Collaboration

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the negative attitudes towards collaboration in playwriting in England during the 17th century. It attempts to trace how this adverse judgment developed and reviews 17th- and 18th-century critical commentary on collaborative plays. The findings reveal negative attitudes toward collaboration was the result of the emergent belief in the writer's imaginative autonomy and that the concern for the assignment of intellectual property produced a preference for solo authorship.

Keywords: playwriting, collaboration, England, collaborative plays, imaginative autonomy, intellectual property

IN tracing the emergence of a new concept of authorship in the later seventeenth century, we have been examining the relationship between playwrights and their sources. Critics, we have seen, were increasingly inclined to demand ‘originality’ and to condemn the traditional practice of appropriation as plagiarism. But another criterion of authorship was developing too. The author, who was increasingly discouraged from copying material from other writers, was also called upon, even more forcibly, to write alone. The movement which deprecated appropriation deprecated collaboration still more severely.
In the early seventeenth century, the practice of collaboration, no less than that of appropriation, had been taken for granted. Even Ben Jonson, who suppressed the contribution of ‘a second pen’ when *Sejanus* came to be printed, who boasted that *Volpone* was his work alone, and who omitted, from the folio edition of his *Works*, plays which he had written in collaboration, never explicitly criticized the principle of joint writing. In any case, Jonson’s sense of the stature due to him as an author of plays was unrepresentative of his time, as the derision which it provoked reminds us. After the Restoration, professional collaboration of the kind prevalent on the Renaissance stage virtually disappeared. Although collaborative playwriting did not cease, it took on new forms and became far less common. Attitudes towards collaboration varied, but, I shall argue, they reveal important similarities to contemporary attitudes towards appropriation: the emergent belief in the writer’s imaginative autonomy and the concern about the assignment of intellectual property produced a preference for solo authorship.

The growth of hostility to collaboration is clearer in retrospect than it was at the time. The reasons for the severe diminution in professional collaboration were initially economic rather than aesthetic, and the negative view of this form of composition was partially masked by a more positive evaluation of Renaissance collaborations. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, collaborative playwriting came to be almost universally condemned on both artistic and ethical grounds. Like appropriation, collaboration was thought to discredit those who engaged in it and to jeopardize the integrity and textual unity of a play. One of my aims in the present chapter is to show how this adverse judgement developed. Another, broader, one is to survey the substantial body of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century critical commentary on collaborative plays, both old and new, so as to enhance our understanding of how dramatic authorship was conceived and the resulting works evaluated.

The Question of Approach
Our knowledge of the scope of collaborative playwriting in Renaissance England derives largely from manuscript sources such as the account book of a theatrical entrepreneur, Philip Henslowe, the Stationers’ Register, the records of the Master of the Revels, and legal proceedings. To a lesser degree, joint responsibility for plays was registered in print: on the title-pages of playbooks, in prologues and epilogues, or in prefatory epistles such as Jonson’s in *Sejanus*. This kind of external evidence tells us that a play is collaborative, and at times gives us a glimpse of some of those involved in the composition. But it by no means provides a basis for apportioning ‘individual’ shares in Renaissance plays. In fact, as Jeffrey Masten has shown, the very notion of individual shares is untenable, for those scripts resist modern notions of singular authority and literary property.
None the less, the belief that the text of a play can be made to reveal traces of individual authorship has been, and in some quarters still is, surprisingly tenacious. In the absence of reliable external evidence, some editors and textual scholars have focused on internal evidence—the text of the play—and have devised increasingly elaborate methods of distinguishing authorial responsibilities for jointly written scripts. (p.132) These methods have included linguistic and stylometric tests, as well as analyses of the ways in which source materials are handled.4 The goal of such procedures and the hope of their practitioners is confidently to ascribe stretches of text to named individuals.

That approach has been questioned.5 Its opponents regard authorship tests as unreliable, as indeed they are. Some critics go further and object to the apportioning of shares on other, and to my mind less persuasive, grounds. From the accurate premiss that all writing is socialized and broadly collaborative,6 they draw the inaccurate inference that there is no authorship, only collaboration.7 It is true that many agencies other than that of the author converge in the making and transmission of any text. The process is particularly complex in the case of plays. That actors, company management, prompters, censors, scribes, publishers, printers, and compositors all participated in the making and transmission of early modern theatrical scripts is by now well understood.8 Yet to conflate the categories of joint writing and multiple agency is mistaken. There is a difference between writers undertaking to write together, in whatever formal (p.133) or informal arrangement, and other agents—actors, scribes, composers, and so on—contributing to the text of the play in the run-up to performance or publication. If we ignore that distinction, we shall miss important changes both in the practice of collaboration between and among playwrights and in critical attitudes to that method of composition. In what follows I shall explore those changes.

Forms of Collaboration
The professional collaboration of dramatists emerged in the later sixteenth century, when the rise of commercial theatres produced a heavy demand for new scripts. Renaissance playwrights routinely formed more or less stable alliances, as many as four or five writers being engaged in the drafting of a plot and sharing the writing of particular acts and scenes. The evidence of Philip Henslowe’s diary, Sir Henry Herbert’s records, and other manuscript and printed documents led G. E. Bentley to infer that this form of dramatic collaboration, in conjunction with the customary practice of revising and updating older scripts, accounted for roughly half of the plays supplied by professional writers in the period from 1590 to 1642.9
Bentley’s calculation, which has been quoted by every subsequent student of collaboration, is deceptive. For though the estimated proportion of collaborative and revised plays among the offerings of Renaissance acting companies may be correct, the neatness of his generalization has all too often been taken to imply that from year to year the number of collaborations (and revisions) remained unchanged. This was not so. The heyday of collaborative play writing occurred at the turn of the sixteenth century, between the 1590s and 1620s. From 1625 onward, as the backlog of strong scripts in company repertories grew, collaboration started to decline. Although (p.134) the dating and attribution of plays in the *Annals of English Drama* are not always reliable, there is one statistic to be derived from it that, however approximate, does carry weight. Collaborations constitute as much as 30 per cent of the total of professional plays listed for 1601–10. In the years 1631–42, the figure drops to 6 per cent.

In comparison with the pre-Civil War period, the later seventeenth century saw a more conspicuous fall in the number of jointly written plays, even as it witnessed a proliferation of collaborative projects in other literary fields. Behind the upsurge of collectively prepared translations, poetic miscellanies, periodicals, and collections of essays and letters by various hands there lay the commercial sponsorship provided by publishers keen to exploit the rising demand for genteel reading-matter. Why, then, was collaboration among professional playwrights so much in decline?

In commercial terms, the impetus to collaborate was greatly reduced by the diminution of the demand for new plays after the Restoration. Theatres, as we have seen, did not undervalue the appeal of novelty; though the Kings Company (and increasingly the Duke’s Company) had at their disposal an attractive repertory of older drama, the number of premières in both houses was high. What did curtail the need for new plays, and hence remove the rationale for professional collaboration—once the chief source of scripts—was the arbitrary limitation of the number of acting companies to two. Indeed, for thirteen years, from 1682 until 1695, London had only one company. The contraction in the number of theatrical venues restricted the potential profits to be divided among the suppliers of scripts; collaboration would entail a further shrinking of an individual playwright’s remuneration. The unrestricted right to publish one’s plays lessened further the incentive to collaborate. Professional writers were not inclined to share the payment for the copy. Nor did they wish to part with any of the credit and fame that increasingly accrued to the dramatic poet.
Not surprisingly then, the majority of early Restoration collaborations were produced by genteel amateurs writing either with each other or with professionals. The Wits’ *Pompey the Great*, Sir Robert Howard’s suppressed *The Country Gentleman* with a scene by Buckingham, the Earl of Rochester’s *Valentinian* with a masque by Sir Francis Fane, Sir Robert Howard’s unfinished *The Conquest of China* for which Rochester supplied a scene, and Margaret Cavendish, Marchioness (later Duchess) of Newcastle’s volumes of unperformed pieces with sections written by her husband William, were all amateur productions whose authors had no financial gain in view. This genteel indifference to profit explains why professional playwrights were willing to collaborate with amateurs: even if the professional’s contribution were not immediately acknowledged—the Dryden-Howard *Indian Queen* first appeared in an edition of Sir Roberts *Four New Plays* (1665); the first edition of the Shadwell-Newcastle *The Triumphant Widow* (1677) had only the Duke’s name on the title-page—that writer was likely to be the sole financial beneficiary and, moreover, had a chance of establishing useful contacts with and through his socially superior partner.
Collaborations produced exclusively by amateurs, or by amateurs working in concert with professionals, were rarely signalled as such on title-pages or mentioned elsewhere in the printed editions of the plays. There were, however, two exceptions. The Wits’ *Pompey* was described on its title-page as ‘Translated out of French by Some Persons of Honour’, though their names were not given. The more striking case is that of Margaret Cavendish, Marchioness (from 1665 Duchess) of Newcastle, who overtly acknowledged her husband’s contributions to her plays. In a folio volume of Cavendish’s *Playes* (1662), the portions of text written by him are distinguished both verbally and typographically. For instance, in the second part of *Youths Glory, and Deaths Banquet*, Cavendish states: ‘These Verses (p.137) the Lord Marquesse writ’, This Song the Lord Marquesse writ’, or ‘Here ends my Lords Writing’ alternatively in the margins and in the main text. The stretches of text supplied by the Marquess are as a rule marked off both at the start (‘This following Scene was writ by the Lord Marquess of New-castle’) and at the end (‘Here ends my Lord Marquesse’s Scene’). Discrete, self-contained units are marked by single acknowledgements, as is the epilogue to the first part of *The Wits Cabal* (‘The Marquiss of Newcastle writ this Epilogue’, p. 289). The reader is also confronted with stretches of text where the couple’s writings intermingle, as when in the second part of *Bell in Campo* ‘These following Verses or Speeches... written by my Lord Marquiss of Newcastle’ are interspersed with the Marchioness’s descriptive stage directions rendered in a different font (II. vii; pp. 613–15). Elsewhere only a section of a scene belongs to him so that she picks up where he has left off (in *The Publique Wooing*, the husband is said to have been responsible for the part of the ‘wooing Souldier’ (I. vi; pp. 375–6) and the ‘wooing part of the Country Gentleman’ (II. xi; pp. 379–80), while the remainder of the scene has been completed by the wife). The volume employs effective visual means of marking off the textual contribution of the Marquess, and drawing the lines of textual ownership. His quantitatively smaller contributions are explicitly enclosed and differentiated from the larger context of Margaret Cavendish’s plays, in which they are embedded. The textual markers in the margins and in the main body of the text continually interrupt the reading process and highlight the interplay between the authorial voices—the ‘Masculine’ and the ‘Feminine’ wit—throughout the book.

For Cavendish, the advertisement of her plays’ collaborative textuality represents a self-conscious endeavour to derive authority and social legitimation from her husband’s participation in her playwriting:
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My Lord was pleased to illustrate my Playes with some Scenes of his own Wit, to which I have set his name, that my Readers may know which are his, as to not to couzen them, in thinking they are mine; also Songs, to which my Lords name is set; for I being no Lyrick Poet, my Lord supplied that defect of my Brain with the superfluity of his own Brain; thus our Wits join as in Matrimony, my Lords the Masculine, mine the Feminine Wit, which is no small glory to me, that we are Married, Souls, Bodies, and Brains, which is a treble marriage, united in one Love, which I hope is not in the power of Death to dissolve; for Souls may love, and Wit may live, though Bodies dye. ('To the Readers', sig. A6v)

That this strategy of validating her status as a woman-author was to some extent effective is shown by a number of subsequent testimonials. When dedicating *An Evening's Love* (1671) to the Duke of Newcastle, John Dryden complimented his patron on his conjugal felicity by emphasizing the Duchess's capacity to share in her spouse's intellectual pursuits: ‘lest anything should be wanting to your happiness, you have, by a rare effect of Fortune, found, in the person of your excellent Lady, not only a Lover, but a Partner of your studies’ (*Works*, x. 199).

The Duke’s contribution to his wife’s play collections was noted by Langbaine in an entry on him in *An Account*: ‘We have many other Pieces writ by this Ingenious Nobleman, scattered up and down in the Poems of his Dutchess’ (p. 387). (Langbaine went so far as to specify the scenes of each play composed by the Duke, pp. 392–3.) Though published under Margaret's name alone, the folio *Playes* of 1662 supplies an original typographical model for recording joint composition.

Amateurs were routinely reticent about help received from professionals. By contrast, whenever an aristocratic patron condescended to peruse, approve, or revise a script by a professional playwright, the grateful client was eager to publicize the favour in print. Thus in the dedication of *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1673) to the Earl of Rochester, Dryden acknowledges ‘That it receiv’d amendment from your noble hands, e’re it was fit to be presented’ (*Works*, xi. 221). He figures Rochester's revision of the script, fully licensed by his nobility, wit, and financial generosity, as a rite of passage from the elite, semi-private circle of the Wits to the public sphere of the theatre and the press.25 Thomas Shadwell used similar rhetoric when inscribing *A True Widow* (1679) to Sir Charles Sedley: ‘this Comedy...had the benefit of your Correction and Alteration, and the honour of your Approbation: And I heartily wish, you had given your self the trouble, to have review’d all my Plays, as they came incorrectly and in hast from my hands’ (sig. A2v). Shadwell conceded that the play had failed on the stage, yet by aligning himself with his aristocratic supervisor he claimed a more aesthetically and socially enduring sanction.
Public acknowledgements of contributions by patrons and social superiors, characteristic of the 1670s and 1680s, gave way in time to less class-conscious admissions of help from friends, fellow playwrights, poets, and actors. The most widespread and most frequently cited in printed editions of plays were correction, revision, recommendation of plots, and assistance with writing specific scenes. The friendly help of Thomas Cheek, a minor poet and conversationalist, was gratefully remembered by Charles Gildon and by Abel Boyer. Both writers combined their acknowledgement of Cheek's contribution with an advertisement of a famous source or sources of their several plays. ‘As I begun my Preface with my Acknowledgement to the Divine Euripides’, Gildon wrote in the introduction to Phaeton: or, The Fatal Divorce (1698), ‘so I shall close it with owning my extraordinary Obligation to my Friend.’ ‘It wou’d be needless’, he said, ‘to repeat the particular Hints he gave me, or the Corrections he made in several parts of the Play upon its perusal. But I must own that the Catastrophe, ows [sic] most of its Beauty to his advice’ (sig. c1r). The imperative to share the credit for an adapted play with the renowned author of the original, and to confess a debt to a colleague who participated in the writing, is likewise documented in Abel Boyer’s preface to Achilles: or, Iphigenia in Aulis (1700):

Now when I call this Play mine, let me not be thought so arrogant as to assume the Honour of the Composition wholly to my self. The Subject of it is taken from a Greek Tragedy of Euripides: This Monsieur Racine brought upon the French Stage with the Addition of the Episode of Eriphile, Achilles’s Captive, which renders his Plot more full and compleat. (sig. A3v–v)

‘I must own my self oblig’d to my honour’d and ingenious Friend Mr. Cheek’, Boyer continues, ‘to whom I owe some of my smoothest Lines. I wish he had a greater share in the whole Play, for then I am sure the Town would have lik’d it a great deal better’ (sig. A3v). Many others, whose generous help was recorded in prefaces and dedications, remained nameless.
A very different kind of working association, which has come to light because one partner called the other to law, was that of Elkanah Settle, professional playwright, and Elizabeth Leigh, actress in the King's Company. The story of their partnership has been reconstructed by Leslie Hotson from a suit he discovered in Chancery records. Settle admits that in 1681 he agreed to compose, within eight months, a play ‘upon A certain Subject or Theme given... by the said Elizabeth Leigh’ to be produced at Drury Lane. In return for the plot Leigh was to be paid; £20, but, Settle insists, only after the play was acted. Should the benefit night, ‘together with the printing, publishing, and dedication’ yield more than £40, he would share the overplus with her. In the event the play did not reach the stage, so there were no profits to divide. None the less, Leigh had Settle arrested for non-payment of the £20 which, she maintains, she ought to have received irrespective of whether the play had been acted or not. She cited a bond of £40, which Settle had signed as a conditional penalty for failure to pay her £20, and another bond, of £100, which he had entered into as security for his completing the play and delivering it to either of the two playhouses to be performed. Her deposition also alleges that, in addition to providing Settle with ‘the Subject and story of a Tragedy or Stage Play’, she had herself ‘composed and reduced part of the Story into writing’, but that Settle had reneged on his part of the bargain, having never finished the script in question.

The suit probably never came to judgment, or, if it did, the outcome is lost. So we do not know what a late seventeenth-century court would have made of the argument that the supplier of a scenario for a play was entitled to remuneration even if the play based on it had never been produced. Most likely, the case would have been decided on purely legal grounds pertaining to Settle's alleged failure to redeem the bond or bonds he had entered into. From our perspective, the two depositions are interesting for what they tell us about the financial relations of collaborators and about the notion of intellectual property implicit in those relations. Settle and Leigh formalized their association by signing a legally binding contract. Though they differed in their interpretations of it (the major bone of contention being the time when the payment of Settle's bond or bonds was due), they agreed that the party supplying an idea for a play and a partial draft was entitled to a share in the profits equal to that of the party who wrote up the script. That right to equal profits was not the same as the right to equal authorial credit: when the play, which Hotson identified as *The Ambitious Slave*, came to be acted and published in 1694, Settle claimed it alone.
In the last decades of the seventeenth century, dramatists began to provide detailed accounts of the changes made in their scripts by theatrical companies prior to performance. In the past such changes had been loosely attributed to a company or to unnamed members of it. Now they were attributed to particular individuals. Settles silence about Elizabeth Leigh’s share in _The Ambitious Slave_ is the more surprising given his profuse acknowledgement, on another occasion, of less substantial contributions by two actors, Thomas Betterton and William Mountfort. In his dedication of _The Distress’d Innocence_ (1691) to Lord Cutts, he thanked them by name: ‘above all I must make my publick Acknowledgments to Mr. Betterton for his several extraordinary Hints to the heightning of my best Characters, nor am I a little indebted to Mr. Montfort, for the Last Scene of my Play which he was so kind to write for me’ (sig. A3'). Mountfort's contribution to the success of another play, Joseph Harris's _The Mistakes_ (1691), was likewise acknowledged by the author: 'And here's a fresh occasion for my gratitude to Mr. Montfort, who in the fith [sic] Act has not only corrected the tediousness by cutting out a whole Scene, but to make the Plot more clear, has put in one of his own, which heightens his own Character, and was very pleasing to the Audience’ (preface, sig. A2v).

This brief survey has illustrated two kinds of change: one in the forms of collaboration that were commonly engaged in, the other in the modes of acknowledgement. The amateur group enterprises such as _Pompey_ and _The Rehearsal_, and the cases in which an aristocrat sought technical assistance from a professional, occur in the 1660s and early 1670s. Little if any obloquy attached to either sort of undertaking. Just as the appropriation of sources by genteel amateurs was condemned at times with less vehemence than that by professional writers, so the collaborations in which they participated were less likely to be perceived as an index of creative inadequacy. More often they were seen as a form of aristocratic pastime, a kind of collective extemporizing which befitted that class's life of leisure and pleasure. As such collaborations die out, we find a concomitant rise in the acknowledgement of other, lesser forms of assistance from friends, actors, or theatre managers. We can hardly imagine that such help was not common in the 1660s and 1670s: the steep rise in the frequency of admissions of assistance is not testimony to changes in patterns of composition, but rather an indication of the degree to which writers increasingly felt they had to acknowledge any contribution by another hand.

Collaboration and Its Critics
The ever more strongly felt ethical obligation to record the help received from others coincided with the upsurge of acknowledgements of source materials by playwrights. Yet just as the author's licence to appropriate previous texts was increasingly being challenged, so collaboration elicited adverse critical responses. Charges of lack of self-sufficiency and invention, so prominent in the condemnations of plagiarism, came to animate the denunciations of collaborative plays, even when collaboration amounted to no more than a little friendly assistance and even when it was officially acknowledged in print.

As early as 1663, Philo-Philippa, the encomiast of Katherine Philips's translation of Corneille's *La Mort de Pompée*, poured scorn on the Wits' version of the play. She likened its confederate authors–Buckhurst, Sedley, Waller, Filmer, and Godolphin–to ‘a new Lay poetick SMEC (Poems, sig. C2v). The Smectymnuans were the five anti-episcopal ministers with whom Milton had made common cause in 1641: the gist of the mock appellation rests on its transference of the qualities popularly associated with their writings, notably clerical bigotry and ponderousness of style, to the fruit of dramatic collaboration among sophisticated aristocratic laymen. According to Philo-Philippa, the ‘Wits club [bed] their sence’ in vain since their version remained inferior to the *Pompey* Englished single-handedly by a woman, Katherine Philips.

The adverse perception of collaboration finds expression in a number of poetic satires. Rochester's *Timon* (written c.1674) and Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* (written c. 1675–6) both jeered at Thomas Shadwell's alleged reliance on the aid of Sir Charles Sedley in the writing of his comedy *Epsom- Wells*. Rochester holds up ‘Shadwell’s unassisted former scenes’ as the model of poetic insipidity and torpor, thereby hinting at the superiority of the plays in which he was aided by a better writer than himself (*Complete Works*, 56, 1. 16). But then why should a poet of Sedley’s wit and ability waste his time in propping up the botched productions of the likes of Shadwell? Dryden is no more favourable towards collaboration than Rochester. He has Shadwell's eponymous father-in-dullness, Flecknoe, solemnly apostrophize and admonish the newly proclaimed poetic heir to ‘let no alien S-dl-y interpose | To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose’ (*Works*, ii. 58, 11. 163–4). The implication is that Shadwell’s lack of talent and of dramatic flair will always foil whatever merit his partners interpolations might supply.

The persistent blending of charges of theft with indictments of collaborative writing reflects the emergent perception of authorship in proprietary terms. To be an author of a play increasingly meant to own it, but ownership was compromised when the hand of another was discernible in the text, whether that of the original author or of the collaborator. Thus Aphra Behn was frequently branded a plagiarist, and her sexual liaison with the lawyer John Hoyle provoked allegations of covert collaboration:
The censuring Age have thought it fit,
To damn a Woman, ‘cause ‘tis said,
The Plays she vends she never made.
But that a Greys Inn Lawyer does ‘em
Who unto her was Friend in Bosom.27

In the dedication prefixed to her Antiochus the Great (1702), Jane Wiseman complained that the critics were ‘unwilling to believe [the Language] my own: and have chose one of our best Poets for my Assistant, one I had not the happiness to know, ‘till after the Play was finish’d’ (sig. A2v). Established male writers occasionally assisted young women playwrights with their scripts, as did William Congreve who, at Catherine Trotter’s request, made extensive suggestions for revision of her draft play The Revolution of Sweden.28 When a woman writer produced a moderately successful play, some commentators would attempt to discredit her achievement by pointing out her real or imagined borrowings, or by implicating her in a spurious collaboration with a man. One hostile writer portrayed mixed-gender collaboration as an aberration. In his poetic epitaph on the Duchess of Newcastle, Clement Ellis wrote: ‘Wit was Hermaphrodite, when One in Twain.’ Referring to the Duke’s survival of his wife, Ellis concluded with visible relief: ‘But now ‘tis only Masculine again.’29

Albeit in different ways, male collaborators were subject to censure too. Abel Boyer and his friend and adviser Thomas Cheek were mockingly dismissed as ‘this new Fletcher’ and Beaumont’ in A Comparison Between the Two Stages (40). ‘This Forreign Author’ fulminates the Critick—Boyer was a French Huguenot—‘Clubs with an honest Gentleman to write a Tragedy...and being a little crippled in the first Act, he makes a Crutch of his Friend, and so as the Proverb runs—Mr. C —— helps a lame D —— over the Stile’ (pp. 39–40). The assistance John Gay received from Alexander Pope and John Arbuth—not in Three Hours after Marriage,30 which opened on 16 January 1717, was promptly derided by Charles Johnson in a prologue spoken on 25 February at the première of his The Sultaness. Again, the altercation reveals a close connection between literary theft and collaboration. Gay’s prologue to Three Hours after Marriage ridiculed inept appropriators of foreign plays and emphasized that he had had no recourse to such materials:

Condemn a Play of theirs, and they evade it,
Cry, damn not us, but damn the French that made it;
By running Goods, these graceless Owlers gain,
Their are the Rules of France, the Plots of Spain:
But Wit, like Wine, from happier Climates brought,
Dash’d by these Rogues, turns English common Draught:
They pall Moliere’s and Lopez sprightly strain,
And teach dull Harlequins to grin in vain.
How shall our Author hope a gentle Fate,
Who dares most impudently—not translate.
Johnson, whose *The Sultaness* was an adaptation of Racine's *Bajazet*, felt understandably threatened by this contemptuous repudiation of foreign sources. He responded by pointing out that it is better to domesticate distinguished foreign plays than to invent bad new ones:

Our honest Author frankly bid me say,  
'Tis to the great *Racine* he owes his Play.  
When *Rome* in Arms had gain'd immortal Fame,  
And proudly triumph'd o'er the *Grecian* Name,  
Her Poets copy'd what *Athenians* writ,  
And boasted in the Spoils of foreign Wit:  
Why then shou'd *Britons*, who so oft have broke  
The Pride of *Gaul*, and bow'd her to the Yoke;  
Be blam'd, if they enrich their native Tongue  
With what the *Gallick* Muse has greatly sung:  
At least, 'tis hop'd, he'll meet a kinder Fate,  
Who strives some *Standard* Author to translate,  
Than they, who give you, without once repenting,  
Long-labour'd Nonsense of their own inventing.

He makes clear that his immediate target is the recent farce by Gay and his associates:

Such Wags have been, who boldly durst adventure  
To Club a Farce by Tripartite-Indenture:  
But, let them share their Dividend of Praise,  
And their own *Fools-Cap* wear, instead of Bays.

This excerpt from Johnson's prologue in turn served as a motto on the title-page of *The Confederates* (1717), a satirical piece purporting to have been written by John Gay's cousin, Joseph. (The title-page featured an engraving of three grotesque figures, easily identifiable as the eponymous 'Confederates': Arbuthnot accoutred in traditional Scottish gear on the left, the puny and deformed Pope in the middle, and Gay, holding a fool's cap in his hand, on the right; see Fig. 4.) John Durant de Breval, who actually wrote *The Confederates*, dissects the trio's inept collaboration. They are shown to bicker, cheat, and despise one another. Thus Pope to Arbuthnot:

Know, *Caledonian*, Thine's a simple Part,  
Scarc'e any thing but some Quack-Terms of Art,  
(p.146) Hard Words, and Quibbles; but 'tis I that sting,  
And on the Stage th' *Egyptian Lovers* bring.

*(scene i, p. 3)*
Each partner unscrupulously strives to arrogate the largest share of the play to himself, yet none is prepared to answer for its failure.

The reception of contemporary plays written by more than one hand was, as we have seen, at best mixed and at worst hostile. Collaboration was considered a compromised mode of composition, for, like appropriation, it undermined the emergent ethos of singular authorship. Those who practised it laid themselves open to charges of creative and imaginative deficiency, while artistic products of collaboration were increasingly found wanting in stylistic unity and wholeness. Yet even as they condemned recent collaborations, late seventeenth-century commentators seem to have held pre-1642 collaborations in high esteem. Phillips's *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675) and Winstanley's *Lives* (1687) introduce what might be described as the critical idealization of Renaissance dramatic collaboration that will reach a climax in Langbaine's *Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691).

Renaissance collaboration was not viewed as the product of mercenary professionalism. Rather, it was idealized in terms of friendship, fellowship, and emulation. Late seventeenth-century critics projected on to the earlier period the canonical hierarchy embodied in the trope of the ‘triumvirate of wit’, itself a mid-century creation, in order to manufacture a narrative explaining the genealogy of pre-Civil War collaborations in terms of merit. Collaboration with Shakespeare, Jonson, or Fletcher was envisaged as an ennoblement of the less well known partner. Thus Philip Massinger is supposed by Langbaine to have been

extreamly belov'd by the Poets of that Age, and there were few but what took it as an Honour to club with him in a play: witness Middleton, Rowley, Field, and Decker: all which join’d with him in several Labours. Nay, further to shew his Excellency, the ingenious Fletcher, took him in as a Partner in several Plays. (Account, 353)

William Rowley ‘was not only beloved by those Great Men, Shakespear, Fletcher, and Johnson; but likewise writ with the former, The Birth of Merlin. Besides what he joined in writing with Poets of the second Magnitude, as Heywood, Middleton, Day, and Webster’ (p. 428).
fig. 1. Francis Kirkman, A True, perfect, and exact Catalogue (1671)

fig. 2. Gerard Langbaine, Momus Triumphans (1688)
fig. 3. Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691)
fig. 4. John Arbuthnot, Alexander Pope, and John Gay: tide-page of John Durant de Breval’s *The Confederates* (1717)

fig. 5. Frontispiece portraits of Sir Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’, from their *Works*, 7 vols. (1711), prefixed to the first volume

fig. 7. Frontispiece and title-page of James Shirley's *Six New Playes* (1653)

fig. 8. Frontispiece and title-page of Sir Robert Howard's *Five new Plays* (1692)
John Ford was portrayed as ‘a Well-wisher to the Muses, and a Friend and Acquaintance of most of the Poets of his Time’ as well as ‘a Partner with Rowly, and Decker’ (p. 219), while Thomas Middleton figured as a Contemporary with those Famous Poets Johnson, Fletcher, Massinger and Rowley, in whose Friendship he had a large Share; and tho’ he came short of the two former in parts, yet like the Ivy by the Assistance of the Oak, (being joyn’d with them in several Plays) he clim’d up to some considerable height of Reputation. He joyn’d with Fletcher and Johnson, in a Play called The Widow...and certainly most Men will allow, That he that was thought fit to be receiv’d into a Triumvirate, by two such Great Men, was no common Poet. (p. 370)

In the same vein, Langbaine says he ‘can give [George Chapman] no greater Commendation, than that he was so intimate with the famous Johnson, as to engage in a Triumvirate with Him, and Marston in a Play called Eastward-Hoe: a Favour which the haughty Ben could seldom be persuad’d to’ (p. 57). Collaboration in the last age is held to have been grounded in merit, worth, and excellence. At the same time, Langbaine's omission of the financial dimension of collaborative writing divorces it from the economic realities of the theatrical marketplace.31
We are left with an odd but hardly inexplicable set of contradictions. Glorification of the past (a natural part of building a native dramatic tradition) meant that even lesser lights than Beaumont and Fletcher’ could be admired for their genteel ideals of friendship, and that their collaborative efforts could be figured as the result of working in a purer if less linguistically refined world. The noncommercial picture of pre-1642 playwriting painted by Langbaine and others is absurd, but the myth was convenient. The other side of the picture is relatively simple, and explains why professional collaboration between current writers was held in opprobrium. If authorship is ownership (and this was rapidly becoming the dominant view), then collaboration, which blurs the boundaries of intellectual property, is no less unwarrantable than appropriation.

(p.148) Beaumont and Fletcher’

The precedence of solo authorship made explicit in the adverse critical response to post-Restoration collaborations was implicit in the changing organization and format of successive dramatic play lists and literary biographies. If and when the names of the authors were given in the commercial catalogues of the 1650s, they tended to be carelessly transcribed from the title-pages of printed editions, which, in any event, often failed to record, or misrepresented, authorship. When we come to Francis Kirkman’s True, perfect, and exact Catalogue of 1671, we find that most plays for which there appears some kind of attribution are assigned to individual authors. Out of the total of 808 titles he lists, only nineteen are explicitly designated as co-authored and 148 are unassigned. The number of collaborations would be significantly higher if Beaumont and Fletchers plays were listed as such. Yet of that pair Fletcher’ alone is mentioned throughout the compilation, even though the ‘Advertisement to the Reader’ cites both authors (p. 16). Kirkman apparently assumed that his readers would be aware of the partnership, and allowed ‘John Fletcher’ to stand for both playwrights.

The change in the format of the play catalogue which came with the publication of Langbaine’s Momus Triumphans (1688) demonstrates the incompatibility of collaboration with the nascent ideal of individual authorship. The typography and layout of Kirkman’s catalogue afforded equal status to singular and collaborative authorship within the space of the page. Conversely, in Langbaine’s catalogue, which alphabetizes authors’ names, collaborative authorship is made typographically subordinate. The name of only one collaborator precedes the play-title in the main text, the names of the others being banished to the bottom of the page. Moreover, the one privileged name is set in italic type larger than the italic of the footnotes which register the names of the remaining contributors. The spatial and typographical structuring of the page privileges singular over collaborative authorship.
The concentration on the author was evident in two early attempts at collective literary biography, Phillips’s *Theatrum Poetarum* (p.149) and Winstanley’s *Lives Of the most Famous English Poets*, as well as in Langbaine’s *Account*, which was the first compilation to approach the study of English drama in terms of the writer’s life and work. Some of Langbaine’s eighteenth-century successors would abandon his alphabetical ordering of entries and would opt for the chronological one instead. Yet the subordinate status of collaboration in relation to solo authorship remained imprinted (both figuratively and literally) in the style of its formal record. For the heading of virtually every entry named only one individual.

The ascent of solo authorship as the artistic and critical norm is particularly apparent in the changing views of the partnership between Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’. In the later seventeenth century Beaumont tends to be seen as no more than a reviser of Fletchers work; and at times his name is omitted altogether. By the mid-eighteenth century, he is increasingly envisaged as an independent writer by critics and editors who move beyond external evidence and look to the dramatic text to determine his and Fletchers respective shares in its production. This urge to identify and attribute shares in collaborative plays reflects the growing individualization of authorship: to be an author is to own distinct stretches of text.

In the commendatory poem which he prefaced to the Beaumont and Fletcher’ folio of 1647, Sir John Denham epitomized the supreme status of Jonson, Shakespeare, and Fletcher’ as the ‘Triumvirate of wit’. Shakespeare embodied Nature, Jonson Art, while Fletchers work exemplified a perfect blending of Nature and Art:

Yet what from *Johnsons oyle* and sweat did flow,
Or what more easie nature did bestow
On *Shakespeares* gentler Muse, in thee full growne
Their Graces both appeare, yet so, that none
Can say here Nature ends, and Art begins...

The description became a trope. It proved exceptionally popular with poets and critics of the later seventeenth century, and was recycled in virtually every account of pre-Civil War drama written in that period.

(p.150) But the trope of the triumvirate excluded Beaumont by definition. In order to overcome this apparent conceptual difficulty, late seventeenth-century commentators seized upon the notion of the ‘symmetry of perfection’ inherent in Denham’s original formulation to describe the partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher’. Here is Edward Phillips’s version of the trope in *Theatrum Poetarum*:
John Fletcher', one of the happy Triumvirat (the other two being Johnson and Shakespeare) of the Chief Dramatic Poets of our Nation, in the last foregoing Age, among whom there might be said to be a symmetry of perfection, while each excelled in his peculiar way: Ben. Johnson in his elaborate pains and knowledge of Authors, Shakespeare in his pure vein of wit, and natural Poetic heighth [sic]; Fletcher' in a courtly Elegance, and gentle familiarity of style, and withal a wit and invention so overflowing, that the luxuriant branches thereof were frequently thought convenient to be lopt off by his almost inseparable Companion Francis Beaumont, (pp. 108–9, second pagination)

Phillips thinks of the talents and skills of the two collaborators as wholly complementary. Fletchers exorbitant, Shakespearian wit and invention are matched by Beaumont's Jonsonian judgement and moderation.

The conception of the relation between Beaumont and Fletcher’ in terms of symmetry and mutual reciprocity was very influential. Its appeal lay in the unity of the collaborators (and the homogeneity of their work) which it implicitly posited. This oneness in turn ensured compatibility of the collaboration with the trope of the triumvirate. The construction of Beaumont and Fletcher’ as a creative monad is attested by Winstanley who, in his Lives, repeats Phillips's interpretation (p. 151) of the trope of the triumvirate verbatim, and adds: ‘These two joynd together, made one of the happy Triumvirate...Beaumont bringing the Ballast of Judgment, Fletcher’ the Sail of Phantasie’ (p. 128). Similarly, Langbaine asserts in the Account that these two playwrights ‘succeeded in Conjunction more happily than any Poets of their own, or this Age, to the reserve of the Venerable Shakespeare, and the Learned and Judicious Johnson (p. 203). He too promotes the idea that Fletchers artistic engagement with Beaumont was intrinsically symmetrical: ‘In a word, Fletchers Fancy, and Beaumont's Judgment combin'd, produc'd such Plays, as will remain Monuments of their Wit to all Posterity’ (p. 204).
Envisaging the collaboration in terms of symmetry of perfection had the unforeseen consequence of marginalizing Beaumont’s position relative to his partner. For what did Beaumont’s share amount to? How did the figurative square with the matter-of-fact? Lopping off the branches of Fletchers luxuriant wit or providing the ballast of judgement to his sail of fancy may testify to Beaumont’s competence as reviser but hardly balances Fletchers original contribution. Indeed, late seventeenth-and early eighteenth-century dramatic play lists do not grant Beaumont his own entry. In Langbaine, Gildon, and Jacob, Beaumont’s name appears in its alphabetically determined place only to be cross-referenced to Fletcher’ (see e.g. Fig. 2). It then resurfaces as a sort of appendage to the heading of the entry on Fletcher’. Not until John Mottley’s catalogue of 1747 does Beaumont earn the distinction of a separate entry and his own engraved portrait (and even then the discussion of the plays is included in the account of Fletcher’).  

Many late seventeenth-century writers, as we have seen, undertook to adapt plays attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher’. Those adaptations came to be regularly acknowledged as such in prologues, epilogues, and prefatory epistles. There too Fletchers prominence was apparent. Robert Wolseley's lengthy preface to the Earl of Rochester's *Valentinian* mentions Fletcher’ several times; so does Aphra Behn’s prologue which was spoken at the première. The edition also includes a prologue ‘intended for *Valentinian*’ though eventually not delivered in the playhouse. This supernumerary prologue invokes both Beaumont and Fletcher’ as the ‘Wit-Consuls [who] rul’d the former Age’ (sig. C3v). Nahum Tate portrays the original of his *Island Princess* (1687) as a ‘Composure of Beaumont and Fletcher (sig. A4r); the preface and prologue to Peter Motteux's operatic version of the same play name only Fletcher’ (sigs. A3v, A4r). In 1696 George Powell claims *Bonduca* as ‘a Foundation of that Celebrated Poetical Architect, the Famous Fletcher’ and *Fletcher* on one and the same page of his dedication (sig. A2v). Clearly, Beaumont was considered sufficiently insignificant to be quietly omitted.

Post-Restoration commentators were well aware that each of the two men was a dramatist in his own right, and that Fletcher had continued to write plays after Beaumont’s death. Phillips portrayed Beaumont as an ‘almost inseparable Companion’ of Fletcher (my italics). For his part, Winstanley carefully pointed out: ‘Yet were not these two Poets so conjoyned, but that each of them did several Pieces by themselves’ (*Lives*, 129). Alluding to Fletcher’s plays written after Beaumont’s death, Winstanley notes: ‘some think them inferior to the former, and no wonder if a single thread was not so strong as a twisted one’ (p. 130). Here joint authorship figures as a guarantee of artistic power and strength, a kind of positive reinforcement of individual talent and skill.
How was one to tell when the thread was single and when twisted? In the case of *The Faithful Shepherdess* and the *Masque of Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* the answer may have been simple, but what about the rest? Langbaine, for one, regretted not being able ‘to give the Reader a perfect Account what Plays [Fletcher] writ alone; in what Plays he was assisted by the Judicious *Beaumont*, and which were the Plays in which Old *Phil Massinger* had a hand: but Mr. *Charles Cotton* being dead, I know none but Sir *Aston Cockain* (if he be ye yet alive) that can satisfy the World in this particular’ (*Account*, 217).

Langbaine was a conscientious and scholarly writer. He had obviously come across Sir Aston Cokayne's *A Chain of Golden Poems* (1658) and paused over the three poems concerned explicitly with (p.153) the attribution of the plays printed in the folio of 1647. But Cokayne gave no titles. He only affirmed that Fletcher, after Beaumont's death, had penned some plays alone and had collaborated on others with Massinger. Armed with the information gleaned from Cokayne, Langbaine registers the urge to offer reliable attributions of plays included in the successive folios under the names of Beaumont and Fletcher. But he stops short of seeking evidence of authorship in the plays themselves. In the absence of authorial statements and credible witnesses, the task appears to him impossible.

Langbaine's immediate successors, Gildon and Jacob, followed his practice of highlighting the few plays Beaumont and Fletcher were known to have written independently of one another. So too did the anonymous editor (possibly John Hughes) of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works* of 1711. The first volume supplies engraved portraits of both authors (see Fig. 5). (Humphrey Moseley, the publisher of the 1647 folio, had deplored his failure to obtain Beaumont's likeness.) There are also two separate biographical sketches. In addition, the preface cites the authority of Dryden to the effect that ‘after *Beaumont's Death*, *Mr. James Shirly* was consulted by *Fletcher* in the plotting several of his Plays’. No attempt, however, is made to ascertain which they were.

The fourth collected edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays (and the second to call itself 'Works') appeared in 1750. The title-page advertised it as having been prepared ‘By The late Mr. *Theobald*, Mr. *Seward* of Eyam in Derbyshire, and Mr. *Sympson* of Gainsborough’. The three men's individual contributions were scrupulously credited to them by name. This edition exemplifies a new approach to the pair's collaboration. Though the trope of the triumvirate and the idea of Beaumont and Fletcher's creative oneness are still in evidence, they are now ancillary to the newer paradigm of difference.
The clash between the two paradigms is illustrated by the fact that the two main editors, Seward and Symson (Theobald died some time before the publication of the edition) hold widely divergent views of the collaboration. Symson claims the plays to be ‘all of a Piece’ and rejects the possibility of determining individual shares:

Mr. Seward will lay before the Reader what internal Evidence he thinks he has discover’d of a distinction of their Hands; but in general Beaumont’s Accuracy and Fletcher’s Wit, are so undistinguishable, that were we not sure, to a Demonstration, that the Masque was the former’s, and the Shepherdess the latter’s sole Production, they might each have passed for the concurrent Labour of both, or have changed Hands, and the last been taken for Beaumont’s and the former for Fletcher’s.  

By contrast, Seward marshals both internal and external evidence in support of his contention that the collaborators possess distinctive, individualized styles which can and ought to be identified. He examines letters, poems, prologues, epilogues, and the plays themselves in a bid to detect differences within the ‘Duumvirate’, as he calls them. Seward initiates a kind of textual enquiry bent upon separating out and attributing shares in a collaborative play. Of this form of enquiry, linguistic, stylometric, and computer analyses are only the most recent developments. Seward’s insistence upon fracturing the unity of a play to assign particular shares in its authorship signals a decisive break with the idealized Restoration view of collaboration in the previous age. Two years later, in 1752, Henry Fielding dispensed with the trope of the triumvirate, and described ‘Master William Shakespeare, Master Benjamin Johnson, Master John Fletcher, and Master Francis Beaumont’ as a ‘Quadrumvirate’. We may only wonder that the driving of a wedge between Beaumont and Fletcher took so long to accomplish, for the attitudes that gave rise to the enterprise had been established by the 1670s and 1680s.

Dryden and Lee
Of the more than 400 plays written in the half-century following the Stuart Restoration, only two were products of a professional partnership. In 1678 Dryden and Lee produced their version of Oedipus. Four years later, in 1682, they created The Duke of Guise. These two exercises in collaboration are so unusual as to invite enquiry. What induced Dryden and Lee to collaborate? How were their joint compositions received? Both plays attracted extensive comment at the time. There was much interest in their collaborative origin. There was no less interest in another aspect of the plays which has a bearing on this study, their authors’ appropriation of source materials.

THE ENGLISH OEDIPUS
Mounted by the Duke's Company in the autumn of 1678, this tragedy 'took prodigiously, being Acted 10 Days together' (Downes, 79), and remained a stock play until the 1720s. The theatrical success and critical acclaim of Oedipus may seem anomalous, for the play proved controversial both as a product of dual authorship and as an adaptation. Even as they commended Oedipus, contemporary critics puzzled over a number of interlocking questions. Should Sophocles' tragedy have been translated faultlessly for presentation on the English stage or were Dryden and Lee right to have modernized and adapted it? How well had they succeeded in transmuting the model Greek tragedy? Should they be regarded as translators, plagiaries, or authors?

The English Oedipus was modelled on a number of ancient and modern sources, principally Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille, although it substantially deviated from all treatments of the story. Perhaps the most striking departure is the addition of a romantic subplot in which the Richard III-like Creon plots rebellion, and woos Oedipus' sister, Eurydice (who loves, and is beloved of, Adrastus King of Argos). The tragic climax sees all the protagonists die a violent death. Jocasta murders all her and Oedipus' children and commits suicide; Oedipus follows suit by spectacularly throwing himself off a tower; Eurydice falls victim to Creon, who is in turn slain by Adrastus, who in turn dies at the hands of the soldiers. The final carnage, reminiscent of Jacobean revenge tragedies, presents a rather different kind of pity and terror from that afforded by classical drama. It also precludes the possibility of a sequel such as Oedipus at Colonnus or Antigone.

Dryden and Lee neither tried to hide their sources and professional association nor dwelt on them. The prologue offers no indication that the play is an adaptation. Quite the contrary, its phrasing, *(p.156)* and its emphasis on the canonicity of the Sophoclean Oedipus, suggest that the play the audience are about to see—and which they are exhorted to appreciate—is a straightforward rendition of the Greek original into English:

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When Athens all the Grœcian State did guide,
And Greece gave Laws to all the World beside,
Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,
Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit...
Then, Oedipus, on Crowded Theaters,
Drew all admiring Eyes and listing Ears...
Now, should it fail, (as Heav'n avert our fear!)
Damn it in silence, lest the World should hear.
(Dryden, Works, xiii. 118)
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The epilogue acknowledges the play as a collaborative reworking of Sophocles' masterpiece, and reminds the audience that the source has been previously appropriated by other cultures and authors:

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What Sophocles could undertake alone,
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Our Poets found a Work for more than one;  
And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,  
With all their force, to draw the pondrous Mass from Greece,  
A weight that bent ev’n Seneca's strong Muse,  
And which Corneille's Shoulders did refuse.  
So hard it is th’Athenian Harp to string!  
So much two Consuls yield to one just King.  

.........

Think ‘em not vain, when Sophocles is shown,  
To praise his worth, they humbly doubt their own.  
Yet as weak States each others pow’r assure,  
Weak Poets by Conjunction are secure.  
(Works, xiii. 214)

In this self-conscious apology, joint authorship is treated with humorous derision. The epilogue playfully concedes that the collaboration has been made necessary by the individual deficiencies of the two authors. Yet at the same time, the doubling of talent and poetic skill is represented as a pledge of quality performance.

The image of two modern dwarfs striving to overhaul the ancient classic hints at the adapters’ awareness of a deep-seated mistrust of, and contempt for, collaborative playwriting. Why then did Dryden and Lee collaborate? Four years after the event, Dryden declared: ‘I (p.157) writ the first and third Acts of Oedipus, and drew the Scenary of the whole Play (The Vindication of the Duke of Guise, in Works, xiv. 344).’ Terse as this statement is, it tells us enough to infer the motivation behind the collaboration. Dryden designed and plotted the play, but wanted major parts of it written in a style he was either unwilling to attempt or felt himself unable to bring off to his satisfaction. He had written rants and overblown dialogue in his earlier heroic dramas, but their stilted quality had been ridiculed in The Rehearsal and in a number of cutting critical pamphlets. If passion and fire were required in emotionally charged situations, perhaps better to let the passionate and fiery Lee provide the needed fustian. Whatever the reasons for their working together, the printed quarto made no secret of the dual responsibility for the English Oedipus. The wording of the title-page is unequivocal: The Authors Mr. Dryden, and Mr. Lee’.
However peculiar the results seem to the twentieth-century sensibility, the English *Oedipus* was not only popular in the theatre but critically respected. Both the theory behind the adaptation, and its execution by two writers rather than one, became subject to criticism in the quarter-century after the première, but the debate did little to damage the standing of *Oedipus*. Though Thomas Rymer was a notable exception, late seventeenth-century commentators generally rated the Dryden–Lee tragedy highly. John Dennis regarded it as ‘an admirable play’; the compilers of the *Athenian Mercury* found it ‘indeed incomparable’; and Langbaine himself grudgingly recognized the English *Oedipus* as ‘certainly one of the best Tragedies we have extant’.43

Radical though the adaptation seems to us, it came under fire for lack of originality. No early charges of plagiarism have survived, but their occurrence may be deduced from Dryden’s preface to *Don Sebastian* of 1690. There Dryden reaffirms his and Lee’s title to the play in the strongest pronouncement on literary property he had yet made: ‘of late years Corneille writ an *Oedipus* after *Sophocles*; and I have design’d one after him, which I wrote with Mr. Lee, yet neither the French Poet stole from the Greek, nor we from the Frenchman. ‘Tis the contrivance, the new turn, and new characters, which alter the property and make it ours’ (xv. 69). In a brusque retort, Langbaine accused Dryden of equivocation: ‘for tho’ he stole not from Corneille in that Play, yet he has borrow’d very much from the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of *Sophocles*, as likewise from that of Seneca (*Account*, 162). Contradicting his own earlier assessment of appropriation of classical sources as ‘lawful prize’, Langbaine here taxes Dryden with translating ‘whole Scenes’ from Sophocles which in his view amounts to theft (pp. 149, 162).
Allegations of plagiarism were in part refuted by Charles Gildon who instead condemned the collaborators’ departures from the Greek source: ‘we have so little to accuse them of being Plagiaries here, that the most understanding Judges wish they had followed Sophocles yet closer, it had then been the best of our Modern Plays, as ‘tis of the Ancients’ (Lives, 46). This demand for greater fidelity to Sophocles typifies a major trend in the critical reception of the English Oedipus. Two innovations that proved particularly objectionable were the change in the characterization of Oedipus and the inclusion of a romantic subplot. According to Dennis, one of the ‘understanding Judges’ cited by Gildon, ‘Mr. Dryden has alter’d the Character of Oedipus, and made it less suitable to the design of Tragedy.’ The underplot inspired by Corneille likewise proved anathema to the self-proclaimed English neo-Aristotelians since its importation was deemed to destroy the purity and unity of the Sophoclean original: ‘Mr. Dryden, and Mr. Lee have spoil’d [the Masterpiece of Sophocles] by introducing the Episode of Creon and Adrastus carped William Burnaby. James Drake’s was a lonely voice in his well-meaning defence of the adaptation: ‘[Mr. Dryden’s] aim was not so much to enquire after any improvements, as additions to Sophocles’s design…to fit it up for the English Stage…the simplicity of the Original Fable and the Chasms, which the omission of the Chorus must necessarily make, requiring to be fill’d up, and supply’d with an Underplot and proper Episodes.’ The bias against Senecan and Corneillian accretions, and against the collaborators’ own interpolations, suggests that late seventeenth-century critics would have rated a relatively faithful translation of Sophocles more highly than they did the Dryden-Lee adaptation. How such a piece would have fared with the English audience is easy to guess.

If the divergence of the English Oedipus from its classical sources was controversial, its collaborative composition was jarring. Most commentators distorted or misrepresented the dual authorship of the play, about which they clearly felt uncomfortable. In his doggerel satire against the playhouse, Robert Gould allowed both writers lavish praise:

And we must do the Laureat Justice too:
For OEdipus (of which, Lee, half is thine,
And there thy Genius does with Lustre shine)
Does raise our Fear and Pity too as high
As, almost, can be done in Tragedy.
For the most part, however, Lee's contribution got short shrift. In the Account Langbaine records the play as a collaboration but taxes Dryden alone for its supposed shortcomings (pp. 162, 167, 321). The Athenian Mercury for 5 December 1691 refers to it as Dryden's Oedipus, 'tho' its true another had a share in't'. Freeman, John Dennis's spokesman in The Impartial Critick, bluntly asserts that the English Oedipus 'would certainly have been much better, if Mr. Dryden had had the sole management of it' (Critical Works, i. 19). Dennis pays lip-service to collaboration, yet in the remaining part of the dialogue proceeds as if the play had a singular, unitary author, and he invariably speaks about 'Mr. Dryden's Oedipus' (i. 20–1). James Drake follows suit in his The Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd. Gildon treats Oedipus as an unhappy embodiment of Dryden's critical convictions, thereby wholly neglecting Lee's contribution. The critics' sense of discomfort at the interplay of two radically different voices, styles, and registers within the text generated an urge to identify the prime mover behind the adaptation and to credit him with the whole. That is why the bulk of Restoration criticism recognizes Oedipus as the work of Dryden. Only William Burnaby treats Oedipus as the adapters' joint failure (Letters of Wit, 236).

Apparently unaware of Dryden's description of the making of Oedipus, one of the commentators remarked regretfully: 'This Play was writ by Mr. Lee and Mr. Dryden; therefore to whom to attribute the Faults is difficult.' Jeremy Collier took better notice of Dryden's statement in the Vindication. His discussion of Oedipus in A Short View is informed by an attentiveness to the play's collaborative composition. True to his aim of pillorying immorality and profanity in stage representations, Collier inveighs against the denigration of the clergy in Oedipus. He also passes unfavourable judgements on the tragedy's circumstantial absurdities; criticizes the fustian as redolent of Taylor the Water Poet; and blames the artistic defects on the pitfalls of collaboration: 'I grant Mr. Dryden clears himself of this Act in his Vindication of the Duke of Guise. But then why did he let these crude Fancies pass uncorrected in his Friend?' Collier believes that collaborators should accept joint responsibility for their work. Who wrote a given act or scene is ultimately immaterial, he contends, since the partners are equally accountable for the whole.

Turn-of-the-century observers who deplored the destructive effects of collaboration on the stylistic and tonal unity of a dramatic work invariably cited the Dryden–Lee Oedipus. George Granville reflected on the poor judgement of the spectators, noticing how, instinctively differentiating between the respective contributions of the two writers, they gave applause to the excesses of Mad Nat. Lee but not to the nobler contributions of Dryden. The audience would presumably have enjoyed Oedipus even more had it been wholly the product of Lee's pen and thus fuller of rant and violence:
When we observe how little notice is taken of the noble and sublime Thoughts and Expressions of Mr. Dryden in *Oedipus*, and what Applause is given to the Rants and the Fustian of Mr. Lee, what can we say, but that Madmen are only fit to write, when nothing is esteem’d Great and Heroick but what is un-intelligible. (preface to *Heroick Love* (1698), sig. A4r)

Joseph Addison makes a similar point in the *Spectator* of 16 April 1711:

But to shew how a Rant pleases beyond the most just and natural Thought that is not pronounced with Vehemence, I would desire the Reader, when he sees the Tragedy of *Oedipus*, to observe how quietly the Hero is dismiss’d (p.161) at the End of the third Act, after having pronounc’d the...Lines, in which the Thought is very natural, and apt to move Compassion...Let us then observe with what Thunder-claps of Applause he leaves the Stage, after the Impieties and Execrations at the End of the fourth Act; and you will wonder to see an Audience so cursed and so pleased at the same Time.\(^5^2\)

Addison contrasts the discerning reader with the tasteless and insensible spectator, and suggests that the ability to appreciate drama has irrevocably left the playhouse and firmly established itself in the study.

In his appraisal of Shakespearian adaptations in the Restoration, Michael Dobson has shown that adapters such as Colley Cibber aimed at a seamless merger of Shakespeare's original script and their own revisions and interpolations so as to ensure stylistic unity in performance, even though the interpolations were occasionally distinguished typographically in the printed editions of the adaptations.\(^5^3\) An analogous point has been made by Jeffrey Masten with regard to Renaissance dramatic collaboration: ‘the collaborative project in the theatre was predicated on erasing the perception of any differences that might have existed, for whatever reason, between collaborated parts’.\(^5^4\) *Oedipus* is an exception to the rules identified by Dobson and Masten in that the parts written by Dryden and Lee are so different from each other, and in that its variation from the classical sources is so drastic.
By the end of the eighteenth century the appeal of the English *Oedipus* had been irrevocably lost. The foreword to Bell’s edition of 1791 observes that ‘It but seldom makes its appearance upon the modern stage, and is hasting, with all its mythological brethren, to that repose, which only solitary curiosity disturbs in the silent though classic ground of the library.’ The collaborative composition of *Oedipus* is deemed of sufficient interest to be noted: ‘This Play is written by DRYDEN and LEE, and their several parts of the production are known. To DRYDEN we owe the entire first and third acts, with the plan and arrangement of the whole; LEE furnished out the remainder’ (p. vi). The preface’s own view of collaboration is epitomized thus: ‘There is a proverb, which says, that two heads are better than one—In designing, perhaps, it may be so; in executing, such a co-operation seems to forbid the proper assimilation of parts’ (p. vi).

THE DUKE OF GUISE

Dryden and Lee’s second collaboration was conceived during the turmoil and hysteria generated by the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis. It proved the most politically divisive play of the later seventeenth century. Modern scholars have rarely been interested in *The Duke of Guise* except as a piece of party propaganda. They have analysed with considerable (and justifiable) scepticism the long defence made by Dryden in *The Vindication of the Duke of Guise* against the political charges levelled at the play, and have elucidated the nature of the political parallels. Yet the preoccupation with the politics of *The Duke of Guise* has overshadowed several other issues raised in the protracted paper war fought over the play: plagiarism, the legitimate use of historical materials, and the ethics of collaboration itself.

The tragedy was banned on 18 July 1682, before it could reach the stage (LC 5/144, p. 278). Newsletters were soon full of speculation about the politically objectionable matter in the play and about its prospects of being produced. A newsletter written on 29 July shows that the *The Duke of Guise* was already being attributed to Dryden alone: ‘A play having been made [by] Mr Dryden tearmed ye Duke of Guise [it being] supposed to Levell att the villifying the Duke of Monmouth & many other protestants.’ That a blatantly Tory play which had got into trouble with the authorities for its allegedly unfavourable portrait of Monmouth should have been attributed to Dryden need hardly surprise us. By mid-1682 Dryden was more than an acclaimed Stuart Laureate. With *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), *The Medal* (1682), and a number of recent fiercely partisan prologues and epilogues he had established himself as a formidable propagandist and party writer. ‘His *Duke of Guise* was therefore widely expected to be a dramatic sequel to *Absalom and Achitophel*.’
Within three months circumstances had changed. The Whig cause was now in ruins. The City was in Tory hands; Monmouth was decisively out of favour with Charles; Shaftesbury was in exile in Holland. Consequently, on 29 October the Lord Chamberlain revoked his earlier ban, certifying that ‘this play of the Duke of Guise shalbe acted & may be Acted by their Ma\textsuperscript{tie}s Comœdians whencesoever they will’ (LC 5/144, p. 291).\textsuperscript{59} The production of The Duke of Guise by the United Company followed on 28 November. ‘This day was Acted a new play’, one newsletter reported, ‘called the Duke of Guise by Mr Dryden.’\textsuperscript{60} As before, the Laureate was taken to be the sole perpetrator of an entertainment violently offensive to the Whigs.

After the première, Dryden’s detractors could no longer plead ignorance of the fact that the play was a collaborative endeavour. The epilogue plainly designated The Duke of Guise a product of more than one pen:

\begin{quote}
Our Poets, like frank Gamesters, threw at All.
They took no single Aim:—
But, like bold Boys, true to their Prince and hearty,
Huzza’d, and fir’d Broad-sides at the whole Party.
(Dryden, Works, xiv. 212, 11. 4–7)
\end{quote}

Any lingering doubt that The Duke of Guise was the product of collaboration would have been dispelled by the publication of the prologue and the two epilogues in a matter of days.\textsuperscript{61} The second epilogue, ‘Intended to have been Spoken to the PLAY, before it was forbidden, last Summer’, begins: ‘Two Houses joyn’d, two Poets to a Play?’ (xiv. 214, my italics).\textsuperscript{62} The persistent targeting of Dryden by Whig partisans was a tactical move rather than an inadvertent misattribution.

(p.164) Thus Thomas Hunt’s Defence of the Charter, appearing in late 1682 or early 1683, condemned The Duke of Guise as the offspring of a time-serving poet. Though he did not name Dryden, Hunt’s pointed references to ‘his Patron Duke’, James, Duke of York, sufficiently identified his target.\textsuperscript{63} A contemporaneous tribute to Monmouth, Sol in opposition to Saturn, likewise treated the play as Dryden’s, and attributed its composition to mercenary motives.\textsuperscript{64} The subtitle of an anonymous pamphlet culled from several chronicles of sixteenth-century France, The True History of the Duke of Guise (1683), declared it to have been ‘Published for the undeceiving such as may perhaps be imposed by Mr. Dryden’s late Tragedy of the Duke of Guise’. Even the Laureate’s nameless champion in An Epode To his worthy Friend Mr. John Dryden (1683) succumbed to the fallacy of solo authorship when urging Dryden to disregard ‘Two malicious Pamphlets against his Tragedy called, The Duke of Guise’. So did Roger L’Estrange writing in the Observator for 24 January 1683.
Only two contributions to the fray recognized the play as a collaboration. The first was an obscure but hardly *Unbiass’d Satyr* (1683), penned by yet another encomiast of Monmouth: ‘Thus thou kind Duke wer’t in Effigie kill’d | By Poets too in Tragedy unskill’d’; the other, *Some Reflections upon the Pretended Parallel in the Play called The Duke of Guise* (1683), featured a lengthy and ferocious prose attack on the play and its principal begetter, John Dryden.

An obvious reason for ignoring or falsifying the joint authorship of *The Duke of Guise* was Whig sensitivity about Lee’s participation in the venture. The nature of his political allegiance in those shifting and uncertain days is difficult to judge. As a rule Lee is taken to have been a Whig—the supposed republicanism of his banned *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681) being cited in support—who turned Tory in the wake of the Exclusion Crisis. Some critics have questioned this view and suggested that the plays he wrote before *The Duke of Guise* were not consistently Whiggish or republican. By his contemporaries, however, Lee was regarded as sufficiently Whiggish to serve as a perfect foil to (and victim of) Dryden’s Toryism.

*The Duke of Guise* is a historical drama set in sixteenth-century France. It is a self-confessed triple parallel between the French Holy League, the presbyterian Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, and the abortive Whig Association of 1681. ‘Our Play’s a Parallel’, proclaims the prologue, ‘The Holy League | Begot our Cov’nant: Guisards got the Whigg’ (Dryden, *Works*, xiv 210, 11. 1–2). But Dryden distinguishes clearly between two types of parallel. While acknowledging that the tragedy is ‘a Parallel of…the Times’, he denies that there is ‘a Parallel of the Men (Vindication, in *Works*, xiv. 314). In particular, he refutes the charge, which was universally made, that the Duke of Guise represents the Duke of Monmouth. To meet the accusation, he discloses that in the early 1660s he had set out to compose a play about the French civil wars: ‘In the Year of His Majesty's Happy Restauration, the First Play I undertook was *The Duke of Guise*’ (xiv. 309). Although that juvenile draft remained ‘Unfinisht’, Dryden maintains that ‘The Scene of the Duke of Guise’s Return to Paris, AGAINST the King’s Positive Command’, which was identified by his enemies as the most glaring proof of the parallel, ‘was then written; I have the Copy of it still by me, almost the same which it now remains, being taken Verbatim out of Davila’ (xiv. 309). The controversial scene is thus at two removes from the reality of Monmouth’s defiant return to London in November 1679: not only is it closely based on a historical source, Davila’s *Historia delle Guerre Civili di Francia* (1630), but it was written (so Dryden claims) twenty years previously and hardly revised since. This may be the truth, but to present this episode from French history on the London stage in 1682 or 1683 could only be taken as a flagrant instance of partisan politics.
The Duke of Guise appeared in print in mid-February 1683. The names of both Dryden and Lee were displayed on the original title-page and under the dedicatory epistle. The text of the play was preceded by the two epilogues highlighting its joint authorship. None the less, the apparatus of the edition features a tension between the overt record of collaboration and the scattered hints that Dryden was the sole author. Although the double signature under the fervently loyal dedication formally confirms both the participation of Lee in the writing and his Tory sympathies, its validity is undermined by a curious inconsistency: half-way through the epistle the plural ‘we’ momentarily gives way to the singular ‘I’ (Works, xiv. 208, 11. 9–10). Moreover, the Advertisement affixed to the quarto announces Dryden’s single-handed reply to the ‘two scurrilous Libels lately printed’, whose authors ‘shall have a day or two thrown away upon them, though I break an old Custom for their sakes, which was to scorn them’ (xiv. 305).

The Vindication provided the most detailed account of a dramatic collaboration that had yet been written. Aware that ‘the Town did ignorantly call and take this to be my Play’ (xiv. 311), Dryden outlines the professional partnership with Lee which led to the writing first of Oedipus and, four years later, of The Duke of Guise. It was on Lee’s initiative, he emphasizes, that he became involved in the latter play:

And now since some People have been so busie as to cast out false and scandalous Surmises, how far we two agreed upon the Writing of it, I must do a common Right both to Mr. Lee and my self, to declare publickly that it was at his earnest Desire, without any Solicitation of mine, that this Play was produced betwixt us. After the writing of Oedipus, I pass’d a Promise to joyn with him in another; and he happen’d to claim the performance of that Promise, just upon the finishing of a Poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite before the undertaking of a second Task. The Person that pass’d betwixt us, knows this to be true; and Mr. Lee himself, I am sure, will not disown it: So that I did not ‘seduce him to joyn with me’ as the malicious Authors of the Reflections are pleas’d to call it; but Mr. Lee’s Loyalty is above so ridiculous a Slander. (Works, xiv. 310–11)
Dryden specifies his and Lee's shares, using markedly proprietorial terms: 'I shall not arrogate to my self the Merits of my Friend. Two thirds of it belong'd to him; and then to me only the First Scene of the Play; the whole Fourth Act, and the first half, or somewhat more of the Fifth' (xiv. 311). His opponents ascribed the whole play to Dryden in order to strengthen their charges of libel and treason; Dryden's response is to stress that he had written less of the play than Lee: 'my promise to honest Nat. Lee...was the only Bribe I had, to ingage me in this trouble; for which he has the good fortune to escape Scot-free, and I am left in pawn for the Reckoning, who had the least share in the Entertainment' (xiv. 321). In fact, as the California editors point out, the passages to which Dryden owns amount to substantially more than a third of the play.  

Well might Dryden understate his share, for the property in individual lines and scenes of the 'Entertainment' came to be seen as a crucial index of authorial intentions. The classic example is the couplet which Thomas Hunt remembered from performance and which he transcribed so as to enable 'some honest Judge or Justice' to 'direct a process against this bold impious man'. (Hunt's attack seems to have occasioned the omission of the couplet from the printed version of The Duke of Guise.) The two lines—'For Conscience, and Heavens fear, Religious rules | They are all State bells to toll in pious fools'—are emphatically disowned by Dryden: 'the Verses are not mine, but Mr. Lees' (xiv. 323). So is their intended meaning which can be verified solely by their rightful proprietor, Lee: 'I ask'd him concerning them, and have this account, that they were spoken by the Devil' (xiv. 323). Dryden affects the utmost caution in interpreting his partner's purpose. Only on the personal testimony of Lee, who, Dryden tells us, affirmed that the blasphemous speech was justified by its dramatic context, does he venture the further comment: 'what can either Whig or Devil say, more proper to their Character, than that Religion is only a Name' (xiv. 323).  

Dryden does not always hesitate to spell out the motives and designs of his partner. For instance, having disclaimed the historically spurious reference to Parisian juries as occurring in Lee's part of the play (III. 1. 57), he freely speculates on the topical motive for its inclusion: 'Perhaps he had a mind to bring the case a little nearer home' (Works, xiv. 347). Dryden finds himself veering uneasily between the 'we' and the 'I', between declaring an avowedly shared agenda—'Our intention therefore was to make the Play a Parallel'—and admitting its intrinsic contingency: 'it is almost unnecessary to say, It was not in my Thought; and as far as any one Man can vouch for another, I do believe it was as little in Mr. Lee's' (xiv. 314, 310). This difficulty of pinning down the authorial intentions in a collaborative play was triumphantly exploited by Dryden's adversary in the Reflections.
The fact that *The Duke of Guise* was a collaboration furnished the Reflector with a convenient starting-point for an assault on its politics and, more generally, on the invidious workings of the Tory propaganda machine. The pamphlet reviews the genesis of *The Duke of Guise*. It probes the manner and degree of cooperation between Dryden and Lee in their remodelling of Lee's previously silenced tragedy *The Massacre of Paris*. In the process, Dryden is accused of stealing from the unperformed play by his partner and of callously arrogating to himself the credit for their joint product, *The Duke of Guise*, prior to the complications which delayed its staging. Further, Dryden is charged with replacing the Whiggish and anti-Catholic politics of *The Massacre of Paris* with a hard Tory line in *The Duke of Guise*. This is branded a dangerous form of corruption and debasement.

Building on Hunt's earlier claim that Dryden's 'Province is to corrupt the manners of the Nation', the *Reflections* stigmatizes his alleged seduction of Lee as a glaring instance of Tory indoctrination, and highlights the threat it poses to the populace at large. The resulting contamination affects not only Lee's original text but the author himself, and thus warrants a denunciation of the collaboration as immoral:

**(p.169)** This Play, at first (as I am inform'd by some who have a nearer communication with the Poets and Players than I have) was written by another, intending to expose that unparallel'd Villany of the *Papists* in the most horrid Parisian Massacre...But...fallen from all Modesty and common Sense...[Bayes] is not content with his own devil-like Fall, but like old Satan, he tempts his Friend, poisons and perverts his good Intentions, and by his wicked Management of the Play, turns it from the honest Aim of the first Author, to so diabolical an End, as methinks it should make a Civil Government blush to suffer it, or not to put the highest mark of Infamy upon it. But 'tis observable, though this could not be acted as it was first writtent [sic] against the *Papists*, yet when it was turn'd upon Protestants it found Reception. (p. 2)

The alleged adulteration of Lee's play and of his staunch Whiggish intentions is troped as a hell-inspired contrivance, Dryden being figured as an aged fiend practising his wiles on an unsuspecting partner. The unregenerate Laureate thus combines the abysmal artistic incompetence of the Bayes of the *Rehearsal* with the viciousness of his own demonic scions, the evil counsellor Achitophel and Melanax, the devilish tempter in *The Duke of Guise*.78
The Reflector spoke truer than he knew when he castigated the inversion of *The Massacre* in *The Duke of Guise*. In the process of adapting sections of *The Massacre* for inclusion in the new play, Lee transferred a number of speeches from villains to heroes and vice versa. Guise's vow of revenge against the Admiral whom he construes as a rebel becomes a pledge to overthrow the king and those loyal to him. What in Charles are moral scruples about the planned massacre of the Huguenots become, in Henry, unmanly vacillation in the face of the treasonable plottings of the Leaguers. The sinister provocation of the Admiral by the Duke of Guise turns into an expression of righteous indignation at Guise's treachery when transferred to the upright Grillon, while the Admiral's profession of his patriotic aims is thoroughly subverted by its re-ascription to Guise. (p.170) Lee's extensive rewriting of *The Massacre of Paris* shows how unstable and contingent the political import of dramatic texts can be.

The Reflector persistently styles Lee 'the first Author'. He slyly insinuates that Dryden had rewritten *The Massacre*, without Lee's consent, imposing a political bias. Having erased the collaborative dimension of the play and established Dryden as its controlling agent, the Reflector confidently charges him with full responsibility for the political message of *The Duke of Guise*. He also stigmatizes Dryden's motives as mercenary, listing the financial advantages he stood to gain from the enterprise: a fee from his Tory masters, a gift from his patron, the Duke of York, and a commercial profit from the playhouse. In the process, collaboration emerges as a compromised and morally suspect mode of composition.

Refuting the attempts to burden him with the sole or principal responsibility for the play, Dryden pointed to its production history. 'I appeal, not only to my particular *Acquaintance*, but to the whole Company of *Actors*, who will witness for me', he says, 'that in all the *Rehearsals*, I never pretended to any *one Scene* of Mr. Lee's, but did him all imaginable Right, in his title to the *greater part* of it' (Vindication, in Works, xiv. 311). As we know from Colley Cibber's *Apology* (pp. 67–8), playwrights routinely read their scripts to the players and explained how they imagined the acting of specific parts. They also exercised some directorial functions at rehearsals. Dryden appears to imply that he and Lee read their own scenes to the company, and that they jointly assisted with rehearsals. Lee's involvement in the production process, however, proves neither that he was not Dryden's dupe nor that he fully subscribed to the political content of the play.
The effect of Dryden's apology is to equate collaboration with a lack of invention and inspiration. Aiming to appear an honorable and appreciative collaborator, Dryden rather awkwardly concedes that artistic inadequacy drove him to collaborate in the first place: ‘when ever I have own’d a farther Proportion [of *Oedipus*], let my Accusers speak: this was meant mischievously, to set us two at variance...When my Friends help my barren Fancy, I am thankful for it: I do not use to receive assistance, and afterwards ungratefully disown it’ (*Works*, xiv. 344–5).

Dryden also feels compelled to address the sensitive issues of his alleged theft of *The Massacre* and the ideological seduction of its author:

\[ \text{(p.171)} \]

but the Accusation, that this Play was once written by another, and then ‘twas call’d the Parisian Massacre: Such a Play, I have heard indeed was written; but I never saw it. Whether this be any of it or no, I can say no more, than for my own part of it.... But that I tempted my Friend to alter it, is a notorious Whiggism, to save the broader Word. (*Works*, xiv. 343)

Besides the flat denial of both ‘Whiggisms’, Dryden claims, as we have seen, to have incorporated his own earlier draft of a play about Guise and the French Holy League into the tragedy he wrote with Lee. With a tidy symmetry, Dryden's early draft matches Lee's *The Massacre of Paris* as a dramatic source for *The Duke of Guise*, save that his juvenile script is said to have been abandoned for aesthetic, not political, reasons: ‘It was Damn’d in Private, by the Advice of some Friends to whom I shew’d it; who freely told me, that it was an Excellent Subject; but not so Artificially wrought, as they could have wish’d’ (xiv. 309).

Dryden's defence rests finally on two points: the exceptional faithfulness of *The Duke of Guise* to its historical source and the innate corruption of his Whig attackers. Earlier in his career, as we have seen, he had insisted on the poet's freedom to depart from historical fact, provided that the new storyline did not violate decorum and probability. In the *Vindication*, Dryden reverses his earlier pronouncements. He now maintains that ‘where the Action is Remarkable, and the very words Related, the Poet is not at liberty to change them much’ (xiv. 309).

\[ \text{(p.172)} \]

He recalls that when *The Duke of Guise* was first prohibited, he appealed to the Lord Chamberlain to carry out a comparative analysis of the play and its source, ‘leaving Davila (the Original) with his Lordship’ (xiv. 310). ‘That which perfectly destroys this pretended Parallel [between Guise and Monmouth], he contends, ‘is that our Picture of the Duke of Guise is exactly according to the Original in the History, his Actions, his Manners; nay, sometimes his very Words, are so justly copied, that whoever has read him in Davila, sees him the same here’ (xiv. 313).
Davila’s words were not ‘so justly copied’ throughout. There were substantial deviations from the official source which called for explanation. Dryden’s answer is to retreat behind the neoclassical concepts of decorum, propriety, and probability. The most overt application of dramatic rules à la Rymer occurs in his justification of the character of Henry III. As Dryden well knew, and as Hunt and company were quick to point out, the historical prototype of the king was a villainous, dissolute, and degenerate individual. Yet in the play his failings have been much attenuated. This metamorphosis provoked allegations that Charles II was shadowed under Henry’s character, a parallel Dryden would never willingly own:

> We were indeed oblig’d by the Laws of Poetry, to cast into Shadows the vices of this Prince [Henry III]; for an Excellent Critique has lately told us, that when a KING is nam’d, a HEROE is suppos’d...But if we were more favourable to that Character than the exactness of History would allow, we have been far from diminishing a Greater, by drawing it into comparison. (Works, xiv. 316–17)

Instead, he disingenuously appeals to the rule of decorum which Rymer invoked in his damning appraisal of the kings in *The Maid’s Tragedy* and *A King and No King*.

There was another historical inaccuracy which, Dryden’s enemies pointed out, likewise heightened the parallel with the situation at home: the presentation of the French ‘Commons’ as the sole signatories of the bill excluding Navarre from the throne. In defence of it Dryden enlists a Horatian critical dictum, ‘ne quarta loqui persona laboret’, arguing that he is ‘unwilling to cumber the Stage with many Speakers’. Here the critical argument breaks down as the political takes over: ‘And what if I had a mind to pass over the Clergy and Nobility of France in silence, and to excuse them from joyning in so illegal and so ungodly a Decree?’ Questioning his own earlier claim that serious drama should closely adhere to historical sources, Dryden exclaims: ‘Am I ty’d in Poetry, to the strict rules of History? I have follow’d it in this Play more closely, than suited with the Laws of the Drama’ (xiv. 318). By saying this, Dryden as good as admits that artistic considerations have been subordinated to a political agenda.
Dryden imaginatively redirects the charge of wrongful appropriation of *The Massacre of Paris* by impugning the Whigs for politically motivated plagiarism. Harold Ogden White has noted the classical precedent for the use of ‘charges of plagiarism as ammunition in racial or religious warfare’. According to White, the practice involved ‘asserting] the priority of [a] race or cult…and…minimizing] all others by denying them originality, holding them up as copyists and thieves’.\(^8\) Dryden does precisely that in order to deprecate Whig political doctrine and practice. He creatively redeployes the concept of the political parallel by aligning it with the theme of English cultural inferiority. This theme had been sounded again and again in plays, prologues, epilogues, and other poetical ephemera, and involved the criticism and ridicule of the English susceptibility to foreign, especially French, tastes and fashions. Those who countenance jaded Whiggish schemes and policies, Dryden intimates, are no better than Frenchified fops, snobbish coquettes, and audiences craving French-style entertainments.

In proclaiming *The Duke of Guise* a triple parallel, Dryden's prologue mocks the slavish copying of French politics by the Whigs, and likens its impact to the equally unwarranted appeal of degenerate French fashions:

> Whate'er our hot-brain'd Sheriffs did advance,  
> Was, like our Fashions, first produc'd in France:  
> And, when worn out, well scourg'd, and banish'd there,  
> Sent over, like their godly Beggars here.  
> *(Works, xiv. 210, 11. 3–6)*

The idea of English cultural inferiority recurs in the *Vindication*, which juxtaposes the two capital cities: Paris, the centre of anti-monarchical activity, and London, the backwater servilely aping that seditious metropolis: ‘I need not inlarge on this Relation, 'tis evident…that the *Sorbonists* were the *Original*, and our *Schismatiques* in *England*, were the *Copiers of Rebellion*; that *Paris* began, and *London* *(p.174)* follow'd’ *(xiv. 337)*. According to Dryden, the deep Whig resentment of Roger L'Estrange, the chief Stuart propagandist and creator of the *Observator*, is due primarily to Sir Roger's relentless exposure of their ignoble political thefts: ‘The quarrel of the Party to him, is that he has *undeceiv'd* the ignorant, and laid open the shameful contrivances of the *new vampt Association* …that in short, he has left the Faction as bare of *Arguments*, as *Aesops Bird* of feathers; and plum'd them of all those fallacies and evasions which they borrowed from *Jesuits* and *Presbyterians*’ *(xiv. 342)*. The equivalence of political and literary theft is here exemplified by the image of Aesop's crow, a standard allegory for a plagiaristic poet. L'Estrange looms as a Lang-baine-like plagiary-hunter dedicated to documenting the purloined materials so as to discredit illicit Whig appropriators.
The reception and transmission of *The Duke of Guise* offer significant insights into the use of sources and the perils of collaboration. The reasons for the collaboration (glossed over by Dryden) are not hard to divine: Lee's *The Massacre of Paris* had been suppressed before performance and his *The Princess of Cleve* had failed. Consequently he had materials that he was eager to reuse or cannibalize, and he clearly hoped that Dryden’s position as Poet Laureate and active Tory propagandist would make the acceptance of their jointly written play easier. Dryden, for his part, must have recognized that involving a collaborator widely known for Whiggish sympathies would be both a formidable blow at the Whigs and a clever defence against political recrimination. In political terms, from Dryden’s point of view, the play worked: if not a tragic masterpiece, it did serve the purpose of blasting Monmouth and riling the Whigs.

In 1689, six years after the publication of *The Duke of Guise*, and one year after the ‘Glorious’ Revolution and his release from Bedlam where he had been confined since 1684, Lee made arrangements to reclaim some of his material by printing *The Princess of Cleve*. That edition omitted Dryden’s original prologue and epilogue (the two were first printed in Dryden’s *Miscellany Poems* of 1684). Instead, Lee himself wrote a new prologue and epilogue signalling his political conversion with an extravagant tribute to William. Lee’s calculated erasure of his association with Dryden (and Dryden’s Tory politics) is made manifest in the dedication he addressed to the Earl of Dorset, the newly appointed Lord Chamberlain. Lee admits to having woven lines from *The Massacre of Paris* into both *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise*, but says nothing about his partner in the latter. In the new political climate, Lee symbolically extricates himself from the collaboration with Dryden by soliciting (and obtaining) permission to stage *The Massacre of Paris* ‘in its first Figure’:

> the Duke of Guise...has wrested two whole Scenes from the Original, which after the Vacation he will be forc’d to pay. I was, I confess, through Indignation, forc’d to limb my own Child, which Time, the true Cure for all Maladies, and Injustice has set together again. The Play cost me much pains, the Story is true, and I hope the Object will display Treachery in its own Colours. (Lee, *Works*, ii. 153)

With the passages that went into *The Duke of Guise* both literally and metaphorically reclaimed, Lee’s joint venture with Dryden is retrospectively eradicated and *The Massacre of Paris* returns to its original, untainted, pre-collaborative state.
The play received its belated première in the autumn of 1689, and was attended by the queen and her Maids of Honour on 7 November. Lee’s success in exploiting the anti-Catholic potential of his tragedy at the time of escalating persecution of the Huguenots in France was attested by a contemporary writer’s suggestive comparison: ‘there were more weeping eyes in the Church, than there were at the first acting of Mr. Lee’s Protestant Play, _The Massacre of Paris_.’ It is thus no small irony that the revival of 1716 precipitated by the recent Jacobite rising advertised the play as ‘The Duke of Guise; or, The Massacre of Paris’ (Dryden, _Works_, xiv. 477 n.).

The original _Duke of Guise_ could not, however, be altogether written out of existence. Though excluded from the repertory, it was easily available in print. The second edition was published in 1687; two more editions followed in 1699. Contemporary cataloguers, Langbaine, Gildon, and Jacob, methodically recorded _The Duke of Guise_ as a collaboration. In opposition to the emerging literary critical trend towards a more scrupulous attribution of collaborative plays, political concerns perpetuated false assumptions about the composition of _The Duke of Guise_. In a speech prompted by Walpole’s notorious Licensing Bill of 1737, Lord Chesterfield recalled events now almost sixty years old:

> (p.176) when the Exclusion Bill was moved in Parliament, he [Dryden, the Poet Laureat of that Reign] wrote his _Duke of Guise_, in which those who were for preserving and securing the Religion of their Country, were exposed under the Character of the Duke of Guise and his Party, who leagued together, for excluding Henry IV. of France from the Throne, on account of his Religion.

With the memory of the play as an outrageous case of Tory propaganda persisting well into the eighteenth century, _The Duke of Guise_ continued to be ascribed to Dryden alone.

The Attribution of Collaborative Plays
What distinguishes collaborative playwriting in the post–Restoration era from that of the Renaissance is the social, political, and critical visibility which it achieved in spite of the sharp fall in the number of actual collaborations. Printed editions of early modern plays as a rule suppress or misrepresent their collaborative provenance; hence, save for the evidence gleaned from manuscript sources such as Henslowe's diary, Herberts papers, the Stationers' Register, legal records, or private correspondence, and the attributions made on a few printed title-pages, we would remain largely unaware of the complex and plural efforts that went into the making of Renaissance scripts. Conversely, throughout the Restoration we may discern a growing tendency towards clear acknowledgement of, and debate about, collaborative playwriting in printed testimonials by authors, political pamphleteers, and critics. This foregrounding of individual shares in collaborative plays at once reflected, and contributed to, the recognition of the author as owner of the portions of text which he or she had composed.

Late seventeenth-century attitudes to collaboration did not develop teleologically. Rather, they were subject to social, political, and aesthetic contingencies. As the example of the English Oedipus demonstrates, the canonical status of the dramatic source could be decisive in fuelling critical controversy and focusing attention on the advantages and hazards of collaborative playwriting. The mixed reception of The Duke of Guise brings out the political and practical motives that might induce writers to collaborate. Under pressure from politically based polemic, Dryden felt compelled to provide a detailed account of his partnership with Lee. This account was accorded notice and authority by contemporary critics, cataloguers, and anthologists. It thereby filtered through to the general reading public and imparted the sense that stretches of text may be owned by their makers.

The inclination to attribute particular passages from collaborative works to individual authors is vividly displayed in Edward Bysshe's The Art of English Poetry, the second section of which comprises 'A Collection of the most Natural, Agreeable and Sublime THOUGHTS...to be found in the best English POETS'. In the preface Bysshe explains his rationale for attribution of anthologized passages:
That the Reader may judge of every Passage with due Deference for each Author, he will find their Names at the End of the last Line...I have sometimes ascrib’d to several Authors the Quotations taken from one and the same Play. Thus to those from the first and third Act of Oedipus, I have put Dryden; to those from the three other, Lee: Because the first and third Act of that Play were written by Dryden, the three other by Lee. To those from Troilus and Cressida I have sometimes put Shakespear, sometimes Dryden; because he having alter’d that Play, whatever I found not in the Edition of Shakespear, ought to be ascrib’d to him. And in like manner of several other Plays.

Accordingly, under the head ‘ASTONISHMENT’ Bysshe cites the following ‘Sublime THOUGHT’: ‘My Soul runs back; | The Wards of Reason roul into their Spring’ (i. 23, second pagination; see Fig. 6). The adjacent marginal note identifies the passage as originating in ‘Lee D. of Guise’. Some forty pages on, a couplet included under the rubric ‘CLOUDS’ reads: ‘The Rack of Clouds is driving on the Wind, | And shews a Break of Sunshine’ (i. 62, second pagination). It is marginally glossed as ‘Dryd. D. of Guise’. In his The Complete Art of Poetry of 1718, likewise apportioned lines from The Duke of Guise (and Oedipus) to either Dryden or Lee on the strength of Dryden’s testimony in the Vindication. Bysshe’s and Gildon’s attributions illustrate the belief that putting words on paper creates property, or that drafting even a part of a play confers ownership upon the writer.

Late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century critics, dramatic cataloguers, and compilers of anthologies were manifestly uncomfortable about collaborative works. They took collaboration to be a sign of creative insufficiency on the part of those who engaged in it, and indicted the lack of artistic unity characteristic of jointly written plays. Given the hostility of critical opinion towards collaboration (especially of the professional sort), the decision of Dryden and Lee to work together on the two plays we have discussed is surprising. Oedipus is the odder case, for there were good political reasons for Dryden and Lee to collaborate on The Duke of Guise and to publicize that collaboration. The rationale for collaborating on Oedipus was probably the desire of two writers of different skills to join their talents to create a ‘better’ play. But Dryden might not have invited Lee to participate had the venture not involved appropriation on a grand scale: Oedipus is an adaptation, not an ‘original’ composition even in the late seventeenth-century sense of that word.
Collaboration

Critics were ambivalent about whether playwrights should adhere closely to celebrated sources or whether they ought to depart radically from them in the service of art and originality. Dryden’s motive for underlining the fidelity of The Duke of Guise to history is to disguise the presence of partisan material. As a rule, however, adapters stress their fresh contributions and aesthetic improvements, even as they strive to capitalize on the famous source or sources they have altered. Their contradictory claims create an unresolved and unresolvable tension.

The parallel between attitudes towards appropriation and those towards collaboration is salient. Both sets of opinion reflect a growing esteem for solitary and independent composition. Both reflect, too, an increasing regard for unity of concept and style as a distinguishing mark of literary merit. But where appropriation continues to find its defenders, hardly anything good is said about collaboration. When Dryden tried to justify working with Lee on The Duke of Guise without admitting political motives, the best he could do was confess to lack of imagination, inspiration, and creativity. And when in 1704 Congreve, Walsh, and Vanbrugh jointly supplied Squire (p.179) looby, a free translation of Molière’s Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, they ingly refrained from publishing it.94 The growing demand for iginality’ and solo authorship was even clearer in the realm of laboration than it was in the realm of appropriation. By the 1680s, laboration implied inadequacy and failure.

Notes:
(2) Volpone or The Fox, ibid., 230, 11
(3) ‘Beaumont and/or Fletcher. ‘Collaboration’, Masten writes, ‘is a dispersal of authority, rather than a simple doubling of it’ (p. 634). For a perceptive discussion of the changing meanings of the word ‘individual’ in early seventeenth-century England see Stallybrass, ‘Shakespeare, the Individual, and the Text’.


(6) D. F. McKenzie has emphasized the importance of the social and material conditions in which texts are made and transmitted in his *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, The Panizzi Lectures 1985 (London: British Library, 1986), and ‘Bibliography and History: Seventeenth-Century England’, The Lyell Lectures (University of Oxford, 1988). I am grateful to Professor McKenzie for giving me a typescript of those lectures.

(7) For example, Gordon McMullan—abandoning his earlier claim that it is necessary to attribute shares to individual collaborators before interpretation can proceed (*Politics of Unease*, 149–54) — criticizes current methods of authorial attribution in "Our Whole Life is Like a Play": Collaboration and the Problem of Editing*, Textus*, 9 (1996), 437–60. He contends that ‘it is essential to acknowledge that collaboration is the paradigmatic mode of textual production’, and that ‘the narrow and broad senses of the term [collaboration] are finally inseparable’ (p. 454).

(8) Bentley, *Profession of Dramatist*, 197 et passim; Orgel, ‘What is a Text?’; Masten, ‘Beaumont and/or Fletcher’.

(9) Bentley, *Profession of Dramatist*, 197–263

(11) Bentley himself, however, was careful to note that collaboration, though popular under Elizabeth and James, ‘falls off somewhat [in the days of Charles I]’ (Profession of Dramatist, 199). Figures included in my Appendix A demonstrate the fluctuations in the proportion of collaborative plays in the period from 1590 to 1720. With respect to revision of scripts for revival, Roslyn Lander Knutson has argued convincingly that the practice was not as common, at the turn of the sixteenth century, as earlier scholars had assumed: see her ‘Henslowe’s Diary and the Economics of Play Revision for Revival, 1592-1603’, Theatre Research International, 10 (1985), 1-18.


(14) Individual acts of the play circulated in manuscript prior to the première, but neither the identity of the contributors nor their shares in the translation were common knowledge. ‘I have laid out several ways to get a Copy’, Katherine Philips wrote to ‘Poliarchus’, ‘but cannot yet procure one, except only of the first Act that was done by Mr. Waller. Sir Edward Filmore did one, and my Lord Buckhurst another; but who the fifth I cannot learn, pray inform your self as soon as you can, and let me know it’ (Letters, 112–13). In the dedication of An Essay of Dramatick Poesie to Buckhurst, Dryden credits his patron with ‘the fourth Act of Pompey’ (Works, xvii. 3).
Buckingham (generally credited as the ‘author’) was said to have received suggestions and help with composition from several friends and dependants, among them Bishop Sprat, Edmund Waller, Samuel Butler, and Martin Clifford, over a period of years. Martin Clifford and Bishop Sprat are named in the ‘1668 Session of the Poets’ as contributors to a ‘Play Tripartite’. See Bodleian MS Don b. 8 as printed in Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660–1714, 7 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963–75), vol. i, 1660–1678, ed. George de F. Lord, pp. 327–37, stanza 4. An anonymous poem ‘On the Duke of Bucks’ refers to the ‘Help of Pimps, Plays, and Table Chat’, and again names Sprat and Clifford: Poems on Affairs of State from the Reign of K. James the First, to this Present Year 1703. Volume II ([London], 1703), 216–17. Anthony a Wood names Clifford and Sprat, and adds Samuel Butler (Athenae Oxonienses, iv. 209). For a general comment on the circumstances and nature of composition see A Key to the Rehearsal printed by Samuel Briscoe (London, 1704), in George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, The Second Volume of Miscellaneous Works, Written by George, Late Duke of Buckingham, ed. Thomas Brown (London, 1705). Waller is reported to have contributed to both Pompey the Great and The Rehearsal in the anonymous ‘Account of the Life and Writings of Edmond Waller, Esq’ prefaced to his Poems, &c. Written upon several Occasions, And to several Persons.... The Eighth Edition, with Additions (London, 1711): ‘He set a great Value on Comeille’s Plays, and joyn’d with the Lord Buckhurst in the Translation of his Pompey’ (p. xlix); ‘It is said he had a Hand in the Rehearsal, with Mr. Clifford, Mr. Cowley, and some other Wits’ (p. xlvi).


Fane’s A Mask. Made at the Request of the late Earl of Rochester, for the Tragedy of Valentinian was published in Poems by Several Hands, and on Several Occasions (London, 1685)

In a letter of 7 Apr. 1676, Howard thanks Rochester for ‘the sceen you are pleased to write’ (The Letters of John Wilmot Earl of Rochester, ed. Jeremy Treglown (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 116). The scene survives in two manuscript versions, BL Add. MS 28692, fos. 70–5, and Folger MS V.b. 233. Howard never completed The Conquest of China; c.1697 he passed the unfinished draft to Dryden, who intended to alter it for his benefit (Dryden, Letters, 93). Dryden died without having made the necessary revisions.
(19) William bestowed songs, stretches of dialogue, prologues, and epilogues on his wife’s published plays, and his share of the writing was acknowledged by her.

(20) It was subsequently reprinted in Howard’s *Five New Plays* (London, 1692). Neither collection made any reference to a contribution by Dryden, and contemporaries clearly thought of the play as Howard’s. See Phillips, *Theatrum*, 163; Winstanley, *Lives*, 188; Langbaine, *Account*, 276. *The Indian Queen* was first printed as Dryden’s in the collected edition of his works introduced by Congreve in 1717; it soon reappeared in Howard’s *Dramatic Works* in 1722.

(21) In Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, *Plays, Never Before Printed* (London, 1668), they are signalled by slip-cancels which, as James Fitzmaurice has shown, were inserted into several copies of the book at the Duchess’s request. See his ‘Margaret Cavendish on her own Writing: Evidence from Revision and Handmade Correction’, *PBSA* 85 (1991), 297–307, at 305. Margaret Cavendish’s distinction between her own and her husband’s contributions may have been influenced by a similar distinction made by her stepdaughters, Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, in a manuscript containing their ‘Pastoral’ and a play called ‘The concealed Fansyes’. That document has marginal notes which identify some passages of the ‘Pastoral’ as written by ‘J.C.’, others by ‘E.B.’ (see MS. Rawl. Poet. 16 in the Bodleian Library). No such annotation accompanies the text of ‘The concealed Fansyes’.

(22) *Youths Glory, and Deaths Banquet*, Part II, in *Playes* (London, 1662), IV. xii; pp. 173

(23) *The Lady Contemplation*, Part I, IV. xx; p. 203

(24) *The Unnatural Tragedy*, pp. 324

(25) In the dedication of *Aureng-Zebe* (1676) to the Earl of Mulgrave, Dryden acknowledges the corrections made by the aristocratic recipient and the advice bestowed by the king (*Works*, xii. 155); in the preface to *The Husband his Own Cuckold* by his son, John Dryden, Jr., he acknowledges revision by its dedicatee, Sir Robert Howard (sigs. A3v–A4r).

(26) *Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, 274–6

(28) Congreve’s comments are preserved in a letter to Trotter written in 1703, where he says: ‘you see madam I am as free as you Command me to be and yet my objections are none but such as you may provide against even while you are writing the dialogue’; the text of the letter will be appearing in The Works of William Congreve, ed. D. F. McKenzie, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, forthcoming). According to Downes, The Revolution of Sweden, which opened at the Haymarket on 11 Feb. 1706, was not a success (Downes, 102).

(29) ‘On the Death of the most Illustrious Princess, the Lady Dutchess of NEWCASTLE. An Epitaph’, in Letters and Poems In Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Dutchess of Newcastle (London, 1676), 177

(30) In an ‘Advertisement’ prefixed to the play, Gay wrote: ‘I must farther own the Assistance I have receiv’d in this Piece from two of my Friends; who, tho’ they will not allow me the Honour of having their Names join’d with mine, cannot deprive me of the Pleasure of making this Acknowledgment’ (sig. A2r).

(31) This vision of Renaissance collaboration survived, with only slight modifications, well into the eighteenth century in such compilations as Jacob’s Poetical Register (1719), John Mottley’s A Compleat List Of all the English Dramatic Poets (1747; see n. 35 below), and the Cibber-Shiels The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, 5 vols. (London 1753).

(32) D. E. McKenzie (‘Bibliography and History’)

(33) ‘On Mr. John Fletchers Workes’, in Beaumont and Fletcher, Comedies and Tragedies, sig. b1v.

(34) One of the earliest transpositions of Denham’s trope from verse into prose appears in Richard Flecknoe’s A Short Discourse of the English Stage, appended to his Love’s Kingdom (1664): ‘To compare our English Dramatick Poets together (without taxing them) Shakespear excelled in a natural Vein, Fletcher’ in Wit, and Johnson in Gravity and ponderousness of Style; whose onely fault was, he was too elaborate; and had he mixt less erudition with his Playes, they had been more pleasant and delightful then they are. Comparing him with Shakespear, you shall see the difference betwixt Nature and Art; and with Fletcher’, the difference betwixt Wit and Judgement: Wit being an exuberant thing, like Nilus, never more commendable then when it overflows, but Judgement a stayed and reposed thing, always containing it self within its bounds and limits’ (sig. G6r). Elsewhere in his treatise Flecknoe refers to Beaumont and Flecher as one, as when he says: ‘For Playes, Shakespear was one of the first, who inverted the Dramatick Stile, from dull History to quick Comedy, upon whom Johnson refin’d, as Beaumont and Fletcher’ first writ in the Heroick way’ (sig. G5r), or ‘Beaumont and Fletcher’ were excellent in their kinde, but they most err’d against Decorum (sig. G6r).

(36) *FletcherTheatrum*, 42

(37) See 'To my Cousin Mr. Charles Cotton' (part of which poem Langbaine transcribes in the *Account*, 218); 'An Epitaph on Mr. John Fletcher, and Mr. Philip Massinger'; and 'To Mr. Humphrey Mosley, and Mr. Humphrey Robinson', in *A Chain of Golden Poems Embellished with Wit, Mirth, and Eloquence* (London, 1658).

(38) 'Preface, Giving Some Account of the Authors and their Writings', in *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont and Mr. John Fletcher*, 7 vols. (London, 1711), vol. i, p. xxvii


(40) *ibid.*, vol. i, pp. v–lxxiv


(44) *Impartial Critick*, in *Critical Works*, i. 19

(45) 'Letter V. Wherein are laid down Rules to judge of *Tragedy* and *Comedy*', in *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*, ed. Abel Boyer (London, 1701), 236

(46) *Antient and Modern Stages Survey'd*, 137–8


(48) 'the Authors of the *English Oedipus*' (pp. 138, 147

(49) 'Remarks on the Plays of Shakespear', in *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, vii. 429

(50) Gildon (or perhaps one of his less knowledgeable assistants), in *Lives*, 46
(51) A Short View of the Immorality, and Profaneness of the English Stage (London, 1698), 108


(53) Making of the National Poet, 100

(54) ‘Beaumont and/or Fletcher’, 632

(55) Oedipus...As Performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane (London, 1791), p. vii


(60) Wilson, ‘Theatre Notes’, 81

(61) Works, xiv. 497

(62) The line alludes to the recent merger of the King's and the Duke's companies and the creation of the United Company.

(63) A Defence of the Charter, and Municipal Rights of the City of London (London, [1682]), 28–9

(64) Sol in opposition to Saturn. Or A short return to a late Tragedy call'd The Duke of Guise (London, 1683)

(65) The Unbiass'd Satyr: Or Reflections On Manners (London, 1683), 13


(70) Hunt’s *Defence of the Charter*Some ReflectionsTrue History

(71) Headnote in *Works*, xiv. 480. See also Harth, *Pen for a Party*, 189.

(72) *Works*, xiv. 548–9


(74) *Some Reflections*, 5

(75) I shall argue elsewhere that the attribution of *Some Reflections* to Thomas Shadwell and a lawyer whose name is unknown, made on the basis of Dryden’s *Vindication*, is unfounded.


(77) *Defence of the Charter*, 30
Achitophel, Malicorne, and Melanax are all satirical likenesses of the Earl of Shaftesbury. On Achitophel see Harth, *Pen for a Party*, 118–28; on the other two, see Rachel A. Miller, ‘Political Satire in the Malicorne–Melanax Scenes of *The Duke of Guise*’, ELN 16 (1979), 212–18.


Dryden reiterated his liberal conception of dramatic uses of history in the preface to *Don Sebastian* (1690), ‘This ground–work the History afforded me, and I desire no better to build a Play upon it: For where the event of a great action is left doubtful, there the Poet is left Master: He may raise what he pleases on that foundation, provided he makes it of a piece, and according to the rule of probability’ (*Works*, xv. 68). He would resort to the pretense of close reliance on history yet again in *Cleomenes*, which was temporarily banned from performance, by having Thomas Creech’s translation of Plutarch’s *Life of Cleomenes* prefixed to the published text.


Rymer’s *Tragedies of the Last Age* (1678), in *Critical Works*, 42

*Some Reflections*, 6–8

Ars Poetica, 1. 192 (Loeb. trans.: ‘nor let a fourth actor essay to speak’), in Dryden, *Works*, xiv. 545.

*Plagiarism and Imitation*, 14


*The E—— of C —— F——D's Speech in the H—— se of L——ds, against the Bill For Licencing all Dramatic Performances* (Dublin, 1749), 12–13


Dryden, *Works*, xiv. i. ii. 4–5

‘The wrack of Clouds is driving on the Winds, And shows a break of Sun–shine’ (IV. i. 121–2)

(94) In a letter written on 20 May 1704 Congreve admits that Vanbrugh and Walsh also a part in it. Each did an act of a French farce. Mine, and I believe theirs, was done in mornings; so there can be no great matter in it. It was a compliment made to the ple of quality at their subscription music, without any design to have it acted or printed ner’ (forthcoming in Congreve, *Works*, ed. McKenzie) The version printed as *Monsieur Pourceaugnac, or, Squire Trelooby* (1704), though indebted in some respects to that which eared on the stage, is a distinct translation by John Ozell. The text of a 1734 revival, d on Vanbrugh’s 1706 revision and further edited by James Ralph, was published as *The nish Squire* (1734) and attributed on the title-page to Vanbrugh.