Abstract

The 'Complete' Shakespeare: Representations of Author, Text and Canon

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What do we mean when we say 'the complete works' of Shakespeare? How has the notion of complete works changed over the years? This dissertation investigates several periods in the history of collecting and publishing Shakespeare heretofore unexplored through this lens of completeness. My primary aim is not to evaluate editions of the complete works but rather to discuss the different rationales behind the concept of completeness itself.

In the preface I provide definitions of some key terms and clarify certain beliefs that guided me during the research. One important assumption is that in England during the Renaissance, individual writers actually produced texts for the stage, sometimes alone but at other times in collaboration, and the identity of these dramatists can be determined via an investigation of internal and external evidence. This is based on the research into authorship by scholars such as Brian Vickers.[1] The view is considered anachronistic by many today because, the argument goes, the 'author' did not emerge until the Enlightenment.[2] But as Vickers has shown, the notion of the individual author can be traced back as far as late sixth century Greece, and this notion was also prevalent during the Renaissance. Another of my key assumptions, based on the work of Patrick Cheney, is that the author at the center of this investigation was a poet-playwright throughout his career.[3] This runs counter to the conventional view of William Shakespeare as a playwright who happened to issue a few poems when the theatres were closed due to the plague. It has also generally been assumed that Shakespeare was not interested in seeing any of his plays published. However, Lukas Erne has built a compelling case that the playwright was not indifferent to publication; rather, he was concerned with how his plays appeared in print as well in the theatre.[4]

Part I focuses on the collecting of authors and works in Early Modern London.[5] My contribution in the first chapter is to situate Shakespeare's collected plays of 1623, the so-called First Folio (F1), in a wider perspective than is usually done. I concentrate on the publication of collected editions from 1550 to 1623 to shed further light on the publication of one of the best-known and influential collections. Most discussions of Shakespeare's

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[1] *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[2] Michael Foucault, 'What is an Author?', trans. by Josué V. Harari, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984), pp. 101-20.
[3] *Shakespeare National Poet-Playwright* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[4] *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[5] I use both 'Renaissance' and 'Early Modern' in this dissertation: the former because it highlights links between that period and the past; the latter as it highlights connections between that time and the present.

collected works begin with F1, and Ben Jonson's 1616 *Works* is usually the benchmark by which it is measured. But Jonson's was not the only collected works to have been published in English before 1623: collections circulating in the Elizabethan and Jacobean era included those by writers ranging from Chaucer to Sidney to Spenser to King James I; these crossed genre boundaries, but many were secular, literary publications. Nevertheless, very little has been written on the connections linking these other collected editions to F1. That the 1623 Shakespeare collection was unique content-wise is without question; however, it did not appear in a textual or cultural vacuum, and many threads can be traced from its production back to other collected works—threads that reach as far back as the first one-volume collected edition of Chaucer printed in 1532. Many of these connections, particularly among the stationers who issued collected editions, seem never to have been discussed before.

F1 is widely seen as the first Shakespeare collection, but the collecting of Shakespeare started much earlier. In Chapter 2 I discuss how his poems and plays were gathered in various ways from 1598 to 1623: in Francis Meres's collection on the page in *Palladis Tamia* (1598); in the bookshop, where Shakespeare's name became increasingly important in the attempt to sell quartos and octavos; in the ten plays that make up the Pavier quartos, the first attempt to collect the plays in 1619; and in F1 itself. Two of my key claims in a close rereading of the passages about Shakespeare in *Palladis Tamia* are that Meres not only saw him as an 'author', but an author who wrote 'workes'.[6] By following the name on the title pages and in dedications after 1598, I confirm that Shakespeare appeared in the bookshop as a poet-playwright for at least a decade and a half; I also argue that the name in the bookshop—'William Shakeſpeare'—can be traced back to the author himself, when in 1593 he seems to have approved how it looked in the dedication to *Venus and Adonis* printed by Richard Field. At the Folger Shakespeare Library there is a copy of the Pavier quartos in original binding, one of only two that survive.[7] I believe this volume, first owned by Edward Gwynn, is a kind of material synecdoche for other bound copies that circulated, and presents us with a unique picture of Shakespeare the playwright. For example, an early reader (perhaps Gwynn himself) gave the collection a title: *Plays and Pamphlets Written by William Shakespeare*. Shakespeare has been called many things, but rarely has he been called a pamphleteer; I think a history of the complete works in print that ignores their appearance as pamphlets is incomplete. In the Pavier quartos Shakespeare is a playwright only; the poet-playwright of Meres and the bookshop is gone. This image is even more pronounced in F1, where the title

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[6] *Palladis Tamia (1598) With an Introduction by Don Cameron Allen* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1938), pp. 283a and 282a–b.
[7] Folger STC 26101 copy 3. The other is at Texas Christian University.

page announces 'MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARES COMEDIES, HISTORIES, & TRAGEDIES', and the narrative poet is mostly absent from the preliminaries. This is a collection of plays, not of works, and one consequence of this is that the Shakespeare of F1 is the image that will resonate down the centuries. It took many years for the poems to be collected with the plays, for example, and to this day there remains great resistance to acknowledging Shakespeare's contribution to any drama left out of the 1623 edition. Thus there will probably never be agreement on what constitutes the complete works of Shakespeare.

Part II includes chapters on complete Shakespeare in early 18th century London and late 19th century Philadelphia. The first edition designed to contain the poems and plays was published by a group including Jacob Tonson and Edmund Curll in 1714.[8] However, some buyers were able to purchase a complete Shakespeare as early as 1709 when, after Tonson had issued the first edition of the plays edited by Nicholas Rowe in six volumes, Curll issued what he called *Volume the Seventh*.[9] Designed to sit alongside Tonson's volumes on the bookshelf, it was edited by Charles Gildon and includes many of the poems and sonnets as well as essays by Gildon on the works and Greek and Roman stage history. In look and contents, this volume 'completes' the works. Chapter 3 examines the selling of the plays and poems between 1709 and 1714 in the advertisements placed in newspapers by Tonson, Curll, and Bernard Lintott, who issued his own edition of the collected poems in 1709.[10] I argue for a more balanced view of Curll; his reputation was tarnished in the 18th century, mostly for bad behavior after his involvement with Shakespeare, and this has led most Shakespeare scholars to dismiss *Volume the Seventh* as nothing but 'a parasitic excrescence'[11] damaged by the inclusion of 'the deformed Benson version'[12] of the sonnets first issued in 1640.. But by following the newspaper ads, especially in 1709, I confirm Curll was indeed 'inventive, energetic, and always alive to the value of publicity and the need to create a market for one's product'.[13] For example, Lintott did not issue his first edition of the poems in the same format as the 1709 plays, and he did not seem to promote it as much as Curll promoted *Volume the Seventh*; these may have been factors in Tonson's decision to bring Curll into the publishing syndicate in 1714. It is easy in hindsight to bemoan this since it was the 'deformed' sonnets that were reprinted in most later 18th editions of the works, while Lintott's 1711 version of

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[8] *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, 9 vols (London: J. Tonson, E. Curll, J. Pemberton, and K. Sanger, 1714).
[9] *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear. Volume the Seventh* (London: Edmund Curll and Egbert Sanger, 1710). The book actually went on sale in 1709.
[10] *A Collection of Poems* (London: Bernard Lintott, [1709]).
[11] Giles. E. Dawson, *Four Centuries of Shakespeare Publishing* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1964), p. 9.
[12] J. Douglas Canfield, *The Baroque in English Neoclassical Literature* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), p. 117.
[13] Raymond N. MacKenzie, 'Curll, Edmund (d. 1747)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan. 2008 <http://www.oforddnb.com/view/article/6948> [accessed 25 July 2009].

the sonnets, based on the 1609 quarto, disappeared.[14] While it may not satisfy our view of what complete Shakespeare means, in context Curll's volume does a very good job of representing the poems and sonnets that were available in 1709; had just the narrative poems and the supplementary material been included, the bookseller's posthumous reputation may even have received a boost.

In chapter 4 I consider a very different kind of complete Shakespeare: the single edition Variorum. Horace Howard Furness (1833-1912) spent nearly fifty years compiling and editing 'complete' critical editions of fifteen plays; this chapter looks at how he did it, and what it meant, with particular focus on his work on *Macbeth*.[15] He began working on a homemade edition of *Hamlet* in 1861. Fifty-two years later he died while working on *Cymbeline*. To say he gave his life to the variorum would be an understatement. For example, he spent one year working on *Macbeth*. The primary contribution of this chapter is to show Furness at work on the play, based on his annotated copies of previous editions in the family's archives at the University of Pennsylvania.[16] What Furness writes in the preface to *Macbeth* about his textual collation from the Folios could be said of his approach to the edition as a whole: 'I have preferred to err on the side of fulness'.[17] 45 editions were used in the textual collation, and over 139 books consulted for the textual notes and appendix. There are over 2,000 notes in the textual commentary, which dominates almost every page of text. The appendix is also exhaustive, and includes over twenty-five pages devoted to Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* and fifty pages of German translations and commentaries. Feminist critics might be surprised to learn that more space is given over to Lady Macbeth in this section than her husband, and that most of this commentary was written by women; the entries about how Sarah Siddons approached the part and played it are still relevant for anyone interested in performance criticism. Few today will be reading this edition, of course, but it still continues to have some influence: one small contribution of this chapter is to show how A. C. Bradley's seminal work *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) was based in part on his reading of the *New Variorum Macbeth* and the other three 'great' tragedies Furness edited.

Part III is devoted to Shakespeare today. Chapter 5 explores competing representations of completeness in six current editions of the works: the Riverside, the

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[14] *A Collection of Poems, In Two Volumes* (London: Bernard Lintott, [1711]).
[15] *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Macbeth*, 3rd edn, ed. by Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1873).
[16] e.g. '*Macbeth* with Handwritten Marginalia', Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania MS Coll 481, Furness Family Papers 1765-1937*, Macbeth, Measure for Measure*, Box 32.
[17] Preface to *New Variorum Macbeth*, p. iv.

Bevington, the Oxford, the Norton, the Pelican, and the RSC.[18] All are massive volumes, totaling more than 10,000 pages, and several have been published in earlier editions; this perhaps explains why an investigation such as this has not been undertaken before. My contribution here is to study the work of general editors G. Blakemore Evans, David Bevington, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Stephen Greenblatt, Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller, and Jonathan Bate as earlier scholars studied editions edited by Rowe, Johnson, Malone, et. al. The discussion is organized around canon, text, and apparatus, and also takes into account the circumstances in which these editions were created as well as critical reactions to them. In the section on canon, for example, I consider how a reader encounters the works. The plays are usually organized by the genres from F1 (often with an extra section called 'Romances'), but the Oxford editors have challenged this tradition by arranging the works in supposed chronological order of composition; it has also been common practice to place the poems and sonnets at the back of an edition, but the Pelican editors put them right at the front, acknowledging Shakespeare's status as a poet-playwright during his lifetime. Topics covered in the section on text include the insertion of 'additional passages' at the end of some plays that survive in more than one version, and the handling of oaths, stage directions and modern spelling. In the last part I focus on apparatus, examining such elements as the general introductions, introductions to the individual works, textual notes, illustrations, and bibliographies. I also assess the extended apparatuses two of these editions (Norton and RSC) have in cyberspace.

Chapter 6 looks at competing representations of co-authorship across the same collected editions discussed in chapter 5. For many years George Wilkins, George Peele, Thomas Middleton and John Fletcher have been identified by some scholars as Shakespeare's collaborators. For just as many years a number of editors have either ignored or dismissed the evidence of this collaboration. My purpose is not to re-argue the cases for co-authorship made by authors such as Brian Vickers and MacDonald P. Jackson, but rather to highlight the problems that arise in multiple representations in collected editions.[19] While some plays are acknowledged as collaborative efforts, others are the subjects of wide disagreement. At times

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[18] *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974); *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd edn, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997); *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 5th edn, ed. by David Bevington (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2003); *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, gen. eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, 2nd edn, gen. eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005); *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997); *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford* [18] *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, gen. eds. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (London: Penguin, 2002); *William Shakespeare: Complete Works,* ed. by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (New York: The Modern Library, 2007).

[19] Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author*; MacDonald P. Jackson, *Defining Shakespeare: Pericles as Test Case* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

one editor boldly makes the case for co-authorship while another does not even raise the issue at all. The ways in which a collected edition represents Shakespeare's collaborators influences a reader's sense of what 'Shakespeare' means, and our understanding of 'complete Shakespeare' will remain incomplete unless we take into account the work of his co-authors. Throughout the chapter I use the two editions of Oxford as touchstones in the debate because these editions have done much to advance the case for co-authorship. I argue that today an edition of the complete works must find room for the playwrights he certainly collaborated with—Peele, Middleton, Wilkins, and Fletcher—and also acknowledge the writers who contributed to *Sir Thomas More*: Anthony Munday, Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Heywood. I also discuss several other plays where collaboration has been detected: it may take some time before the 'others' who worked on *Edward III* and the *Henry VI* plays are identified, but Thomas Nashe and Thomas Kyd should get credit for their parts in writing *1 Henry VI*. Finally, I argue that literary critics should stop whitewashing co-authors from their discussions of the plays, and I give some examples of what a 'collaborative criticism' might look like.

In the afterword I consider a few areas of complete Shakespeare I did not pursue. First, there is more work to be done on the print culture of collected editions examined in chapter 1, including that most influential of all complete works, the Bible. There is also a need for more research on the representations of completeness beyond the collected works in a single volume, like 'The Complete Arden 2 Shakespeare', i.e. the whole collection of individual editions published between 1951 and 1982. Finally, I briefly discuss some of the problems of complete Shakespeare on the Internet. For example, when I began work on this dissertation in 2004 I thought of including a chapter on The Internet Shakespeare Editions.[20] It promised free access to peer-reviewed, critical editions of the works with loads of links to multiple levels of textual and performance-based notes; as of January 2011, however, only two modern critical editions were available, and the site seemed to be in financial trouble. Readers looking elsewhere for free texts have plenty to choose from: 'HTML editions, PDF versions, searchable scanned versions [. . .] and facsimile editions'[21] but due to copyright restrictions those who want to read a 'modern' text will have to settle for one edited at least a century ago.

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[20] http://www.internetshakespeare.uvic.ca.
[21] *Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet,* 'Works', <http://www.shakespeare.palomar.edu/mrwilliamshakesWORKS.htm> [accessed 19 January 2011].