

Essays written by: Louis Marder

J. L. Styan

Albert C. Labriola

John F. Andrews

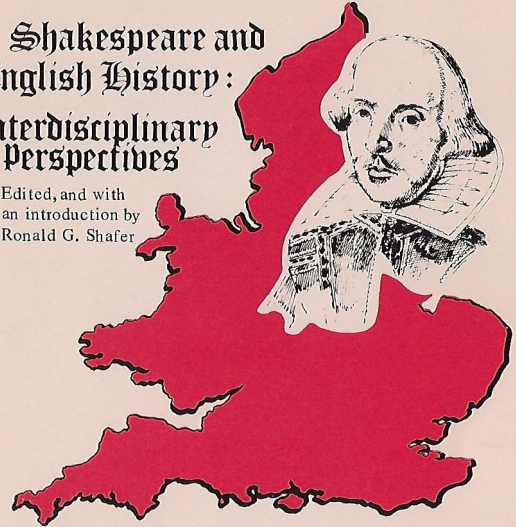
Harrison T. Meserole

Roy Battenhouse

\$3.00

Shakespeare and English History: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Edited, and with
an introduction by
Ronald G. Shafer



*Lecture
Series*
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

SHAKESPEARE AND ENGLISH HISTORY: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

Edited, with an Introduction

by

Dr. Ronald G. Shafer

A compilation of lectures presented at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the summer of 1976.

Published by
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Manufactured in the United States of America by Shick Printing Co.,
Inc., Indiana, Pennsylvania 15701.

Cover design by David E. Miller, IUP '77

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I wish, first of all, to acknowledge my grateful appreciation to the six scholars who have permitted me to print their essays in this collection and who were, before that, willing to participate in a series of lectures at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am also indebted to my colleague, Professor Dale E. Landon, who helped me coordinate the many special programs that were dovetailed with the course, who was willing to approach Shakespeare in the interdisciplinary fashion I originally dreamed about, and who was indispensable to and directly responsible for the success of our team-teaching approach to Shakespeare. Without the financial grants, this volume could never have been made possible. I thank the Foundation of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and our President, Dr. Robert C. Wilburn who authorized the grant. I am equally thankful to the Graduate School (Dr. Joseph M. Gallanar, Dean) for a grant and to The Mack Foundation of Indiana, Pennsylvania (Joseph N. Mack, Director) for their very generous and enthusiastic support of this project. Mr. Richard T. Wolfe, Director of Grants at IUP, is also to be thanked for his efforts in securing grant monies.

In addition to permitting us to print his essay, Dr. Albert C. Labriola also assisted me in the arduous tasks of composition and proofreading, for which I am most thankful. Mrs. Judy A. Moorhead, Director of University Relations and Publications, is to be acknowledged for her help in planning the design and format of the book and for arranging all printing details. The Shick Printing Company of Indiana, Pennsylvania and in particular Mr. V.G. Vaughn, President and Mrs. Vera L. Bright, Vice President—Customer Service, has made the task of printing these essays rewarding and enjoyable. I wish to thank Mr. David Miller for his art work on the covers of the volume, and Dr. Richard E. Ray (Chairman, Department of English), Dr. Suzanne Hudson (Associate Dean of the Humanities), and Dr. Francis G. McGovern (Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences) for their constant encouragement and financial support of my course and its many varied programs, mainly, the Lecture Series on Shakespeare, printed here. The Instructional Resources Department at IUP has given me much support, especially through their videotaping of the six lectures and the television interviews. I wish to thank, finally, my wife Mary who has been very understanding and supportive of my endeavors.

R.G.S.

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Ronald G. Shafer — 1

BIOGRAPHY OF THE EDITOR:

Dr. Ronald G. Shafer is currently in his seventh year as Associate Professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He took his Ph.D. from Duquesne University in 1975 and studied Shakespeare at Oxford in 1973. He is Assistant to the Editor of The Shakespeare Newsletter and an Abstractor for Seventeenth-Century News. In addition to editing this volume, he has published other articles, including "George Herbert's Poetic Adaptation of St. Paul's Image of the Glass" and "Televised Community Lectures." He has read papers at NEMLA and MLA meetings and also presented a paper at the Third Annual Ohio Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies. He is the President and principal founder of The Friends of Milton's Cottage, an American group that financially helps to restore and preserve Milton's only extant home as a museum.

INTRODUCTION

The number of approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare probably equals the number of instructors who do the teaching. The interdisciplinary/historical approach, which fuses the study of Shakespeare with the study of English history, is one that works exceptionally well. At our institution, the course offers three credits of English and

three credits of history to both graduate and undergraduate students.

The basic objective of the course is to return Shakespeare to the context of English history from which he is too often dislodged. Instead of seeing Shakespeare as a product of his age or as one who holds the mirror up to the Elizabethan society, instructors all too often concentrate attention only on the play. While the play's the thing, it is my belief that one can give the play so much attention that one excludes consideration of the age and of the view that the plays were "intended for the stage," not the line-by-line analysis that all too often characterizes the teaching of Shakespeare. In our approach (the course is team-taught with Professor Dale E. Landon¹), the departmentalized barriers between disciplines are eliminated. The intent, instead, is to reconstruct the age, to integrate, not fragment; to synthesize, not insulate. The result is an understanding of the total milieu, which places one in the interesting vantage point of being able to gain more from reading the plays. A knowledge of English history (with its dated ethics, unfamiliar societies, and complex labyrinth of events and facts) enables one to understand the plays more completely, especially those passages that are obscure and difficult for modern audiences whose sensibility is not Elizabethan. The process, happily, works in reverse: by reading the plays, particularly the Chronicles, one is given a dramatic representation and interpretation of significant characters and events of English history, which are often more vibrant and memorable than the historical accounts in brown pages of dusty texts. Not that I care to slight history books or historians' abilities to weave historical fact into informative, perhaps even entertaining, accounts. But I do not think one would care to match a historian's portrayal and creation of character with Shakespeare's.

This fairly intense study of English history also sheds some light on that most complex enigma — Shakespeare the dramatist. A historian is quick to point out that Shakespeare was a dramatist and not a historian. While those of us in English understand that view and are somewhat offended to

¹Dr. Dale E. Landon is Professor of History at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

be reminded of it, still we do not have benefit of understanding what a historian actually means by the statement. We are lacking the knowledge of English history to see how completely Shakespeare's dramatizations do not equal historical fact. A deeper look at the history, from a historian's eyes, acquaints students with the events of those bygone ages. Armed with this knowledge, students are well prepared to note and analyze Shakespeare's deviations from historical reality. With a little practice they even become sophisticated enough to conjecture at times why Shakespeare might have deviated from the sources, and gifted students might even surprise the instructor by noting that Shakespeare's modifications of historical sources fall into "patterns" that become, if not predictable, at least familiar.

The vantage point also offers the students the singular opportunity of getting closer to Shakespeare and watching him compose a play. At times the students feel comfortably situated, as if they were in a corner of Shakespeare's study watching him at work. The statement is admittedly hyperbolic, but it is also meaningful: when one has a solid grasp of the history of a given era and of its key people, he is able to understand an artist's interpretive rendition of that period. The characters of Richard II and Henry VIII are examples: the students, who had made a fairly detailed study of Richard II, were able to observe which historical episodes of Richard's reign Shakespeare included in his play. The selection of some and the omission of other episodes indicate a great deal about Shakespeare's overall attitude toward Richard II and about the development of major themes in the play. This, in turn, gives the students a "feel" for Shakespeare the dramatist. He becomes a bit more comprehensible and tangible, not the distant genius surrounded by an impenetrable fog.

The example of Henry VIII is even more illustrative. The students had learned about this English monarch from the history texts, my colleague's lectures, their own background reading, the movie "Anne of a 1000 Days," and especially from the highly acclaimed British Broadcasting Company production of "The Six Wives of Henry VIII." The students

could almost approach the play as a historian would, since they had attained a knowledge of this Tudor king that far surpasses the knowledge most literary students have. When they confronted Shakespeare's *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth*, they were knowledgeable of Shakespeare's process. If Shakespeare chose the dominant episodes at the end of Richard II's reign and really did not need to make too many decisions on what would be included in the play, he did not do so in his play on Henry VIII. Shakespeare, in other words, deviated fairly little from actual historical fact when he composed *Richard II*, simply because he was working with only a three-year period and could dramatize virtually all of the major events. In *Henry VIII*, on the other hand, the events span a period of many years, and a real selection process is obvious when one reads the play. All of the events of Henry's reign could not be encapsulated in this play. Consequently, the study of the episodes which are and are not included is most revealing of Shakespeare's intent and of his dramatic craft generally. Instead of approaching this play as they do most plays (with a feeling that the Inimitable Master had composed it, that one word could not be changed, that the play itself exists as an entity that we cannot imagine in any other form) they were acutely aware of the method and artistry used by Shakespeare as he wrote the play. They were able to see, or at least intelligently speculate, what went through his mind as he wrote the play. Some could even imagine alternate methods of scene construction. Truly it was as though we were able to watch him at work, and while the process did not necessarily increase our affinity with Shakespeare the man, it did increase our understanding of Shakespeare the playwright. This appreciation and understanding were probably my greatest rewards, proving the validity of the interdisciplinary approach and suggesting the degree of insight that could be attained through its use. Whereas historians, I should point out, have ample knowledge of the factual background to Shakespeare's plays, they are not always guaranteed as extensive an appreciation or understanding of Shakespeare's dramatic method, since they lack the knowledge of literary technique.

It is not until one gets acquainted with the environs of another discipline and of perceiving reality from a whole new perspective that he is able to gain this appreciation. The disintegrative tendency is strong in our pursuit of knowledge, and this fusing of two cultures does not come easily. We are conditioned to tear apart in highly specialized courses; as a result, the job of putting pieces back together takes some getting used to. One does not, moreover, acclimatize himself instantly to the habitat and customs of a new discipline. The resulting syncretism, however, readily compensates for expended energies.

With this statement of the mission of the course, I am now able to speak of the place of the lecture series and its role in helping us realize this objective. I brought to our campus six Shakespeare authorities who lectured on various topics. The talks were presented during the semester when the course was being taught. I tried, first of all, to have the six lectures cover diverse topics that would never become too specialized or esoteric, nor too duplicative. I found that timing was probably the single biggest consideration. The lectures, that is, had to be made an integral part of what was happening in the classroom and had to be presented in such a way that they blended well with the chronological development of the course. If we would not have insisted on such timing and coordination with the entire course and its other special programs,² then we would have burlesqued our own most fundamental objective in the course, of making all the pieces fit into a whole, for each of the presentations would have been isolated talks that would not have been adequately interwoven. As it was, I viewed the lecture series as an opportunity to carry on the fusing of two separate disciplines and to continue the reconstruction of those misty ages of the past. Instead of being a series of loose ends, the lectures became very vital threads in the fabric of the course which provided the design for the whole. Those lectures are reprinted in this book.

The first essay, by Professor Louis Marder, is entitled "Shakespeare's Survival: 1592–1976." In this essay Dr.

²In addition, the course featured a film festival of some 24 films, several exhibits, an excursion, and an Elizabethan banquet.

Marder explores the reactions of people throughout the ages toward Shakespeare. The introductory pages discuss the kinds of celebrations which have been held to honor him. The essay very honestly explores the lack of knowledge which we have about Shakespeare. Instead of conjecturing about the events of his life, Dr. Marder is content to separate fact from fiction by listing legends and traditions which through the ages have been erroneously construed as fact. He comments on the state of scholarship in Shakespeare and the various adaptations that have been made of the plays throughout the centuries, especially those in the twentieth century. Referring to some of the more bizarre productions of Shakespeare, he suggests that such producers "do not realize that the best Shakespeare is the play which seems least directed." Dr Marder concludes his essay by looking at the reasons for Shakespeare's enduring popularity. The essay is a particularly good one for starting a lecture series or a volume of essays because it stirs much interest on an inherently fascinating subject. Its fairly general nature also prepares the reader for some of the more specialized talks which follow.

The second essay in the volume, "Shakespeare's Use of His Stage" by Professor J. L. Styan, logically follows the first. Instead of discussing many reasons for Shakespeare's continued popularity, however, Professor Styan explores only one — the main one — Shakespeare's ability to use the stage. He begins by providing some background material on the use of Shakespeare as an "Educational Force" in the classroom, a hesitant process that did not enjoy much success until the nineteenth century. Then the pace picked up since the twentieth century made "the great discovery... that Shakespeare is a playwright." Thus we view the plays somewhat differently, one result of which is a "swing to stage-centered criticism" and a rejection of the "Victorian mishandling of Shakespeare." Professor Styan believes that our "perception must synthesize if what we see and hear is to make any sense. For in the theatre we are never asked to analyze or to pull the play to pieces: it is imperative that we put it all together, and from this activity comes the experience." In short, one will quickly note, Professor

Styan's feelings about the way one should treat a play are exactly my feelings about the way one should approach the teaching of Shakespeare. The essay then discusses the playhouse and "the Elizabethan mode of dramatic experience" which consists of a drama that is essentially "non-illusory" since it "does not call for illusion on the stage or the appropriate response to it." Based on the little information that has come down to us, a discussion of the stage and its elements then follows. The effects of this kind of stage upon Shakespeare and his craft are interwoven throughout. He concludes with a profound answer to a pertinent question: "If Shakespeare writes simple plays, as I believe he does, how do we account for the constant variety, the unpredictable interest, of their results in performance?"

These first two essays, then, fit very well into an interdisciplinary course because of their emphasis on history. Professor Marder examines the history of Shakespeare's popularity, whereas Professor Styan takes a historical view of the Elizabethan stage. The third essay — "This Sceptered Isle: Kingship and the Body Politic in the Lancastrian Tetralogy" by Professor Albert C. Labriola — interweaves the study of Shakespeare and history even more directly. While the first two essays delve into the history of Shakespeare's age or of the succeeding centuries, this essay treats pre-Elizabethan times; in fact, the events occur some 200 years before Shakespeare. The essay opens with a discussion of the Tudor myth, especially as it was used "to stabilize and enhance their [Tudor] rulership" and the Welsh ancestry of the Tudors. Professor Labriola suggests that "Against this background Shakespeare perceived the earlier events of British history." The adaptation of historical sources, the contrasts in character creations, and the patterns of imagery are three methods by which Shakespeare emphasizes dominant themes, two of which are "the traits of effective kingship and the welfare of the body politic." These three elements are then applied to the four plays in a most significant and provocative way. The conclusion arrived at by Professor Labriola is that "the interrelation of the king and the body politic becomes the central theme" of the tetralogy. Henry V is seen as the

"mirror of all Christian kings" which permits England to become "the world's best garden."

The fourth essay in this volume is by Dr. John F. Andrews and is entitled "The First Folio: Imperfect but Indispensable." Professor Andrews begins his essay with a very honest assessment of where our knowledge and study of the first folio stands. In this introductory section of the paper, he lists the questions, associated with the first folio, that cause disagreement among critics most often. He concludes, "I see no reason to anticipate that the debate will come to an end in the near future." Although the First Folio is not as rare a book as countless others, still it is an "exceedingly precious book." Professor Andrews speaks of the contents of the First Folio and of those plays that were reprints of earlier editions. He suggests that the First Folio is extremely important, because "of its value as a supplement and corrective to the earlier quarto printings." The role of the men who compiled and printed the First Folio is considered, along with the economics of printing a book like the First Folio. The essay also probes the relationship between the Droeshout portrait, Ben Jonson's verses about it, and the three stages the engraving underwent. In the remaining pages of his essay, Professor Andrews considers the main contents of the First Folio, its reliability, the copies from which the plays were set, the habits of the compositors who set type, and the role of proofreading. He concludes that, while "the First Folio is a radically imperfect book, it is one we would or could not be without."

In the fifth essay in the volume, Professor Harrison T. Meserole talks about "Shakespeare in America: The Great Shakespearean Jubilee, American Style." He opens his essay by quoting authors who have made statements that adapt Shakespearean lines. This practice was so common that "it is literally impossible to scan a run of issues of any magazine or newspaper without finding not just one but clusters of such references." While Professor Styan shows that Shakespeare's use as an "Educational Force" was hesitant, Professor Meserole indicates that evidence of Shakespeare nevertheless

exists in the writings of early Americans "during the first period of the history of Shakespeare in America," which continues up through 1730. In this year the second period begins and marks the beginning of Shakespearean drama in America, along with actual reprints and various editions of the plays. One of the main reasons for the large number of editions was the popularity of Shakespeare on stage. Professor Meserole discusses this growing popularity and the 1823 Pageant which commemorated the 200-year anniversary of the publication of the 1623 First Folio. He speaks at length about the Great Shakespeare Jubilee. With all of its elaborate preparation and festivities, this Jubilee at Boston far surpassed the other three Jubilees that had been held in America and proved "that the age of Shakespeare idolatry... had crossed the Atlantic and established itself in a young country eager for theatre."

The final essay in this volume — "King John and Henry VIII" by Professor Roy Battenhouse — was also delivered in lecture form at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The essay is especially suitable for rounding off a series of lectures or volume of essays that shed light on an interdisciplinary approach to Shakespeare, since it returns us quite directly to Shakespeare the dramatist, especially the historical dramatist, and since it provides us opportunity to examine an early and later play. In this essay, Professor Battenhouse, attempting to prove that these two plays are not the "carelessly" and "clumsily" assembled plays which people often think, begins by examining the reasons why Shakespeare wrote them and offering contemporary opinion of what moderns think of these English monarchs. He examines the quality of justice in Henry's court, as evidenced in the fall from favor of four people — Buckingham, Katherine, Wolsey, and Cranmer. The religious overtones of Henry's treatment of these four are noted, along with Shakespearean dramatic devices that adapt or modify English history. The action of the play is both unified and supportive of Shakespeare's thematic intentions.

In the second part of his essay, Professor Battenhouse summarizes the action of *King John* and simultaneously

notes "the evolution of the Bastard's (Philip Faulconbridge, illegitimate son of Richard the Lion Hearted) attitude in order to indicate Shakespeare's overall perspective." He shows the deviations Shakespeare made from the historical sources, again explaining the thematic intentions of the playwright. In the conclusion, Professor Battenhouse summarizes the similar motifs of *Henry VIII* and *King John*. He suggests that if we can appreciate "history's sad and tragic truths," then we can "shed a tear over the mighty who have fallen. . . [and] perhaps have approached Shakespeare's insight."

The six essays in this volume offer insights that do not, in most cases, appear elsewhere in print. While they make a valuable companion piece to any study of Shakespeare, they are especially worthwhile for use in an interdisciplinary approach, since history is emphasized in all of the essays. If the essays are to accompany an interdisciplinary approach to Shakespeare, then the instructor would do well to consider the problem of timing and sequence. The students received the original lectures so well because they fit into the material being taught in class. The opening lecture by Dr. Marder, for instance, provided interesting background material and set the stage for subsequent lectures and the classroom work that lay ahead in the course. It reinforced the comments I was making about Shakespeare in the opening sessions of the course. Dr. Styan's talk was also timely. Because knowledge of Shakespeare's use of his stage is so fundamental to an adequate comprehension of Shakespearean drama, we wanted this lecture scheduled early in this series of lectures and volume of essays. By the time of the third lecture — Dr. Labriola's discussion of the Lancastrian tetralogy — the class had completed reading these four plays. Thus, they were especially well prepared for his comments. The same is true of Dr. Andrews' talk on *Hamlet*. We had completed our reading and study of *Hamlet*, and had seen the Olivier film and three educational films on *Hamlet* besides. By the time of the fifth talk, we were getting fairly well through the course and were able to more fully appreciate and digest Dr. Meserole's comments on the reception and celebration of

Shakespeare in America. Dr. Battenhouse's talk, finally, had to come last since it gave a fine overview of the early and later Shakespeare, a comparison we were able to make since we had by that time been exposed to much of the Shakespearean canon. I believe, finally, that the interdisciplinary historical approach to Shakespeare is, like many others, extremely adaptable to the Shakespeare classroom and that a series of lectures or a companion volume of essays is indispensable if this approach is used. In the context of this approach, the various views help the students adjust to perceiving Shakespeare and English history from many vantage points instead of one, and it is that broad perspective that facilitates reconstruction of past ages of English history, especially that age fascinating to all — the age of Shakespeare and Elizabeth I.

Ronald G. Shafer
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Armstrong Campus
November 1, 1976

But Hal's generalship is only one aspect of his character, a richly variegated character that distinguishes him from Richard and from Henry IV. To learn the views of the commoners in his army, Hal conceals his status as king and mingles with them. In deliberating on the nature of the kingship (IV.i), its duties and responsibilities, he continues the deliberation that he had begun earlier in 2 *Henry IV*, when he had taken the crown from the pillow close to his dying father. His practical joking with Fluellen and his banter and levity with Katherine of France all combine to suggest a well-rounded and admirable portrait of a king. In nearly all that he says and does, Hal may be compared and contrasted with the other major characters of the tetralogy. His wooing and marriage of Kate, for instance, encourages the reader to recall several other relationships in the tetralogy, including those of Richard II and his queen, Hotspur and Lady Hotspur, Mortimer and Lady Mortimer, and Falstaff and his women, namely Doll Tearsheet and Mistress Quickly.

Across the panorama of the tetralogy, the interrelation of the king and the body politic becomes the central theme. In *Henry V* at the beginning of Act II, the chorus views Hal as "the mirror of all Christian kings," and because of his kingship England, in the epilogue to the play, can be called "the world's best garden." If these were also the judgments of the chronicles, they are even more clearly the judgments of the tetralogy.

Albert C. Labriola
Duquesne University

JOHN F. ANDREWS

Director of Research Activities, Folger Shakespeare Library, and Chairman of the Folger Institute of Renaissance and 18th-Century Studies. He is editor of the Shakespeare Quarterly and executive editor of Folger Publications. He received his A.B. from Princeton University in 1965, his M.A.T. from Harvard University in 1966, and his Ph. D. from Vanderbilt University in 1971. He was an Instructor at the University of Tennessee in Nashville, 1969–1970 and Assistant Professor at Florida State University, 1970–1974 (Director of Graduate Studies in English, 1973–1974). He has delivered several papers and addresses, and his publications include: "The Pavier Quartos of 1619 — Evidence for Two Composers" (Shakespeare Newsletter, February 1972), "The Catharsis of Romeo and Juliet" (Contributi dell'Istituto di Filologia, edited by Sergio Rossi), "The Ipsissima Verba in My Diary? Review Article" (Shakespeare Studies, 1976).

The First Folio: Imperfect But Indispensable

I am speaking today on a big subject, a subject I would be foolish to pretend I have mastered. I once thought I knew a little about part of it, having spent some time investigating a few of the compositors who set type for the First Folio, but I'm now much more conscious of how much I don't know. Not that I mean to suggest that there is a paucity of information available. As a consequence of the painstaking labors of such scholars as A. W. Pollard, W. W. Greg, Alice Walker, Fredson Bowers, Charlton Hinman, and Trevor

Howard-Hill, it is now possible for us to speculate intelligently about why the First Folio was compiled, who its principal compilers were and how they went about their task, how and by whom it was printed, and what its sales reception must have been. Through the careful work of other scholars such as Sidney Lee, J. Dover Wilson, Allardyce Nicoll, Matthew Black, M. A. Shaaber, James G. McManaway, and Giles E. Dawson, we also now have some understanding of the relationships between the 1623 First Folio and other printed texts of Shakespeare: the numerous quarto printings that preceded it, and the three folio printings that followed it (the Second Folio of 1632, the two issues of the Third Folio in 1663 and 1664, and the Fourth Folio of 1685).¹

Even though a great deal of information has been brought to light, however, there are still some questions whose final answers elude us. We don't know as much as would be desirable, for example, about the ways in which the printing and publishing industry regulated itself in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Scholars differ in their views of what constituted copyright in Shakespeare's time, and consequently it is not yet possible to ascertain the exact "legal" status of many of the quartos printed before 1623. Part of the problem is that we do not yet know enough about the various relationships between playwrights, acting companies, printers, and publishers in the period. Just what constituted "piracy," for example, and how and by whom were "pirated" texts made available for publication? And if and when the publication of a play was authorized by an acting company, what kind of printer's copy did the company provide for use by the printers: the playwright's foul papers? a scribal fair copy of the foul papers? a scribal copy of the company's promptbook? Did Shakespeare ever evince an interest in the publication of his own plays? These and other questions continue to generate debate, and I see no reason to anticipate that the debate will come to an end in the near future.

Similarly, I doubt that scholars will soon solve all of the problems associated with analysis of the printing-house conditions in which the substantive texts of Shakespeare

were produced. At the same time that some scholars are attempting to "see through" the printed texts to the general kind of copy that was given to the printer in the first place, other scholars are attempting to learn exactly what happened to the copy once it arrived in the shop. To what extent was a manuscript pre-edited before being turned over to the compositors for setting into type? How many compositors were involved in the typesetting for particular texts, and exactly which portions were set by each man? How faithfully did each compositor reproduce the copy before him? How carefully were the printed texts proofread after the initial typesetting? How long was a volume such as the First Folio in press, and how many copies of it were printed? These are some of the knotty textual problems that up to now have eluded final solution. I trust, therefore, that you will regard most of what I say today as tentative.

With that cautionary preamble, let us turn our attention to the First Folio. As Sir Sidney Lee was perhaps the first to discover around the turn of the century, the First Folio of Shakespeare is not so rare a book as it was at one time thought to be; a surprisingly large number of copies have survived the three and a half centuries since the book came off the press of William and Isaac Jaggard in 1623.² So far as I know, there has been no recent census of extant First Folios — or any very systematic census of extant Second, Third, and Fourth Folios — but Elizabeth Niemyer, the Folger's Acquisitions Librarian, estimates that there may be as many as 250 surviving copies of the First Folio. Now, a book that survives in that many copies is not particularly rare, especially by comparison with the various quartos printed prior to the Folio. Bartlett and Pollard's *Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto*³ lists no more than 17 copies of any first quarto edition. Only 2 copies of *Hamlet Q1* and 5 copies of *Hamlet Q2* are known to survive, for example. And one of Shakespeare's quartos, the 1594 first quarto of *Titus Andronicus* now in the Folger collection, survives in only one copy. By comparison with the quartos, then, the First Folio cannot really be described as a rare book. But it is nonetheless an exceedingly precious book. William A.

Jackson, in *The Carl H. Pforzheimer Library*, asserts that the First Folio "is incomparably the most important work in the English language and will always be revered and valued accordingly."⁴ I doubt that there are many who would dispute that assessment; the First Folio is, after all, the primary repository of most of the masterworks of the man who has a better claim than any other to the title of greatest author in human history.

This is not to say that the First Folio contains everything that Shakespeare wrote, or even the most authoritative texts of all the works it does include. Four major Shakespeare works are not even included in the First Folio, for example, even though they were published in quarto texts during Shakespeare's lifetime. The two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*, were published in 1593 and 1594, respectively, clearly with the authorization of Shakespeare, who composed florid dedications for both of them. The *Sonnets* and *Pericles* were both published in 1609, the former probably and the latter almost certainly without the author's permission and assistance. Why *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets* were excluded from the First Folio is not difficult to surmise: it was evidently the aim of the compilers to include only Shakespeare's dramatic works in the collection. But just why *Pericles* was excluded we don't know. It is possible that the compilers had some questions about Shakespeare's share of the authorship of this rather puzzling play (many scholars believe that at least one other playwright had a hand in its composition). Or, setting aside this hypothesis, it may be that the compilers were unable to come up with what they considered a suitable manuscript from which to print; the 1609 first quarto of *Pericles*, which has served as the basis for all subsequent printings of the play, is unfortunately a manifestly corrupt text, and it may be that no better text was available for the First Folio. Perhaps significantly, *Pericles* was also excluded from the Second Folio and from the first issue of the Third Folio; it made its first Folio appearance in the second issue of the Third Folio, along with six other plays that no scholar today attributes to Shakespeare.

Now, of the thirty-six plays that did get included in the First Folio, six were obvious reprints of earlier quarto editions and are therefore plays with no textual authority in their Folio versions. For these six plays, modern editors rely on: (1) the 1598 first quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost*, (2) the 1598 first quarto of *1 Henry IV*, (3) the 1599 second quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*, (4) the 1600 first quarto of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (5) the 1600 first quarto of *The Merchant of Venice*, and (6) the 1600 first quarto of *Much Ado about Nothing*. There are two other plays that the Folio in the main reprinted from earlier quartos — (1) *Titus Andronicus*, first published in 1594, and (2) *Richard II*, first published in 1597 — but modern editors do turn to the Folio texts of these two plays for passages not printed in the earlier quartos. Disregarding the Folio passages that are evidently genuine additions to *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard II*, then, there are eight First Folio plays for which earlier quartos provide superior texts.

Twenty-eight plays remain, and for all of these plays the First Folio provides texts of real authority.

For three of these twenty-eight plays, the First Folio provides important additions to and alternative versions of texts first published in substantive quarto editions — (1) *2 Henry IV*, first published in 1600; (2) *Hamlet*, the substantive second quarto of which appeared in 1604–5; and (3) *Troilus and Cressida*, first published in 1609. For these three plays most modern editors draw on both the good earlier quartos and the good alternative or additional First Folio passages to produce eclectic editions.

Eight other First Folio plays had also appeared in earlier quarto versions; for these, the First Folio provides what is clearly the substantive text. For five of these eight plays we would be left with only hopelessly bad quarto texts without the First Folio: (1) *Taming of the Shrew* (1594), (2) *2 Henry VI* (1594), (3) *3 Henry VI* (1595), (4) *Henry V* (1600), and (5) *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602). For the remaining three of the eight we would be left with quarto texts not hopelessly bad, but nevertheless of doubtful authority and

accuracy: (6) *Richard III* (1597), (7) *King Lear* (1608), and (8) *Othello* (1622).

If only for its value as a supplement and corrective to the earlier quarto printings, then, the First Folio is of immense importance for students of Shakespeare. Nineteen of the thirty-six plays published in the First Folio had appeared in earlier quarto versions, but thirteen of these had appeared only in textually corrupt, doubtful, or incomplete versions. Without the First Folio, then, we would have inferior or incomplete texts of several of the most important plays in the canon, including *King Lear*.

To gather the full importance of the First Folio, however, we must consider the seventeen plays that appeared for the first time, and in their only substantive versions, in the 1623 folio. It is probable that without the First Folio, we would have no texts at all for nearly half of Shakespeare's plays. We would be lacking seven of the works we now value the most — *The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. We would also be without ten other plays in which modern playgoers and critics have become increasingly interested — *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King John*, *1 Henry VI*, *Henry VIII*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Cymbeline*.

The men responsible for the First Folio seem to have realized the significance of what they were doing. In a preface addressed to "the great Variety of Readers," John Heminge and Henry Condell, the two principal surviving shareholders in the acting company that had included Shakespeare until his death in 1616, wrote as follows:

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and

surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of inurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them.

If these words may be taken at face value — and since A. W. Pollard⁵ no scholar has put complete trust in them — we are presented in the First Folio with the "true text" of Shakespeare's dramatic works, and that for the first time. Whether Heminge and Condell are condemning all the previous quartos as "stolne," "maimed," and "deformed" — as most scholars prior to Pollard assumed — or pointing only to the "bad quartos" that were obviously produced through some "surreptitious" means, one point emerges with complete clarity: these men have performed a labor of love in honor of their recently-deceased associate and friend. As they say in their dedication of the volume to William, Earle of Pembroke, and Philip, Earle of Montgomery, "We have but collected them [i.e., Shakespeare's plays], and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphanes, Guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, & Fellow alive, as was our SHAKESPEARE, by humble offer of his playes, to your most noble patronage."

What prompted Heminge and Condell to collect Shakespeare's plays for publication? And were they in fact the prime movers in the project? We cannot know for certain. The colophon at the end of the volume states that the First Folio was "Printed at the Charges of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley, 1623." But the imprint beneath the Shakespeare portrait in the front of the volume mentions only two men, Isaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount. W. W. Greg arrived at the conclusion that the two men mentioned in the imprint were the principal undertakers of the volume, Isaac Jaggard as printer and Edward Blount as publisher.⁶

As early as 1619, the Jaggard shop had manifested an interest in publishing a collection of Shakespeare's works, producing ten quartos for the stationer Thomas Pavier. This project seems to have been undertaken without the authori-

zation of Shakespeare's acting company, the King's Men, and many of the details in it (including several false early dates on the title pages of plays included) indicate that it was "surreptitious" in the extreme. There is little doubt that Heminge and Condell disapproved of the Pavier Quartos, because we know that on May 3, 1619, the Court of the Stationers' Company received a letter from the patron of the King's Men, the Lord Chamberlain (i.e., the same William, Earle of Pembroke addressed in the dedication of the First Folio), ordering that in the future no plays belonging to the King's Men were to be printed without their consent.

How did the printer who was forbidden to proceed with the Pavier Quartos in 1619 secure the assistance of the King's Men to produce the First Folio in 1623? We can only speculate. Perhaps the Jaggards, prevented from proceeding openly with their quarto collection, approached Heminge and Condell with a proposal for the Folio edition. Perhaps Heminge and Condell, disturbed that Shakespeare's works were continuing to come out in a debased form and noting Jaggard's interest in underwriting a collected works, approached the printer with a proposal. Whatever the particular circumstances, some form of reconciliation obviously took place, and for that we can be thankful.

Let us now pause to consider the economics of folio publication. Our best evidence is that quartos in Shakespeare's age probably sold for approximately sixpence; the First Folio evidently sold for about one pound, forty times as much as a single-play quarto. When one notes the high price for a folio, not to mention the tremendous amount of time and capital that would have gone into the production of such a volume, one realizes that the publishers of the First Folio were embarking on what Charlton Hinman has aptly termed a "decidedly chancy venture."⁷ Either they must have had some kind of subvention, or they must have had a good deal of confidence in the marketability of Shakespeare's works. In view of the fact that most of the plays printed in quarto before 1623 had gone through at least two editions, and two (*Richard III* and *1 Henry IV*) had gone through six, I suspect that it was the anticipated marketability of the volume that

induced the Jaggards to undertake its publication, whether or not they had financial support from Heminge and Condell (or their patron).

The first thing that catches our eye when we open the First Folio is the engraved portrait of Shakespeare by Martin Droeshout on the recto page and the address "To the Reader" by B. I. (presumably, Ben Jonson) on the verso page facing the portrait. Jonson's verses are conventional, but they are worth reading nevertheless:

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

These couplets make two assertions: (1) that the engraver has captured a convincing likeness of Shakespeare's face; and (2) that even so excellent an engraving as this cannot capture Shakespeare's "wit." Hence, the poem instructs the reader, proceed from the picture to the book if you would truly acquaint yourself with the "gentle Shakespeare."

To what extent can we rely on Jonson's assessment of the Droeshout engraving? Had Jonson actually seen a print made from the plate when he penned these verses? Did he really believe that Droeshout had "hit his face"? I doubt that we can give affirmative answers to either of these questions. It seems more than likely that Jonson's words were committed to paper well before the printers had the engraving in their possession. For the primary reason for Jonson's verses, we must remember, was not to attest to the accuracy of the Droeshout engraving, but rather to provide a kind of imprimatur to the volume the engraving adorned. And what more fitting testimony could the publishers have obtained? Jonson was the contemporary playwright whose popularity

and critical esteem most nearly rivaled that of Shakespeare — if indeed Jonson's reputation at this time did not exceed Shakespeare's. Moreover, Jonson had established an important precedent for the volume by publishing his own plays in folio in 1616 — an act that many at the time had regarded as audacious. Heminge and Condell would surely have been aware that verses by Jonson would go a long way toward establishing the authority of the volume, and Jaggard and Blount would not have failed to calculate this advantage in terms of sales potential. But more on Jonson later. What of the Droeshout engraving of Shakespeare?

It is of some interest to note that the engraving exists in three states, all of which may be found in Folger copies of the First Folio. In the very first, or "proof" state, there is no shadow on the ruff beneath Shakespeare's proper left cheek, nor is there much shading on the left side of Shakespeare's head. The result is that the head seems curiously detached from the ruff and shoulders below it, rather like an egg poised to slide down a steep incline to a fate like Humpty-Dumpty's. In the second state, shadows have been added to both the ruff and the left side of Shakespeare's face; one will notice, also, that the moustache has been extended upward toward the crease of the cheek and, further, that the chin whiskers have been darkened and coarsened somewhat. In the third state, the alterations are more subtle. One strand of hair has been drawn as detached from a lock on Shakespeare's left side, and lines have been drawn through the white reflection of each pupil, with the line in Shakespeare's left pupil being ineptly extended so far that it actually crosses the lid above the eye.

Clearly, the engraving was deliberately altered twice during the process of printing the frontispiece of the First Folio. The reason, apparently, is that someone was dissatisfied with the engraving — probably one of the publishers rather than the engraver — and wished to obtain a more satisfactory rendering of Shakespeare's portrait. The alterations do, I think, increase the portrait's verisimilitude; the portrait in its third state seems less geometric and wooden — less clumsy on the whole — than the portrait in its first state. Even in its

third state, however, the portrait still retains a rather amateurish execution. There being no suggestion of a neck, the head is somewhat disembodied; one eye is unaccountably lower than the other; the mouth is set slightly to the left of center; and the clothing is too stiff to be convincing. Despite the clear evidence that the engraver was compelled to fuss with the portrait at least twice after printing had actually begun, therefore, we cannot be confident that the resulting portrait represents a true likeness of William Shakespeare. This, of course, is unfortunate, because most scholars agree that there are only two extant portraits of Shakespeare with any claim to authority, the bust by Gheerart Janssen that serves as Shakespeare's monument in Holy Trinity Church at Stratford, and the engraving by Martin Droeshout that serves as the frontispiece to the First Folio. The Janssen bust, of course, depicts the poet as a considerably older and paunchier man, whereas the Droeshout engraving apparently derives from a sketch made by another artist when Shakespeare was just entering his prime. S. Schoenbaum observes in *Shakespeare's Lives* that Martin Droeshout was only twenty-two when the First Folio appeared. How he "secured a commission to furnish the portrait to adorn that momentous volume we do not know. It can scarcely have been because of his gifts, which were meagre. Probably his fee was small. Possibly he was recommended for the assignment by Janssen, whose family worshipped with the Droeshouts in the same Dutch Church at Austin Friars; but this is mere speculation."⁸

One of the most famous and valuable items in the First Folio is the 78-line poem by Ben Jonson, "To the memory of my beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us." Inasmuch as Jonson has generally been remembered more for his criticism of Shakespeare than for his praise, it is well nigh astonishing to come upon his generous and prescient applause for his rival's accomplishments:

My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Monument, without a tombe,

And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses?
I meane with great, but disproportion'd Muses:
For, if I thought my judgement were of yeeres,
I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,
And tell, how farre thou didst our Lily out-shine,
Or sporting Kid, or Marlowes mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latine, and lesse Greeke,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke
For names; but call forth thund'ring Aeschilus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,
And shake a Stage: Or, when thy Sockes were on,
Leave thee alone, for the comparison
Of all, that insolent Greece, or haughtie Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britaine, thou hast one to showe,
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When like Apollo he came forth to warme
Our cares, or like Mercury to charme!
Nature herselfe was proud of his designses,
And ioy'd to weare the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.
The merry Greeke, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated, and deserted lye
As they were not of Natures family.
Yet must I not give Nature all: Thy Art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.

If one of the unfortunate spinoffs of Jonson's poem was to encourage the view that Shakespeare was an untrained natural genius — innocent of the classics and devoid of art — that was not really Jonson's fault; he avoided that kind of oversimplification, at least in these First Folio verses. What I

find remarkable about the poem is its recognition — which seems sincere, not merely conventional, and (surprisingly enough) not grudging — that Shakespeare is nonpareil, "not of an age, but for all time." What other critical assessment has been more universally accepted?⁹

Enough time has been spent on the front matter. Let us now turn to the contents of the First Folio. The first page of text in the Folio is Act I, scene i of *The Tempest*. *The Tempest*, being one of Shakespeare's most recent plays, and being one of the seventeen plays printed for the first time in the First Folio, was apparently chosen by the editors as an initial offering that would generate instant appeal for the Folio. A similar line of reasoning would account for the ordering of the Folio as a whole. The comedies came first in the volume, in other words, because nearly half of the plays printed for the first time in the Folio were comedies (*The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Winter's Tale* — eight plays in all).

How reliable are the twenty-eight substantive Folio texts? There is no simple answer to this question. Part of the problem is that we cannot always be sure about the nature of the copy used for Folio printings. The texts in which most modern editors repose the greatest confidence are those that appear to have been set up directly from Shakespeare's own autograph copy — that is, from the working drafts the dramatist turned over to the acting company's scribe for preparation of a fair copy and a promptbook. Charlton Hinman believes that ten Folio plays fall into this category: *The Comedy of Errors*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Henry VIII*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry VI*, and *Henry V*¹⁰. It also appears likely that the Folio additions to the text of *Richard III* were printed from foul papers.

The research of Trevor Howard-Hill¹¹ indicates that five Folio plays were set from copy prepared by the scribe Ralph Crane, one of them from Crane's transcript of the theatrical promptbook (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*) and the other four

from Crane's transcripts of Shakespeare's working drafts (*The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Merry Wives of Windsor*).

Five more Folio plays appear to have been printed from promptbook copy: *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*. Many scholars regard prompt copy as inferior to authorial working drafts, inasmuch as it is probably copy at least one remove from Shakespeare's own handwriting and is therefore likely to incorporate revisions and interpolations made during the process of producing the play. I'm not sure that I can accept the view that such copy is necessarily suspect; after all, if Shakespeare was a principal shareholder in the company, and even an actor in many of his own plays, it seems likely that any revisions that were entered in the promptbook would have had his consent or approval.

For most of the remaining Folio plays, quarto copy was used wholly or in part. In some instances, it seems probable that annotated quarto copy was used — or quarto copy in conjunction with manuscript copy. This is almost certainly true of *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. Where more than one quarto had been printed prior to the First Folio, it is occasionally difficult to determine which quarto or — even more alarming — which quartos were used as printer's copy for the Folio text. Scholars such as J. K. Walton¹² and Andrew S. Cairncross¹³ have attempted to thread these mazes, but thus far no completely convincing arguments have been brought forward to explain the provenance of Folio texts for such plays as *Richard III* and *King Lear*. Scholars are still arguing, for instance, over whether Folio *Lear* was set entirely from promptbook copy, or partly from prompt copy and partly from Q1, or partly from prompt copy and partly from a combination of Q1 and Q2.

Another complicating problem has to do with the habits of the compositors who set the copy into type. Over the years since Thomas Satchell initiated compositor analysis in 1920, scholars such as Alice Walker, Philip Williams, Fredson Bowers, Charlton Hinman, D. F. McKenzie, Richard Proudfoot, Robert K. Turner, and Trevor Howard-Hill have

refined the methods of compositor study and applied much of their labor to the First Folio. As the methods of compositor discrimination have become more sophisticated, the number of identifiable compositorial patterns in the First Folio has grown from two to six. How much farther the process will go is anybody's guess. My own suspicion is that there may yet be one or two additional compositors lurking in the pages of the First Folio, but probably no more than that.

Identifying the compositors is one thing; learning their characteristics well enough to apply this knowledge usefully is quite another. Alice Walker¹⁴ was one of the pioneers in garnering information about Folio compositors. By analyzing the Folio text of *1 Henry IV* as compared with the 1613 quarto from which it was reprinted, she discovered some striking differences between the two compositors, A and B, who set type for Folio *1 Henry IV*. What she found was that Folio Compositor B reproduced copy much less reliably than Compositor A, not only making numerous errors apparently owing to carelessness, but also introducing a large number of what appear to have been deliberate changes. My own analysis of Compositor B¹⁵ at an earlier stage in his career — when he set type for approximately one-third of the pages of the Pavier Quartos in 1619 — confirms Dr. Walker's general conclusions. It is not too much to say, I think, that Compositor B is one of Shakespeare's earliest editors — and a clever and often corrupting one at that. I find that on the average he introduces more than twice as many alterations per page as the other compositor in the Pavier Quartos, Compositor G, and that quite often he rearranges words so capably that only by reference to his copy can one detect his alterations of the text. He transposes words to smooth out the meter; he paraphrases or even deliberately omits words in order to squeeze copy into tight spaces; he frequently performs a helpful service by correcting obvious misprints in his copy, but he even more frequently substitutes one word for another when to do so is totally unnecessary. Once one gets to know Compositor B, then, and goes on to consider that he set the type for nearly half of the First Folio —

setting a far larger portion of the book than any other compositor — one's instinctive reaction is to shudder. Hinman neatly sums up the situation in his introduction to *The Norton Facsimile* of the First Folio: "B often falsified the text without reducing it to nonsense, and his inaccuracies are the more dangerous because frequently hard to detect."¹⁶ Fortunately, the other five compositors who set type for the Folio seem to have been more faithful to the copy they were given.

What about the proof-reading of the First Folio? Can we not hope that much of the error introduced by compositorial inaccuracy or high-handedness was detected and corrected by the Folio's proofreader? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Hinman's thorough analysis of stop-press corrections in the First Folio¹⁷ indicates that by and large the proofreading for the volume was cosmetic only: the greatest bulk of the variants turned up in Hinman's collation of the Folio were variants that involved replacing broken types, reversing upturned letters, or performing similarly nonsubstantive corrections. What is more, the proofreading seems to have been only random in the first place, with most of the stop-press corrections occurring in pages set into type by the apprentice compositor, E. Finally, and perhaps most disturbing, in the relatively small number of instances in which Hinman found substantive proof-corrections, it was obvious that the proofreader had made most of his corrections without reference to copy, so that the Folio in its final, corrected, state is often likely to be more false to the copy than the Folio in its earlier, uncorrected state.

For all its glory, then, the First Folio is a radically imperfect book. We would not be without it — indeed, we couldn't get along without it — but we end our examination of it echoing the words of Heminge and Condell: "It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have been wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings."

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FOOTNOTES FOR "THE FIRST FOLIO: IMPERFECT BUT INDISPENSABLE"

1. Rather than attempt to provide a representative list of the contributions of each of these scholars, I shall simply refer the reader to a source where the contributions alluded to are systematically enumerated: T. H. Howard-Hill's *Shakespearean Bibliography and Textual Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).
2. Sir Sidney Lee, *Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies: A Supplement to the Reproduction in Facsimile of the First Folio Edition . . . Containing a Census of Extant Copies With Some Account of their History and Condition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902). Lee provided a supplement to his *Census* in 1906 (published in London by H. Frowde).
3. Henrietta C. Bartlett and Alfred W. Pollard, *A Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto, 1594–1709* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1916); Henrietta C. Bartlett brought out a revised and augmented edition in 1939.
4. (New York: Privately printed, 1940), III, 935.
5. *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* (London: Methuen, 1909).
6. *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).
7. *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), p. x.
8. S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 10.
9. Harry Levin has recently commented on Jonson's encomium in his fine lecture on "The Primacy of Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 26 (Spring 1975), 99–112.
10. *The Norton Facsimile*, pp. xiv, xv.
11. *Ralph Crane and Some Shakespeare First Folio Comedies* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1972).
12. *The Quarto Copy for the First Folio of Shakespeare* (Dublin: Dublin Univ. Press, 1971).
13. "The Quartos and the Folio Text of *King Lear*," *Review of English Studies*, NS 6 (1955), 252–58.
14. *Textual Problems of the First Folio* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1955).
15. "The Pavier Quartos of 1619 — Evidence for Two Compositors," Diss. Vanderbilt 1971, and supplementary work presented in papers at the March 1973 Shakespeare Association of America meeting and the December 1973 Modern Language Association meeting.
16. *The Norton Facsimile*, p. xix.
17. *The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).