ what should be included. Donne seems to compare Ford to Davenant, whose *The Witts* had just been published and contained two commendatory verses.<sup>651</sup> Davenant is Donne’s ‘sick Poet’ and Ford’s ‘lame, scant, and slothfull’ poet who will ‘purchase fresh bayes’. Davenant came to represent the self-loving writer who relied on his peers for acclaim because he could not ‘out-doe’ the professional playwrights. Donne proclaims that Ford’s artistry is legitimate, whilst the ‘sick Poet’ produces mere ‘noyse’ pretending to be an authentic poet and a wit. Ford’s prologue and Donne’s verse reiterate that simply terming someone a wit does not make it true. Wit must be demonstrated and judged, ‘without Lethargie’, by both audiences and commenders.

Ford’s portrayal of the attitude and place of both Henry VII and Warbeck also mirrored the status and reputation of Ford and Davenant in the professional theatre, with Ford being likened to the impostor Warbeck. Despite his courtly ties, Davenant was still providing plays for the commercial stage. Ford had studied at the Inns of Court and was connected to wealthy and aristocratic patrons, making him the more likely amateur,

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<sup>650</sup> Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A4v.

<sup>651</sup> D’Avenant, *The Witts*, Sig A4r, and Donne, ‘To my owne friend, Master *John Ford*’, Sig A3r. Donne makes reference to the prologue to Davenant’s play where Davenant states ‘Blesse mee you kinder Stars! How are wee throng’d? / Alas! whom, hath our long-sick-Poet wrong’d, / That hee should meet together in one day / A Session, and a Faction at his Play?’

aristocratic playwright. The concerns of lineage and heritage in the play, both in terms of actual parentage as well as a more metaphorical literary similitude, juxtaposed questions over Charles's right to the throne with the competition that was infecting the theatrical community. Charles's legitimacy was questioned because of Warbeck, but the resonance of the play had implications for the professional theatre and playwrights as well.

Warbeck's defeat gave Charles's reign legitimacy. In terms of the professional stage, Ford created a character in Warbeck, a martyr who dies for his beliefs, who resonated with those professional playwrights who saw their plays fare worse than those of the amateurs providing for the same commercial playhouses. Davenant would represent the court and the weak petulance as exemplified by the fictionalized Henry, whilst Ford represented the outsider trying to disrupt the corrupt court with his strong ideals and steadfast beliefs.

Sir George Crymes wrote the second commendation to Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* and continued the political comments that Donne began.<sup>652</sup> Crymes's verse to Ford is disapproving of Warbeck and his low, illegitimate birth, which again raises issues of heritage and lineage:

PERKIN is rediviu'd by thy strong hand,  
And crownd' a King of new; the vengefull wand  
Of *Greatnesse* is forgot: HIS Execution  
May rest un-mention'd; and HIS birth's Collusion  
Lye buried in the Storie: But HIS fame  
Thou has't eterniz'd; made a Crowne HIS Game.  
HIS loftie spirit soares *yet*. Had HE been  
Base in his enterprise, as was his sinne  
*Conceiv'd*, HIS TITLE, (doubtlesse) prov'd unjust,  
Had, but for *Thee*, been silenc't in his dust.<sup>653</sup>

Although he disapproved of the real Warbeck, Crymes praises Ford for his artistry and his ability to turn an immoral character into something 'loftie' in fiction. Again, the reversal showed the inverted nature of the commercial theatre at the time, with the professionals competing with courtly impostors and those seeming noble. Crymes treats the story as a myth, remarking that Ford covered up all the bad traits, despite the

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<sup>652</sup> There is no listing of George Crymes or any reasonable pseudonym for him listed in *ODNB*.

<sup>653</sup> George Crymes, 'To my faithfull, no lesse deserving friend, the Authour; This indebted Oblation.' in Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A3v.

historical inaccuracies. The capitalization of HIS and HE separates the character in the play from Ford's myth, and separates the truth from the fiction, although the prologue claims that the play did have some historical truths and accuracy.

The epilogue to the play references the threat to the nation from outside. Bastard agents, such as Warbeck, threatened those in power and the speaker advises caution when dealing with such characters:

Here ha's appear'd, though in a severall fashion,  
The Threats of Majestie; the strength of passion;  
Hopes of an Empire; change of fortunes; All  
What can to Theater's of Greatness fall;  
Proving their weake foundations<sup>654</sup>

The epilogue put the politics of the theatre and the realm into the same sphere, just as the commendations likened the author and his rival to the fictitious, adverse characters. Davenant could be seen as the bastard, outside agent who tried infiltrating the commercial stage. With the epilogue in mind, Crymes's commendation speaks more of a political warning and thanks Ford for highlighting such threats.

Another respected figure to offer Ford commendations was 'Ra E'vere Baronis Primogen'. Like George Crymes, very little is known about him, but the title 'Baronis' suggests the wealthy and connected member of the gentry Ralph Evre. The first lines of the verse to Ford praise the author's ability, despite the rather sensitive material found in the play:

Let men, who are writt Poets, lay a claime  
To the *Phebean Hill*, I have no name,  
Nor art in Verse; True, I have heard some tell  
Of *Aganippe*, but ne're knew the Well:  
Therefore have no ambition with the Times,  
To be in Print, for making of ill Rimes;  
But love of *Thee*, and Justice to *thy Penne*  
Hath drawne mee to this Barre, with other men  
To justifie, though against double Lawes,  
(Waving the subtill bus'nesse of his cause)  
The GLORIOUS PERKIN, and thy Poet's Art  
Equall with *His*, in playing the KINGS PART.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig K5v.

<sup>655</sup> Ralph Evre, 'To his worthy friend, Master *John Ford*, upon his *Perkin Warbeck*' in *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A3r-3v.

Evre's commendation echoed both Donne's and Crymes's verses. He includes the fawning obsequy and his own ineptitude in justifiably praising the author and the play that characterized Donne's verse, and the admiration in constructing a 'noble' Warbeck that characterized Crymes's verse. Evre claims to be unworthy of writing praise, even though the subject matter Ford provided was controversial. This play is a skilled and artful, yet fictitious rewrite of history. Evre also criticizes Ford's rival dramatists and includes his own politicized comment. The emphasis on 'GLORIOUS PERKIN' and 'playing the KINGS PART' alludes to an affiliation with the would-be usurper, as well as a suppressed hostility toward the court of Charles I. Furthermore, the obscurity and humility the commender expresses in his own verse worked in Ford's favour. The commender is not a poet and therefore cannot offer the lofty commendation to Ford that he deserves. However, his status as a baron gives him a legitimate claim to comment on the political climate, which he uses to laud the author, in spite of the sensitive subject. Evre aligns Ford and Warbeck in these lines, justifying both in their respective challenges.

Evre also makes two legal references, 'Barr' and 'Lawes', which continue in the following commendation from Ford's peer at Gray's Inn, John Brograve. Brograve was a colleague of Ford's at the Inns of Court and, as such, was another 'friend'. He wrote a commendation that exuded hostility toward rival playwrights of the era and claimed that Ford is above reproach:<sup>656</sup>

Thus *Graces* are, with *Muses* mett,  
 And practick *Critick's* on may fret:  
 For heere, Thou hast produc't, A *Storie*,  
 Which shall eclipse, *Their* future Glorie.<sup>657</sup>

Brograve's commendation to Ford includes some of the most common phrases and appraisals of the author's work, both from other commendations in the paratext and verses from Ford's other plays. The words that Brograve uses in his commendation and those that appeared in italics in the printed version, including 'Judgement, Envy, Truth, and Grace', were common words that appeared in a number of commendatory verses

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<sup>656</sup> J. H. Baker, 'Brograve, Sir John (bap. 1538, d.1613), lawyer', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3493?docPos=1>> [accessed 21 February 2008].

<sup>657</sup> John Brograve, 'To the Authour, his friend, upon his Chronicle Historie' in Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A4r.



written both by and for Ford. Brograve, like Donne, refers to the play as a ‘storie’. Although Donne refers to Ford’s play as a ‘Justifiable Poem’ and a ‘WORKE’ in his commendation, which gives it even more artistic, Jonsonian gravity, he also dubs the play a ‘Storie’.<sup>658</sup> In this sense, a ‘storie’ is: ‘a narrative, true or presumed to be true, relating to important events and celebrated persons of a more or less remote past; a historical relation or anecdote’, rather than a frivolous piece of fiction meant solely to entertain.<sup>659</sup> However, by referring to the play as a ‘storie’, commendators invited the more trivial meaning: ‘an incident, real or fictitious, related in conversation or in written discourse in order to amuse or interest’, which alleviates any political pressure from the controversial tale and excuses Ford’s decision to end the play without condemning the royal imposter Warbeck.<sup>660</sup> None of Ford’s other paratexts referred to the drama as a ‘storie’. The twice-termining of *Perkin Warbeck* in this manner seemed deliberate. There is little reason to believe that Brograve and Donne collectively decided upon the term for their commendations, as neither had previously exchanged verses or given commendations to the same author. As he had offered a commendation to Ford for *The Lover’s Melancholy*, it is plausible that Ford influenced Donne’s decision to use the unusual term ‘storie’ when describing the play. Because the term itself had a definite and precise meaning, the use of it, whether the commendators’ or Ford’s, demonstrates a very exacting and methodical linguistic choice.

However, neither Brograve’s nor Donne’s associations with Ford were as strong as the author’s ties to some other members of the Inns of Court, such as John Ford, who appeared as a dedicatee in *The Lover’s Melancholy* and *Love’s Sacrifice*.<sup>661</sup> The author’s ‘kinsman, John Ford’ picks up from Brograve in slighting the author’s rivals:

*Drammatick Poets* (as the Time goe) now  
 Can hardly write, what *others* will allow;  
 The *Cynick* snarl’s; the *Critick* howles and barkes;

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<sup>658</sup> ‘work, n II-13’, *OED* <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50287171>> [accessed 28 June 2007]. Donne is directly comparing Ford to Jonson by terming and also emphasizing the play as a WORKE. A work is ‘A literary or musical composition (viewed in relation to its author or composer)’.

<sup>659</sup> ‘story, n I-1a’, *OED* <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50238547>> [accessed 28 June 2007].

<sup>660</sup> ‘story, n I-5d’, *OED* <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50238547>> [accessed 28 June 2007].

<sup>661</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 216-19.

And *Ravens* croake, to drowne the voice of *Larkes*:  
Scorne those STAGE-HARPYES! This I'le boldy say,  
Many may imitate, few match thy Play.<sup>662</sup>

The commender Ford's verse contains furious and resentful sentiments that are highly critical of the enemies (both within and outside) of the contemporary stage. Ford the commender compares the '*Drammatic Poets*' to vicious and loathsome creatures, bent on destroying the beauty of Ford the author's true artistry. Davenant had referred to his early poem *The Cruell Brother* as a 'Drammatic Poem' in the dedication to Lord Weston, and it is possible that Ford the commender is referencing Davenant directly in his verse to Ford.<sup>663</sup> The verse harshly critiques the current trend of playwrights calling themselves 'poets'. With all the obsequious commendatory verses circulating, Ford the commender points out that it is hard for any playwright, especially one as deserving as Ford, to be commended. Ford the verse writer claims those '*Drammatic Poets*' are actually jealous and petty rivals by emphasizing the words '*Cynick*', '*Critick*', '*Ravens*', and 'STAGE-HARPYES'. He refers to Ford the author as a '*Lark*', while the playwright's rivals are represented by the '*Ravens*' and 'STAGE-HARPYES'. True '*Drammatic Poets*', like Ford, were being challenged by impostors, those who claimed the same title but lacked the wit and ability.

### *The Lover's Melancholy*

Ford's first play, *The Lover's Melancholy*, contained a number of paratexts that addressed unearned praise, the need for audience understanding, and the necessity of self-fashioning - issues that were further explored in the matter of the play. As this was the first independent play of Ford's career as a dramatic artist, the paratexts were crucial in not only setting up Ford's reputation, but also in introducing the ideals that he held dear, that would be reflected in his drama, and that would define his career.<sup>664</sup> The play was written

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<sup>662</sup> John Ford, 'To my friend, and kinsman, Master *John Ford*, the Author' in Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*, Sig A4r.

<sup>663</sup> D'Avenant, 'To the Right honourable The Lord Weston, Lord High Treasurer of England' in Davenant, *The Cruell Brother* (London: Augustine Mathewes, 1630), Sig A3r-4r; STC 6302.

<sup>664</sup> Modern critics tend to find Ford's plays harder to date than perhaps any other Caroline dramatist's. However, *The Lover's Melancholy* is widely believed to be one of his first independently written dramas and was certainly the first to be published.

for the Blackfriars theatre, but the actors often censored the works that were provided for them out of fear of offending the court or the aristocracy; this censorship negatively influenced Ford's experience in writing for the theatre and after this play was staged, Ford left the Blackfriars for the rival Cockpit, where he believed he would have more authorial control and freedom to express himself. Ford's play was challenging to the audience, which was not what the coddled Blackfriars theatregoer expected. He directed a specific understanding and asked the audience to work to find meaning. According to Gurr, 'Ford's idea of the proper style for his stage poetry took him fairly quickly away from the leading repertory at the Blackfriars to the Cockpit', where he could develop his artistry more fully with less persuasion from the owner or company.<sup>665</sup> Farr claims that Ford struggled to choose between the Blackfriars and the Cockpit in pleasing 'a difficult audience without debasing art'.<sup>666</sup> Because the Blackfriars had such an elevated reputation, the King's Men were more guarded in what they played on stage and sometimes censored works (like Davenant's *Albovine*), despite authorial protest. Christopher Beeston (the manager at the Cockpit in 1628 when the play was staged), on the other hand, was viewed as an 'impresario manager' who was flexible as to what was allowed on stage.<sup>667</sup> Beeston relied heavily on certain playwrights, Ford included, to build his theatre and heighten his reputation.<sup>668</sup> As such, Ford's control over his plays was likely greater in his partnership with Beeston than it had been at the Blackfriars. Gurr claims that Beeston allowed Ford to publish his first play that he had written for Blackfriars, a move that would have antagonized the rival playhouse, but would have proved Beeston to be a manager dedicated to his writers.<sup>669</sup> The decision to switch to the Cockpit to maintain artistic control demonstrated Ford's primary goal in determining the path of his career and dictating how others would perceive him. From the very beginning

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<sup>665</sup> Gurr, 'Singing Through the Chatter' in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Neill, p. 93.

<sup>666</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 13.

<sup>667</sup> Payne, 'Patronage and the Dramatic Marketplace under Charles I and II', pp. 159-76 and Gurr, 'Beeston [Hutchinson], Christopher', *ODNB*.

<sup>668</sup> Bentley Eades, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941-1968), VI (1968), pp. 71-72 and David Stevens, 'The Stagecraft of James Shirley', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 29 (1977), 493-516. Bentley Eades contends that Beeston, as the manager of the Cockpit, had significant influence on the drama of late Caroline period. Beeston was renowned for having a helpful and encouraging demeanour in the dramatic community. His ambition is what led him to be a more understanding and lenient manager who relied on the writings of certain playwrights, Massinger and Ford, to build his reputation.

<sup>669</sup> Gurr, 'Singing Through the Chatter' in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Neill, p. 93.

of his independent, dramatic career, Ford insisted that others would not dictate how his plays were to be viewed, but that he would control how meaning was determined.

Ford's dedication to his Gray's Inn counterparts in *The Lover's Melancholy* set the tone for the paratexts that followed, by stating that the author was not going to cater to audience tastes, but push them.<sup>670</sup> He would not moderate the play, nor would he let the actors, the manager, or the company prescribe the play's meanings. Ford's remark that he cares 'not to please many' became the underlying idiom that resonated through the whole of the paratext, the play, and his dramatic career.<sup>671</sup> It symbolized that he was writing to those who would understand his meanings and accept them as true works of art. The authorial control and exclusivity that Ford established in the dedication to his Gray's Inn colleagues was carried on in the commendatory verses. The commendations included with *The Lover's Melancholy* are not 'puffing' up Ford's name, but instead are praising him for his literary prowess and his noble efforts in writing to an audience that is understanding and appreciative of his talents. The first commendation to appear in the published play is by George Donne. The address 'To my Honour'd Friend, Master John Ford, on his Lovers Melancholy' established Donne as a 'friend' who understands Ford's meanings and intentions:

If that thou think'st these lines thy worth can raise,  
Thou do'st mistake: *my* liking is no prayse:  
Nor can I thinke thy Judgement is so ill,  
To seeke for Bayes from such a barraine Quill:  
Let your *true Critick*, that can judge and mend,  
Allow thy Sceanes and Stile: I, as a friend  
That knows thy worth, doe only sticke my Name  
To shew *my Love*, not to advance *thy Fame*.<sup>672</sup>

Donne denigrates his own ability to judge. He is merely a reader who understands and likes Ford's work and thus is writing a commendatory verse. Donne does not desire to 'advance [Ford's] Fame', he wants to show his love and affection for the author. This commendation is reminiscent of Ford's earlier poetic paratexts, where the author stated only 'friends' are able to judge his work because only 'friends' understand it. Donne left

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<sup>670</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 216-18.

<sup>671</sup> Ford, 'TO MY WORTHILY RESPECTED FRIENDS' in *The Lover's Melancholy*, Sig A2r.

<sup>672</sup> George Donne, 'To my Honour'd Friend, Master *John Ford*, on his Lovers Melancholy' in Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, Sig A3r.

judgement of the play and the author to the ‘true Critick’: anyone who can properly and wholly ‘judge’ the work on Ford’s terms. Donne leaves the author to ‘mend’ his own ‘sceances and stile’, rather than allowing others to determine what is right and wrong with the play. The verse reminds readers what the purpose of a commendation should be: to show support to a ‘friend’. It also re-affirmed that Ford wrote not for the general public, but for ‘friends’ who understand him and his intentions.

The notion first raised in the dedication to Ford’s Gray’s Inn fellows, that the commercial theatre audience’s approval is not what is important in determining the skill of the author, is further emphasized in the second commendatory verse by William Singleton. In his commendation, ‘knowing men’ are ‘friends’ of Ford, who only offer praise because his writing is ‘approve’d’ and good. Singleton’s purpose in writing was to emphasize that it is the power of Ford’s pen that moved audiences and that he alone had the ability to keep an elevated, theatrical tradition alive:

I Write not to thy Play: Ile not begin  
To throw a censure upon what hath been  
By th' *Best* approv'd; *It* can nor feare, nor want  
The *Rage*, or *Liking* of the Ignorant.  
Nor seeke I Fame for Thee, when thine owne Pen  
Hath forc'd a praise long since, from knowing Men.  
I speake my thoughts, and wish unto the Stage  
A glory from thy studies; that the Age  
May be indebted to Thee, for Reprieve  
Of purer language, and that *Spight* may grieve  
To see *It selfe* out-done. When Thou art read,  
The Theater may hope Arts are not dead,  
Though long conceal'd; that *Poet-Apes* may feare  
To vent their weaknesse, mend, or quite forbear.  
This I dare promise; and keepe this in store;  
As thou hast done enough, Thou canst doe more.<sup>673</sup>

Singleton begins by saying he will not talk about Ford’s play, as it had already been ‘th’ Best approv’d’ and ‘can nor feare, nor want / The *Rage*, or *Liking* of the Ignorant’. Singleton denies that he is seeking personal fame or fame for Ford in writing the commendation: ‘Nor seeke I Fame for Thee, when thine owne Pen / Hath forc’d a praise long since, from knowing Men’. The commender credits Ford with reviving a ‘purer’ and

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<sup>673</sup> William Singleton, ‘To his worthy Friend, the Author, Master *John Ford*’ in *The Lover’s Melancholy*, Sig A3r-3v.

more artistic brand of drama that had been seen on stage in the previous generations. He also stresses that Ford's artistry moved easily from stage to page, as 'when [he's] read, / The Theatre may hope Arts not dead'.

Singleton, in addition to praising Ford's literary artistry, also comments on the habit of those in the literary community to write shabby entertainments and then pass them off as 'Art'. The '*Poet-Apes*' who 'may feare / To vent their weaknesses, mend, or quite forbear' are nervous because of Ford's skill, which frightens less skilled playwrights into silence, thus improving the quality of drama in the age. 'Poet-Apes' also referred to the first poet's war and aligned Ford with the professional dramatists who decried those who 'aped' artistry, but who did not possess and skill or talent themselves.<sup>674</sup> Singleton's use of the term put Ford in league with the defenders of the professional, commercial stage, the 'poets', as opposed to those playwrights who relied solely on what others said about them, the 'poet-apes'. Singleton classifies Ford as true dramatic artist rather than a 'Poet Ape', whilst Davenant, the would-be professional and amateur courtier, was a 'poet ape'.

The remaining two commendations summed up the ideas that Donne and Singleton set forth. The first, 'To the Author, Master John Ford' in *The Lover's Melancholy* by Hum(phrey) Howorth, praises Ford for his accurate vision of the human condition and the various ailments that plagued the stage and afflicted Ford, the honest and adept playwright. The final verse came from an unknown source who signed his commendation in Greek. Roughly translated, the commendation is attributed to 'O phi I lo s', 'philos', a lover. A mere four lines, the verse acts as a summation of the issues raised in the previous commendations:

Tis not the Language, nor the fore-plac'd Rimes  
Of Friends, that shall commend to after-times  
The *Lovers Melancholy*: Its owne worth  
Without a borrowed prayse, shall set it forth.<sup>675</sup>

The first line calls attention to the 'Language' and 'Rimes' used by the commenders to praise Ford. The writer claims that the verses offered to Ford are below the literary standard set by the author himself and that it is the language the dramatist uses that will

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<sup>674</sup> See Massinger, 'A Charme for a Libeller' in Beal, 'Massinger at Bay', 196-99.

<sup>675</sup> Anonymous, 'Of the Lovers Melancholy' in Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, Sig A4r.

eternalize his play, not the empty words of 'Friends' writing about it. However, 'a lover' acknowledges that these are 'fore-plac'd Rimes' offered to Ford by 'Friends'. Again, in the Fordian sense of the word, 'Friends' referred to anyone who understood the author's meanings and exercised measured judgement in evaluating the play. The speaker claims the play has 'its owne worth / Without a borrowed prayse'. The commendation states that no commendations are needed to show the play as a literary work of art, worthy of eternal recognition and praise.

This final commendatory verse speaks about the inclusion of paratexts, the frivolity and insincerity of them, but also the necessity they held in advertising the author's ideas. As this short commendation came last, and is so matter-of-fact in its discussion of the purpose behind such paratext, it could have been written by Ford himself. The signing of the verse 'a lover' suggests it was the title 'lover' that offered the commendation. The title character was Ford's creation, and therefore these words sprang from Ford and represented what he wanted his commenders and 'Friends' to say about the work. There is no direct reference to the author, only the play, as well as a reference to the detrimental effect peer 'puffing' has on drama. The short, anonymous commendation emphasizes the importance of 'Friends', which Ford himself had highlighted in his poetic dedications and which he would continue to highlight throughout his dramatic career.

The commendatory verses adopt a tone that began in Ford's dedications to his companions at the Gray's Inn. The dedication stresses the author's resistance to fame or praise, followed by his reliance on audiences who understood and appreciated his intentions, ending with an indirect assault on contemporary theatrical and dramatic standards. The commendations, if read in succession, follow nearly the same pattern: Donne not wanting to bestow obsequious praise, Singleton highlighting the need for artistry, Howorth attacking rival playwrights who feign artistry and the audiences who are accepting of sub-standard drama, and all of them summed up with a commendation on the nature of commending. Taken together, the paratexts worked as a separate frame for the play that established how Ford wanted his literary audience to accept his work and view him as the author.

One of the primary concerns of *The Lover's Melancholy* is the function of art in society and its potential to both corrupt and correct social ills. In the play, Ford stresses the link between 'the function of art with the training of the individual in cultivated society', which he does through the matter of the play and through specific characters who represent different kinds of artistry.<sup>676</sup> It is the artistically gifted characters who are the most independently stable and personally cultivated in the play, with the physician Corax representing professional artistry and its cathartic potential. Corax's 'art' is learned and practiced, described in the OED as 'skill in doing anything as the result of knowledge and practice'.<sup>677</sup> Throughout the play, Corax uses his skill as a physician and his knowledge of human emotion and feeling, in order to eradicate the pervasive melancholy that has not only affected the prince, but the whole kingdom. His professional artistry is the focal point of Ford's plot, as the potential harmony of the state and all the other characters depend on his practice. The professional artist reflected the professional playwright who studied, learned, worked, and then passed on knowledge to others, knowledge that had a curative effect.

Corax's artistry is restricted and subject to the natural limitations of men, which he must work around to restore order. His art is subject to those around him, even though he steadfastly refuses to be constrained by external pressures. He creates situations that require the compliance and participation of many others, yet Corax is quick to dominate and dictate the direction of his interactions through the use of his art. He will not alter his art for anyone, regardless of social pressures, but he does consider and include the influence of outside agents when practicing. Ford's emphasis on professional artistry and the ideas put forward in the paratext can be seen in the character of Corax. The feigned artistry employed by rival dramatists weakened the professionals and infected audiences with foolishness. Fake 'art' caused conflicts and led to dangerous divides, as was evidenced in the contemporary theatrical climate with the amateur, courtly dramatists vying with the professionals for audience approval. In the play, Ford's characters prove that professional art results from skill and practice and has the potential to cure, but only if the artist has noble motives.

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<sup>676</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 22.

<sup>677</sup> 'art, n<sup>1-4</sup>', *OED*, 28 June 2007. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50012467>> [accessed 22 February, 2008].



Farr describes Corax as an ‘artist rather than physician and the artist is more princely than the prince’, which shows how important he is to the maintenance of balance and harmony in the fictional society.<sup>678</sup> He is an outsider who was brought in to fix the problems of the Prince. As a physician, he takes a very clinical approach to the cure, but remains detached from any emotional involvement and uses his artistry as a tool of the trade, rather than something to be admired:

Y’ar your selfe a Scholer.  
And quicke of apprehension: *Melancholy*  
Is not as you conceive. Indisposition  
Of body, but the mindes disease. So Extasie,  
Fantastick, Dotage, Madnesse, Phrenzey, Rupture,  
From *Melancholy*, which is briefly this,  
A mere commotion of the minde, o’re-charg’d  
With feare and sorrow; first begot i’th’ braine,  
The Seate of Reason, and from thence deriv’d  
As suddenly into the Heart, the Seate  
Of our Affection.<sup>679</sup>

Corax is a wise and capable man, not only as a physician, but also in terms of understanding and appeasing those around him. He is also well aware of his own value amongst the courtiers, who require his help in restoring the emotional stability of the prince. Corax’s language is technical and shows a profound understanding of his profession. He does not pretend to know how to cure the Prince, but he believes he is capable of such a feat because of his detached and empirical approach to the problem.

In the paratext, Ford’s commender, Humphrey Howorth, spoke of Ford’s ability, like Corax’s, to cure the diseases inflicting the professional dramatic community:

It is no sinne, then what is thy disease?  
Judgements applause? effeminated smiles?  
Studie's delight? thy wit mistrust beguiles:  
Establisht Fame will thy Physicion be,  
(Write but againe) to cure thy Jealousie.<sup>680</sup>

Ford’s play is worthy of praise and he, as the author, is able to cure ‘disease’ with his writing. Corax, in much the same manner, demonstrates knowledge of not only the body, but of the mind and the heart, showing an understanding of the natural human condition.

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<sup>678</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 24.

<sup>679</sup> Ford, *The Lover’s Melancholy*, III.i.113-124.

<sup>680</sup> Hum. Howorth, ‘To the Author, Master John Ford’ in Ford, *The Lover’s Melancholy*, Sig A3v.

This understanding is not manipulative in eliciting a response, but rather is used to restore a natural balance between the heart and the mind. Corax, like Ford, separates his own natural emotion from his learned knowledge of human suffering, and thus produces work that is admirable and artistic.

Corax's solution to heal the Prince's melancholy is to write a masque. The cathartic nature of drama is examined as Corax orchestrates a play to show his intended audience, the prince, what is wrong with him and how he can be cured. Through this plot, Ford created a role that is less like that of a fictitious physician and more like that of a real-life dramatist. Corax's knowledge and his attitude toward those around him, in both his profession and at court, resemble the reputation of Ben Jonson. In the opening speech of *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*, Jonson set up an antagonistic speech by Cyclops pitting nature against art, which closely resembles the theme Ford chose for his own play:

Soft, subtile fire, thou soule of art,  
Now doe thy part  
On weaker Nature, that through age is lamed.  
Take but thy time, now she is old,  
And the Sunne her friend growne cold,  
She will no more, in strife with thee be named.  
[...]  
Looke, but how few confesse her now,  
In cheeke or browe!  
From every head, almost, how she is frighted.  
The very age abhorres her so,  
That it learnes to speake and goe  
As if by art alone it could be righted.<sup>681</sup>

In *The Lover's Melancholy*, Ford made professional artistry the most powerful tool in combating social ailments, just as Jonson had done in his masque. Ultimately, professional artistry required an understanding and balance that made it more powerful. Corax's professional and learned art subdues and cures the Prince's melancholic condition. Jonson's determined and resolute attitude toward the theatre and his reputation influenced Ford, who was as meticulous about his own reputation and the conveyance of his personal principles against the fashions dominating the Caroline stage. According to W. David Kay, Jonson consistently and persistently attacked 'the conventions of

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<sup>681</sup> Jonson, *Mercurie Vindicated from the Alchemists* in Jonson, *Workes* (1616), p. 1004.

Elizabethan romantic drama in his prologues, prefaces, and inductions and so boldly did he put forward his own works as models of what “other plays should be”.<sup>682</sup>

Furthermore, he held a certain amount of disdain for his contemporaries who he felt were not treating the dramatic stage with the reverence it deserved.<sup>683</sup> Like Ford after him, Jonson used his plays to set dramatic and moral examples that were meant to be upheld by the rest of the public.<sup>684</sup> The impact Jonson had on Ford is noticeable, not only in the way Ford shaped his own reputation, but also in the way he espoused certain values above others in his first independent play.

In *The Alchemist*, one of the most referenced plays of the Caroline era, Jonson used Face, Subtle, and Doll in a quasi-masque that cured various visitors of their sins and vices.<sup>685</sup> In Ford’s play, Corax’s teaming with the court melancholic, Rhetias, mirrors the relationship between Subtle and Face, one of animosity and begrudged mutual admiration and respect:

*Rhetias*           Thar’t an excellent fellow. *Diabolo*, O this lousie close-stoole  
Empricks, that will undertake all Cures, yet know not the  
causes of any disease. Dog-leaches. By the foure Elements I  
honor thee, coo’d finde in my heart to turne knave, and bee thy  
flatterer.

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<sup>682</sup> W. David Kay, ‘Ben Jonson and Elizabethan Dramatic Convention’, *MP*, 76 (1978), 18-28 (p. 18).

<sup>683</sup> See Kay, ‘Ben Jonson and Elizabethan Dramatic Convention’, 18-28. Kay makes the case that Jonson sought to invert the conventions of the Elizabethan stage in order to prove that not only could it be done, but that it took a skilled writer, such as himself, to do so and thus to improve the standard and quality of playing in the era.

<sup>684</sup> G K Hunter and John Buxton, *The Oxford History of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 367. Buxton and Hunter discuss the revival of ‘estates morality’ due to the pervasive nature of vice displayed in his plays, which serve as moral reminders to the audience.

<sup>685</sup> See Joe Lee Davis, *The Sons of Ben: Jonsonian Comedy in Caroline England* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), pp. 98, 116, 137, 155, 160-62. Davis claims that many of the Caroline dramatists were influenced heavily by Jonson and his plays, particularly *The Alchemist*: the hero Luke Frugal in Massinger’s *The City Madam* is based upon the characters Tribulation Wholesome and Sir Epicure Mammon, Thomas Randolph’s *Hey for Honesty*, *Down with Knavery*, a satire on Puritanism and Catholicism, is also based on *The Alchemist* with the character Ananais Goggle being a combination of Jonson’s Tribulation Wholesome and Ananais, Henry Glapthorne bases his characters Dr. Artless, Mrs. Mixum, and Urinal on Subtle, Doll Common, and Face in *The Hollander*, Brome’s *The Damoiselle* and *The City Wit* are heavily influenced by the Jonson play, with Dryground, Frances, and Wat of the former being variants of Subtle, Doll, and Face whilst in *The City Wit* Brome makes direct reference to the Jonson play when he writes ‘By Indenture Tripartite, and’t please you, like *Subtle*, *Doll*, and *Face*’ (III.i).

*Corax*           Sirr, tis pittie th'ast not been a Scholer;  
                   Th'art honest, blunt, and rude enough. O Conscience!  
                   But for thy Lord now, I have put him too't.  
                   [...]  
                   Farwell --- a shrewd-braine Whorson, there's pith  
                   In his untoward plainnesse.---<sup>686</sup>

Although Jonson's characters are more depraved and underhanded than Ford's, the idea that through role-playing moral problems can be allayed was Jonsonian in nature. Corax uses an 'artistic mental therapy' to cure those melancholies around him and to keep emotions and social standing in check, in much the same way that Jonson reminded his audiences of the place of both themselves and those around them.<sup>687</sup> Corax, like Jonson and Ford, warns it is necessary to maintain personal perspective and judgement in order to cure.

Corax's seeming animosity toward his royal audience is also representative of Jonson. Corax holds a good deal of contempt for his courtly spectators, who he believes are unappreciative of and unreceptive to his art:

To waste my time thus Droane-like in the Court,  
 And lose so many houres, as my studies  
 Have horded up, is to be like a man  
 That creeps both on his hands and knees, to climbe  
 A muntaines top, where when he is ascended,  
 One carelesse slip downe, tumbles him againe  
 Into the bottome whence a first began.  
 I need no Princes favour: Princes need  
 My Art. Then Corax, be no more a Gull,  
 The best of 'em cannot foole thee, nay, they shall not.<sup>688</sup>

Corax believes his artistry and talent is wasted on the Prince. He refuses to pander to the court and sees compromising to the whims of the royal circle as an insult to his abilities and his reputation. He hints at an imbalance that is based on social standing alone and does not account for skill, when he says: 'I need no Princes favour: Princes need / My Art'. The hubris exemplified by Corax, along with his inevitable cure of the Prince's melancholy, could be seen as homage to the dramatic prowess of Jonson and a nod to the playwright's defence of his own personal beliefs. The notion that favour is too fickle

<sup>686</sup> Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, IV.i.104-110, 131-132.

<sup>687</sup> Anderson, *John Ford*, p. 54.

<sup>688</sup> Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, III.i.96-105.

amongst the royal circle is something Jonson experienced first hand, when he departed under strained circumstances as Charles's masque writer, three years after *The Lover's Melancholy* was staged.<sup>689</sup> Corax is treated with sympathy, but he comes close to directly criticizing the crown for fickle artistic preferment. With the staging of the play, Ford experienced a similar displeasure with fickle preferment, which prompted him to leave the Blackfriars, because he believed his artistic intentions were not being upheld to his standard.

Corax displays the sort of boastful pride that Jonson was known for and which he demonstrated through his hypercritical prologues and dedications, some of which were aimed at the court architect Inigo Jones. His battles with Jones over artistic control were widely known and commented upon by members of the court.<sup>690</sup> The source of the battles between the two revolved around artistic authority, with each man trying to command the direction of the masques on which they collaborated. Jones was the victor in the struggle and Jonson gave up writing masques and returned to the professional stage, where he displayed bitterness toward Jones and the royal circle. In an echo of the turmoil surrounding Jonson's place at court, Corax's desired payment for curing the prince's melancholy is a complete and total separation from the court:

'Tis soone perform'd,  
That I may be discharg'd from my attendance  
At Court, and never more be sent for after:  
Or if I be, may Rats gnaw all my bookes,  
If I get home once, and come here again,  
Though my necke stretch a halter for't, I care not.<sup>691</sup>

The vitriol demonstrated by Corax toward the court mirrors Jonson's own anger. Jonson's conflict with Jones threatened his own sense of artistry, even though the separation from the court meant the possibility of a damaged reputation. It was at this time that Jonson's reputation as a professional dramatist started to wane and his peers critically attacked his writing.<sup>692</sup> Jonson's art and writing did 'stretch a halter' for the

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<sup>689</sup> See D. J. Gordon, 'Poet and Architect: The Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12 (1949), 152-78.

<sup>690</sup> See Gordon, 'Poet and Architect', 152-78. Jonson wrote his animosity toward Jones in epigrams, poems, and even characterisations in plays.

<sup>691</sup> Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, III.i.144-49.

<sup>692</sup> Suckling, 'A Session of the Poets' in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, pp. 254-58. Suckling's poem attacked Jonson's verses as haughty and arrogant.

break with the court, yet his strong sense of self eventually led him away from Whitehall, in order to preserve his artistic vision, an action Ford would have admired.

Even if Ford is praising Jonson through the fictional Corax, he is not necessarily including himself in the ‘Tribe of Ben’ or emulating his dramatic style. Despite his abilities, Jonson allowed his own experiences and emotions to get in the way of his professional success, for which he suffered. He did not demonstrate noble sufferance, which Ford prized, and as a result Jonson, and his fictional counterpart Corax, were plagued by inner turmoil and outward strife. Ford makes Corax draw from his own life and experiences, including the struggles and emotions he, as a character, has experienced:

<i>Meleander</i>	What of your daughter now?
<i>Corax</i>	I cannot tell yee, Tis now out of my head againe; my braines Are crazie; I have scarce slept one sound sleepe These twelve moneths.
<i>Meleander</i>	‘las poore man; canst thou imagine To prosper in the taske thou tak’st in hand, By practising a cure upon my weakenesse, And yet be no Physician for thy selfe? Goe, goe, turne over all thy bookes once more, And learne to thrive in modesty; for impudence Does least become a Scholer. Thou art a foole, A kind of learned foole.
<i>Corax</i>	I doe confesse it. <sup>693</sup>

Corax is able to cure others with his art, but he cannot use it to solve his own personal problems. In a similar vein, Jonson inspired a generation of successful playwrights, but died disgraced and poor. While he did not include his own experiences in his plays, there was a distinctive and opinionated Jonsonian voice in nearly all he wrote throughout his career, especially in the paratexts that accompanied the plays.<sup>694</sup> Ford, on the other hand,

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The first that broke silence was good old *Ben*,  
Prepar'd before with Canary wine,  
And he told them plainly he deserv'd the Bayes,  
For his were calld Works, where others were but Plaies.’

Suckling mentioned Jonson’s desire for the ‘Bayes’, which he had previously bestowed upon Davenant. He also makes mention of Canary wine, referencing Jonson’s place in the 1630s as a mentor to other writers who met with the playwright in various pubs around London. The wine suggests that Jonson had become an alcoholic, past his prime, and unable to write anything of merit.

<sup>693</sup> Ford, *The Lover’s Melancholy*, IV.i.219-32

<sup>694</sup> See Kay, ‘Ben Jonson and Elizabethan Dramatic Convention’, 18-28, Jonson, ‘To the Reader in Ordinaire’ and ‘To the Reader Extraordinary’ in *Catiline*, Sig A3r, ‘Ode to Himself’ in *The New Inn*, Sig

excluded his own personal thoughts on social issues, letting others voice opinions on his behalf. Oliver comments that Ford ‘writes most convincingly and with most conviction when he is not personally involved’.<sup>695</sup> Ford seemed critical of those who allowed their emotions to affect their drama and their livelihoods. He created characters that drew from their own, fictitious experiences (more often than not to detrimental effect) to instruct and rectify, rather than offering examples from his own life. Corax’s inability to solve his own problems, whilst undertaking the cure of others, seems critical. Jonson was undoubtedly viewed by Ford as a very gifted and skilled playwright, yet his personal conflicts and antagonistic personality led him to a poverty-stricken state in which not only his career and health suffered, but also his professional reputation. Ford was eager to avoid making the same mistake and thus avoided putting any personal thoughts into his drama. Instead he let others, both real and fictitious, express such emotion. Farr says ‘dramatically the effect is to distance the situation’ from the writer by offering another, alternative voice for opinions.<sup>696</sup> In this instance, Ford used Jonson to offer an example of what happens when a dramatist puts too much of himself into his work and advertises his opinions.

With *The Lover’s Melancholy*, Ford attempted to establish himself as an independent dramatist capable of creating his own style. Farr claims that ‘unlike Jonson, Ford evidently had sufficient faith in the Caroline theatre to believe that a better phase of development was possible, not by retreating or complying but by fusing what was of value in the new drama with what was best in the old, so as to bring a new virility to the contemporary stage’.<sup>697</sup> Ford demanded a great deal from his audiences by way of understanding and interpreting; he insisted that the actors and authors deliver plays that contained ‘wit, words, mirth, and matter’. He removed those tragicomic elements from his play that were attractive to an upscale audience. In doing so, Ford seemed to be testing the boundaries of audience taste and toleration, forcing them to listen to what he expected of them, rather than catering to their fickle tastes. By altering and revising those styles that had already been tested and proved successful by the great dramatists of the

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H1v-2v. Jonson constantly manipulated his reputation and often scolded audiences for being unappreciative or unintelligent in his paratext.

<sup>695</sup> Oliver, *The Problem of John Ford*, p. 21.

<sup>696</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 29.

<sup>697</sup> Farr, *John Ford and the Caroline Theatre*, p. 152.

previous eras, Ford used the dramatic tools that would seem to have ensured his popularity, but in a way that was distinctly his own, and reflected the ideas and ideologies he held most important.

Ford, unlike some of his contemporaries, such as Davenant, would not sacrifice his own ideals or principles in order to appeal to the highest social echelons or the most prestigious theatregoers. When his vision was compromised at the Blackfriars theatre, Ford sought an alternative venue for his works at the Cockpit, which allowed him the creative freedom to fulfil his artistic vision with minimal interference. In this respect, *The Lover's Melancholy* and the circumstances surrounding its staging and printing serve as a template for Ford's subsequent plays. He remained steadfast in his vision and sought the means to express himself and his ideas as free of censorship as possible, whether it was public (from Herbert) or private (from a company, a contemporary author, or even himself). His ideals were advertised in the paratexts that accompanied his first play, which outlined how he felt about the nature of paratext, as well as his view on when and how such material should be used. He was determined, as a dramatic artist, to raise the moral and artistic levels of stage plays higher than they had been in the previous eras, a notion that the dedication to his Inns of Court peers enforces. Through his ideological paratexts, Ford expressed his stoic ideas on what makes a good dramatist and a good audience. He also used others to directly address and comment on these same ideas for him, and through paratext Ford fashioned himself, from the start, as a dramatic artist.

### Conclusion

Poetry was a noticeable element of Ford's dramatic creations. Kathleen McLuskie persuasively claims that Ford believed drama was made of the 'discrete elements of language, matter, and mirth'.<sup>698</sup> Indeed, Ford's own paratext places emphasis on the author's reliance on 'language', 'matter', and 'mirth'. Sanders restates this argument when she says that Ford was acutely 'alert to the possibilities of theatrical and

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<sup>698</sup> Kathleen McLuskie, "'Language and Matter with a Fit of Mirth": Dramatic Construction in the Plays of John Ford' in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Neill, pp. 97-127 (p. 97).



theatricalized poetry'.<sup>699</sup> Ford's artistry is seen through his choice of language, both in what he wrote and what others wrote about him, and he used language to separate himself and his plays from rivals. The language with which he wrote 'stood at a greater remove from the style of the courtier poets', who used loftier terms and rigid, structured language.<sup>700</sup> Ford believed that this was done to enhance their reputations as dramatic poets with the various audiences and, to a certain extent, their literary peers. According to Clark, 'the speech norm of the noble is a restrained and refined, languorously rhythmical, and sparsely but analytically figurative poetry'.<sup>701</sup> Ford incorporated this style into his drama when the nobler characters speak or when he wanted to mock the courtly pretenders who imitated their betters in hopes of being included in the higher orders. Otherwise, Ford was reliant on colloquialism and a 'chaster theatrical language promoted by the poets of the Cockpit circle', which was more in tune with the older styles of stage plays.<sup>702</sup> Through a measured portrayal of noble action, written in precise and careful language, Ford was able to develop his own idea of artistry, which he fervently stuck to throughout the Caroline era.

Because the language Ford used was so specific to him, the inclusion of similar terms and tropes in the commendations would suggest that Ford collaborated with, or even dictated to, those who wrote such verses to him. Ford practiced a 'deliberate' type of writing in which 'there is only fugitive contact with the dramatist's perceptions of the nature of things'.<sup>703</sup> Although he deliberately distanced his personal opinions from his drama, Ford did have a well-recognized reputation as a literary artist who wrote for an undefined, yet elite and 'knowing' audience. This was accomplished, in large part, through the commendations written to him by select 'friends' who knew Ford intimately and expressed his desires in their verses. Ford strove for tight control over both what was said and how the printed paratexts and plays were received and read. It was important to Ford that he not only maintained strict authority over his own writing, but also over how it was received and thus how he was perceived by audiences and fellow authors. In order to shape his reputation and his persona, he relied on 'friends' to write commendations for

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<sup>699</sup> Saunders, *Caroline Drama*, p. 14.

<sup>700</sup> Gurr, 'Singing Through the Chatter' in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Neill, p. 91.

<sup>701</sup> Clark, *Professional Playwrights*, p. 89.

<sup>702</sup> Neill, 'Introduction' in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, ed. by Neill, p. 5.

<sup>703</sup> Leech, *John Ford and the Drama of his Time*, p. 46.

him. Through the careful selection of such ‘friends’, and what these ‘friends’ said, he was able to establish a very specific place for himself and his writing on the Caroline stage and in print – that of an artist and teacher. The influences placed on Ford seemed to be numerous: writing for an elite, yet anti-court coterie, then collaborating with popular playwrights who aimed to entertain audiences with timely plays, and finally writing for himself with the express desire of advertising his beliefs in what constituted art and artistry to an audience, regardless of contemporary fashions. His penchant for artistry and literary flair resulted from his belief that the function of art was to train the individual in a cultivated society. It was this belief that shaped Ford’s writing, which was concerned with values, ideals, and an adherence to personal standards above all else. Ford maintained a clear and easily distinguished outlook on the pedagogical role of drama, which he then advertised in his paratext.

## Conclusion

Paratext was a necessary tool used by the playwrights of the Caroline era to formulate specific reputations and personas for themselves, as well as to dictate specific meanings and interpretations for their writing. The persona an author created for himself in his paratext, although sometimes fictional and performative, was often more biographical and telling than an author may have intended. Although this material was meant to put forward a strong, forceful, and ideologically determined vision of the author and what he wanted and expected, often this material betrayed the playwright's true feelings and intentions toward the theatrical or literary audiences and towards rival playwrights or rival institutions. Davenant's paratext betrayed anxiety about his inability to please the commercial theatregoers' diverse tastes. Brome's paratext, and his prologues in particular, were venomous and scathing towards his rivals, despite his attempts to fashion himself as a humble man of the theatre. Ford's paratext, the most true-to-life and biographical, showed a pedagogical side to the playwright who wrote to instruct audiences and create a coterie of understanding 'friends'. Alongside forming distinct profiles for the author, this material also ensured the playwrights a continued presence and success within the theatrical institution and/or the literary marketplace. Paratexts distinguished playwrights from their rivals and advertised them and their plays to audiences. Paratext was used to carve out specific niches within the dramatic community and align dramatists with like-minded authors, based on the individual author's preference and persona. These coterie were then publicized in this very same material. The importance of paratext in shaping authorial presence, both in terms of the playwright's place in the early modern theatrical community and in terms of the reception of his plays, is an area of scholarship that has been lacking.

Much modern scholarly interest in the paratext of the early modern period has focused primarily on the individual forms in isolation: the prologue and epilogue, the commendatory verse, and the dedication. Each form is important in the author's construction of himself and his work, and each form serves a very specific and direct function in forming reputation and dictating meaning; however, the specific and direct function of each piece of paratext becomes much clearer and more meaningful when it is looked at in relation to another, as well as over the body of an author's framing material.

A playwright's attitude toward the commercial theatre audiences and his position within the professional theatre emerged in the dedications to the patron. His position in a coterie of like-minded contemporaries, whether literary or not, were advertised in the commendatory verses that followed the dedication, further strengthening a vision of the author's political, social, and ideological leanings that began with the dedication and the choice of patron. The commendatory verses then affect how the prologue is read and thus how the reader reacts to the play in its entirety. The prologue in print reminded audiences of the play's birth on stage and served to either reconnect it with that theatrical past or distance it from the stage and give it a new life in print, based on the author's vision of the theatre that had been established in the preceding paratexts. What this thesis has shown is how these different forms of paratext work together, building on one another to provide a very specific message to the reader based on the author's own ideology.

Much attention has been paid to how paratext has functioned at a specific time, whether it is at the start of the early modern era or in conjunction with the increase in print. Such scholarship often looks at the relationship between the time and the inclusion of paratexts, but rarely does it examine the cause and effect of the use of paratextual material. Whilst this thesis does focus on the paratext of the Caroline era, it does so in order to show how this framing material had developed and how its use and its importance resulted from other factors, such as the establishment of the professional theatre, the rise of the printing press, and the fractionalization of the institution in the 1630s and early 1640s. The increased use of paratext in the Caroline era was the result of other factors affecting the professional theatre, but paratexts also had a profound effect on how and why playwrights used the material. The rise in the amount of paratext printed during this time resulted, in part, from the increased use of print as a medium for dramatic dissemination. However, this led some playwrights to seek more control over the meanings embedded in their plays and the formation of their reputations in relation to the profession or courtly stages. Paratext was affected by wider circumstances, but then it had an effect on authorial choice and control. Such authority helped to create and then promote the individual author.

When playwrights neglected to use paratext to meet their specific aims, the author and the work lost significance in the wider context of the early modern theatrical arena.

Without paratext, the author and his work were more easily forgotten, and without clearly defined paratextual meanings, advertised to an audience, the author could appear hesitant and directionless about his place in the dramatic community and the aim of his work. The dramatic and literary communities of the Caroline era were much more competitive and combative than the previous decades. As such, authors needed to distinguish themselves from their rivals and to advertise their works, their reputations, and their unique skills to theatrical and literary audiences in order to achieve success. I argue that the most effective way for a playwright to do this was through his paratext, which not only allowed him to voice his opinions and declare his preferences, but it also enabled him to exert control over his career. Paratext provided a means of control for the author over his work and his reputation. The meanings derived from paratext are contingent on how the author uses it. It is imperative that the author's meanings and intentions for his plays and his own reputation and persona are considered in relation to the paratexts that he wrote and that were written for him. In the Caroline era, the way to gain fame and garner applause was through association with other playwrights (as Davenant's career exemplifies), through pleasing the theatrical audience (as Brome had done), or by setting plays up as literary examples to be followed by other playwrights, or his characters as ideological and moral models for the audiences to emulate (as Ford and his plays do).

Other scholarship by Bergeron, Stern, Bruster and Weimann, and Chandler has focused on the changes that specific types of paratext underwent in the play's transition from the stage to the page. Questioning who benefits from paratext, and how paratext changes the identity of the party responsible for the play's success, is an area of modern scholarship that has been under-developed. Again, the author's own attitude toward the actors and the audience colours the paratext; different forms become different tools, based on how the author wanted his plays to be read and interpreted. Because Brome insisted on cooperation between the actors, the author, and the audience, his paratext had a very different tone and served a very different purpose from Davenant's, who used this material to gain a footing at the professional theatre and then scold audiences when his attempts were unsuccessful. It is through the printed paratext that authority is prescribed, based on how the author wanted to be seen in the context of the theatrical institution.

Bergeron observes that ‘in these early years of regular publication of dramatic texts the playwrights remain wary and in conflict about theatrical performance and publication’.<sup>704</sup> Bergeron continues by stating that the divide between performance and publication ‘underscores the authorial quest [...] The paratexts provide a forum for the author’s voice and embolden him to use this space to defend the play’.<sup>705</sup> Although paratext allowed for authorial self-representation that was not necessarily accurate or true, this additional material betrayed an author’s leanings toward a professional or courtly faction or toward a theatrical or printed medium. This material also promoted, to theatrical or literary consumers, the author’s ideals and advanced his reputation and his work; at the same time, it created a persona for the author that was distinctive and memorable.

The specific manner in which paratext was used in the era is being considered more often in contemporary criticism, but it is usually looked at in relation to how paratexts were used as a whole, rather than in individual circumstances. The use of prologues and epilogues in the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and even Caroline eras has been considered in recent studies, as has the function of the dedication and the changing role of the commendatory verse from the late sixteenth century to the closure of the theatres in 1642. However, what has been neglected is a look at how this material has worked, as a whole, to shape the identities of individual authors. The effect of each kind of paratext and the changing functions of each form are seen more clearly in an in-depth analysis of how the material was used in conjunction by different playwrights. The changes in the use and purpose of paratext, as well as the necessity of the material, for the author, in forming a known and influential reputation, are best seen in how different playwrights manipulated the material to project an image of themselves. In the Caroline era, playwrights such as Davenant, Brome, and Ford used paratext as a form of self-presentation that had varying degrees of success for each in winning audience approval, peer admiration, and status.

Without the calculated and specific use of this framing material, authors might become indistinguishable from one another, their writings could seem interchangeable,

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<sup>704</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 19.

<sup>705</sup> Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama*, p. 19.

and their reputations forgettable to the audiences and patrons they wanted to attract. Certainly without precisely aimed and directed paratext, the impact that an author had on the dramatic landscape was lessened, sometimes seemingly to the point of non-existence. Ben Jonson knew this when he incorporated a variety of paratexts in his Jacobean-era plays, in order to promote himself and his works. He was very methodical and exact in his use of paratext to form his reputation; a form of self-styling that would have a profound effect on the paratexts of Caroline-era dramatists. Although he was ridiculed for such authorial self-fashioning, his presence on the early modern dramatic landscape was arguably greater than any other playwright's. His reputation as rigid, controlling, and demanding derived from the paratexts he included in his printed drama. Jonson's use of paratext was followed by nearly every dramatist of the Caroline era, either in mimicry of or in opposition to.

Playwrights of the Caroline period were writing during a transitional time when literature was, in the words of Cecile Jagodzinski, 'somewhere between the public, social, communal, and oral experience of the text during the manuscript era and the private and individualized reception of the written word today'.<sup>706</sup> Many playwrights of the era favoured either print or performance and announced this preference in the paratexts and ancillary material that accompanied their plays. Without looking at how paratextual forms combined with and relied on one another, both within a single play and across an author's body of work, we cannot get an accurate picture of how fundamental such framing material was between 1625 and 1642. This thesis provides a valuable look at how crucial paratext was in the formation of an author's persona, the shaping of his reputation for both audiences and literary and dramatic peers, and the interpretation of his plays and works for early modern and contemporary audiences.

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<sup>706</sup> Cecile Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth Century England* (Charlottesville VA and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 11.

## Appendix A

### **'Upon AGLAURA printed in Folio'<sup>707</sup>**

Br this large Margent did the Poet mean  
To have a Comment writ upon his Scene?  
Or is it that the Ladies, who ne're look  
On any but a Poeme or Play-book,  
May, in each page, have space to scribble down  
When such a Lord, or Fashion comes to Town.  
As Swaines in Almanacks account do keep,  
When their Cow calv'd, and when they bought their sheep?  
Ink is the life of Paper: 'tis meet then,  
That this which scap'd the Press should feel the Pen.  
A Room with one side furnish'd, or a face  
Painted half-way, is but a faire disgrace.  
This great voluminous Pamphlet may be said  
To be like one that hath more haire then head;  
More excrement then body. Trees, which sprout  
With broadest leaves, have still the smallest fruit.  
When I saw so much white, I did begin  
To think Aglaura either did lie in,  
Or else took Pennance. Never did I see  
(unlesse in Bills dasht In the Chancerie).  
So little in so much; as if the feet  
Of Poetry, like Law, were sold by th'sheet.  
If this new fashion should but last one yeare,  
Poets, as Clerks, would make our paper dear.  
Doth not the Artist erre, and blast his fame  
That sets out pictures lesser then the frame?  
Was ever Chamberlaine so mad, to dare  
To lodge a childe in the great Bed at Ware?  
Aglaura would please better, did she lie  
I'th' narrow bounds of an Epitomie.  
Pieces that are weav'd of the finest twist,  
(As Silk and Plush) have still more stufte then list.  
She, that in Persian habit made great brags,  
Degenerates in this excesse of rags;  
Who, by her Giant-bulk this only gaines,  
Perchance in Libraries to hang in chaines.  
Tis not in Book, as Cloth; we never say  
Make London-measure, when we buy a Play:  
But rather have them pair'd: Those leaves be faire  
To the judicious, which more spotted are.  
Give me the sociable Pocket-books.  
These empty Folio's only please the Cooks.

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<sup>707</sup> Richard Brome, 'Upon AGLAURA printed in Folio' in *Five New Playes* (1659), unpaginated pages following title page of *The Weeding of Covent-Garden*.



## Appendix B

The following table contains information on the amount and kinds of paratextual material printed from 1595 until the closure of the theatres in 1642. The plays listed are new plays; no reprinted versions of older plays are considered, as it is my contention that the paratext included in the first editions of plays most accurately reflect the ideas and attitudes of the author at the time the play was first printed. Later editions of texts were often printed at the printer's discretion and not at the insistence of the author himself. The control that the author had over choosing what paratexts were included and who provided them was likely diminished in later editions, especially if they were not published by the same printer. Also, in many instances, later editions were printed after a considerable amount of time had past from the first printing. The author's attitude and opinions may have changed, and therefore the paratext of later editions might not necessarily fit with the meanings and messages of the play itself.

The information is from volumes one and two of W. W. Greg's *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*. The number of plays printed each year is listed, followed by the number of plays that contained prologues/epilogues, commendatory verses, or dedications to patrons, and then the number of plays that contained other types of paratext. In the table, the column entitled 'Etc' includes inductions, addresses to the reader, addresses from the publisher, synopses of the plays, and any other forms of paratext.

Certain collected works of literature (Shakespeare's and Jonson's collections and other collections of plays and works) are listed with information on what types of paratext were featured in each.

Year	No of Plays Printed	Plays w/ Paratext	No of plays with multiple forms of paratext	Prologues/ Epilogues	Comm. Verses	Dedications	Etc.
1595	5	2		1			1
1596	4	2		2			
1597	4	2		2			
1598	6	3				1	3
1599	9	4		4			1
1600	15	8	1	7			2
1601	6	5	1	5			1
1602	13	7	1	5		2	1
1603	4	1	1		1	1	1
1604	10	6	1	2		3	1
1605	14	5	2	3	1	1	2
1606	15	9	3	7		2	3
1607	23	15	5	11	1	4	6
1608	16	8	3	5		2	4
1609	8	4	1	3		2	

1610	6	5	2	1	1	3	2
1611	7	4	2	2	1	1	2
1612	8	7	4	3	2	5	5
1613	13	10	3	2	1	8	3
1614	5	3		1		1	1
1615	9	7	4	5		3	2
1616	6	3		1		2	
	Ben Jonson's <i>Workes</i> featured: 9 commendatory verses, 8 dedications, 8 prologues, 1 epilogue, and 7 additional pieces of paratext (including addresses to the reader, epigrams, and other miscellaneous pieces of paratext)						
1617	3	2				2	
Year	No of Plays Printed	Plays w/ Paratext	No of plays with multiple forms of paratext	Prologues/ Epilogues	Comm. Verses	Dedications	Etc.
1618	4	3	1	2		2	
1619	5	3		1		2	
1620	5	4		2		2	
1621	4	1				1	
1622	6	4	2	2	1	2	2
1623	6	4	3		2	4	1
	Shakespeare's collected works featured: 2 addresses to the reader, 1 dedication, 4 commendatory verses, as well as 3 prologues and 3 epilogues each attached to the their corresponding plays.						
1624	4	2	1		1	2	
1625- James I	1	0					
1625 – Charles I	1	1		1			
1626	1	1				1	
1627	2	2	1			1	
	A collection of 2 plays was printed which featured prologues and epilogues for both plays						
1628	3	3	2	2		2	1
1629	7	7	5	3	5	6	1
1630	10	8	5	1	4	6	2
1631	19	16	10	9	1	12	8
1632	13	12	10	8	6	10	7
1633	19	18	10	10	2	12	6
1634	8	7	2	4	1	2	3
1635	6	5	3	2	2	4	1
1636	9	8	5	6	2	6	2
1637	16	13	5	4	2	8	4
1638	17	14	8	11	4	9	3
1639	23	18	4	7	1	8	6

1640	29	26	14	15	9	19	6
	Jonson's <i>Workes</i> featured 1 overall address and 11 commendatory verses. Each play also had paratext, which combined added up to 9 dedications to patrons, 6 prologues, 3 epilogues, and 7 additional pieces of paratext.						
1641	7	5	3	4	2	3	2
	Jonson's <i>Workes</i> featured 3 plays that had, combined, 4 prologues, 3 epilogues, and 2 additional pieces of paratext.						
1642	3	1		1			

## Appendix C

### **'The Prologue at Court'**<sup>708</sup>

Had not obedience ov'r rul'd the Authours feare  
And Judgement too, this humble peece had nere  
Approacht so high a Majestie, not writ  
By the exact and subtile rules of wit;  
Ambitious for the splendor of this night  
But fashion'd up in hast for his owne delight.  
This, by my Lord, with as much zeale as ere  
Warm'd the most loyall heart, is offered here  
To make this night your pleasure, although we  
Who are the Actors, feare twill rather be  
Your patience: and if any mirth; we may  
sadly suspect, twill rise quite the wrong way.  
But you have mercy sir, and from your eye  
Bright Madam, never yet did lightning flye,  
But vitall beames of favour such as give  
A growth to all, who can deserve to live.  
Why should the Authour tremble then, or we  
Distresse our hopes, and such tormentors be,  
Of our owne thoughts, since in those happie times  
We live, when mercie's greater than the crimes.

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<sup>708</sup> Habington, 'The Prologue at Court' in *The Queene of Aragon*, Sig A2r.

**'The Prologue at the Fryers'**<sup>709</sup>

Ere we begin· that no man may repent  
Two shillings and his time; the Author sent  
The Prologue, with the errors of his Play,  
That who will, may take his money and away.  
First for the Plot, it's no way intricate  
By crosse deceits in love, nor so high in state,  
That we might have given out in our Play-bill,  
This day's the Prince writ by Nick Machivill.  
The Language too is easie, such as fell  
Unstudied from his pen, not like a spell  
Bigge with misterious words, such as inchant  
The halfe witted, and confound the ignorant.  
Then what must needes afflict the Amorist,  
No Virgin here in breeches, casts a mist  
Before her Lovers eyes; No Ladies tell  
How their blood boyles· how high their veines doe swell.  
But what is worse, no bawdy mirth is here;  
(The wit of bottle Ale, and double Beere)  
To make the wife of Citizen protest,  
And Country Justice sweare, twas a good Jest.  
Now sirs you have the errors of his wit:  
Like or dislike, at your owne perills be't.

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<sup>709</sup> Habington, 'The Prologue at the Fryers' in *The Queene of Aragon*, Sig A2r-v.

## Appendix D

### **'The Prologue to the King's Majesty'**<sup>710</sup>

Your Majesty is welcome to a Fayre;  
Such place, such men, such language & such ware,  
You must expect: with these, the zealous noyse  
Of your lands Faction, scandaliz'd at toyes,  
As Babies, Hobby-horses, Puppet-playes,  
And such like rage, whereof the petulant wayes  
Your selfe have knowne, and have bin vext with long.  
These for your sport, without perticular wrong,  
Or just complaint of any private man,  
(Who of himselfe, or shall thinke well or can)  
The Maker doth present: and hopes, to night  
To give you for a Fayring, true delight.

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<sup>710</sup> Jonson, 'The Prologue to the King's Majesty' in *Bartholmew fayre: a comedie, acted in the yeare, 1614 by the Lady Elizabeths servants, and then dedicated to King James, of most blessed memorie* ; *The divell is an asse : a comedie acted in the yeare, 1616, by His Majesties servants* ; *The staple of newes : a comedie acted in the yeare, 1625, by His Majesties servants by the author, Benjamin Johnson*, Sig A3r.

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