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978-1-107-07301-2 - Ellipsis in English Literature: Signs of Omission

Anne Toner

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## ELLIPSIS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Anne Toner provides an original account of the history of ellipsis marks – dots, dashes and asterisks – in English literary writing. Highlighting ever-renewing interest in these forms of non-completion in literature, Toner demonstrates how writers have striven to get closer to the hesitancies and interruptions of spoken language, the indeterminacies of thought, and the successive or fragmented nature of experience by means of these textual symbols. While such punctuation marks may seem routine today, this book describes their emergence in early modern drama and examines the relationship between authors, printers and grammarians in advancing or obstructing the standardization of the marks. Their development is explored through close study of the works of major English writers, including Jonson, Shakespeare, Richardson, Sterne, Meredith and Woolf, along with visual illustrations of their usage. In particular, Toner traces the evolution of ellipsis marks in the novel, a form highly receptive to elliptical punctuation.

ANNE TONER is a Fellow and Director of Studies in English at Trinity College, Cambridge.

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*Signs of Omission*

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107073012](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107073012)

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First published 2015

Printing in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Toner, Anne, 1971–

Ellipsis in English literature : signs of omission / Anne Toner.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-107-07301-2 (Hardback)

1. English language–Ellipsis. 2. English literature–History and criticism. 3. English fiction–History and criticism. 4. English language–Style. 5. English language–Punctuation.
6. English language–Written English. 7. Narration (Rhetoric) I. Title.

II. Title: Signs of omission.

PE1369.T66 2014

421'.1–dc23 2014030462

ISBN 978-1-107-07301-2 Hardback

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## *Acknowledgements*

I should like to thank the three Cambridge Colleges at which work for this book has been undertaken: Trinity Hall, Emmanuel and Trinity. Some parts of my chapters have already appeared in print. I am grateful for permission to reprint in modified versions work first published in the journals *Renaissance Drama*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* and *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, and in the book edited by Sarah A. Brown and Catherine Silverstone, *Tragedy in Transition*. Full acknowledgement of these previous works appears in the chapters that follow. Many librarians have assisted me in the research for this book and I am especially grateful to the librarians in the University Library, Cambridge; the Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge; the Beinecke Library, Yale University; the British Library; the Pierpont Morgan Library; the Wisbech and Fenland Museum; the Victoria and Albert Museum.

It is impossible for me to thank everyone sufficiently who has helped in the development of a book that has been written over such a long period of time. I have been fortunate enough to work on a subject that has captured many people's interest and I have benefited enormously from the conversations and suggestions of many friends and colleagues. Among those I should especially like to thank the following:

Sarah Barrett Jones, the late Anne Barton, Kate Bennett, Joe Bray, Pierre Caquet, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, Jason Goddard, Caroline Gonda, Tess Grant, Eric Griffiths, Miriam Handley, Christopher Hartley, Michael Hawcroft, Beth Lynch, David McKitterick, Jessica Martin, Mary Newbould, As Richards, Jan Schramm, Francis Spufford, Andrew Taylor, William St Clair and Emma Widdis.

I was supervised by John Lennard for my PhD on the subject that became this book. It would be difficult to have a more inspiring, erudite and generous supervisor and friend. I was also lucky to have the advice and encouragement of another scholar in the field of punctuation studies, Malcolm Parkes, who died in 2013. Jerome McGann has been enthusiastic

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*Acknowledgements*

about this project from its early days and my colleague Adrian Poole has been a source of invaluable guidance and wisdom. I am also grateful to Linda Bree and to Anna Bond at Cambridge University Press, and to the readers of the manuscript of this book.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my parents for their patience and interest. My greatest thanks go to my husband, Jerry. He has lived closely with this book. He has been tireless in his encouragement, in his generosity and with his time. Without these, this book would not have been finished. My gratitude to him is, without doubt, inexpressible.