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THE TEXTS FROM WHICH JOHNSON PRINTED HIS SHAKESPEARE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY editors of Shakespeare before Capell (1767) did not base their texts on the early folios and quartos nor on MS transcriptions from these; they printed instead from the editions of their more immediate precursors. Pope's printer, for example, set the type for and printed Pope's Shakespeare from a corrected copy of Rowe's 1714 edition; Warburton's printer worked from a copy of Theobald's second edition (1740); and scholars from Capell to McKerrow have held that Johnson printed his text (1765) from Warburton's (1747).¹

Collation appears to substantiate the general opinion by revealing several striking agreements in error between the two editions. For example, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, I.i.96, Theobald's second edition has, "He weeds the corn, and still lets grow the weeding," which is correct. Warburton and Johnson print "let's."² In *Coriolanus*, II.i.12, Johnson follows Warburton in printing "are two" for "two are" in the line, "You two are old men"³; and in *2 Henry IV*, II.i.111, both editors misprint "Pry'thee" for "Pr'ythee."⁴ Even more striking is the following from *Twelfth Night*, II.iii.8: "to go to bed after midnight, is to go to bed betimes." Warburton, followed by Johnson, printed, "go bed betimes."⁵ Similarly impressive evidence of Johnson's dependence on Warburton is found in a double misprint inherited from *Macbeth*, V.iii.11. Theobald printed, "The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd lown!" Warburton and Johnson have, "chou cream'fac'd lown!"⁶

¹ Capell's *Shakespeare*, [1767], i. 18, n. 8; William George Clark and John Glover, *Cambridge Shakespeare*, 1863, i. xxxvi; J. Parker Norris, "The Editors of Shakespeare, VII. Dr. Samuel Johnson," *Shakespeareana*, viii (1886), 27; Horace Howard Furness, *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*. Vol. II. *Macbeth*, Phila., 1873, p. v; David Nichol Smith, "Johnson and Boswell," *Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. by Sir A. W. Ward and A. R. Walter, Cambridge, 1907-16, x. 203; Ronald B. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text by His Earlier Editors: 1709-1768*, London, 1933, p. 28; McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, Oxford, 1939, p. 73, n. 1; Walter Ebisch and Levin L. Schücking, *A Shakespeare Bibliography*, Oxford, 1931, p. 54.

A portion of the material in this paper was part of a dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Yale University.

² T40.II.174; W.192; J.115.

Edition, volume, and page numbers will be indicated hereafter as in this example; that is, Theobald's second edition (1740), vol. II, p. 174, etc. If, when several references are given in a series, a volume number is omitted, the number is the same as in the preceding reference. Thus, above, the Warburton and Johnson references are also to vol. II. All act, scene, and line references are to the Cambridge text of 1863-66.

³ T40.VI.376; W.462; J.521.

⁴ T40.IV.205; W.228; J.261.

⁵ T40.III.121; W.142; J.II.379.

⁶ T40.VI.337; W.416; J.472. For other examples of Johnson's use of W, cf. *TN*,

Recently, however, Professor G. Blakemore Evans has shown Johnson's dependence on the 1757 edition of Theobald for the text of *1 Henry VI* and has suggested that Johnson may have used this edition for many if not most of the plays.⁷ Collation supports this suggestion. Johnson agrees with the 1757 Theobald in adding an unauthorized "why" after "live" in *Romeo and Juliet*, IV.v.101: "Oh, an you will have me live, play *heart's ease*"⁸; in substituting "day's" for "days'" in *King John*, IV.iii.20: "'twill be/Two long days' journey"⁹; in misprinting "shrew'd" for "shrewd" in *2 Henry VI*, II.iii.41,¹⁰ and "Pry'thee" for "Pr'ythee" in *Measure for Measure*, III.ii.126.¹¹ Both editors mispunctuate *Julius Caesar*, V.iii.78 ("Hie you, Messala,/And I will seek for Pindarus") so that it reads, "Hie, you Messala."¹² Both mistakenly place a question mark after "thine" in *Richard III*, IV.iv.249: "Even all I have; yea, and myself and all,/Will I withal endow a child of thine."¹³ Both agree in a large series of what may be regarded as either errors or ill-judged emendations. Both substitute "wing" for "wings" in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II.ii.4: "Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings"¹⁴; both substitute "a word" for "or word" in *Measure for Measure*, V.i.361: "Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence,/That yet can do thee office?"¹⁵

I.v.32: T40.iii.111 ("Better a witty fool"), W.iii.129, J.ii.366 ("Better be a witty fool"); *TN*, II.iii.140: T40.iii.125 ("swarths"), W.iii.147, J.ii.385 ("swaths"); *R2*, II.i.131: T40.iv.27 ("thou respect'st"), W.iv.29, J.31 ("thou respects"); *R2*, II.i.160: T40.iv.28 ("us"), W.iv.30, J.32 ("us": punctuation in error; following sentence left without subject or verb); *R2*, II.i.250: T40.iv.31 ("I wot not what;"), W.iv.33, J.35 ("I wot not what?"); *IH4*, I.i.87-89: T40.iv.94 ("exchang'd . . . call'd"), W.iv.100, J.113 ("exchang'd . . . call").

⁷ G. B. Evans, "The Text of Johnson's *Shakespeare* (1765)," *Philological Quarterly* xxviii (1949), 425-428. I am greatly indebted to Professor Evans for a MS copy of his article and for his helpful pointer to Johnson's use of T57.

⁸ T57.viii.85; W.95; J.106. T57's addition of "why" in this line appears to stem from a misprint in T40: "Oh, an you will have me live,y play *heart's ease*."

It should be noted that since T52 and T57 were both printed from T40, many points of difference from W are shared by all three editions. I have collated all three for several whole plays and for several portions of plays, and I believe there can be no doubt that Johnson's use of Theobald is confined to T57.

⁹ T57.iii.399; W.455; J.479.

¹⁰ T57.v.35; W.36; J.38.

¹¹ T57.i.344; W.414; J.331.

¹² T57.vii.77; W.89; J.95.

¹³ T57.v.276; W.309; J.331.

¹⁴ T57.i.93; W.119; J.120.

¹⁵ T57.i.377; W.451; J.374. For other examples of Johnson's use of T57, cf. *2H6*, II.i.145: W.v.30 ("Whip him till he leap over that same stool"), T57.v.30, J.31 ("the same"); *Temp*, III.ii.62: W.i.53 ("take his bottle from him"), T57.i.43, J.54 ("this

Johnson printed his text, then, not only from Warburton but from Theobald (1757) as well. To determine the extent to which he depended on each, we must turn to such collations of his two precursors as the following from *Romeo and Juliet*, IV.v.30–101. Johnson agrees with Theobald in every instance except in line 37, where he prints “deflowered.”¹⁶

<i>Line Number</i>	<i>Theobald's Reading (1757)</i>	<i>Warburton's Reading</i>
30	O woeful Time (Theobald and Johnson, however, agree with Warburton and spell “woful” at lines 49, 50, and 54.)	<i>woful</i>
32	Death . . . Ties up my Tongue	<i>Tyes</i>
37	Flow'r as she was, deflowred now by him	<i>Flower . . . deflower'd</i>
49	oh woful, woful, woful, day	<i>woful day</i>
56	Most detestable Death, by thee beguil'd	<i>Thee</i>
57	By cruel, cruel thee quite over-thrown	<i>Thee</i>
58	O Love, O Life,—not Life, but Love in Death	<i>Life, not</i>
61	To murder, murder our Solemnity	<i>murther, murther</i>
63	Dead art thou	<i>Thou</i>
66	Heaven and yourself	<i>Yourself</i>
67	Had part in this fair Maid; now Heav'n hath all	<i>Part . . . All</i>
68	And all the better is it for the Maid	<i>All</i>
69	Your part in her	<i>Part</i>
70	But Heav'n keeps his part in eternal Life	<i>Part</i>
72	For 'twas your Heaven, she should be advanc'd	<i>Heav'n</i>
78	she's best married, that dies married young	<i>dyes</i>
84	All Things, that we ordained festival	<i>things</i>
92	And go, Sir <i>Paris</i> ; ev'ry one prepare	<i>every</i>
94	The Heav'ns do low'r upon you	<i>lowr</i>
96	'Faith, we may put up our pipes	<i>Faith</i>
101	Oh, an you will have me live, why, play <i>heart's ease</i>	<i>live, play</i>

bottle”); *TGofV*, V.iv.72: W.I.244 (“’Mongst”), T57.I.205, J.255 (“’Mong’st”); *JC*, II.i.319: W.VII.36 (“Had you an healthful ear to hear of it”), T57.VII.32, J.37 (“hear it”); *R&J*, IV.v.30, 49, 50, 54: W.VIII.93–94 (spells “woful” in every instance), T57.VIII.82–83, J.103–104 (spell “woeful” at line 30, “woful” in other lines).

¹⁶ All annotated discrepancies between T57 and W have been omitted from this and all other collations in accordance with the principle that Johnson’s concurrence with either predecessor is significant of textual dependence *only* when it was accidental or unintentional. Similarly, differences in scene-numbering and scene-division are excluded since in these matters Johnson quite consciously followed Warburton.

The significance of Johnson's reading at v. 101 ("live, why, play") has already been mentioned. Of similar importance is his concurrence with Theobald's inconsistency in the spelling of "woeful" at v. 30, 49, 50, and 54. Unfortunately, collation reveals few such striking agreements in error or inconsistency. Except in the pettiest of details, Theobald (1757) and Warburton, both of which were printed from Theobald (1740), are often almost identical for hundreds of lines on end. It therefore becomes necessary to determine whether trivial differences have value as evidence.

If it can be shown that major agreements in error are accompanied by agreements in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, then it will be reasonable to infer that a multiplicity of these minor agreements is by itself proof of textual dependence. It will be seen in the collation given above that Johnson concurs with Theobald even in the petty details of comma placement and capitalization. And it will be found in *Macbeth*, V.iii, where Johnson follows Warburton in printing "chou cream'fac'd lown," he also agrees with him in all but one of the petty differences. For example, he agrees in not capitalizing "rest" at line 39,¹⁷ in spelling "lilly" instead of "lily" at line 15,¹⁸ and "rubarb" instead of "rhubarb" at line 55.¹⁹ The one exception is in the capitalization of "Lord" at lines 31, 37, and 57.²⁰ The validity of proof derived from collation is only significant, of course, when difference or agreement is unconscious; and since Johnson had been capitalizing "Lord," and not infrequently "Lady," through much of his edition, I judge his failure to agree with Warburton at this point to be the result of conscious application of editorial policy. Examination of the other plays wherein there is a striking agreement in error generally reveals this same agreement in points of lesser difference. I conclude, therefore, that a large plurality of concurrences, even though none is striking and though any one might be the result of purpose or conscious planning, is good evidence of textual dependence.

On the basis of a great many collations, many of which belong in the category just discussed, I should assign Johnson's use of his two predecessors, volume by volume, as follows:

¹⁷ T57.vi.338; W.418; J.473.

¹⁸ T57.vi.337; W.417; J.472.

¹⁹ T57.vi.338; W.418; J.474.

²⁰ T57.vi.337-338; W.417-418; J.473-474.

	I	II	III	IV
Temp	T ²¹	AYLI	T Shrew	T R2 —
MND	T	LLL	— CofE	T 1H4 —
TGofV	T	WT	T MAdo	— 2H4 —
MforM	—	TN	— AWTEW	T H5 T
MofV	—	MWofW	T KJohn	— 1H6 T
	V	VI	VII	VIII
2H6	T	Lear	— JC	T R&J T
3H6	T	Timon	T A&C	T Ham T
R3	—	Titus	T Cymb	T Oth T
H8	T	Macb	W T&C	T
		Cor	W	

The eleven unassigned plays present a final and peculiar problem, the more tantalizing for the already mentioned close similarity between Theobald and Warburton, for in all of these plays Johnson agrees in major error or in the clustering of petty peculiarities of capitalization, spelling, and punctuation with *both* of his predecessors. To take *Love's Labour's Lost* as an example, Johnson agrees with Theobald in the accidental indentation of III.i.110 ("Costard running out, that was safely within"),²² in the misplacement of the apostrophe at V.ii.891 ("And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks"),²³ and in the unannotated alteration of "bearing, and estimation" to "bearing an estimation" at I.i.254 ("Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation").²⁴ These are strong indications of textual dependence, yet the indications are equally strong that Johnson was using Warburton. He follows Warburton, as we have said, at I.i.96, where he prints "He weeds the corn, and still let's grow the weeding,"²⁵ and at I.i.252, where he substitutes "need" for "meed" (Him, I . . . have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment").²⁶ He follows him once again in an error of punctuation at IV.iii.78: Theobald correctly prints,

²¹ It may be thought odd that Johnson, who began his Shakespeare in 1756, was using for his first plays an edition dated 1757. Since most of the publishers of T57 were also Johnson's publishers, I imagine they gave him advance volumes of T57 as they came off the press. Since it was the most modernized of the texts up to that time, it might well have seemed the best basis for Johnson's own modernized text.

²² T57.ii.198; W.217; J.144.

²³ T57.ii.260; W.287; J.223.

²⁴ T57.ii.179; W.198; J.122.

²⁵ T57.ii.174; W.192; J.115.

²⁶ T57.ii.179; W.198; J.122.

O heav'ns, I have my wish;
Dumain transform'd? four woodcocks in a dish?

Warburton and Johnson print "transform'd four."²⁷

Did Johnson begin *Love's Labour's Lost* using Warburton, then shift to Theobald, then back to Warburton, and so forth? The evidence of the lesser concurrences supports that of the principal concurrences: when Johnson shifted from one base text to the other his own edition reveals that shift in its peculiarities of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. The following portion of the *Love's Labour's Lost* collation (IV.iii.74–261) will illustrate. (A "T" or "W" under "Johnson's Reading" indicates Johnson's concurrence with Theobald (1757) or Warburton respectively.)

<i>Line Number</i>	<i>Theobald's Reading (1757)</i>	<i>Warburton's Reading</i>	<i>Johnson's Reading</i>
76	wretched fools' secrets	<i>wretched</i>	W
78	I have my wish; <i>Dumain</i> transform'd? four woodcocks in a dish?	<i>transform'd four</i>	W
82	there you lye	<i>lie</i>	W
105	<i>Air</i> , (quoth he) <i>thy cheeks may blow</i> ; <i>Air</i> , would I might triumph sol	blow/ <i>Air</i>	W
147	Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy	<i>hypocrisie</i>	W
167	Where lies thy grief	<i>lyes</i>	W
168	Where lies thy pain	<i>lyes</i>	W
208	Will these turtles be gone	<i>begone</i>	T
209 s.d.	<i>Exeunt</i> Costard and Jaquenetta	<i>Cost . . . Jaquen.</i>	T
211	As true we are, as flesh and blood can be	<i>As true as we</i>	T
214	We cannot cross the cause why we were born:	<i>born,</i>	T
233	nothing wants, that want itself doth seek	<i>it self</i>	T
235	Fy, painted rhetorick	<i>Fie</i>	T
258	Her Favour turns the fashion of the days	<i>favour</i>	T

Not all the evidence follows the neat pattern of the preceding example, for Johnson was periodically attentive to minor details. He tended to modernize spelling, to adjust punctuation, to reduce capitalized nouns to lower case. And since the editor of the 1757 Theobald made the same sorts of changes, it is not uncommon to find portions of Johnson's text wherein the evidence is apparently contradictory. Add to the sporadic nature of Johnson's application of editorial principle the frequent absence of difference between Theobald and War-

²⁷ T57.ii.216; W.237; J.167.

burton for several pages, and it will be seen that the exact points of Johnson's shift from one text to another cannot be certainly determined and that the following table of Johnson's use of his predecessors is necessarily tentative.²⁸

<i>Vol. I</i>	<i>MforM</i>	<i>MofV</i>
	T: I-IV.v.s.d.	W: I-II.v.49
	W: v.i.18s.d.-v.i.50	T: II.vi.33-vii.30
	?: v.i.79-219	W: II.viii.7-III.i.93
	T: v.i.283-end	T: III.i.105-IV.i.7
		W: IV.i.28-IV.i.153
		T: IV.i.278-end
<i>Vol. II</i>	<i>LLL</i>	<i>TN</i>
	W: I.i.1-214	T: I.i.1-19
	T: I.i.228-II.i.189	W: I.i.41-III.47
	W: II.i.200-227	W?: I.iii.74-IV.14
	T: II.i.252-IV.i.22	T: I.iv.33-v.23
	W: IV.i.60-III.168	W: I.v.32-197
T: IV.iii.208-end	T: I.v.207-273	
		W: II.i.s.d.-III.i.15
		T: III.i.66-121
		W: III.ii.4-IV.36
		T: III.iv.87-end
<i>Vol. III</i>	<i>MAdo</i>	<i>KJohn</i>
	W: I.i.1-278	T: I.i.1-22
	T: I.ii.3-I.iii.54	W: I.i.39-II.i.97
	W: I.iii.58-II.i.57	T: II.i.130-228
	T: II.i.73-end	W: II.i.304-III.i.108
		T: III.i.134-v.iii.14
		W: v.v.8-end
<i>Vol. IV</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>IH4</i>
	W: I.i-III.iv.78	W: I.i.-III.157
	T: III.iv.98-IV.i.64	T: I.iii.181-251
	W: IV.i.66-end	W: I.iii.260-III.iii.155
		T: III.iii.167-IV.i.9
		W: IV.i.13-end

²⁸ To arrive at the conclusions presented here I have taken sample collations of T57 and W at 100-line intervals throughout the entire thirty-six plays, the size of the samples being determined by the frequency and nature of the disagreements between the two editions. Wherever the evidence has been contradictory or suggestive of a shift in base texts, I have collated the omitted lines. The following summary of a part of the A&C collation (acts I-II) illustrates the nature and range of coverage this method has permitted. Collated: I.i.1-51; I.ii.84-III.63; I.iv.55-v.78; II.ii.49-162; II.iii.10-v.40; II.vi.20-vii.84; etc.

2H4

W: i.i–ii.iv.282
T: ii.iv.314–iii.i.25
W: iii.i.33–iv.i.41
T: iv.i.56–154
W: iv.i.168–v.iii.s.d.
T: v.iii.43–end

Vol. V R3

W: i.i–ii.232
T: i.iii.38–ii.iv.42
W: iii.i.s.d.–145
T: iii.i.160–end

Vol. VI Lear

T: i.i–ii.i.24
W: ii.i.44–ii.17
T: ii.ii.29–end

Johnson's procedure is certainly rare if not unique among eighteenth century Shakespearean editors; the question naturally arises, therefore, whether it stemmed from editorial policy or the lack of it, whether Johnson found Theobald good here and Warburton there and used them accordingly or simply adopted what we now regard as a cavalier attitude and used either as chance laid it to hand. The evidence is slight and somewhat negative, but it is suggestive.

1. Examination of the table directly above shows no significant correlation between Johnson's shifts in base text and any given number of lines, pages, or gatherings.

2. The same table shows that a great many of the shifts in base text overlap Johnson's act or scene changes. The first shift in *Merchant of Venice*, for example, coincides with Johnson's change from II.vi to II.vii, and the second shift coincides with his change from II.vii to II.viii.²⁹ Hence it seems likely that Johnson often completed the particular act or scene on which he was working before shifting to the other text.³⁰

3. A further inference follows from the preceding point, and that

²⁹ Since Johnson's system of scene enumeration is a modification of the French system, his scene numbers do not jibe with those of modern editions.

³⁰ If this inference is correct, it would be possible to indicate with greater precision than in the table above the points at which Johnson shifted base texts. I have not altered the table, however, because in the gaps between the assigned portions of the plays (e.g., *MforM*, IV.v.s.d.–end of act) the two base editions are, generally, identical, and where they are not, the evidence appears to be inconclusive.

is that the shifts may indicate lapses in Johnson's application to his editorial task.

4. Certain of the shifts may have been motivated by a temporary irritation at or a loss of faith in the text Johnson was using up to the shift. For example, Johnson used Warburton through *King John*, II.i.97. At II.i.114, however, Warburton had silently introduced a major emendation into his text. Johnson has a note on this line in which he rejects the emendation,³¹ and beginning with the next difference between Theobald and Warburton, Johnson agrees with Theobald.

5. All but two of the plays for which Johnson used both Theobald and Warburton appear in the first four volumes. We know from Percy that Johnson was working on volume III in December of 1758, the month in which he had promised to publish.³² It may be that certain of Johnson's shifts in base text are related both to his editorial inexperience at the beginning of his task and to his attempts to meet a deadline.³³

6. Although Johnson drew heavily on Theobald's notes (the 1757 Theobald reprinted the notes of the 1740 edition) in every volume and in almost every play, *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*, the last two plays in volume VI, are exceptions. In the first there are but two notes

³¹ W.III.403; J.420–n.4. Similar instances occur in *IH4*, IV.i.13, where T57's omission of part of a line may have turned Johnson to W (T57.IV.154; W.171; J.195), and *2H4*, IV.i.46, where a W misprint ("every" for "very") followed by an error in punctuation at line 48 may have turned Johnson to T57 (T57.IV.240; W.267; J.305).

³² *Proposals For Printing, by Subscription, The Dramatick Works of William Shakespeare, Corrected and Illustrated by Samuel Johnson*, June 1, 1756, p. 2. Hans Hecht, *Thomas Percy und William Shenstone (Quellen und Forschungen)*, 103, Strassburg, 1909, pp. 4, 9. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. ed. L. F. Powell, Oxford, 1934, i. 323.

³³ If Johnson was hard pressed to keep up with the printers, he may have responded to their requests for copy by giving them what he had, whether a completed or incomplete play, and continued his work, using the edition he still had by him. Such a theory is appealing, but it is, of course, only one of many possible. Theobald's Shakespeare was duodecimo, a handy pocket size. Perhaps Johnson carried the Theobald in his pocket and worked on it away from home whenever he found a few free minutes, then shifted back to the octavo Warburton with its larger margins and more easily legible type when at his lodgings. Possibly Tonson, Johnson's publisher, attempting to do his share to get the edition ready in time, occasionally employed two type-setters to work on the material as it came in from Johnson. Thus, for example, when *Love's Labour's Lost* arrived from the editor (let us suppose entirely in Warburton's edition), one setter worked from it. But the other, to hurry up the work, began at a later portion of the play, using Theobald's edition to set from. When he had set an act or so, he took the copy of Warburton which Johnson had annotated and went over his type, correcting it to match Johnson's alterations.

signed "Theobald," and both are clearly drawn from Theobald's first edition (1733).³⁴ In *Coriolanus* there is but one note signed "Theobald," and that derived from neither the first nor the second editions, but from Tonson's octavo reprint (1745) of Hanmer's Shakespeare.³⁵ In volume vi, then, Johnson appears to have used Warburton because he had no copy of Theobald's sixth volume at hand.

This evidence is slight, but in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it would seem that there is no single, all-encompassing editorial principle by which to explain Johnson's transfers from Theobald to Warburton and that these transfers were generally not the results of editorial evaluation. John's use of two different sources within the same play, within the same act, even within the same scene, and his willingness to omit important notes because he lacked the sixth volume of Theobald's Shakespeare point to no policy but that of expediency. "It is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth," said Johnson; and I suspect he considered the fluctuation from one base text to another a matter of no importance.

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³⁴ J.vi.379-n.7 and 8; T33.v.392-n.6 and 7.

³⁵ J.vi.507-n.3; H45.v.99-n.a.