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The Second Pen

Nicholas D. Brennan
CUNY Hunter College

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The Second Pen

by

Nicholas Brennan

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Date

Gavin Hollis

Signature

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Date

Cristina Leòn Alfar

Signature of Second Reader

The Second Pen

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
 Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
 Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
 'Twas mine, 'tis his and has been slave to thousands.
 But he that filches from me my good name
 Robs me of that which not enriches him
 And makes me poor indeed.

Iago, *Othello* (3.3.160-167)

Quite possibly, Shakespeare never transcribed his greatest tragedy. It could very well be his own death. His may represent the death toward which his tragedies were all working, for little remains to indicate his labors as a playwright were heading towards anything else but that most common of ends. The extant documents attributed to Shakespeare's hand rather deflect searches for underlying motives in any of his writing, for they consistently disparage the validity of faithfully pursuing the motives of another. These documents are largely limited to his drama and poetry, which feature characters who exhaust the possibilities for reliably deducing intent. In effect, the most direct accounts of Shakespeare's activity limit searches for his underlying motives to contradiction. If Shakespeare left personal narratives behind for posterity, they appear not to have withstood the test of time. In effect, Shakespeare's grave continues to rob scholars of any conclusive word on the original concerns of his masterpieces. The deaths in Shakespearean tragedy may only pale in comparison to that of their creator. Collectively, they culminate in his final bow.

Erasing the definitive authority on Shakespeare's life from the face of the earth— forever silencing the only voice capable of satisfactorily supplementing the dearth of autobiographical records from this playwright— Shakespeare's death has turned Shakespeare's paper trail into little

more than a dead end, the quintessence of dust, at best. His writing may do little more than mirror the natures of those who behold it. Denying critics the opportunity to analyze Shakespearean literature with reference to its writer outside this literature, Shakespeare's death has confined his literature to endless reenactments of the conflicts it stages. Consequently, the meanings of many cornerstones in the canon of English literature have effectively been left up to the mad world, including yours truly, whose lack of reflexivity these works frequently bemoan. This situation has proven as much a curse as a blessing, a reader's nightmare as much as the critic's never-ending dream. Lacking explicit documentation from Shakespeare regarding his approach to playwriting, the world may hardly presume Shakespeare sought either fame or fortune through his playwriting. The frequency with which his rival and colleague, Ben Jonson, fell in and out of favor with both the royal court and that of public opinion offers reason to divest Shakespeare of any realistic expectations to attain either. Then again, given the virtual absence of documentation regarding Shakespeare's intent, even denials of his intent must remain matters of speculation.

Nevertheless, the tragedy of Shakespeare's death, in spite of apparently obscuring his heart of hearts for all-time, provides all the more reason to give Shakespeare a good name. Although Shakespeare's death seems to have petrified his life's ostensible neglect for securing his historical identity as a writer, Shakespeare's genius, for this reason, remains unlimited, open to anyone and everyone, no matter the name, actor and audience alike. Furthermore, Shakespeare's obscured history leaves his characters to speak on his behalf, and a good name is the most they ever really ask for, as may be indicated by the above epigraph. Granting Shakespeare a good name may be but the least we can do for them, given all the hearts they've moved over the years; yet Shakespeare's drama appears to have requested nothing more. As the endings of *The Life of Timon of Athens*, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, and *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

may suggest, his characters believe that a person's death should culminate in a generous, however incommensurate, commemoration of that person in name.

So this service I will do these characters. I will uphold their father's good name. Surely, faithfully preserving someone's memory necessitates holding that person to what remains of his or her scripts for performing this general act. By echoing Shakespeare's characters in my efforts to echo Shakespeare, I may hopefully allude to their centrality to his legacy, especially as I may thusly corroborate the intimacy between life and drama they frequently, if not characteristically, intimate. However, I will not simply give Shakespeare the benefit of the doubt; I will do my damndest to provide a balanced portrait of extant historical documentation surrounding historical appearances of his name in upholding this. Still, there remains a degree of generosity in my doing so. I will reflect Shakespeare through one of his writing's greatest strengths: its commitment to providing balanced portraits of topics. I will reflect his writing's character in both the content and the form of this paper, hopefully to reflect a hint of the art distinguishing Shakespearean drama. In lieu of the relative absence of autobiographical accounts by Shakespeare, I may not be able to provide anything beyond a general sketch of the basic mechanics of Shakespeare's authorial activity as an Early Modern English playwright. I may only approach him through the use of his name by others. But so, I may hold Shakespeare's representation accountable to his characters' standards for posthumous representation; for his name may thusly indicate its distance from his historical person in gesturing toward this. Enabling his representation to create this distance will also encourage others to continue to supplement my representation of him, or represent Shakespeare via his characters' emphasis on preserving good names even further.

I will ground the act of upholding Shakespeare's name, by which I mean providing a balanced portrait of his name's history, in the act of literally giving him a "good name." Offering

another moniker for Shakespeare may support my aforementioned purpose of providing a balanced portrait of this playwright, for it will represent him through the vantage of his typically peripheral characters, his fools, while limiting and de-limiting the power of his fools and him. Giving Shakespeare a “good name” will mime a central means of his fools’ poignancy: their fondness for taking the figurative literally. Doing so may also allow me to simultaneously represent his functioning both during his life and after his death. Principally representing Shakespeare through a moniker will allow me to acknowledge his grandiose differentiation from humanity in many of his posthumous appropriations while simultaneously recognizing the self-alienation this has prompted and continues to foster. By leveling Shakespeare to a moniker, I may implicate Shakespeare in the trivializations of culture which British colonial education consistently used him to prompt, and which post-colonial writers continue to struggle with. Refusing to turn Shakespeare into more than an idea would detach him from the form he assumed in British colonial education and render his person irresponsible to his involvement in a long history of dehumanization, a suggestion I am not willing to make. I believe that reimagining Shakespeare for the sole purpose of returning him to humanity would be to negate that very purpose. However, principally associating Shakespeare with a moniker may also allow me to return his idea to its prior humanity. Representing Shakespeare’s present transcendental status through a moniker will turn his self-alienation against its prior purposes of elevation. Anyways, what’s in a name?

A coin, perchance. This idea, at least with regards to Shakespeare’s name, holds currency even to this day. I believe The Royal Mint would back me up on this idea. This year, in order to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s passing, the Royal Mint was “proud to present a series of three £2 Shakespeare coins that capture the essence of his moving tragedies,

his brilliant histories, and the genius of his comedies” (“400th”). This English institution blatantly invests the coin with the ability to grant Shakespeare’s name a life of its own; it authenticates such a body with the privilege of raising and preserving, if not circulating, his name. Furthermore, Shakespeare’s dramatic portrayal of money has proven a principal means by which his franchise has secured its relevancy in contemporary society. This has allowed his name to become as famous as Karl Marx’s theory of money; for this theory culminates in a reading of *Timon of Athen*’s notorious voiding of gold, while it substitutes Shakespeare’s name for that of Timon in presenting these lines (“Preface,” *Economic* 60). Given the manner in which Marx incorporates Shakespeare into his theory, Shakespeare’s word figures as good as the gold Marx has him renounce. Shakespeare functions somewhat like “exchange-value itself” (“Chapter Three,” *Capital* 8), for Marx exchanges labor he would otherwise have to perform in his analysis of money for labor Shakespeare has already configured in this respect by exchanging himself with Shakespeare. Marx reduces the original use-value of Shakespeare’s lines to appraise them for the labor they have already done and which they will enable him to continue. Marx even explicitly equates a person’s name with the concealment of a money:

The name of a thing is something distinct from the qualities of that thing. I know nothing of a man, by knowing that his name is Jacob. In the same way with regard to money, every trace of a value-relation disappears in the names pound, dollar, franc, ducat, &c. (“Chapter Three,” *Capital* 5)

Even Shakespeare might be of Marx’s persuasion with regard to a name’s underlying meaning. Shakespeare’s most economically-oriented play, *The Merchant of Venice*, invests Antonio’s name with the capacity to be credited with “money” or “commodity” (1.2.78), inextricably linking the “pound” with “flesh” (2.1.145-146). In the opening epigraph, Iago also suggests that a name is the “immediate” expression of the soul’s jewel, or rather an entity resting upon another

whose primary value is exchange. Iago may refute the exchangeability of a person's name; however, he simultaneously promotes a name as bearing something worth hoarding. Additionally, the money-commodity may represent the "direct incarnation of all human labor" ("Chapter Two," *Capital* 6); therefore, the coin could very well conjure the riddle lurking beneath any human's name. As Marx notes, "the essence of man" is not individuated, but a manifestation of a "species-character" that is (to quote Erich Fromm) "universally human, and which is realized in the process of history by man through his productive activity" (Fromm 344). Lastly, I feel inclined to reduce the human's coin to a coin of its ghastly form— the name referred to as 'coin,' or a coin functioning in a manner which Marx defines the coin against— because the coin arguably functions as an embodiment of what Slavoj Žižek calls "fetishistic inversion" (Žižek 301). It may thusly be represented as inverting itself through a fetishization. Lurking beneath the coin may be the "immaterial corporality of the 'body within the body'" (Žižek 303).

As for the coin I offer, it is this: "The Second Pen." I believe this coin may support a balanced, yet generous portrait of Shakespeare's theatrical career because it effectively articulates Shakespeare's dual commitment to both playwriting and acting in either practice. By virtue of doing so, this coin may also encapsulate the openness of Shakespeare's playwriting to other writers, which in turn may recognize his writing's apparent deference to authority and its ostensible humility. Furthermore, it may subsequently redress the relatively flat portraits of Shakespeare's career provided by the coins for Shakespeare which currently prevail, those being "The Bard," "Swan of Avon," and "Upstart Crow." Although each of these coins for Shakespeare offers useful points of entry into what remains of his artistic and historical personae, each one's applicability to either of these remains regrettably limited, or rather undermines the dynamics suggested by

the remaining evidence on these personae. Consequently, perpetuating their use may also undermine Shakespeare's commitment to providing balanced portraits.

Unlike "The Second Pen," these coins also discourage Shakespeare's re-appropriation and, subsequently, the possibility of Shakespeare receiving even better, hopefully more economical, names than the one which I offer in this essay. They perpetuate glorified perceptions of this playwright which have been instrumental in unduly distancing his writing from readers. They do not help return Shakespeare's writing to us. Conversely, "The Second Pen" promotes his deconstruction, and subsequently his approachability, by more clearly depicting his present image as the product of others' construction. It more clearly positions this man as a piece of work rather than a stable ideal. Certainly, I reinforce Shakespeare's present status as a dense character of language more so than a fluid historical subject by making a coin central to his representation; however, this coin actively acknowledges Shakespeare as a product of others' language more so than vice versa. Thusly, it may more aptly encourage his students to participate in his construction and view the genius of his writing as open to their own. Indeed, I write this thesis for many more pens beyond my own. In this way do I hope to uncover more of Shakespeare's balance, or at least more balanced understandings of the world's relation to him. In this way may my labors live up to his good name.

*

Laudably, "The Bard" exhibits the performativity of Shakespeare's playwriting while simultaneously rooting his particular brand of theatrics in oral traditions. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 'bard' emerged in the 16th century as a "term for an itinerant musician" ("bard"). Essentially, the term refers to a performer dependent upon primarily non-literary artistic material, as indicated by this performer's essential function as a musician and definitively

transient social status. In effect, “The Bard” distances Shakespeare from a stable identity and promotes the indebtedness of his genius to the conventions and practices of others. Ostensibly, this coin emphasizes significant and dynamic aspects of Shakespeare’s writing while simultaneously inviting readers to participate in this playwright’s construction.

The performativity of Shakespeare’s playwriting can be witnessed in his proclivity for crafting stage representations of the playwright, in addition to the tendency of these, not surprisingly, to manifest characteristics of the actor. Arguably, the greatest expression of Shakespeare’s prowess as a playwright—possibly his most seamless dramatization of himself—revolves around such a figure. Hamlet, as Mary Jo Kietzman asserts, may represent the quintessential “actor-author,” for he embraces his role as protagonist, in his life as in the play at large, to transcend this and assume a position from which to manipulate his functioning as an actor. For Kietzman, Hamlet becomes an “acto[r] who author[s] fictions to explore rather than reproduce his reality” (259). Furthermore, dramatizations of the playwright in Shakespearean drama are certainly not limited to Hamlet. As Patrick Cheney argues, the list of other significant examples is rather lengthy, including: “Joan of Arc in the first tetralogy; the collectivity of the four courtiers in *Love’s Labour Lost*; Bottom, Puck and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; the bastard Faulconbridge in *King John*; Iago in *Othello*; Falstaff in his several plays, but especially *Merry Wives of Windsor*; Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Viola and Feste in *Twelfth Night*; the Duke in *Measure for Measure*, Edgar and the Fool in *King Lear*; Autolycus in *The Winter’s Tale*; and Prospero and Ariel in *The Tempest*” (34). Surely, the length of this list could suggest that Shakespeare typically thought of his playwriting as comparable to acting, even if his comparison of playwriting and acting were to be part of an act.

As for the influence of oral traditions on Shakespeare's playwriting, this can be witnessed, as Marion Trousdale suggests, in his penchant for "compositional repetition," his consistent accentuation of arbitrariness in both logic and intent, and the typical referentiality of his verses' import to "the occasion of its saying" (105-112). Trousdale also notes the frequently improvisational quality of the speech in Shakespearean drama. In accordance with C.S. Lewis' Shakespearean criticism, she presents the speech of Shakespeare's characters constantly dancing around "the precise, polished phrase[s] that might encapsulate the essence of [its characters'] feelings" (115).

Yet the utility of "The Bard" as a coin for Shakespeare is not simply limited to its intimation of his writing's proclivity for performativity and oral traditions. By virtue of emphasizing these qualities in his writing, this coin also gestures toward Shakespeare's service as an actor. Additionally, it articulates the legal status possibly conferred to Shakespeare by his service as actor, which may have been that of a vagabond, at least initially. According to the *O.E.D.*, 'bard' first emerged in the 16th century as a "derogatory" term for an itinerant, despite its subsequent romanticization, most notably by Sir Walter Scott ("bard"), in such poems as "The Bard's Incantation" (Scott 136) and "The Dying Bard" (Scott 115). Consequently, this coin situates Shakespeare's writing as a humble act of reproduction rather than any form of transcendental creation. It would appear to encourage Shakespeare's re-appropriation and discourage my dismissal of this coin, given my aforementioned criteria for Shakespearean coins.

As for tangible evidence of Shakespeare's acting career, this can be found in the 1616 folio of Ben Jonson's *Workes*, which includes two cast lists with William Shakespeare's name. In this folio, Shakespeare's name appears beside that of Richard Burbage, also at the top of its re-

spective column, in a reprinted cast list for a 1598 Globe performance of *Every Man In His Humour* (Potter 234); additionally, it can be found, again beside that of Richard Burbage, in a reprinted bill from a 1603 production of *Sejanus: His Fall* (Ayres 37). By intimating Shakespeare's acting career, "The Bard" may also commemorate his extensive collaboration with Ben Jonson, given that non-anecdotal documentary evidence limits Shakespeare's acting career to Jonsonian roles. By challenging the popularized opposition between these two playwrights, this coin demonstrates not only its verity, but also its support of interventions into the fashioning of Shakespeare's image. Contradicting the reliability of traditional perceptions of Shakespeare, in addition to supporting the liminality of his identity, this coin encourages others to infuse their voices into Shakespeare's writing.

As for how Shakespeare could have ever been a vagabond, this is conceivable if his acting career actually extends beyond licensed companies. During Shakespeare's lifetime (1564-1616), the law identified stage actors who publicly performed outside of a licensed company as "vagabondes," per an April 1551 emendation to the Privy Council's *Acte for punyishment of Rogues Vagabondes and Sturdy Beggars* (Dutton, *Mastering* 110). Affirming the possibility of Shakespeare's acting outside of a licensed company first depends on proving that he even acted beyond the King's Men, in any of this company's several incarnations. Certainly, proving this is a tall order that presently remains beyond the scope of any historian. For better or for worse, there remains only circumstantial evidence to prove this. Nevertheless, the evidence of this allows, however minimally, for Shakespeare's acting in the Queen's Men in 1587. This evidence centers on the fact that one of the company's leading players, William Knell, died in June of that year, while the company visited Stratford shortly thereafter. This company passed through Shakespeare's town in 1587 while possibly in search of another player. It seems quite possible

that Shakespeare could have found himself in the Queen's Men at this time, that is if he did at all. The very possibility, regardless of the dating, also rests on circumstantial evidence, which is the similarity of several Shakespearean dramas with those traditionally assigned to the repertory of the Queen's Men: *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *The Tragical History of King Leir*, and *The Troublesome Reign of King John*. The fact that Knell's widow Rebecca married John Heminges in 1588 would also support the idea that Shakespeare joined the Queen's Men when they passed through Stratford in 1587. His marriage to Rebecca suggests that the Queen's Men may have encountered Shakespeare while one that could put in a good word for Shakespeare was involved in it. Heminges would become a very close colleague of Shakespeare's in the future (Potter 54-5).

In this scenario, Shakespeare may have joined the first licensed company at a time when they would have still been the only licensed company in England (Dutton, *Mastering* 50). This scenario would subsequently indicate that Shakespeare had extensive experience acting without license prior to joining this company. The Queen's Men likely would not have considered Shakespeare without prior acting experience, while their status as the first licensed company indicates that Shakespeare could only have gained this experience he may have had beyond this company with an unlicensed one (Potter 54-5).

Nevertheless, by accenting Shakespeare's familiarity with destitution in the beginnings of his career, "The Bard" equally suppresses a crucial aspect of his writing: its profound, if not gratuitous, fascination with upward mobility. Ultimately, it neglects his writing's deference to the interests of the royal court to unduly distance him from his apparent conformity with authority, however qualified this may have been. This deference is emblemized quite neatly by the coat

of arms which Shakespeare received from Sir William Dethick, Garter King of Arms on 20 October 1596 (Donaldson 159). Additionally, it is emblemized nearly to excess in his drama. Indeed, the emphasis which Shakespearean drama places on both fictional and topical representations of gentry members, in addition to court life in general, is quite overwhelming. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is arguably his only play that concentrates upon middle-class values. *Norton Shakespeare* editor Walter Cohen has found that “the Fords and the Pages are almost Shakespeare’s only portrayal of middle-class couples” (1257). Consequently, “The Bard” would seem to not only misrepresent the majority of Shakespearean drama, but also overly romanticize Shakespeare’s poetic genius as purely natural. It suppresses the degree to which his poetic genius represents a product of royal indoctrination. Certainly, the history of the usage of ‘bard’ may reflect Shakespeare’s history, for the former also evinces its romanticization as historically relative; however, the history of the term’s evolution is primarily lost upon its use. “The Bard”, therefore, would not appear to actively assert the historical relativity of Shakespeare’s romanticization. In effect, it would rather appear to discourage Shakespeare’s openness to re-appropriation and reinvention.

Yet “Swan of Avon” may be even more likely to undermine the openness of Shakespeare’s identity than “The Bard.” Firstly, this coin is not nearly as effective in evoking the performativity critical to the style and content of Shakespeare’s writing; therefore, it is not nearly as effective in deconstructing his individual genius. “Swan of Avon” references a moniker bestowed upon Shakespeare by Ben Jonson in a 1623 elegy which Jonson wrote for Shakespeare and included in Shakespeare’s First Folio, an elegy which Jonson entitled “To the Memory of my Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare: And what he hath left us”:

Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,

And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza and our James! (70–73)

In effect, “Swan of Avon” principally situates Shakespeare in non-dramatic poetic convention. Furthermore, it subordinates his memory beneath the literary tradition of a writer who consistently worked to “detheatricalize the theatre” (Barish 31), and who desperately sought to legitimate his art to Early Modern scholars (Burt 32–33)—or rather those who mistrusted spectacle as an “article of faith” (O’Connell 299) and customarily proliferated insistences on “*scriptura*, on what is written—and only what is written” (O’Connell 286). Associating Shakespeare with Jonson renders his works as “bookish object[s]” rather than stage pieces (Barish 34).

This moniker equally suppresses the prominence of performativity in Shakespeare’s playwriting by evoking a memory of Shakespeare as “Author.” By associating Shakespeare with a 1623 usage of this term, it portrays Shakespeare’s playwriting career as significantly invested in the production of text rather than performance. Prior to Shakespeare’s First Folio, printers rarely ascribed authorship to play texts; therefore, playwriting would not have been a representative function ascribed to a 1623 usage of the term ‘author.’ As Cyndia Susan Clegg affirms, only twenty percent of Elizabethan play texts and twenty-two percent of Jacobean play texts are ascribed authorship. Conversely, the Elizabethan print market saw “seventy percent of scientific and medical books, including treatises on mathematics, warrant[t] the naming of their authors,” in addition to witnessing a whopping “[n]inety-eight percent of classical texts name the author.” A 1623 use of the term ‘author’ would therefore principally present Shakespeare as a producer of text and suppress the attentiveness of his writing to performance. Jonson’s identification of Shakespeare as “Author” may be somewhat justifiable in the context of an elegy, since classical writers, or rather the prototypical dead white men, were the quintessential “authors” in Early Modern England (Clegg 33–34). However, the association of classical writers with a 1623 usage

of the term ‘author’ further positions “Swan of Avon” as an instrument for unduly distancing Shakespeare from contemporary readers. Certainly, Shakespeare received recognition as an author during his lifetime, for a considerable number of his plays were printed with his name upon them; nevertheless, these publications do not indicate Shakespeare’s investment in receiving recognition as an “Author,” much less asserting himself as this. Ultimately, referring to Shakespeare as “Swan of Avon” and conjuring Jonson’s memory of him as “Author” conflates Shakespeare with Jonson’s project to legitimate the individual as a potential source of transcendental genius. While it may accurately reflect Shakespeare’s present reception, it nonetheless unduly perpetuates the distortion and inapproachability of his conception.

Shakespeare first received official credit as an author on 23 August 1600, when *2 Henry IV* and *Much Ado About Nothing* were attributed to “Master Shakespeare” in the Stationers’ Registers (Clegg 35). In effect, Shakespeare was first credited as an author after he had likely penned twenty plays for the stage, according to the “Timeline” of Shakespearean dramatic production compiled by *The Norton Shakespeare* (1872-5); additionally, he would have received this initial credit after at least seven of his plays and three quartos of his poetry had been printed without his name, according to the chronology of “Shakespeare’s Works” compiled by the British Library. Therefore, this accreditation of authorship appears unlikely to have been something Shakespeare thought to request. His stage and print history up to this point would suggest relative indifference to accreditation of this kind. Had he wanted accreditation, it seems he would have already thought of requesting it by this time, especially given the extensive printing of his poetic writing, which he likely composed beyond the intrinsically collaborative writing environments of one of his companies, and which would have been quite evident to him as his own production. If the

above accreditation can represent the request of Shakespeare, it would indicate he did so in conformity with a trend in dramatic publication rather than out of principle.

Additionally, printers and publishers have shown extensive, if not exclusive, involvement in works published during Shakespeare's lifetime, as might be indicated by the absence of his name in printed plays prior to 1600. Therefore, any element of a Shakespearean text printed during Shakespeare's lifetime could possibly represent the work of a printer or publisher. The exclusion of the dramatic author from the printing and publishing process of the dramatic author's plays certainly would be typical in England prior to 1600, and arguably up until 3 May 1619, when the Stationer's Court of Assistants, which was the guild court, issued an order to the printing guild "forbidding printing of the King's Men's plays without permission of the representatives of the players" (quoted from Rose 21). The fact that this was in response to a letter written by William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, then Lord Chamberlain, on behalf of the King's Men, to protect Shakespeare's name suggests that Shakespeare had not received printing rights before, and possibly was disinclined, if not discouraged, to entertain these rights. This matter also suggests that he would never receive it. Mark Rose notes that this matter did not involve either an author as plaintiff or even a "regular court of common law" (Rose 21).

The content of Shakespeare's dramatic texts might also suggest his detachment from the idea of the author. They only refer to the playwright, himself, as author in two instances, those being the epilogues to *Henry V* and *2 Henry IV*, coincidentally enough; furthermore, its use in these two instances portrays Shakespeare as "a modest storyteller" (Rose 26). "Author" would not appear to be a term that Shakespeare necessarily sought association with, but one to which he reluctantly relented. As Paul D. Cannan might claim, the work which these epilogues perform to downplay the authority of the author merely indicates Shakespeare functioning within, or at least

reproducing, the virtually obligatory modesty topos of Early Modern extraliterary material; but if so, all the better for my argument seeking to show the incongruence of “To the Memory” and “Swan of Avon” to Shakespeare. By exhibiting Shakespeare deferring to the modesty topos, these epilogues may serve to distinguish him from the writing tactics of Jonson. As demonstrated in the prefatory material of quartos to *Sejanus: His Fall* and *Volpone*, Jonson liked to experiment with the limits of the modesty topos “restric[ing] his contemporaries”, if he did not actively seek to “break free” from it completely (Cannan 200). The use of first person narration rather than an “extraliterary persona” in the prefatory material of these quartos indicates that their gestures toward the modesty topos are veils to an assertion of authorial distinction. The uniqueness of Jonson’s doing so in this dramatic material also suggests that Shakespeare is likely not responsible for the two appearances of “author” in his plays; for his doing so indicates that Early Modern playwrights would not be inclined to conceive of themselves as authors. Possibly, the aforementioned epilogues were included by the printer, as even the debut of Shakespeare’s name on one of the plays containing these epilogues, *2 Henry IV*, could indicate. There is certainly precedent for printers being extensively, almost to the point of artistically, involved in the printing of epilogues in Shakespearean drama. The reproduction of a couplet from the epilogue of the 1609 quarto of *Troilus and Cressida* bearing an address to the “Eternal reader” within Troilus’ closing remarks in act five scene three of the 1623 Folio edition of *Troilus* provides evidence of Shakespearean epilogues being constructed in the print shop (Stritmatter 71). Even the presence of Shakespeare’s name on one of his texts could be attributed to his absence from its printing. Douglas A. Brooks suggests that Shakespeare’s name could have been assigned to these texts by a publisher for the purpose of marketing them, since Shakespeare’s plays had frequently appeared on the Elizabethan stage throughout the 1590s (Clegg 35).

Of course, there remains significant evidence to simultaneously suggest that Shakespeare wrote without reference for the stage. Shakespeare appears to have been the first playwright to exceed the highest annual average for play length during the time when he likely was writing drama, 1587-1616, which was 2,500 lines. Therefore, Shakespeare would appear unconcerned with always writing with respect to the “two hours traffic” he proscribed through the Prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* as a limit for performance running time (Prologue.12). However, given that *Hamlet* “exists in a very short version (Q1) and two much longer ones which themselves show different cuts to the text”, the length of his plays cannot prove that he simply wrote for print. Drawing from the scholarship of Lukas Erne, Lois Potter supports the possibility of Shakespeare anticipating cuts for acting versions of his lengthy texts while producing them (156).

Of the three prevailing Shakespearean coins, “Upstart Crow” may be the least inclined to pervert Shakespeare’s aggrandizement. Firstly, it references a term used to describe Shakespeare in his lifetime, and so it locates Shakespeare within a reality of his own time period. Furthermore, this term is principally employed to satirize Shakespeare’s meteoric rise. “Upstart Crow” appears in the following sentence of *Greene’s Groats-worth of Wit* (1592):

Yes trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is all well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. (Greene)

This context for the use of “vpstart Crow” confirms the term as a moniker for Shakespeare because the phrase “*Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*” appears to echo *3 Henry VI*. This phrase could very well represent “a deliberately twisted misquotation” of the Duke’s response to Queen Margaret’s censure of his ambition (Van Es 569): “O tiger’s heart wrapp’d in a woman’s hide!” (1.4.138). Although this line of Shakespeare’s takes its cue from the “vocabulary of cosmic transgression” in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*, this parallel does not render the *Groats-worth* line a

direct reference to the work of the latter playwright. Marlowe was already established as a model playwright by 1592, and so a sentence chiding an “vpstart Crow” would likely not refer to him. Therefore, the line should be considered predominantly for its Shakespearean allusions. “[V]pstart Crow” would be more likely to indicate an unjustifiably cocky imitator rather than a model playwright. Horace references the ‘crow’ to attack imitative poets in his third *Epistle*, and this author maintained great popularity amongst English poets of the 1590s (Van Es 561-562). The use of ‘crow’ in writing during this time period likely alludes to Horace, as this poet would have been familiar to many literary types at the time. The term “*Players hyde*” would also support the idea of “Crow” referencing some form of imitator. Marlowe would unlikely be positioned as either unjustifiably cocky or an imitator because, according to Bart Van Es, “imitation of *Tamburlaine*... was the hallmark of the professional ‘Arch-plaimaking-poet’” during the final decade of the sixteenth century (571). In 1592, Marlowe might have been one of the few playwrights to which the identity of imitator did not apply, for Marlowe’s identity most likely applied to most of his contemporaries. Ultimately, the choice of *Groats-worth*’s author to reference a Shakespearean line with apparent echoes of *Tamburlaine* likely functions to position Shakespeare within Early Modern conventions of imitation, as *Groats-worth*’s use of the term “Crow” and “*Players hyde*” would indicate. Consequently, “Upstart Crow” may reference not merely Shakespeare’s reception amongst his peers, but also his writing’s responsiveness to his peers. Its use in *Groats-worth* affirms the highly imitative, and thusly performative, style of Shakespeare’s playwriting. This implication also stems from *Groats-worth*’s reference to “Shake-scene,” for in addition to “bit-part acting,” it may also imply “play-patching” (Van Es 558), or essentially re-writing scenes from other plays into new versions of those plays, if not new plays altogether (Van Es 561).

Of course, as Park Honan, Katherine Duncan-Jones, and Stephen Greenblatt have suggested, “vpstart Crow” may reference not only Shakespeare the playwright, but also Shakespeare the actor. This idea is unavoidable given *Groats-worth*’s suggestion that its “Crow” donned a “*Players hyde*” (Van Es 551-2), in conjunction with the aforementioned implication for acting that “Shake-scene” carries. Certainly, the meticulous textual scholarship of Bart van Es in “*Johannes fac Totum*’?: Shakespeare’s First Contact with the Acting Companies” provides greater support for the idea of “vpstart Crow” referring to Shakespeare’s writing, rather than his acting, career; however, even Es indicates that this passage from *Groats-worth* demonstrates Shakespeare transitioning into an acting role. Es suggests that Shakespeare’s so doing would have likely spurned a writer’s criticism of a playwright in 1592. The subsequent ambiguity of the passage in question with respect to the beginnings of Shakespeare’s theatrical career only further corroborates the utility of “Upstart Crow” in representing Shakespeare. In this way, the coin alludes to the closeness of both playwriting and acting in Shakespeare’s work, a notion that I will proceed to corroborate in my later discussion of the parallels between *Sejanus* and *Coriolanus*, along with the support they provide for the relevance of “The Second Pen” to Shakespeare. But as for the relevance of “Upstart Crow,” it also overtly communicates Shakespeare’s concern for upward mobility. Additionally, by referring to an instance where his upward trajectory met resistance from a notable writer, it alludes to his success in rising through the theatrical world. In effect, it may point toward Shakespeare’s multi-faceted service as a dramatist for the King’s Men.

Nonetheless, in spite of the commensurability of “Upstart Crow” with history’s presentation of Shakespeare, I do not think this coin makes this readily manifest. The coin’s matrix of implications is not apparent without an awareness of the context of its origins and the literary

history of the term ‘crow.’ Therefore, I would still defend the utility of incorporating “The Second Pen” into Shakespeare’s list of coins. Although “The Second Pen” may not expand upon the dissemblance, or subsequent proliferation, of Shakespeare’s ascendancy propagated by “Upstart Crow,” the former coin might make this activity more readily available to those without considerable familiarity with Early Modern literary history. The dissemblance of Shakespeare’s image would appear derivable from the very diction of “The Second Pen,” rather than simply its historical referentiality. Meditation on this coin itself may spurn the imagination toward history’s imagination of Shakespeare. Identifying Shakespeare’s person as a secondary or alternate writing utensil, the diction blatantly presents this playwright as not only a vehicle for, but also an instrument of, other writers. By privileging an instrument of writing to simultaneously qualify the acting dimension of Shakespeare’s career, “The Second Pen” may equally clarify the reciprocity between Shakespeare’s acting experiences and writing. In effect, it may also reinforce the imitative nature of his writing. Furthermore, it captures his humility more than “Upstart Crow,” or any of the other prevailing coins. It conveys Shakespeare as unconcerned with asserting his identity in his art, or rather more concerned with incorporating the identities of others. Although Shakespeare was inclined to grant playwright figures leading roles in his drama, this inclination does not necessarily conflict with a defense of his humility. These representations are more conventional than personal, for they predominantly serve to undercut the playwright’s authority over actors. What’s more, “The Second Pen” does all this while still referencing a specific historical context in which Shakespeare likely functioned. Therefore, this coin may effectively undercut alienating idolization of Shakespeare and promote his perpetual reconstruction, in addition to providing a balanced, possibly more historically relevant portrait of his theatrical career, particularly with respect to its demonstration of his balanced approach to both playwriting and acting.

“The Second Pen” may bear greater relevancy to Shakespeare’s history, in addition to the dissemblance of Shakespeare’s popular authority as an author, because, first and foremost, it reproduces a term coined during Shakespeare’s lifetime by one of his colleagues for the particular purpose of referring to Shakespeare’s work as a dramatist for the King’s Men. It does not rely on evoking both his writing and acting career to assert this historical truth. It is a direct appropriation of the term which Ben Jonson specifically uses in his 1605 *Sejanus* quarto (Q) to describe the individual who collaborated with him on the stage version of this drama that preceded Q; and this must represent a substitute for a leading dramatist of the King’s Men in 1603, namely Shakespeare. Certainly, my contention that Q’s mention of “second pen” represents a reference to this dramatist, and thusly Shakespeare, conflicts with traditional identifications of this label with another one of his contemporaries, George Chapman; consequently, a significant portion of my defense of “second pen” as an appropriate reference to Shakespeare will revolve around a proof of how this term could evoke Shakespeare as dramatist and not Chapman as collaborator. Yet from this proof, I will provide reason to believe that “The Second Pen” strongly asserts a role of Shakespeare’s beyond that of playwright which the other three coins but gesture towards (seeing as both “The Bard” and “Upstart Crow” forward Shakespeare’s lowly origins, in spite of their intimation of an upward trajectory, while “Swan of Avon” indirectly suggests as much indirectly by corroborating Shakespeare and Jonson’s experience writing together).

By providing further reason to support Shakespeare’s work as a dramatist, in addition to delineating the nature of his work in this capacity, I hope to conclusively articulate Shakespeare’s balanced dedication to the arts of writing and acting, as well as the balance of the portrait of Shakespeare provided by “The Second Pen.” Corroborating his residency as dramatist

will also enable me to support the idea that he was invested in collaboration and inclined to imitation, as “The Second Pen” figuratively suggests; for doing so will corroborate his close work with other playwrights. In accentuating his shape-shifting capacities, “The Second Pen” may also elicit his resistance to the idea of the author, or rather his writing’s indifference to self-assertion, as well as the centrality of performativity to his writing. By indicating Shakespeare’s closeness with Jonson, “The Second Pen” will also serve to suggest that Shakespeare was inclined toward upward mobility, or deferent to the opinion of authority, as may also be suggested by the work “second pen” does to indicate Shakespeare’s apparent reluctance toward maintaining association with a failed performance. The historical implications of this term may also exhibit Shakespeare’s familiarity on stage with peculiarly literary drama; for by evoking a public stage version of *Sejanus*, it evokes a Jonsonian performance with documentary proof of Shakespeare’s participation in its cast. This implication will also support the capacity of “The Second Pen” to represent Shakespeare’s acting career. Additionally, it may corroborate the responsiveness of Shakespeare’s acting to the proscriptions of not only the quintessential playwright, but one besides himself. Although, “The Second Pen” may attest to Shakespeare’s authority over Jonson by evoking Jonson’s deference to Shakespeare as dramatist, it may equally evoke his acting for a writer who was a notorious control freak when it came to staging his play, as indicated by Jonson’s preference for boy acting companies (McCarthy 8), and even by Jonson himself, through characters such as Carlo Buffone of *Every Man Out of His Humour* and the Stage-Keeper of *Bartholomew Faire* (Donaldson 106). By referencing Shakespeare’s experience acting for a quintessentially literary playwright, “The Second Pen” will also refer back to its figurative import with respect to Shakespeare’s acting career and further substantiate the relevance of the coin’s implications.

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A working draft for the *Sejanus* script “acted on the public stage, wherein a second pen had a good share” (quoted from Donaldson 181), which this drama’s 1605 quarto (Q) names as its precursor in its address to its readers, was likely completed independently by Jonson in late spring of 1603. A version for the stage also likely debuted sometime during this period. In summing the Introduction to the *Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson* provided by Tom Cain, Ian Donaldson limits the possible time frame for this version’s debut to the week’s time spanning 9 May-16 May 1603 (Donaldson 181n12). I will use this time frame for this debut as a prompt for a slightly more generous one, 7 May-17 May 1603; however, I will ultimately uphold its suggestion that this debut occurred sometime in mid-May 1603 prior to, if not on, May 17 of that year. This general time frame for the completion of an independently constructed working draft in conjunction with this particular dating for a stage version’s debut would corroborate William Shakespeare as the “second pen” which had a share in the latter’s writing. The closeness in time between an independent completion of a working draft and the debut of a stage version suggests that the collaborator which Jonson references was likely the dramatist of the company that debuted the play, and this individual was likely William Shakespeare. The likelihood of Shakespeare being said dramatist is based on the title-page of the 1616 folio edition of *Sejanus* (F1), which advertises “the K. MAIESTIES/ SERVANTS” as the company that originally acted the play in “1603” (*Sejanus: His* 231). Shakespeare was the main dramatist of the King’s Men at this time.

Jonson probably finished penning a working draft of *Sejanus* on his own in late spring of 1603 because, as Donaldson recognizes, Jonson presented a copy of the 1605 quarto to Sir Rob-

ert Townshend with the following grateful inscription: “The testimony of my affection and observance to my noble friend, Sir Robert Townshend, which I desire may remain with him, and last beyond marble” (quoted from Donaldson 182). This inscription cements what the evidence of Jonson’s time of residence with Townshend in early 1603 already suggests: Jonson completed significant portions of the “1603” stage version of *Sejanus* at one of Townshend’s residences. By affirming that Jonson completed significant portions of this version while residing with Townshend, this inscription suggests that Jonson likely completed a working draft by himself in late spring 1603. There is reason to believe that Jonson remained with Townshend until this time, while there is little reason to believe that Jonson had contact with other playwrights while with Townshend. John Manningham, a former law student at the Middle Temple, reports in a February 1603 diary entry that his and Jonson’s friend, Thomas Overbury, informed him that Jonson had moved in with Townshend and “scorns the world” (quoted from Donaldson 181). This entry suggests both that Jonson was only just beginning a period of residence with Townshend around February 1603; furthermore, it insinuates that Jonson had no intention of returning to his life in London for some time, likely until late spring. Jonson would not appear inclined to visit even his wife and children during his residence with Townshend, for as William Drummond claims, Jonson once spent a period of five years without seeing his wife and children while staying with another one of his patrons, Lord Esmé Stuart, seventh Seigneur d’Aubigny. The inscription’s suggestion that Jonson worked on *Sejanus* while with Townshend also suggests that Jonson would have likely made some kind of extended stay once with Townshend. Evidence of an extended stay with Townshend further disparages the likelihood that he sought outside help with his work on an initial draft of *Sejanus* (Donaldson 181).

Undoubtedly, the writing of *Sejanus* was a time-consuming endeavor. It evidently incorporates extensive research of many classical sources, which range from Tacitus' *Annals*, Dio Cassius' *Roman History*, Claudian's *Against Rufinius* and *On Stilicho's Consulship*, Pliny's *Natural History*, Juvenal's *Satires*, Persius' *Satires*, Martial's *Epigrams*, and several Senecan plays. The tedium of its classical research is observable in the citations of Q's marginalia as well as the drama's subtle and meaningful rearrangement of these sources' facts. As David Ayres declares, "Hazlitt's description of the play as a 'mosaic' ... does it an injustice" (10-11). The residence of Townshend, what would have been "no doubt more spacious and tranquil than Jonson's home in Blackfriars," would have also provided a favorable, if not extremely conducive, setting not only for Jonson's life, but for his writing of *Sejanus* (Donaldson 181). Therefore, it is more than possible he wrote much of it here, while the likelihood of this would imply that Jonson stayed with Townshend in relative isolation for some time after he arrived at a residence of his in February 1603. Evidence that Jonson was recovering from a serious illness at this time, possibly an early wave of the plague (Donaldson 181) that was to shut down London's theaters on 17 May 1603 (Donaldson 181n12), also suggests that Jonson would have been inclined to take advantage of a Townshend residence for some time and avoid visitors. It suggests that he was disposed to rest rather than travel once he moved in with Townshend.

Jonson appears to have been recovering from an illness sometime in 1603 because a letter he sent to Sir Robert Cotton dated to sometime in 1603 documents Jonson describing himself "as a man but faintly returned to his despaired health" (quoted from Donaldson 181). This can likely be assigned to the time he spent with Townshend in 1603 because the letter requests "topographical information about the Campania region of Italy," or rather the place to which the Roman Emperor Tiberius withdraws in both Tacitus' *Annals* and Jonson's *Sejanus* (Donaldson 181).

Given the likelihood of Jonson working on *Sejanus* while at Townshend's in 1603, and the reference of this 1603 letter to information relevant to writing *Sejanus*, Jonson was likely recovering from the illness this letter claims he was recovering from while at Townshend's working on *Sejanus*. In conclusion, Jonson likely completed a working draft for the public stage version in late spring 1603 on his own because he likely spent a considerable amount of time beyond February 1603 working on it outside London. His residence at Townshend's beginning in February 1603 would have offered him an ideal setting for performing the extensive research *Sejanus* evidently required, while his apparent infirmity during this time would have inclined him to reside and continue working at Townshend's alone until warmer times in England. Furthermore, as I will proceed to demonstrate, this version was likely performed before London's theaters closed for the rest of 1603 on May 17 of that year. In light of the likelihood that the second pen's version was performed in 1603 around mid-May, given the closure of London's theaters for 1603 at this time and evidence of Jonson's time beyond London in early 1603, Jonson could have completed it as late as early May. Both the textual and performance history of *Volpone* establish a precedent for a Jonsonian drama taking at least two weeks for an acting company to prepare. As Donaldson reports, *Volpone* was delivered to the King's Men by the end of February 1606 and performed by mid-March that year (230). Surely, the peculiar wordiness of *Sejanus* would have taken the King's Men at least such a relatively short time to prepare for performance.

Certainly, the "1603" in F1's title-page could potentially refer to a date as late as 24 March 1604, since the old style dates for the beginning and end of a year were the same as Queen Elizabeth's birthday (Ayres 9). By virtue of allowing for a performance as late as early spring 1604, the title-page could also indicate that neither a working draft nor a stage version of *Sejanus* were prepared by mid-May 1603. However, it remains unlikely that this drama would

have made its debut so late, and so Jonson was likely preparing, as well as finishing, a working draft and stage version earlier rather than later in “1603.” *Sejanus* could not have been publicly performed between 17 May 1603-9 April 1604, or rather anytime in the old style “1603” calendar following the closure of London’s theaters (Cain, “Sejanus: Textual” 1); therefore, *Sejanus* likely debuted in the March 25-May 17 period referred to by the “1603” of the title page, and likely the latter portion of this time period, given that Jonson had only just begun his presumably extended stay with Townshend, his apparent muse, in February of this year.

The second pen’s version also likely debuted around, or even during, Cain’s particular dating of it because Q’s dedication to Lord Esmé Stuart, seventh Seigneur d’ Aubigny, claims that this lord was in attendance for a failed public performance prior to Q’s printing:

If ever any ruin were so great, as to survive; I think this be one I send you [Esmé]: the *Fall of Sejanus*. It is a poem that (if I well remember) in your Lordship’s sight, suffered no less violence from our people here, than the subject of it did from the rage of the people of Rome[.] (*Sejanus: His* 233)

This evidence regarding the audience(s) of *Sejanus* substantiates a performance in mid-May 1603 because there is reason to limit Esmé’s opportunity to attend a public performance of *Sejanus* prior to Q’s printing to mid-May 1603, which I am inclined to limit to May 7-May 17 of that year. The dedication’s suggestion that Esmé attended a failed performance of *Sejanus* equally corroborates the notion of him witnessing the debut. A performance would appear unlikely to have met overwhelming resistance following successful performances, or at least the contrary would appear more likely. The likely completion of a working draft in late spring 1603 also supports the idea that Esmé witnessed the debut at the possible time of his attendance. In summation, the dedication dates the debut of *Sejanus* to mid-May 1603, for it suggests Esmé witnessed the debut, while Esmé’s personal history only indicates he was in London in “1603” while the theaters were open during mid-May.

Esmé had evidently returned to London from Scotland a week or two before the plague outbreak that compelled King James I to close the city's theaters on 17 May 1603. Following Queen Elizabeth's death on 24 March 1603, Esmé, being a cousin of King James I (Donaldson 182), followed a large Scottish entourage that left Edinburgh for London on 4 April 1603 in order to accompany James along his journey to naturalization (Potter 302). Esmé reportedly arrived in London in early May of 1603 and likely stayed at least until just after the theaters closed that year. Presumably, Esmé witnessed the naturalization ceremony for James that occurred on 24 May 1603, given that he followed an entourage which travelled great distances to see James through to this ceremony (Donaldson 182-4). The English court's conventional "insistence on the continuity of the body politic" also provides reason to push Esmé's arrival to early May. This insistence would have compelled James and his Scottish entourage to initially arrive in London after Queen Elizabeth's funeral on 28 April 1603 (Potter 302). Esmé also likely witnessed the public failure of *Sejanus* which Jonson says he did between his return to London in early-to-mid May 1603 and the closure of London theaters on 17 May of that year because his residence in London after the theaters re-opened on 9 April 1604 and 25 March 1606, the latest possible dating for Q's 1605 printing (Cain, "Sejanus: Textual" 2), remains unconfirmed. Additionally, there is reason to believe Esmé may not have been in London following his initial return. As Donaldson affirms, Esmé "continued to move periodically back and forth" between England and his family estates at Chateau de la Verrerie to look after his mother, Katherine de Balsac (185). Given my prior dating for the completion of the second pen's version, this evidence of Esmé's "1603" London residence, however limited, also offers further evidence to qualify the performance Jonson references in Q's dedication, and consequently that of the second pen, as its debut

Certainly, Jonson's claim that Esmé attended a public failure of *Sejanus* is not necessarily accurate, but rather remains somewhat doubtful. Therefore, limiting Esmé's "1603" residence in London prior to Q's printing to mid-May of 1603 need not imply this as a possible time in 1603 when *Sejanus* was debuted, or even performed. Q's dedication not only raises doubt concerning Esmé's attendance of a public failure of this drama, but also doubt concerning his attendance of any performance. Esmé's personal history cannot necessarily qualify Jonson's claims regarding Esmé's attendance history: the latter may have no veritable application to the former. Correspondingly, Jonson's claims regarding Esmé's history cannot necessarily qualify *Sejanus*' performance history. Jonson compromises the reliability of his claim that Esmé witnessed *Sejanus* by qualifying this claim of his, however parenthetically, upon the conditional "if I well remember." The elegy penned by Jonson for Shakespeare in "To the Memory" may provide a precedent regarding the proclivity of Jonson's memory for distortion, if not self-projection, and simply by virtue of its title. To reiterate a point I asserted in my discussion of "Swan of Avon," Shakespeare may have never conceived of himself as an "Author" as resolutely as Jonson suggests. In effect, Q's suggestion that Esmé witnessed *Sejanus* need not imply that *Sejanus* was performed for stage as early as May 1603, the time when Esmé could have seen it, for Q need not imply that Esmé saw it at all.

Nevertheless, there exists evidence to indicate that Esmé would have harbored an inclination to attend a performance of *Sejanus* while in the vicinity of one; subsequently, for all intents and purposes, we may use Q's claim regarding Esmé's *Sejanus* attendance as a reputable prompt for reconstructing *Sejanus*' performance history. We may conclude that Esmé likely witnessed a performance of this drama with evidence beyond Q's dedication, and so we may proceed from

Q's claim that Esmé did just this. The notion that Esmé did so should not remain prey to Jonson's memory. In effect, there is still reason to regard Q's dedication as a reference to a mid-May 1603 performance of *Sejanus*.

Esmé would have likely had motivation to attend *Sejanus* during the entire time it could have been performed prior to Q's printing because he was probably close with Jonson by the time the drama was likely scripted for performance. The dating of his relationship with Jonson affirms no possible date of performance as totally precluded from Esmé's attendance; rather, this dating suggests that Esmé would have been inclined to attend a performance of *Sejanus* from the earliest possible time that anyone could have. Therefore, we may reasonably believe Jonson's suggestion that Esmé attended a performance of this drama.

Esmé probably knew Jonson by the time the second pen's version of *Sejanus* was completed, for, as Donaldson claims, Jonson possibly met Esmé when he passed through London with his brother, Ludovick, in 1602, and very probably by late spring 1603. Yet, Esmé and Jonson not only knew each other, but had a very close relationship, to which Q's dedication may allude. Esmé went so far as to house Jonson with him in Lord Cobham's old residence near Playhouse Yard following his return to London. He provided Jonson with a quite convenient location for accessing the Blackfriars, a theatre at which Jonson frequently performed with boy acting companies, as well as one where Jonson could spend extended periods of time writing in solitude (Donaldson 182-185). Esmé likely invited Jonson to stay at his house well before 25 March 1606, the latest possible dating for Q's printing, given his prominence in Q's prefatory material. To have had such a "bond" with Esmé's "benefits" by Q's printing, Jonson must have been staying at Esmé's for some time before. As further testament to their closeness, Epigrams 127 of Jon-

son's 1616 folio explicitly expresses supreme gratitude to Esmé (Donaldson 182). Given Jonson's reference to his own closeness to death in this poem, it also likely refers its gratitude to a time in 1603, a time during which Jonson appeared inclined to document illness.

As Esmé would indeed appear motivated to attend *Sejanus*, we may realistically trace the performance referenced in Q's dedication to as early as mid-May 1603. Again, firm evidence regarding Esmé's residence in London is limited to spring/early summer 1603; therefore, we may limit evidence of his possible activity in London following the drafting of *Sejanus* to this period. The dating of Esmé's journey from Scotland also affirms mid-May as the beginning of his 1603 residence in London, and so Esmé could not have witnessed *Sejanus* any earlier in 1603. Additionally, there remains a dearth of evidence indicating Esmé's presence in London at any time in 1603 after mid-May. Certainly, the lack of dates in Q's dedication to him leaves open the possibility of Esmé attending a public performance of *Sejanus* sometime after the theaters re-opened in either 1604 or 1605. The use of his name with reference to a performance of *Sejanus* may not necessarily extend the performance history of this drama as far back as May 1603. This dedication may very well indicate Esmé's attendance at a *Sejanus* performance much later. However, the evidence to support the possibility of Esmé attending a performance after May 1603 is weak, at best.

Nevertheless, there remains evidence to support the possibility of Esmé attending a *Sejanus* performance after May 1603. There is reason to suspect the existence of *Sejanus* performances after this time, as well as evidence to indicate that the King's Men debuted it to a hostile audience at a date later than May 1603. In Q's dedication, Jonson tells Esmé that *Sejanus* has "out-lived" the "malice" of London's people in ways that its title's subject could not. In all possibility, Jonson could be suggesting the existence of performances that followed an ill-received

performance for Esmé to have potentially attended. Given Jonson's qualification of his claim regarding Esmé's attendance history and his own memory, Esmé may not have necessarily attended an ill-received performance of *Sejanus*, if he did attend any. Additionally, an account of *Sejanus*' performance history provided by Francis Osborne, a friend of Thomas Hobbes, indicates that Osborne "sat [*Sejanus*] out, not only patiently, but with content, and admiration" after "others hissed *Sejanus*" off-stage (quoted from Cain, "Sejanus His" 1). This may suggest that Osborne watched *Sejanus* after the completion, however premature, of one performance. Therefore, *Sejanus* performances seem to have followed a 1603 King's Men debut.

Yet still, by supporting the idea of an ill-received performance of *Sejanus* preceding others, Osborne corroborates the idea that Esmé attended the "1603" debut, which likely occurred prior to the closure of London's theaters in mid-May 1603, if we are to proceed with Jonson's suggestion that Esmé attended an ill-received performance. What's more, the existence of Q could just as easily attest to an enduring quality in *Sejanus*; therefore, Jonson could just as easily be basing his articulation of this in Q on the reality of his very articulation of this in Q, rather than the reality of any later performances. Osborne's account could also merely affirm his gentility in the face of others' hissing during a performance. It need not suggest the existence of another performance not worthy of his hissing. There may have only been a failed public performance for Esmé to attend. Consequently, we may still believe Jonson's claim that Esmé did just this, as well as its implication of a mid-May 1603 debut of *Sejanus*, given the evidence regarding Esmé's London residence.

Nevertheless, the vagueness of Jonson's referents in Q's dedication in conjunction with Esmé's genealogy allows for its reference of performance to regard a court rather than public

performance. In effect, the dedication may reference a debut following the 1603 closure of London's theaters (since the mourning of Queen Elizabeth just before this closure in conjunction with evidence regarding the completion of a working draft suggests that a court performance would not have occurred before this closure). The parallel between "our people here" and "the people of Rome" could position the former as a reference to London's ruling class as much as London's populus, especially in light of Jonson's persistent, however vain, identification with court culture. Certainly, the "rude multitude" is that which literally destroys Sejanus in the end, tearing him "limb from limb" (5.798-801); however, it is the representatives of Rome's people in the Senate who ultimately inspire violence in Rome's people and expose Sejanus to this. Furthermore, the Senate inspires the rage of its people by appearing just as impressionable as its people; according to Terentius, the Roman people expressed their rage for Sejanus without "proof, or testimony" of his wrongdoing, with only rumor that "[t]here came a huge, long, worded letter/From Capreae against him" (5.785-787). In effect, Rome's Senate would appear somewhat interchangeable with the people of Rome, as they should, yet as they only could. As Arruntius laments of Rome's Senate:

They, that before like gnats played in his beams,
And thronged to circumscribe him, now not seen!
Nor deign to hold a common seat with him!
...Whom, but this morn, they followed as their lord!" (5.711-716).

Arruntius confirms not only the proclivity of Rome's Senators for subscribing to popular opinion, but also the blindness and subsequent fickleness of their so doing. His portrayal of the Roman Senate thusly echoes one which he proceeds to provide regarding the Roman people:

But had Sejanus thrived
In his design, and prosperously oppressed
The old Tiberius, then, in that same minute,
These very rascals, that now rage like furies,
Would have proclaim'd Sejanus emperor. (5.790-793)

In addition to the textual evidence of parallels between Rome's people and its Senate, there is strong reason to believe that Esmé would have been invited to court: he was a cousin of King James I, one who even accompanied James from Scotland to England for his naturalization. Esmé's genealogy allows for his attendance at a court performance, and so it may corroborate the suggestion of Q's text, however limited, that he did as much.

E.K. Chambers also affirms the possibility of a court performance following Esmé's return to London, and thus the possibility of Esmé attending a court performance. Chambers also provides the following spectrum of possible dates for a court performance of *Sejanus*: 26, 27, 28 and 30 December 1603, 1 January 1604, and 2 and 19 February 1604. He bases these dates on his suspicion that Jonson completed *Sejanus* for performance in 1603 after London theaters closed (Ayres 9). Of course, I do not agree with the reasoning leading him to his idea of *Sejanus*' court performance on one of the dates above, nor his subsequent belief that *Sejanus* endured its well-documented public failure sometime after the theaters re-opened on 9 April 1604; nevertheless, I concede the possibility of a court performance, as well as the possibility that this could have occurred on the above dates. I think Osborne's account, which may substantiate the possibility of other performances following a public failure, lends credence to the idea of a court performance of *Sejanus* on one of the dates during the court's 1603/4 Christmas season.

The possibility of a court performance at this time is also supported by the fact that the King's Men would not have been performing for Queen Elizabeth during the aforementioned season, but rather the newly coronated King James I. This would have given them less reason to allow possible reservations regarding the performance of *Sejanus* to get the better of them. The King's Men would not have been catering to the tastes of a monarch who harbored unqualified hostility toward Roman historical drama, but rather one who appeared predisposed to a love of

theatre, or at least to masking his “resentment of public performance” (Miller 292). Nevertheless, James also exhibited deep-seated paranoia concerning the possibility of revolt from Parliament, and so he would appear hostile toward the performance of anything analogous. In 1607, James gave a speech to Parliament that discussed “general rhetoric...as a smokescreen for particular or private interest,” effectively implying that he considered the possibility of its members conspiring behind his back: “Nor yet is it on the other side a conueinent place for priuate men vnder the colour of general Lawes, to propone nothing but their owne particular gaine” (quoted from Baldo 569).

However, the indeterminacy of the dating for the Privy Council’s trial of *Sejanus*, in conjunction with evidence that *Sejanus* had not been modified until sometime around 2 November 1604, its first appearance in the Stationers’ Registers (Corballis 274), allows for the possibility that *Sejanus* was performed at court in “1603” following that year’s theater closure. This evidence substantiates the likelihood of the King’s Men not recognizing this drama’s potential for offense prior to the 1603/4 Christmas season. The fact that William Drummond identifies The Earl of Northampton (previously Lord Henry Howard) as the individual who took issue with *Sejanus* before the Council in the only documentation of this play receiving official censure also indicates that it could have been performed at court during the aforementioned season. It indicates that this drama was witnessed by a member of the gentry, or someone more likely to have seen it at court rather than a public performance. Then again, the accusations of “popperie and treason” which Drummond claims Northampton, Jonson’s “mortall enimie” (quoted from Ayres 16) leveled against *Sejanus* appear unjustified, likely products of ulterior motives for revenge. As John Jowett affirms, “[n]othing in the text is overtly papist; nor could it be, without gross anachronism” (“Fall” 291). Northampton might have leveled them without even seeing the play, or

simply upon knowledge of its performance and Jonson's Catholicism. Still, Jowett does observe some reason as to how Northampton could have perceived Catholic sympathies in the play. In effect, Jowett suggests that Northampton's accusations against *Sejanus* may have been inspired by some observance of the play, which would have likely been a 1603/4 court performance:

Nevertheless, the ideological assumptions that emerge from [*Sejanus*] are entirely consistent with Catholicism. The Machiavellian events of the play are observed from a particular standpoint, the traditionalist position of the Germanican group. They idealize and ideologize the past into an era of social fixity, stability, respected rights, and mutual obligations; this loaded image of the past informs the rhetoric of their criticism of the degraded present... It is precisely Jonson's co-religionists who could find an expression for their fortunes in the myth of an idealized feudal past. The seigneurialism of this perspective would be reinforced by the Catholics' dependence for patronage and protection on a handful of influential lords. No group would have experienced the present so acutely as a fallen present, nor identify in the past so strongly with that prelapsarian stability and natural order of things. Their history was one of dispossession, spasmodic persecution, and persistent state harassment and surveillance. (Jowett, "Fall" 291)

Of course, simply Jonson and Osbourne's indication of *Sejanus*' public failure, regardless of its dating of this failure, contradicts the likelihood of a court performance of *Sejanus* by the King's Men. This indicates the presence of overt controversial elements in *Sejanus*, ones immediately recognizable to audience members. Consequently, the King's Men likely anticipated resistance to a *Sejanus* performance. They would therefore appear disinclined to perform *Sejanus* at court, for they would appear disinclined to take the risk of offering a clearly hazardous performance at court.

The King's Men likely insinuated its potential to create problems because simply its genre could have indicated as much to them. A ban on the writing of satire and epigrams imposed by Bishops Whitgift and Bancroft on 1 June 1599 had been accompanied by "further prohibition on the writing of history" than that which already existed (Donaldson 186). Nevertheless, Shakespeare's company was not necessarily deterred from putting on history plays by this

ban, as may be indicated by Thomas Platter's account of a September 21, 1599 Globe performance of *Julius Caesar* (Platter). However, it does provide reason to substantiate their wariness of doing so. The preference for Tacitus displayed by *Sejanus*' historical references provides even more reason to believe the King's Men would have been so wary. As Donaldson reports, "[t]he writings of... Tacitus, with their searching analyses of corruption and double-dealing at the imperial court... had been a particular focus of [Whitgift and Bancroft's] suspicion" (186-7). John Hayward's second corrected edition of *The First Part of the Life and Reign of Henry IV* (1599) was also "seized and burned while in the press" primarily on Francis Bacon's observation of this book's appropriation of whole sentences from Tacitus. Bacon's survey of this piece at the behest of the Queen found no other offense but this felony, not even sedition. In light of Bacon's survey, the Queen confirmed its "Latin preface flatteringly dedicated to the Earl of Essex" as reason to dismiss its history of Henry Bolingbroke as a promotion of Essex. These references also seem to have indicated as much to others beyond the Queen. This book was cited at both the June 1600 Star Chamber hearing of Essex, as well as his trial following his failed uprising of February 1601. Apparently, the royal court perceived the use of Tacitus to be not only indicative of the use of history for contemporary commentary, but more specifically, apologies for Essex. Of course, this connection was not completely unfounded. The Earl of Essex did demonstrate a deep interest in Tacitus during his life (Donaldson 186-7).

Shakespeare would have likely picked up on the strong Tacitean presence in *Sejanus*, given the debt to Tacitus he displays in *Richard II* and *3 Henry VI*, which would also demonstrate his awareness of Tacitus' conduciveness for representing English history (Benario 202). Subsequently, Shakespeare would appear to have known better than to present *Sejanus* before the court. Again, the court had already set clear precedents for severely punishing representations of

Tacitus and topical events. The King's Men also would have had to work with Jonson on *Sejanus*, and Jonson certainly would have been aware not only of his use of Tacitus, but the likelihood that Tacitus would be read topically. Given his extensive use of Tacitus' account of Tiberius' reign, Jonson must have been aware that Tacitus admits in his "grim account" of this reign that he sees the "roots" of contemporaneous "evils" (Jowett, "Fall" 290). Essentially, Tacitus explicitly promotes his history as a means by which to access the present. Q also provides evidence that Jonson would have harbored awareness of Tacitus' topicality while writing *Sejanus*. As Jowett recognizes, an "anti-analogical stance does not even survive the Quarto's preliminaries" ("Fall" 290). In the paragraph appended to "The Argument" in Q, Jonson writes that *Sejanus* is to "aduance... a marke of Terror to all Traytors [and] Treasons," in addition to proving the entire spectrum of princes, not simply those of Rome, subordinate to the "continuall watch" of the "*Heauens*" (quoted from Jowett, "Fall" 290). Given the transparency of Jonson's efforts to avoid topical commentary in Q, he appears to have resigned to the futility of his efforts to do just this. Jonson thusly seems to have been aware that his play, inevitably, one way or another, was going to be charged with topicality. Jowett goes so far with this suggestion as to claim that Jonson must have been "unavoidably and palpably conscious of its potential as an oppositional text" ("Fall" 292). Simply Q's adamant protest of the play's topicality presents its historicity as "intrinsically problematic" (Jowett, "Fall" 287-288). Additionally, the appearance of marginalia, which its prefatory material presents as defenses of the drama's "truth and integrity" (*Sejanus: His* 234), invests Q with the "interactive potential" from which it seeks to disassociate Q (Jowett, "Fall" 292). They preserve its truth to the present more so than its exclusivity to Roman history. The King's Men must have had some idea that *Sejanus* would be read topically from working with Jonson on the play.

Jonson would also appear to anticipate topical readings of *Sejanus* because this drama's version of its subject's fall is significantly different from that presented by Tacitus. Jonson appears to have consciously altered Tacitus for his day. There are a handful of significant alterations of Tacitus in *Sejanus* which work to essentialize the conflict between good and evil that Tacitus consistently works to qualify (Donaldson 187). Consequently, Jonson appears to have actively modified Tacitus to heighten the play's dramatic intrigue. For instance, *Sejanus* neglects Tacitus' concession that Tiberius "was essentially well-meaning, if weak and influenced by his mother, early in his reign," and instead makes him overtly evil. As Richard Dutton asserts, the actions of the play's Tiberius are "cold, premeditated" and ultimately self-indulgent, wholly dismissing Tacitus' complication of them as potential products of "mental instability and a pathological fear of assassination." Jonson also suppresses Tacitus' mention of the favor shown by Tiberius to Lepidus, which works to avoid the complicated "alliance of honesty and vice" that the two historically demonstrate. Likewise, Jonson presents Sabinus as a "model of Stoic reserve and rectitude" rather than the "whining character, given to bitterness and complaining" that Tacitus makes him out to be. Most notably, Jonson presents Silius accused of treason without reason, which is a complete fabrication, to make him the "unwitting victim of malign forces" and suppress Tacitus' belief that Silius had "connivance with an enemy chieftain" and participated in "rapacity and extortion." By making these changes Jonson transforms Silius' suicide into the "desperate expedient of a virtuous man" (Dutton, "The Sources" 185-6).

Yet most clearly, the scene with the historian Cordus affirms *Sejanus*' involvement in topical history writing and, consequently, Jonson's anticipation of its topical reading. This scene discusses this topic by offering a denial of the "applicability of historical analogues" (Jowett,

“‘Fall’” 288). Consequently, this scene also contradicts the program which Q’s extraliterary material formally articulates for the drama, albeit this content simultaneously exhibits this project. It denies the ability of the play to be credited with this program *by virtue* of articulating this. This scene shows Early Modern activity mirroring representations of Roman history; therefore, it negates our capacity to take Q’s marginalia as a serious indication of Jonson’s activity in conceiving *Sejanus*. Q’s marginalia, by claiming to assert exclusively Roman historical truth, proffers to discourage “defamatory interpretations of [*Sejanus*] in terms of living public figures” (Jowett, “‘Fall’” 287). Likewise, Cordus asserts the benignity of his historical writing by openly citing, and thusly proclaiming complete conformity with, his sources, which he claims range from Titius Livius, Asinius Pollio, Bibaculus, and Catullus (3.414-435). By so doing, Cordus (to quote Jowett) “echoes his author in a context where there can be no denying that history does have a role as commentary on the present” (“‘Fall’” 289). Cordus subverts his dedication to historicity in the very opening of his defense, in which he claims, “So innocent I am of fact, my lords,/As but my words are argued” (3.408-409). Here, Cordus indirectly denies his use of facts, instead presenting his histories as arranged for “argument”—a word which “intrinsically suggests ... the rhetorical deployment of that subject-matter in order to advance a proposition” (Jowett, “‘Fall’” 288). Cordus’ terminology could add further evidence to support the topicality of *Sejanus*’ “Argument.”

Certainly, the Cordus scene need not corroborate the potential of a *Sejanus* performance to cause an outcry prior to Q’s printing, nor the likelihood of the King’s Men perceiving an outcry as a likely response to a *Sejanus* performance at this time. It may not be able to suggest anything about *Sejanus* prior to Q’s printing. This scene could have been added following this drama’s apparent censorship. This scene would seem comparable to the experience Jonson must

have had during *Sejanus*' trial with the Privy Council; therefore, this scene was possibly included after this drama's performance had been suspended (Jowett, "Fall" 288). Indeed, a 1603 performance may not have included overt evidence indicating its conversation with issues of topical history writing. Consequently, Esmé may have been as likely to witness a performance at court for the 1603/4 Christmas season as much as a public performance upon his 1603 return to London. The King's Men may not have had the terribly strong reason not to perform *Sejanus* for the court provided by the Cordus scene.

The dating of the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh may also provide reason to deny the possibility of a failed performance occurring in mid-May 1603. The trial of Raleigh, a likely analog for Silius, occurred on 17 November 1603, four months after his imprisonment on 17 July 1603; consequently, the topicality of *Sejanus* by May 1603 may not have been overt. The dating of this trial could also indicate that *Sejanus* was not even completed by mid-May; for it suggests that a public stage version may not have encountered all of its inspirations until summer 1603 (Ayles 18). Ultimately, the trial dating could indicate that Esmé witnessed a failed performance during the 1603/4 Christmas season rather than mid-May 1603, since it would allow that *Sejanus* came to include offensive material by this time, but not before. Still, this evidence does not negate the possibility that *Sejanus* could have been performed in mid-May 1603, only the possibility that a performance at this time would have caused public offense, maybe even the possibility that Esmé witnessed a performance at this time.

Then again, given the typicality of overzealous topical readings of Tacitus-inspired drama, which Hayward's experiences along with those of many other Early Modern English playwrights can demonstrate, evidence of actual topical elements not being included in *Sejanus* by May 1603 should not suggest that a performance could not have been considered treasonous.

A performance capable of causing a public outcry still could have occurred when Esmé was available to witness *Sejanus* at this time, even without Cordus or Silius' trial; therefore, the dedication may reference a performance of *Sejanus* at this time. *Sejanus* nonetheless used Tacitus, and so this drama could have still been suspected of treason, or at least anticipated treason. Northampton appears to have been predisposed to denounce it, anyways. Therefore, it remains unlikely that *Sejanus* was performed for the court, much less that it debuted there. Evidence of a court performance of *Sir Thomas More* during the 1603/4 Christmas season (Potter 304) provides reason to entertain the idea that *Sejanus* was performed at court then, since there is extensive evidence to suggest that *More* was offensive enough to the court to be censored (Gabrieli 32). However, Northampton also likely wanted revenge, or at least was unconcerned with the content of the play, as his very accusations of popery and treason against *Sejanus* could affirm; therefore, it is possible that he made his accusations simply from hearing of a performance's occurrence, and possibly prior to the 1603/4 season, albeit the play's offensiveness may not have been overt at this time. Evidence of *Sejanus* missing Q's representation of Cordus or Silius by May 1603 poses no contradiction to the idea that there could have been a failed performance prior to Raleigh's trial when Esmé first arrived in London in 1603, or the idea that the King's Men would have been disinclined to perform it for the 1603/4 season. Esmé still could have attended a performance of *Sejanus* met by violence when he was in London around mid-May 1603, and so Q's dedication need not point us to a different time for performance. The second pen version which Jonson claims could have caused an outcry before Esmé still likely could have been performed in mid-May 1603 when Esmé was likely in London. Given my dating of the writing of this version, its likely performance at this time was also likely its debut.

The closeness in time between the completion of an initial working draft of *Sejanus* and its first public performance corroborated by my dating of these two events, in conjunction with the evidence of Jonson's significant work on this draft alone outside of London, nominates a dramatist of the company responsible for its debut as the most likely candidate for the second pen which Jonson implicates in his writing of this version. This closeness suggests that Jonson delivered a working draft to this company soon after finishing it, or rather after returning from his retreat at Townshend's. Ultimately, it suggests that the King's Men were likely the first ones to see a working draft, given F1's identification of this company as *Sejanus*' debut company. Evidence affirming someone from the King's Men as the one involved in the writing of *Sejanus* for stage nominates this company's dramatist. As confirmed by Anne Barton and G.E. Bentley, "a normal part of the duties of a resident dramatist [was] to re-furbish...plays" (Barton 94). And this resident dramatist was likely Shakespeare.

Certainly, King James I's issuing of a Royal Patent for the King's Men on 17 May 1603 would complicate a proof of this company's dramatist as the second pen. The patent suggests that the King's Men debuted the play after a significant amount of time had passed since my dating for a completion of an independent working draft, given its simultaneity with the 1603 closure of London's theaters. The patent would ostensibly suggest that the King's Men did not debut *Sejanus* before London's theaters closed in 1603, for it suggests that they did not exist at this time. It supports the notion that the King's Men did not debut *Sejanus* until the 1603/4 Christmas season, or long after Jonson's work on *Sejanus* at Townshend's in the spring of 1603. In effect, it allows significant time for Jonson to collaborate with someone outside the debut company. However, I do not see a reason why the King's Men could not have performed *Sejanus* on this date of their formation.

A Royal Patent would have given the King's Men the necessary confidence to perform it, given that it granted them royal protection; additionally, it seems possible that James issued it in a response to a performance by the company they were formally known as on this date. *Sejanus* could have met controversy at this time, as previously indicated, while James' affinity for theatre would suggest that he would have liked to preserve his capacity to legitimately witness some of London's best players. Furthermore, F1's identification of the King's Men might be retroactive, or based on the fact that F1 was written after Lord Chamberlain's Men had been re-dubbed the King's Men. Therefore, F1 could refer to a performance by the King's Men before they were known as the King's Men, or sometime prior to 17 May 1603. Lois Potter indicates that the two names might have been functionally synonymous, for she indicates that in December 1603, seven months after James issued his royal patent for the King's Men, "someone – perhaps Pembroke – arranged for the Lord Chamberlain's Men to perform at Wilton and paid them an exceptionally large fee to cover the time and trouble of their journey" (305).

Shakespeare was most likely a resident dramatist of Lord Chamberlain's Men, and so he could have been the second pen that helped write the stage version of *Sejanus* for a debut prior to- or on- 17 May 1603. This idea is supported by documentation of Shakespeare being granted the privilege of collecting a fee with Richard Burbage and William Kemp on 15 March 1595 for two performances given for the Queen by Lord Chamberlain's Men at Greenwich Palace during the 1594/5 holiday season. Shakespeare was also a shareholder of Lord Chamberlain's Men, in addition to a frequently performed playwright, by 1597. Therefore, he likely had significant writing responsibilities with the company by 1603. Again, his identification as "Upstart Crow" also implicates him as a resident dramatist by 1603; this coin suggests that he was familiar with, and even renowned for, splitting time as an actor and playwright as early as 1592. Attaining the

prominence of a resident dramatist would have required such versatility. Potter also suggests that Shakespeare “probably revised plays that had been performed on the road or seen in London before the cessation of playing” in 1592 (Potter 144). In effect, he was likely on his way to becoming a dramatist for Lord Chamberlain’s Men by the turn of the seventeenth century. The evidence of Hand D on the original manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* being Shakespeare’s would also establish a precedent for Shakespeare’s involvement in revising extant plays of other playwrights prior to 1592 (Potter 272). He also appears to have had “the power to back new writers and make changes in the manuscripts submitted” (Barton 94). This power can be indicated by a popular anecdote published by Nicholas Rowe, editor of *The Works of William Shakespear* (1709), concerning Shakespeare’s involvement in the late September 1598 debut production of *Every Man In His Humour* by Lord Chamberlain’s Men (Potter 34):

Mr Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players in order to have it acted, and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr Jonson and his writings to the public. After this they were professed friends, though I don’t know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. (quoted from Donaldson 234)

This anecdote also establishes a precedent for Shakespeare intervening in his company’s debuts of Jonsonian drama.

Conversely, there is little reason to confirm Chapman as “the second pen.” As Anne Barton suggests, *In Seianum*, Chapman’s commendatory poem on *Sejanus* prefixed to Q, “is so convoluted and cloudily metaphoric that it is impossible to be certain whether or not the poem contains a reference to the collaborative nature of the acting text” (92). R.P. Corballis, on the other

hand, perceives this poem's reference to a troublesome audience as "our Hearde" to be clear evidence of Chapman's involvement in the infamous debut of *Sejanus*. He denies the possibility that this term alludes to Chapman's troubles collaborating with Jonson on *Eastward Ho!* because he remains convinced that this poem was composed before Chapman and Jonson were imprisoned for the performance of this play. However, I am not so convinced, and so I am disinclined to corroborate Corballis' suggestion regarding "our Hearde."

The Children of the Queen's Revels performed *Eastward Ho!* at Blackfriars theatre in late July or August 1605 (Donaldson 206); consequently, this play may have been performed before Edward Blount transferred copyrights for *Sejanus* to Thomas Thorpe on 6 August 1605 (Corballis 274). The debut of *Sejanus* may not have been the only failed performance that Chapman could have experienced prior to the date when printing began for Q, and so Chapman appears capable of writing about it for Q. Although, Thorpe, as Corballis suggests, may have begun work on the printing well before the date of its transferal to him (274), this remains a conjecture. Even if it were demonstrated, this fact would not necessarily corroborate the idea that *In Seianum* had been ready for consideration in print by the time Thorpe began working on Q. Jowett indicates that elements of Q may have been added just before its completion, offering the discrepancy in type-size between the Argument and coda of Q as indication that an element, namely the coda, "appears to have been added on the spur of the moment after the book's layout had been determined" ("Jonson's" 260). The possibility of this would allow the poem's naming of Suffolk to refer to Suffolk's involvement in releasing Chapman from his imprisonment for *Eastward Ho!*. Additionally, the other Privy Councillors such as "Salisbury, Northumberland, Worcester, Northampton, Devonshire, Ellesmere (the 'Chancellor'), and Dorset (the 'Treasurer')" which this

poem names were on the Council in 1605, when Chapman and Jonson were imprisoned for *Eastward Ho!*, as well as 1603, the earliest possible year Jonson could have been on trial for *Sejanus* (Corballis 276).

Corballis is also of the opinion that the presence of a Marston commendatory poem in Q indicates that Q, and subsequently, Chapman's poem, had been prepared for print before any performance of *Eastward Ho!*. Corballis claims that Marston would not have been on good terms with Jonson following a performance of *Eastward Ho!*, while he proceeds to suggest that Marston would not have prepared a commendatory poem for Q following the performance of this drama. Corballis notes that the epistle to the first quarto of *The Fawn* (1606) by Marston makes mention of "the factious malice and studied detractions" of fellow dramatists, which Corballis suggests can only refer to Jonson and Chapman blaming Marston for clauses of *Eastward Ho!* deemed offensive by the Privy Council (Corballis 275). Yet, while Chapman and Jonson apparently deny responsibility for these clauses, there is no evidence to corroborate Corballis' suggestion that they actively blame Marston for them: there is no evidence that they ever make mention of Marston while under detention. As Donaldson suggests, they would even seem to be protecting Marston with their evident silence, for there is no evidence that Marston was imprisoned. Even if Marston was imprisoned, their silence would still seem to bear the intent of protecting him, for it would indicate that they still perceived some advantage to keeping Marston's name clean (Donaldson 212). There does not seem to be a reason that Marston would not have written a commendatory poem for *Sejanus* after a performance of *Eastward Ho!*, and so there is no reason to believe that its presence in Q indicates that Chapman's was written prior to a performance of *Eastward Ho!*.

Certainly, it seems strange to suggest that *In Seianum* qualifies a comedy with phrases such as “Muses waters” and “sacred River” (Corballis 275). However, Chapman’s apparent involvement in *Eastward Ho!* provides reason to believe that he would be inclined to compliment Jonson. Furthermore, Jonson also makes reference to a muse in *Cynthia’s Revels* and *The Poet-aster*, and so there is reason for Chapman to use these phrases to describe a Jonsonian comedy. Chapman certainly speaks of Jonson’s activity avoiding “Men’s illiterate Lust”; however, Chapman is not necessarily referencing Q as a response to a failed performance of *Sejanus*. In effect, this reference cannot be used to support his involvement in *Sejanus*. As Anne Barton suggests, “Chapman was more probably alluding to Jonson’s earlier unpublished plays for Henslowe and praised by Frances Meres, and to the compromises that they made to popular taste” (93), which include *Richard Crookback*, a Richard III play that Henslowe commissioned Jonson to write on 22 June 1602, as well as several additional scenes for Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* (Donaldson 179).

Jonson would also not seem inclined to actively seek another collaborator for *Sejanus*. The majority of this drama’s writing likely required Jonson to perform intense research in solitude. This would also present *Sejanus* as a play he took on to please himself (Barton 93). Furthermore, why would Jonson mention Chapman for *Eastward Ho!*, another play he likely anticipated backlash for—given its explicit reference to *Isle of the Dogs*, the first drama for which Jonson was imprisoned (Donaldson 113)—if he had taken the trouble to suppress his name from a prior play that received backlash? Why would Jonson include a poem by Chapman that might have suggested to many that Chapman was involved in *Sejanus* if Jonson took the trouble to differentiate Chapman’s involvement in *Sejanus*? Maybe Jonson wanted all the glory for Q or sought to maximize its potential to improve his reputation following the second pen’s version.

However, his recognition of Chapman in *Eastward Ho!* challenges the idea that he would actively suppress Chapman if he was indeed a collaborator.

Shakespeare also seems a more likely candidate for the second pen than Chapman because there are strong, arguably unmistakable parallels between *Sejanus* and *Coriolanus*, a tragedy which, according to *The Norton Shakespeare's* "Timeline" of Shakespearean dramatic production was penned in 1608 (1876). Certainly, my suggestion that these parallels indicate Shakespeare's collaboration on the writing of *Sejanus* must only remain speculation. They could simply indicate Shakespeare's work as actor in *Sejanus*. However, I believe these parallels can provide support for extant evidence regarding Shakespeare's collaboration on the writing of *Sejanus*, and so I will proceed to delineate them. As *Groats-worth* indicates, Shakespeare would have already had a reputation as a play-patcher. If nothing else, drawing parallels between these plays may also support the influence of Shakespeare's acting upon his playwriting and corroborate the capacity of "The Second Pen" to reference Shakespeare's approach to acting.

First and foremost, both tragedies have the same basic plot structure, and so *Sejanus* would certainly appear capable of providing inspiration to the gestation of *Coriolanus*. Both plays feature a Roman general rising to power to ultimately be mobbed for treason until he is literally torn to shreds. Certainly, Jonson and Shakespeare present the rises of their respective Roman generals in "dramatically" different ways: *Sejanus* actively seeks power by manipulating the art of flattery and the power of suggestion, or essentially assuming the role of an actor, while he never attains the power he seeks; *Coriolanus*, on the other hand, reluctantly achieves power and vehemently shuns both flattery and acting. Nonetheless, articulating the ways in which their plots

differ also helps to articulate the ways in which they are the same. Both work to present challenges to the integrity of acting, while both denounce the art of flattery by suggesting that it is intimately linked with the art of acting.

Coriolanus adamantly protests acting as both inefficacious and debilitating. He goes so far as to suggest that putting on a gown of humility, or rather masking his adamant censures of acting and congeniality, would be for him to stand exposed (2.2.134). For Coriolanus, acting will not only contradict its professed purpose, but will also, in so doing, leave the actor's weaknesses vulnerable to attack. As a general, Coriolanus refuses to feign anything to his people "[l]est [he] succease to honour [his] own truth" and let his "body's action teach [his] mind/ A most inherent baseness" (3.3.121-123). Of course, Sejanus incontrovertibly demonstrates the duplicity of acting, for he uses acting to thwart the detection of his ultimate design to seize the throne from his superior. As Sejanus admits:

...The way to put
A prince [Tiberius] in blood is to present the shapes
Of dangers greater than they are (like late,
Or early shadows) and, sometimes, to feign
Where there are none, only to make him fear;
...This I have made my rule[.] (2.383-390)

Ultimately, by the virtue of acting, Sejanus offers vigilance in the place of his malice and solidarity in place of his radical, Machiavellian self-interest.

Yet both plays accentuate not only the duplicity in acting, but also that in theatre's other principal arts: directing and writing. What's more, they do so in markedly similar ways. *Sejanus'* Tiberius, as with *Coriolanus'* Aufidius, activates a suspicion of his Roman general's treason to plot his general's demise behind his back. In effect, both assume the role of director to orchestrate and conceal questionable designs to defend, if not indulge, their own pride. Tiberius directs Marco to spy on Sejanus, or essentially perform a director's role in his stead, while using the law

to mask this sabotage operation; furthermore, Tiberius directs Marco to do so based on the proverbial, intuitive belief that “greatness hath his cankers” (3.689) rather than any tangible evidence:

Here, Marco, we assign thee, both to spy,
Inform, and chastise; think, and use thy means,
Thy ministers, what, where, on whom thou wilt;
Explore, plot, practise: all thou dost in this,
Shall be, as if the Senate, or the Laws
Had given it privilege...(3.701-706)

Ultimately, Tiberius achieves his end by galvanizing the Senate with mere letters that reiterate his suspicions without proof beyond their rhetoric. Likewise, Aufidius also seeks to manipulate the “dull actor” (5.3.40) that is Coriolanus behind his back, in defiance of Coriolanus’ demonstrative merit, to advance his own power. In response to Coriolanus renewing his loyalty to his mother and wife, though not Rome, Aufidius declares in an aside that he will work a “fortune” out of Coriolanus’ “mercy,” as though this indicates a lack of “honour” (5.3.201-203). Lastly, Sejanus appears to behave duplicitously not only in terms of the actor, but in terms of the author. He figures himself as a writer in his instructions to Varro on how to carry out his designs for the throne: “Here be your notes, what points to touch at; read:/ Be cunning in them” (3.7-8). Jonson also elucidates the vanity of authorial conceits, for Tiberius, rather than Sejanus, proves to be the actual author of the play, with Sejanus just another one of his puppets. Tiberius’ letters to the Senate ultimately seal Sejanus’ downfall. In the end, Sejanus has his efforts to preside as author turned against him. Likewise, Coriolanus positions himself as author to appear equally vain. Coriolanus professes that he will “stand/ As if a man were author of himself” (5.3.35-36) only to fall to the designs of Aufidius. Even in shunning the art of acting and assuming the role of author, Coriolanus can only “forget” his original “part”; he can only ever prove to be a “dull actor” (5.3.40-41)

The anti-theatrical parallels between *Sejanus* and *Coriolanus* also serve to suggest that the former influenced the latter. These parallels exhibit a Shakespearean play promoting a distinctly Jonsonian viewpoint. Shakespeare is the supreme actor-playwright, one who goes so far as to suggest that even the one who conceives a drama's actors cannot detach himself from the mechanisms of acting; therefore, he would not appear to have developed *Coriolanus*' anti-theatricalism by himself. Additionally, it is highly possible that he could have acquired these sentiments from *Sejanus*, for, as Q's marginalia demonstrates, *Sejanus* may represent the pinnacle of "textual fetishism" (Loewenstein 48) and "bibliographic ego" (Cook 106) in Early Modern drama. Certainly, Shakespeare could have already acquired anti-theatrical sentiments from his work on *Every Man In*; however, suggesting that he would have acquired these sentiments from this plays suggests that he worked intimately on its construction, or that he was already acting as a dramatist by the time *Sejanus* was delivered to his company. In effect, this suggestion can support the notion that Shakespeare would have been in a position to be Jonson's "second pen." Of course, Shakespeare evidently acted in *Every Man In* and could have simply familiarized himself with anti-theatrical drama from this experience; one might argue that the acting in this Jonsonian comedy is quite dull. However, this suggestion still works to support the applicability of "The Second Pen" to Shakespeare, even if it does not conclusively support the idea that Shakespeare was the "second pen" which Jonson refers to in Q. It suggests that he was familiar with quite writerly acting, and so it allows "The Second Pen" to reference his work as an actor, in addition to his work as a playwright and dramatist.

Yet, *Coriolanus* would nevertheless appear to support the idea that Shakespeare worked on *Sejanus*, for it suggests that he had experience with some form of censorship. *Coriolanus* appears preoccupied with thwarting overzealous readings from audience members, as though trying

to suppress a bad memory. The play's opening scene depicts people of an audience making fools of themselves trying to read topically; it shows how people will mistake ways something is about them even when informed that it will be about them. Even when Menenius informs the First Citizen that he refers to him as "the great toes of this assembly," this citizen still cannot conceive of the actual meaning of this reference: "I the great toe? Why the great toe?" (1.1.144-145). In effect, this scene evinces the futility of pursuing topical readings, for it portrays them inherently bent by impenetrable subjectivity. Additionally, Menenius exhibits how even those who ostensibly know how to effectively provide topical readings are hasty and self-absorbed. In response to Cominius' report regarding Coriolanus' profession of the "folly" to "leave unburnt" but "one poor grain or two" from "a pile/ Of noisome, musty chaff," Menenius immediately claims he is "one of those," as if Coriolanus would distinguish him for saving before his mother, wife, or child (5.1.25-29). Menenius would seem to read topically out of a fear for his life, or at least see himself in vague references which do not necessarily imply a reference to him. Invalidating rather than refining topical reading would appear to be a primary concern of the writer of *Coriolanus*.

Of course, Shakespeare may have been anticipating the censorship of *Coriolanus* simply based on its content rather than any prior experience with censorship. This play represents both a person of rank and contemporaneous insurrection, or rather representations which the original manuscript of *Sir Thomas More*—the Early Modern play text bearing the clearest evidence of censorship—includes, and which Master of the Revels Sir Edmund Tilney marked for removal in it (Gabrieli 32). Sharon Miller asserts that Coriolanus' condemnation of "senatorial concessions to the people echoes the sentiments of a royal proclamation that James issued against the Midland Riots on 24 July 1607, something many would [have been] familiar with at the time Shakespeare

wrote *Coriolanus*” (297). The proclamation represents an expansion upon Coriolanus’ refusal to negotiate with “[t]he cockle of rebellion, insolence, [and] sedition” (3.1.74) by offering a reason for refusing to do so. James claims that “popular Insurrections. . .doe bring a heape of calamities upon multitudes of innocent Subjects, and chiefly upon the Authors and Actors themselves” (quoted from Miller 297). *Coriolanus* represents a person of rank and insurrection in the same character.

Yet the preoccupation with topical readings likely indicates Shakespeare’s work with *Sejanus*, for Menenius begins with describing Rome’s people in a much similar fashion as the concluding description of Rome’s people in *Sejanus*. *Coriolanus* would seem to take off where *Sejanus* ends, and so the latter would appear as an inspiration to the former. In the final scene of *Sejanus*, Terentius describes the mob that rips Sejanus “limb from limb” as becoming these very extremities that it takes from its prince: “A thousand heads,/ A thousand hands, ten thousand tongues, and voices,/ Employed at once in several acts of malice!” (5.801-803). Correspondingly, Menenius, in the first scene of *Coriolanus*, allegorizes the mob before him as “all the body’s members” (1.1.85). The aversion which *Coriolanus* demonstrates toward the masses could simply reference Shakespeare’s experiences acting in *Sejanus*, for he could have been booed off stage during its performance by the King’s Men. Shakespeare, given that he was a well-known company member by 1603 and might have spoken the Epilogue (that is if the play even got that far), “in which case he would have experienced the full force of [audience] anger at the play” (Potter 307). But again, *Coriolanus*’ depiction of the people could exhibit Shakespeare’s involvement in writing *Sejanus*. Although *Coriolanus* gives its Roman citizens much more of a voice, its concluding depiction of them seems to be the same. The people of

Coriolanus seem equally impressionable as the people of *Sejanus*, given the success of Coriolanus in becoming emperor so reluctantly and misanthropically (2.3.59-145). Additionally, the story of Menenius seems to achieve its effect on the people, in spite of their initial, and rather adamant, resistance. They seem to conform to the ultimate import of this story, as those instruments for the design of noble desires it claims them to be. The First Citizen eventually comes to proclaim, “The noble tribunes are the people’s mouths,/ And we their hands” (3.1.271-272).

The similarities between *Coriolanus* and *Sejanus*, and the ways in which these support Shakespeare as Jonson’s “second pen,” affirm the predominantly collaborative nature of Shakespeare’s writing. Their support of this ultimately supports the figurative applicability of “The Second Pen” to Shakespeare’s writing, since this coin promotes Shakespeare’s writing process as consistently informed by another hand. *Coriolanus*’ dependence on historical sources also supports the coin’s figurative applicability to Shakespeare’s writing process, for this also presents Shakespeare’s writing as highly invested in the work of other writers. The similarities between *Coriolanus* and *Sejanus* equally substantiate a reciprocity between Shakespeare’s acting and playwriting; thusly they allow “The Second Pen,” even with its overt reference to writing, to refer to his acting. The similarities also affirm Shakespeare’s familiarity with anti-theatrical drama, or roles meant for text, in addition to affirming the instrumentality of his acting to his writing. They may affirm the figurative applicability of “The Second Pen” to Shakespeare’s acting in these ways, as well. The applicability of “The Second Pen” to the reciprocity between playwriting and acting in Shakespeare’s writing also allows this coin to forward Shakespeare’s humility more so than the others, for it demonstrates Shakespeare refusing to distinguish himself from his actors in his playwriting. This coin effectively indicates that Shakespeare thought of himself,

above all else, as a “company man” (Dutton, *Licensing* 99). Hopefully, by doing so, “The Second Pen” may provide me with good company in giving Shakespeare a good name.

*

In closing, I hope to provide a penultimate demonstration of the utility of the “The Second Pen” in sketching Shakespeare’s theatrical career. I will proceed to do so by demonstrating its support of Michel Foucault’s brilliant answer to his own question, “What is an Author?” Surely, if I am to demonstrate the utility of “The Second Pen” in describing an author, I should do so by drawing parallels to another’s writing beyond that of both my main subject and myself; or rather, by inscribing its matrix of implications regarding the authorial practices of Shakespeare inside- and out- of my own writing. And surely, I should proceed through the writing of Foucault, which consistently writes outside of itself, as Foucault presides over both history and theory as much as Shakespeare does over tragedy and comedy.

Firstly, “The Second Pen,” as a phrase, may gesture towards Foucault’s affirmation of authorial activity as a disappearance before itself into the complex operations of discourse (Foucault 208-209). It suggests an act of writing in which another besides the author is present. The resonance of “The Second Pen” with this notion of writing is not only to the benefit of its representation of authorship, but also that embraced by Shakespeare. His playwriting appears open to a conflation of its work with others’ discourse, given its debt to classical literature and Shakespeare’s work as a dramatist. Yet “The Second Pen” entrenches Shakespeare’s writing not only in the intrinsically collaborative nature of writing articulated by Foucault, but also the dissociative, or rather actorly, character by which Foucault qualifies writing. It conjures his suggestion that the “author” is just as absolutely incommensurable with the historical “real writer” as he is

any “fictitious speaker”, for it could imply that Shakespeare takes an an “alter ego” as a playwright (Foucault 215). Certainly, the commensurability of “The Second Pen” with Foucault in this case also seems to complement its relevance to Shakespeare, given Shakespeare’s apparent affinity for producing “actor-author” analogs. By defining Shakespeare through the text of another writer, Ben Jonson, “The Second Pen” may also perpetuate Foucault’s limitation of the search for authorial identity to discourse produced by other authors. Consequently, my methodology in conceiving “The Second Pen” would seem all the more credible. Admittedly, my work in this thesis demonstrates my belief that Shakespeare’s historical presence at certain places and times influenced his texts’ representation of his authorial practices. Indeed, much unlike Foucault, I think learning that “Shakespeare was not born in the house we visit today” *would* alter “the functioning of [this] author’s name” (Foucault 10); for it would change who he met and which discourses he could have possibly drawn from and potentially included in his writing. Therefore, my arguments in this thesis may seem to deviate from Foucault’s methodology. But still, as my proposal of “The Second Pen” might suggest, I hope to present writing as the culmination of the meaning of the events in Shakespeare’s history. Just as Foucault, I believe that drawing from the discourse of others turns the author into a fiction rather than a reality (Foucault 214-215).

In the end, by limiting Shakespeare’s identity to text with the coin of “The Second Pen,” I hope to once and for all present an answer to the question of who was Shakespeare: I hope to dismiss this as a valid question, one with an answer, altogether. This question can still have functional efficacy despite being moot, or at least as silent as the page. Thusly, it may turn the focus of Shakespearean criticism back to the characters of Shakespeare’s text, the most direct spawn of

Shakespeare which remains, and away from topical readings. I hope to have provided an exhaustive exercise in reading for the historical Shakespeare and cloyed you with much fat meat in this respect, especially regarding the fluidity of Shakespeare's artistic practices. I also hope to have shown that reading Shakespeare in this way would be to engage in activity which the very characters of his texts fear for—which they think will distort, ironically enough, their relevance to anything. I hope to show that readings of this nature threaten to obscure, if not contradict, Shakespeare's legacy. In any event, Shakespeare's writing constantly puts history right in the text, so why look for it anywhere else behind the text? What is more, why look for individual identity in text when Shakespeare subordinates this beneath historical discourse? Even Jonson's most adamant profession of authorial distinction in his literature evidences that he could not erase the influence of a second pen. Anyways, we have still yet to answer the question of who was Hamlet, so why continue to let it beg the alternative one of who Shakespeare was? Shakespeare may never have even thought there to be a difference to begin with, especially given the apparent influence of his acting upon his writing. What is more, Hamlet's "madness"—much like that of Lear, Macbeth, and so on—is "a text for others' meditative self-understanding" (Huelin 37), "in a word...Realistic, neither a matter of crippled reading or deceitful play, but of true vision" (Knapp 28). It may not matter who is speaking in Shakespeare's texts, for they may have sought to echo universality, even if only that of the ego. Just look at all the words, words, words! In them is the disappearance of yourself, no? So look for yourself there, then! Shakespeare may still be writing all of us, even as I write of his memory! So, tell me, how could there be a Shakespeare beyond our names for him?

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