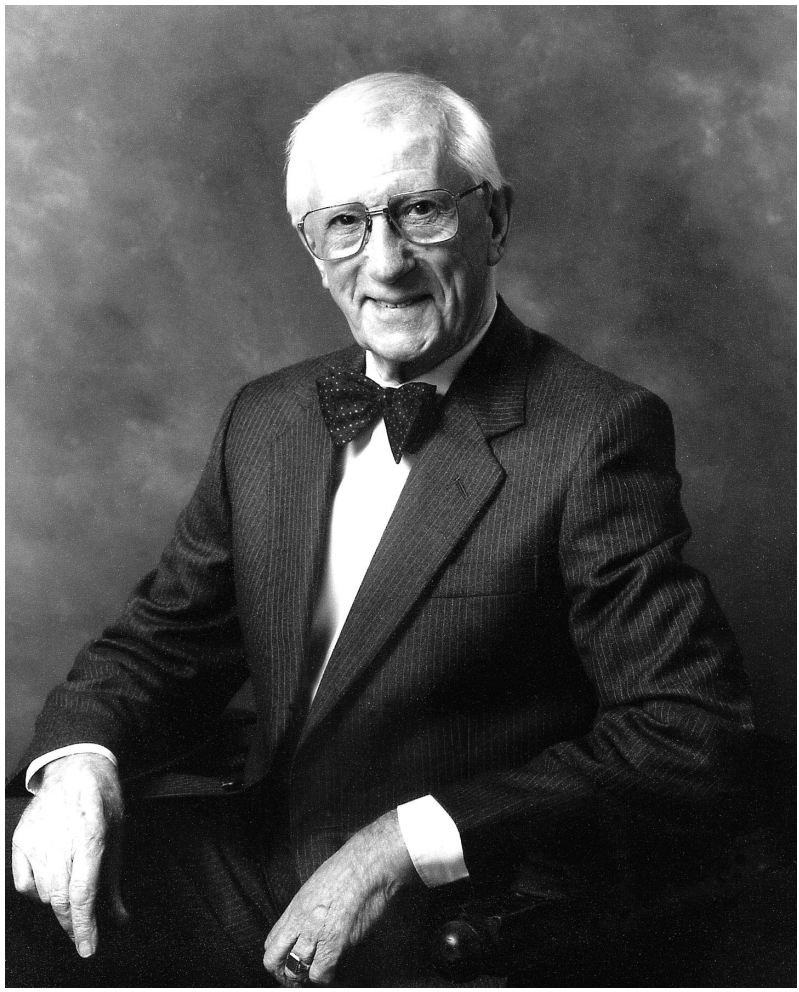

HAROLD JENKINS

Harold Jenkins
1909–2000

HAROLD JENKINS (Harold to his many friends, old and young) was born at Shenley, Buckinghamshire, on 19 July 1909, the eldest son of the five children of Henry and Mildred Jenkins (Ann, Harold, May, Wallace, Albert). Henry and Mildred were cousins. Henry, described as 'Shenley's own milk and egg retailer', was depicted in *Around Stony Stratford*[1] with his horse and cart, 'measuring milk out of his churn'. I have seen a family-tree which traces some of Harold's ancestors to the seventeenth century. His grandfather, George Jenkins (b. 1839) married Hannah Fossey, lace-maker, in 1864; their fifth child, Henry (1878–1932), was Harold's father.

The Jenkins family had lived in Shenley for generations. Henry and Mildred started life together in a cottage, and later moved to a substantial seventeenth-century house. A cousin who knew her well describes 'Aunt Milly' as 'very charming, very lady-like, always smartly dressed'. Apparently she was a fine singer (contralto) and sang in the church choir. The family attended Loughton Baptist Church, where Henry Jenkins was a deacon and church secretary (as secretary he sometimes preached himself). Harold's sister May was also elected to the Diaconate (at Spurgeon Baptist Church, Fenny Stratford) and served until 1981, when she became a Life Deacon. Harold no doubt played a part in the family's religious activities, for he met his future wife at a

[1] Audrey Lambert, *Around Stony Stratford*, A Second Selection, Britain in Old Photographs (Stroud, 1996), 90.

Proceedings of the British Academy, **111**, 553–72.

Baptist gathering at UCL (University College London). In later years, however, he no longer attended services.

Harold went to a local school at the precocious age of three, and from there, in 1920, won a free place in the Secondary School (later Wolverton Grammar School), nearly five miles away—walking or cycling each day with his sisters, and helping in his father's business in school vacations. At school he was keen on football, cricket and tennis, and, one assumes, on academic studies as well. In 1926 he won a County Major Scholarship (£100 p.a. for three years), and in 1927 he added the Ewelme Scholarship, open to pupils from Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire (£40 for three years).

Harold proceeded to UCL in 1927 to read English Language and Literature (1927–30), graduating with First Class Honours; he also won the Morley Medal in English Literature and, a greater triumph, the George Smith Studentship (1930–1), awarded annually to the outstanding candidate in English Language and Literature throughout the (federal) University of London. He wanted to continue with English studies. His father, having other children to support, could not afford to go on subsidising him, and called on Professor R. W. Chambers to explain his predicament. At this point the Quain Studentship fell vacant unexpectedly and Chambers nominated Harold, which (at £150 p.a.) made possible five years of graduate study at UCL with some teaching responsibilities (1930–5). One of his closer friends at this time was Geoffrey Tillotson, with whom he shared a very small room, 'almost a cupboard' (Professor Kathleen Tillotson).

The first holder (from 1928) of the Lord Northcliffe chair of Modern English Literature was C. J. Sisson (1885–1966) who, I later heard from his own lips, greatly admired Harold, and, I now know, backed him at important points in his career. In 1930 Harold embarked on an MA dissertation on the minor Elizabethan dramatist Henry Chettle: Sisson, the leading specialist in Elizabethan literature at UCL, no doubt nudged him in this direction, but not for selfish reasons. Sisson arranged that Harold should be supervised by W. W. Greg, President of the Bibliographical Society and an honorary lecturer in Bibliography at UCL.

In 1997, introducing Harold's three lectures on Shakespeare's romantic comedies, I claimed that 'his fearlessness is an essential part of his mental equipment' and that 'he was not even overawed, I believe, by the great Sir Walter Greg'.[2] Not so, Harold wrote to me (23 August 1997).

[2] *The Shakespeare Newsletter*, Extra Issue (1997).

'The idea that I wasn't overawed by Greg, though flattering, is comic. When Sisson brought into college the great man who had edited Henslowe's *Diary*, it was almost like a royal visit. And when Sisson handed me over to him for the supervision of my MA it was a very formidable privilege.'

Harold graduated MA with distinction in 1933. Next year *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle* was published by Sidgwick & Jackson, of which firm R. B. McKerrow happened to be a director. In his Preface Harold explained that his MA dissertation 'has been thoroughly and extensively revised', acknowledging his indebtedness to three mentors—Sisson, Greg, and McKerrow.

To understand Harold's subsequent career we have to remember the extraordinary impact of the Bibliographical Society (founded 1892), and to a lesser extent of the Malone Society, in the first decades of the twentieth century. Describing the early history of the Bibliographical Society and its most active members, F. P. Wilson declared that 'if one man is to be chosen as the hero, then it is clear who that man is'[3]—yet while Greg was undoubtedly the hero (and his later publications only confirmed his pre-eminence), Wilson also gave generous praise to others, notably McKerrow.

> In the first decade of this century . . . Greg and McKerrow had established themselves as upholders of a new standard of accuracy and knowledge in the bibliographical criticism of Elizabethan texts, Greg above all by his editions of *Henslowe's Diary* and of the *Henslowe Papers* and by the work which he was doing (from 1906) for the Malone Society, McKerrow above all by his edition of Nashe, but both of them and especially Greg by severe though just reviews of any work that fell below the standards they had set themselves. (p. 78)

R. B. McKerrow (1872–1940) and W. W. Greg (1875–1959) had known each other at Harrow and became close friends at Cambridge. They, together with A. W. Pollard (1859–1944), were leading spirits in the Bibliographical Society, and Greg was also general editor of the Malone Society (from 1906 to 1939). Sisson, a younger man, shared their interests and at the same time pursued a passion of his own, the study of public records. It was Harold's great good fortune that he was taken up by these outstanding scholars, who no doubt recognised him as 'one of us'. To Sisson Harold owed his enthusiasm for Elizabethan literature and his introduction to Greg (and, through Greg, to McKerrow), and he was

[3] F. P. Wilson, 'Shakespeare and the New Bibliography', *The Bibliographical Society 1892–1942 Studies in Retrospect* (1949), 134.

further indebted to Sisson when he followed him, for his second book, to the public records.

At the time when Harold embarked on his postgraduate career, how were his three mentors occupied? Greg had just edited *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company 1576–1602* (1930) and was busy with *English Literary Autographs 1500–1650*, published in four parts between 1925 and 1932, and *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses* (1931), not to mention innumerable articles and reviews and other work that was later to bear fruit in *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration* (4 vols., 1939–59) and *The Shakespeare First Folio* (1955). McKerrow was one of several friends who helped Greg with *English Literary Autographs*, had published *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students* (1927), became Sandars Reader in Bibliography at Cambridge (1928), read a revolutionary paper on 'The Elizabethan Printer and Dramatic Manuscripts' to the Bibliographical Society in 1931 and issued *Title-page Borders used in England & Scotland 1485–1640* in 1932. Sisson's years of toil in the archives led to *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (1932), *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (1936), and *The Judicious Marriage of Mr. Hooker* (1940).

We may take it that Harold was deeply impressed by the work of his three mentors and decided to follow in their footsteps (unfortunately for him, in my opinion, since he had other gifts which were not brought into play for some years). They clearly encouraged him, for McKerrow and Sisson each published two articles from his pen in the 1930s. McKerrow had founded *The Review of English Studies* in 1925 and edited it until his death in 1940, and Sisson became General Editor of *The Modern Language Review* (1933–55). Harold, therefore, enjoying privileged access to the leaders of his profession, had to work to the very highest standards to satisfy them—and to satisfy himself.

His first book will have seemed to him a modest achievement compared with the heroic labours of his three seniors. It is placed in a different perspective, however, when one recalls that Harold was only twenty-five when it appeared. It reads like the work of a mature scholar: over and above his firm grasp of the problems of collaboration, dating, text, etc. he pronounced on the findings of men of established reputation with incisive judgement, characteristic of him throughout his life. Because of the nature of Chettle's surviving work, much of it written in great haste, Harold's talent for literary criticism was not here seen to best advantage, but we may illustrate his other great strength, his ability to marshal evidence, from an article that grew out of his book, 'On the

Authenticity of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*'.[4] Greene's two pamphlets were alleged to be spurious; the argument had continued from the 1590s to the 1930s, and Chettle was thought to be implicated. Harold examined the evidence meticulously, and distinguished between different levels of proof. His own arguments

> are not put forward as a proof of authenticity; but they do, I hope, suggest that there is no insuperable bar to the belief that these two pamphlets are the work of Robert Greene, written during his last illness. I do not think that the last word on the subject has been said; but the *Groatsworth* and the *Repentance* are not to be removed from the canon of Greene—even to be placed in the category of doubtful works—until evidence of very much greater significance is forthcoming.

Harold's awareness of other possibilities, and his sure-footedness in reaching his own conclusions, are already fully developed. As he foresaw, and I have special reason to know,[5] the argument for spuriousness did not die away.

After the Quain Studentship Harold moved for a year to the University of Liverpool as William Noble Fellow (1935–6) and then to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Junior Lecturer, 1936–8; Lecturer, 1939–44; Senior Lecturer and second in command under Professor J. Y. T. Greig, 1945). In 1945 he returned to UCL (Lecturer, 1945–6; Reader, 1946–54), invited back by Sisson, the Joint Head of Department, who had him promoted to the Upper Division of the Readership Grade in 1951. From 1954 to 1967 he served as Professor of English at Westfield College, University of London (a women's college until 1964)—perhaps his happiest years—and from 1967 to 1971 as Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

The move to Edinburgh was a mistake. Long ago Harold told me how it came about. He had not applied for the chair, had no connections with Edinburgh. Quite unexpectedly he was invited to take the oldest chair of English Literature in the United Kingdom, was asked to meet the Edinburgh Principal at Heathrow between planes, they talked very briefly, and this 'head hunting' was of course flattering. Harold assumed that the Regius Professor would be the Head of Department and heard, too late, that another Head was already in place. He was unworldly enough to accept before he knew what his salary would be, and in consequence wrote about this to the Principal (24 September 1966):

[4] *Review of English Studies*, 11 (1935), 28–41.

[5] See John Jowett, 'Credulous to False Prints' in *Shakespearean Continuities*, ed. John Batchelor, Tom Cain, and Claire Lamont (1997), 93–107.

> I wasn't quite so happy—I know one isn't supposed to speak of such things and this is only for your private ear—about his [the Secretary's] dealing with the salary, the single reference to which I thought very cavalier. What in the circumstances you yourself think proper will be acceptable to me; but I don't like the idea of its being done in your absence. I think you will understand this.

Frictions within the department probably contributed to an undiagnosed ulcer, from which he suffered for some time.[6] He wrote to me (29 March 1988) 'I was never happy in the Edinburgh department, which had made me think it wanted me but never wanted anything I wanted to do.' What he chiefly wanted to do was to edit *Hamlet*. 'I worked steadily on *Hamlet* for the best part of ten years'—that is, after retiring, not counting his occasional publications on the play in the 1950s and 1960s.

But let us go back to the 1930s. Soon after completing his work on Chettle, Harold's thoughts turned to Edward Benlowes, who was to be the subject of his next major book. In 'Towards a biography of Edward Benlowes'[7] he followed up an article by Carl Niemeyer ('New Light on Edward Benlowes'),[8] stating that he had 'been engaged on some independent research on the life and career of this poet, [and so] I am able to add several important details to the biographical information which Mr. Niemeyer has collected'. Next year he published 'A Poet in Chancery: Edward Benlowes'.[9] These preliminary studies fed into his D.Litt. thesis at Witwatersrand, 'The Life and Times of Edward Benlowes, 1602–1676' (1945), and the thesis in its turn was revised and published as *Edward Benlowes (1602–76) Biography of a Minor Poet* (The Athlone Press, London, and Harvard University Press, 1952). This book, not as well known as it ought to be, is surely a minor classic.

I have met colleagues who consider the *Benlowes* as an achievement equal to the edition of *Hamlet*, but there I cannot agree. The *Benlowes* is a beautifully paced narrative of a personal tragedy, the decline of a man who inherited a fortune of more than £1,000 p.a. and died a pauper—a fascinating story, much of it unearthed by Harold himself, but it did not permit him to display his characteristic strengths. Harold's wit, his brilliance in argument and his ability to rise to the demands of great poetry, so evident in the *Hamlet*, are missing, for Benlowes, like Chettle, was a

[6] Much earlier Gladys Jenkins had noted in her diary (16 Oct. 1943) that 'H. had a good deal of pain in his stomach . . . the doctor is afraid that there might be a gastric ulcer', and the pain returned now and then.

[7] *RES*, 12 (1936), 273–84.

[8] *RES*, 12 (1936), 31–41.

[9] *Modern Language Review*, 32 (1937), 382–93.

minor writer, and a major critic cannot come into his own unless he finds a literary talent worthy of his attention. Chettle and Benlowes did not bring the best out of Harold: when he picked these authors (or were they picked for him?) he was still dazzled by Sisson and Greg, and perhaps did not see that his own genius demanded a greater challenge.

Nevertheless the *Benlowes* was much admired and certainly counted as Harold's most prestigious publication when he was appointed to the chairs at London and Edinburgh. Joan Bennett summed up the general reaction. 'No one will ever need to write Benlowes's biography again, but many students of the seventeenth century will turn to Mr Jenkins's book.'[10] Christopher Hill regarded the *Benlowes* as 'a model biography of its kind . . . The poet can be related to his social and economic background with an assurance that is rare in seventeenth-century biography'.[11] Indeed Harold's scholarly skills in this book were exceptionally wide-ranging: discoveries in the public records; complete mastery of obscure religious and political implications and events, and of no less obscure poets and their literary connections; bibliographical analysis of Benlowes's chef d'oeuvre, *Theophila* (1652), with its revisions and pen-and-ink corrections. 'Of the nineteen copies which I have myself examined,' Harold observed, 'ten have authoritative corrections in pen and ink' (p. 315). If he had not said so one would never have guessed that 'large parts of it were originally written in South Africa, and only those who have tried it will appreciate the difficulties of working at a distance from one's primary sources and a well-equipped specialist library' (p. vii).

Absorbed as he was by the *Benlowes*, Harold found time to edit *The Tragedy of Hoffman By Henry Chettle* for the Malone Society Reprints 1950 (1951), 'prepared by Harold Jenkins and checked by Charles Sisson' (all MSR texts are checked by at least one other scholar). He also carried a full teaching load, and soon became known as an outstanding lecturer. In London he gave courses on Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama, Shakespeare, Metaphysical Poetry, Restoration Drama, Eighteenth Century Literature, the Romantics, Victorian Literature, and many other subjects. His students were devoted to him, both as lecturer and as tutor. It was the experience of teaching that will have helped to draw him away from 'scholarship' to 'criticism'—to such

[10] *MLR*, 48 (1953), 336–8.

[11] 'Benlowes and His Times', *Essays in Criticism*, 3 (1953), 143–51. See also *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, Volume One (Amherst, 1985).

acknowledged classics as his lectures on *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.[12]

But of course his scholarly studies continued, and special mention must be made of one in particular, 'Readings in the Manuscript of "Sir Thomas More"'.[13] When Greg's MSR of *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (1911) was reissued in 1961 and, because of the precarious state of the manuscript, scholars were not permitted to examine the original, Harold was asked to prepare a 'Supplement to the Introduction', having checked through the manuscript not long before. He now corrected Greg's transcription and notes some four dozen times. Years later he wrote to me (23 August 1997) 'Of course I occasionally disagreed with [Greg], but one would not dare risk printed disagreement (or indeed with people like McKerrow, Kittredge, Bowers) unless one was pretty sure of one's ground.' Harold also surveyed recent discussions of the play and made several penetrating suggestions. He thought that J. M. Nosworthy's analysis of Addition III made 'a very formidable case' for attributing this (as well as Addition IV) to Shakespeare, and was able to strengthen it.

> More, awed by his unnatural elevation, sees implied in it the reversal of the natural roles of father and son, and his sense of the parent's unnatural homage finds expression in an image of kneeling (III. 10). That such an association is deeply rooted in Shakespeare's imagination is amply shown elsewhere. He has no scenes more moving, for their combination of human feeling and symbolic force, than those in *Lear* and *Coriolanus* which show the unnatural act of the parent kneeling to the child.

By the 1950s Harold, now in his forties, was ready to bring together 'scholarship' and 'criticism' in the ultimate test, an edition of *Hamlet*. Harold F. Brooks, one of the general editors of the Arden Shakespeare, once told me that, when the editors for individual plays were selected, he announced 'there is only one man in the world who is fit to take on *Hamlet*: Harold Jenkins'. A contract was signed in 1954, and the edition appeared twenty-eight years later, in 1982. In between these dates, in 1958, Harold replaced Una Ellis-Fermor and joined Harold Brooks as general editor of the Arden Shakespeare, and 'the two Harolds' reigned for many years (they were joined later by a third general editor, Brian Morris). Harold's painstaking and unselfish work on other Arden volumes undoubtedly held back his own *Hamlet*, the crowning achievement

[12] The first two were reprinted, and the third printed for the first time, in *Three Classic Essays by Harold Jenkins* (*The Shakespeare Newsletter*, Extra Issue, 3 (1997)).
[13] *MLR*, 43 (1948), 512–14.

of his career—so much so that he began to worry that he would not live to complete it.

Yet it must not be supposed that in his '*Hamlet* years' (1954–82) Harold could devote himself exclusively to *Hamlet*. Until he retired, in 1971, he was very busy with teaching and committee work, with visits to many universities; he was a popular invited speaker at conferences, he was active as a reviewer and assessor. At Edinburgh, among other duties, he had to judge submissions for the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction. His inaugural lectures at Westfield and Edinburgh, *The Structural Problem in Shakespeare's 'Henry the Fourth'* (1956) and *The Catastrophe in Shakespearean Tragedy* (1969), two of his finest performances, give some idea of the quality of mind that he brought to every task. When C. J. Sisson published Shakespeare's *Complete Works* (*c*.1954), Harold contributed a brilliantly compressed 'biographical essay' and a text of the play *Sir Thomas More*, 'here for the first time printed in full in an edition of [Shakespeare's] writings'.

When he undertook *Hamlet*, Harold must have realised that his edition would be compared with Dover Wilson's (1934) in the New (Cambridge) Shakespeare. He would also have known that Dover Wilson had published two other hugely influential books on *Hamlet*.[14] He could not have foreseen that he himself would be invited to succeed John Butt, Dover Wilson's successor in the Regius chair at Edinburgh, and that he himself would one day write the Memoir for Dover Wilson published in the *Proceedings* of this Academy (1973). Yet as the years passed Harold will have grown aware that not only was *Hamlet* 'the centre-piece of all his [Dover Wilson's] work', it was no less the centre-piece of his own.

Before we consider the two editions of *Hamlet* let us compare the two editors. Although they both belonged to families 'with a long farming history in Buckinghamshire', occupied the same Regius chair and devoted the best years of their lives to the same play, no two men could have been more unlike. This becomes very clear in Harold's Memoir of Dover Wilson. As an editor and critic, Dover Wilson loved to live dangerously. Thus when he took full control of the New Shakespeare he lost 'none of the spirit of adventurousness, the willingness to take risks which had characterized his work from the beginning'. Quiller-Couch had 'repeatedly warned him against too many "discoveries" '; his 'daring in hypothesis was such that [A. W. Pollard] . . . often had to urge restraint'.

[14] *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' and the problems of its transmission* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1934); *What Happens in 'Hamlet'* (Cambridge, 1935).

Yet, Harold added, 'he never sought to disguise that his conclusions were "provisional", and the more conservative scholars who were justly sceptical of some of them did not dispute the value of his method'. In scholarly matters (though not in politics) Harold was definitely 'more conservative'—more cautious and, once he had come to a decision, less willing to change his mind. Temperamentally he and Dover Wilson were far apart: Harold impressed those who did not know him as reserved, whereas Dover Wilson, in public and in private, was always at his ease, his eyes sparkling with mischievous humour. Harold's caution and Dover Wilson's endearing enthusiasm were also reflected in their scholarly output: Dover Wilson poured forth a never-ending stream of books and articles, Harold produced only four books, and many of his articles were spin-offs of those books.

Harold's relationship with Dover Wilson was a complicated one. As he acknowledged at the end of his Memoir, Dover Wilson had treated him with great kindness on several occasions before he moved to Edinburgh in 1967, and then 'the Dover Wilsons were the first to ask us to dinner'. He paid tribute to Dover Wilson's magnanimity and zest, and much later wrote a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* (27 May 1988) protesting against Marshall McLuhan's 'shameful description' of Dover Wilson as 'soullessly bookish': on the contrary, said Harold, he was one 'whose geniality of manner, vivacity of mind and warmth of humanity inspired affection in all who knew him'. Kenneth Muir wrote to Harold 'I'm glad you wrote in defence of Dover Wilson—he was a generous and splendid person.' Yet Harold did not want to 'do the Memoir'. He wrote to me (29 March 1988) that after he retired from Edinburgh

> the mental euphoria of such unwonted freedom was glorious. But of course there were ties of work—all the things I had contracted to do & never done. These included the Brit. Acad. obituary of Dover Wilson, which I never wanted to do but couldn't get out of when Peter Alexander bequeathed it to me. And Gladys [Harold's wife] afterwards confessed that it was the one thing that really worried her because she thought I never was going to get it done. Apparently she never had qualms, as I did, about my finishing *Hamlet*.

I suspect that he never 'wanted to do' the Memoir partly because he already knew that he would have to disagree so often with Dover Wilson in his own *Hamlet*.

Let us return to *Hamlet*. For sixteen years Dover Wilson had waged a 'campaign . . . with simultaneous attacks upon the textual and dramatic problems', brought to fruition in the three books of 1934 and 1935. In addition he had produced the play as a young lecturer at Goldsmiths'

College, and he had had a trial run as editor in his Cranach Press *Hamlet* (1930), based, like his later edition, on the Second Quarto. What, then, could Harold offer in competition with Dover Wilson?

In a word, he could offer judgement—a wonderful grasp of the complexities of conflicting evidence and a very rare talent for untangling it. When he signed his contract in 1954 he must have known that while he would follow Dover Wilson's lead in some important departments—notably in basing his text on the Second Quarto—he would also have the opportunity of presenting a very different *Hamlet*. The decision to measure himself against Dover Wilson, to challenge a colleague and friend of Pollard, McKerrow, and Greg, the giants of Harold's youth, must have been pondered with some trepidation.

In what was probably the most searching and authoritative review of Harold's *Hamlet*, Fredson Bowers mentioned 'his rather sharp tongue in parts of the commentary'.[15] We may guess that Bowers had in mind passages such as 'Warburton's famous emendation *god* [II. ii. 182] . . . still occasionally resuscitated by otherwise reputable editors, and misleadingly maintained by Bowers . . . is as unnecessary as it is unjustified' (pp. 466–7). In fact Bowers got off more lightly than many. One man's 'evidence, when not illusory, is featherweight' (p. 51), another was guilty of 'extraordinary fantastications' (p. 520), another of an 'unexpectedly perverse and obfuscating article' (p. 536). Having known Harold for almost fifty years, and regarding his contempt for poor scholarship and muddled thinking as an essential part of the man, I nevertheless wonder at these side-swipes, entertaining though they may be. And of course Dover Wilson was an irresistible target. One Dover Wilson 'fancy' is 'obviously unacceptable' (p. 270), another is 'quite beside the point' (p. 324); 'it is impossible to agree with Dover Wilson' (p. 388); 'Dover Wilson attempted a different solution . . . I think we must pronounce it indubitably wrong' (p. 566)—and much more in the same vein. Harold seems to have realised that he went too far, and apologised in the Preface. 'If I have seemed sometimes to show less than respect, I am glad to right that here. I take no pleasure in disagreement with the illustrious dead, especially when this coexists, as in the case of Dover Wilson and McKerrow, with the memory of their personal kindness to me.'

Harold wrote to me (28 Jan. 1994) 'I haven't the spirit or combativeness for that sort of controversy these days.' The combativeness is very much in evidence in his *Hamlet* (far more so than in the *Chettle* or the

[15] *The Library*, Sixth Series, 5 (1983), 282–96.

Benlowes), and it will jar some readers. If it does, we must remember that it is intimately connected with more precious gifts, Harold's flair for getting at the truth and the high value he attached to it. I have not counted them, but there must be hundreds of Commentary notes that add to knowledge. As for Harold's text, a comparison of the first pages of the New Shakespeare and Arden editions, especially of their stage directions and punctuation, shows that Harold went his own way. And there are many readings in the text that one now identifies with Harold, even though in some cases he built on other men's conjectures—'Thus diest thou' (IV. vii. 56), 'Let her come in' (IV. v. 152). 'In both these cases F makes a facile "correction" while evidently misconceiving the dramatist's intent. That distinguished scholars through a faith in F should persist in defending manifest error is occasion for despair.'[16]

It will be clear by now that Harold rarely followed the conventional route, and this is very evident in his *Hamlet*. While his edition appears to conform to the guidelines of the Arden Shakespeare, it breaks away from them repeatedly. Much longer than the other volumes, almost twice as long as Kenneth Muir's *King Lear* in the same series, it is intended for informed readers familiar with the history of *Hamlet* criticism and it pursues the topics that particularly interested the editor. Hence 150 pages of Longer Notes, an innovation in the Arden Shakespeare, marvels of compression and clarity. Hence, too, more than sixty pages on the texts, another ten on *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, and a Critical Introduction that solves many disputed problems and (for reasons of space?) ignores others. Harold concentrates on plot problems (delay, the central act, revenge, the final act), and has less to say about atmosphere, imagery, stage history, and the like. Challenging T. S. Eliot and others who dismiss the play as an 'artistic failure', Harold stresses its 'coherent dramatic design' (p. 127), Shakespeare's 'assured grasp [of] the many threads of his complicated plot' (p. 135), and gives less emphasis to the play's 'unrivalled imaginative power' (p. 123) and 'infinite suggestiveness' (p. 128). All that he says about the dramatic design is illuminating and I would not want one word unsaid: still, I wish that he could have found space to stand back from the play, as when he decides that 'what Hamlet shrinks from is not the act of vengeance but the whole burden of living' (p. 147).

The length of the textual introduction may have stunned some readers (compare the sixty pages in *Hamlet* with the five pages in Kenneth Muir's *King Lear*), though not all. At St Paul's School one set of sixth-formers

[16] *The Shakespeare Newsletter* (Winter, 1991), 48.

was fired by Harold's 'obvious fervour for the subject' and 'we were drawn into increasingly detailed debates about the text of *Hamlet*'. Tim Jotischky wrote to the editor about a textual crux (II. i. 65) and received back a characteristic 5-page reply (7 Nov. 1984) in which Harold defended his editorial thinking and ended 'I hope I have acquitted myself adequately . . . I am very glad that you and your set have in general found my edition helpful.'

Harold's sixty pages on text are modest compared with Dover Wilson's two volumes and, if they unbalance the Introduction, are what they are by deliberate choice. Harold believed 'that editing was the most valuable of all scholarly activities, for the edition of a text will stand for future ages long after the fogs of critical and uncritical opinion have dispersed' (18 June 1993). Or, on a more public occasion, 'the most important Shakespeare research in our century, to my mind, is that which has been devoted to his text'.[17]

One cannot deny that Harold had decided views. Yet his thinking about the text of *Hamlet* wobbled interestingly over a period of many years. Just one year before he signed his contract, in 1953, Alice Walker had published *Textual Problems of the First Folio*, where she examined six Folio plays and their 'copy'. It had been accepted for some time that these Folio texts were somehow related to both one or more Quarto texts and to a lost manuscript. Alice Walker argued that the F texts were printed from corrected Quarto copy—that is, from a printed text into which a scribe or editor had written words and lines from a manuscript. This hypothesis, with its far-reaching implications, could not be ignored by the editor of *Hamlet*. As soon as he signed his contract Harold grappled with it, and concluded that

> Dr. Walker's expert scrutiny of the two texts [Second Quarto and Folio *Hamlet*] has revealed, as we have seen, a number of resemblances between them. And when due allowance has been made for those which need not have the significance which she attaches to them, enough remain to make it probable that, in the preparation of F, some use was made of Q2 . . . But Dr. Walker's theory that the actual copy for the Folio *Hamlet* was a corrected Second Quarto must clearly be rejected.[18]

Greg endorsed this conclusion.

> Harold Jenkins, while recognizing the influence of Q2 on F, advances strong reasons for supposing that it cannot have served as copy. Indeed, the absence of

[17] Address to the Honours Convocation of Iona College, 16 Oct. 1983.

[18] 'The Relation Between the Second Quarto and the Folio Text of *Hamlet*' *Studies in Bibliography*, 7 (1955), 69–83.

> any general typographical resemblance between the Q and F texts is a difficulty in the way of Miss Walker's thoroughgoing theories in the case of other plays besides *Hamlet*.[19]

Nevertheless when the edition of *Hamlet* appeared in 1982, Harold had changed his mind.

> Although F relies upon an independent manuscript, it cannot have been printed directly and simply from it. What is often supposed and what I now accept as probable, is that it depends, though not necessarily directly, upon a copy of Q2 which had been collated with the manuscript and emended to conform with it. (p. 68)

He explained that 'the shift in my own position since I first wrote on the subject over twenty years ago, from the acceptance of an occasional to a conviction of a general dependence, has been determined by my increased familiarity with the minutiae of the texts and my consequent awareness of much more correspondence than had then been pointed out'. Yet ten years later, when the editors of *The Shakespeare Newsletter* invited Harold to initiate a new series 'in which distinguished Shakespearean scholars and critics reflect on their own work of a decade or so past', he confessed that

> the complex relation between Q2 and F remains the chief unsolved problem of the *Hamlet* texts . . . The question I found most troublesome was how and how far F actually used Q2, and my attempt to answer it still seems to me the least satisfactory thing in the edition.[20]

Most of the reviewers of Harold's *Hamlet* were very respectful, like Bowers, and even enthusiastic. But times were changing: in the twenty-eight years since he had signed his contract some of the premises of the New Bibliography were challenged, and this affected the reception of his edition. Some of his quite basic assumptions were now treated as 'obsolete'—for instance, his belief in conflated texts and in 'good' and 'bad' quartos. He described to me (11 Oct. 1992) his 'despair at finding that the achievements of scholarship should be denigrated by the likes of [a North American critic] . . . I do not think the fact of memorially constructed texts is a matter of opinion, least of all his', and added (19 Oct. 1992) 'Fashion has turned against Greg & bibliography, and people seem more concerned to be . . . on the bandwagon than to seek and hold on to truth . . . I am old-fashioned enough to believe that one opinion is not as good

[19] W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford, 1955), 333.
[20] *The Shakespeare Newsletter* (Winter, 1991), 47.

as another.' In 1988 he was outraged that a belated review of his *Hamlet* 'praised it with superlatives and proceeded to decline acceptance of almost everything it said' (5 Sept.). In the later 1980s and 1990s he felt 'marginalised' (21 Jan. 1994). 'Can you wonder . . . that I am disillusioned and despairing of modern developments in Shakespeare scholarship?' (16 March 1996). His despondency was not helped by the thought that he ought to defend the New Bibliography and himself when attacked—instead of which he knew that he was snatching at excuses 'to cover what is really indolence and cowardice, I fear—the accidie of old age' (21 Jan. 1994); 'I hate the thought of involving myself in controversies over *Hamlet*' (7 Oct. 1993). Although his mind was as sharp as ever, I think he worried that truth might suffer from the weakness of its champion's declining years.

To some extent all scholars who live to the age of ninety have to accept that they may be thought obsolete. Admired as he was by many loyal friends, Harold felt his growing isolation keenly. Yet at the same time he received some of the usual and some unusual honours, especially after the publication of his *Hamlet*. Before 1982 he had been a Visiting Professor at Duke University (1957–8) and Oslo University (1974), a member of the Council of the Malone Society (1955–89; President, 1989–2000) and of the Editorial Board of *Shakespeare Survey* (1964–72). After 1982 he became an honorary D.Litt. of Iona College, La Rochelle, NY (1983). He was the first Shakespeare specialist to receive the Shakespeare Prize of the FVS Foundation, Hamburg (Stiftung FVS zu Hamburg), in recognition of his work as general editor of the Arden Shakespeare and as editor of the Arden *Hamlet*, in 1986. This prize, awarded annually for outstanding contributions to European culture, was first won by Vaughan Williams (1937), and later by Graham Greene, Harold Pinter, Janet Baker, Paul Scofield, Peter Brook, Graham Sutherland, Philip Larkin, Tom Stoppard, David Hockney, Doris Lessing, Alec Guinness, etc., a list that almost anyone would be proud to join, as was Harold. I was present at a dinner given by the West German ambassador in London, where Harold said, in reply to the ambassador, 'If I may repeat just one thing that I said in Hamburg, it would be this. I was able to accept the prize with a little less sense of inadequacy in so far as I could regard it as given to me as one small representative of a great tradition of Shakespearian scholarship'—but of course we all knew that it had gone to the best man in his own right, not just to a representative. A festschrift appeared in 1987, *"Fanned and Winnowed Opinions" Shakespearean essays presented to Harold Jenkins*, ed. John W. Mahon and Thomas A. Pendleton, under the imprint of

Methuen the then publisher of the Arden Shakespeare (1987: the title refers to Harold's reading of *Hamlet* V. ii. 189). He became a Senior Fellow of this Academy in 1989, a Fellow of UCL in 1992, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1999.

Harold met his future wife, Gladys Puddifoot (born 1 July 1908) when they were undergraduates in London and they married in South Africa in 1939. Gladys, a history graduate (BA, King's College, London, 1930), later presented a thesis on 'Methods of influencing Public Opinion, 1593–1603' (MA Cum Laude, Witwatersrand, 1941), and published various articles, including 'Ways and Means in Elizabethan Propaganda' (propaganda, she explained, was not a new weapon, 'as if no one had ever heard of it until Dr. Goebbels discovered it hiding in a beer-cellar').[21] She taught History and English in South Africa, and also taught in a 'native school' some evenings. 'How I hate this country with its endless cruelty' she wrote in her diary (20 July 1943): yet she also loved (and painted) the landscapes, enjoyed tennis with Harold, and they led an active social life. In later years she devoted one day a week to study and research, with Harold's full support; I think she was his equal in many ways and the perfect partner for him—a charming and gentle person, yet with a mind of her own. She died in 1984 in a tragic road accident, a blow from which he never really recovered. Fortunately she lived long enough to read his tribute to her in the Preface to *Hamlet*. 'In daily conversation I have had available to me her intimate and wide-ranging knowledge of things Elizabethan and her wise, and sometimes sceptical, comments.' One obituarist, Elizabeth Brennan, rightly said that the marriage was at the centre of Harold's life. There were no children.

In his later years failing sight and hearing greatly restricted Harold's activities. He continued to go frequently to the theatre—he never lost his love of the theatre—and to lectures and meetings, even though he sometimes could not hear or see. He also suffered from a tremor in his hands ('my affliction' he called it), which made eating and drinking difficult: if he dropped a cup or a knife, always to his consternation, it was touching to observe how lovingly Gladys protected him. A stroke in September 1999 hastened the deterioration of his general health. In November he moved to a home in Ashtead, Surrey, where he died in his sleep on 4 January 2000. A memorial gathering followed on 26 July at the British Academy.

[21] *History*, 26 (1941–2), 105–14. See also her article, 'The Archpriest Controversy and the Printers, 1601–1603' in *The Library*, Fifth Series, 2 (1948), 180–6; and 'Thomas Winter's Confession', by Gladys and Harold Jenkins (*The Month*, N.S., 7 (1952), 83–8 and 290–5).

Elizabeth Brennan welcomed Harold's friends, Randolph Quirk (the Lord Quirk) a former student and colleague at UCL, gave the address, and other speakers included John Mahon and the present writer; Michael Pennington, a famous Hamlet, with Barbara Hardy, Nicola Bennett and Piers Plowright, read passages from the Arden text of the play, and Sandra Clark read some of Harold's Commentary notes.

* * *

What more can we say about his character and style? A student of his in South Africa (Ruth Nevo) reports that 'he would appear in the classroom, tall, fair, handsome, impeccably dressed, a touch dandified perhaps for the provincial tastes of those days but providing, with his, we felt, quite libertine choice of neckties matter in which his audience took the keenest interest. And he would launch into a lecture as faultlessly constructed and as gracefully articulated as was his appearance . . . I was convinced! And bewitched. And have remained so ever since.' At much the same time Gladys wrote in her diary (11 Nov. 1944) that a lady said to her 'There's your husband coming along with one of his gay ties' and Gladys noted 'Apparently he has rather a reputation for his vanity.' (I suspect that some of her diary entries were meant to be read by him.) A former student (Poh Sim Plowright) described Harold as 'very courteous, very elegant and slightly daunting' in 1963, and I would think that he made a similar first impression on many.

Younger colleagues often found Harold enormously encouraging and helpful. When one at Westfield moved house, Gladys and Harold, immaculate in his denim suit, turned up to lift and carry. Yet he did not hesitate to express his feelings when he disapproved—for example, when junior colleagues disappeared for several days each week. And he spoke out as well when others roused his anger or impatience, particularly doctors and politicians. 'When I replied to the doctor's enquiry about how I was by saying I was old and feeble, she responded by saying it was delightful to see me looking so well. This of course is meant to cheer one up . . . Doctors are humbugs when they can't take refuge in an easy remedy' (24 July 1996). He saw Kenneth Baker and Cecil Parkinson on television and disliked 'the extraordinary complacency and self-satisfaction of the politicians . . . Who, anyway, wants to see Parkinson sitting in his shirt-sleeves in the garden? . . . for its larger purpose of presenting oneself on television to a million or more viewers, it seems to me contemptible. Why must these people who hold forth on television insult us in this way?' (7 Oct. 1993).

Yet when one had got to know him one realised that, at heart, he had a gentle, sensitive nature, as well as charm and wit, closely related as these were to his verbal mastery. A letter from Harold—not infrequently I received one a week—was an occasion for rejoicing. The pithy style of his commentary on *Hamlet* also remains a joy, even 'his rather sharp tongue', because the style is the man and expresses perfectly what he wanted to say. 'Mercifully the difficulty of the problem is in excess of its importance' (p. 112); 'Hamlet is not exhorting them to give a straight answer; he is assuming they won't' (on II. ii. 278). He combined sensitivity with Johnsonian wisdom. The same was true of his conversation and his letters: he could sparkle or fume or commiserate, he was always equal to the occasion. 'I should like to experience the joys of vertical living again before the terminal horizontality' (from hospital, 24 April 1994); 'I have concluded a very outspoken correspondence with the Barnet Social Services Manager, who notably avoided my invitation to come and see me' (27 July 1994); '[very soon] I shall be 86, and no doubt carrying an increased number of aches and pains. But at least I am still carrying them and not they me' (9 July 1995); 'though we must always remember that *Hamlet* is a stage play, we must also remember, as the present generation doesn't want to, that *Hamlet* is much more than a stage play' (7 May 1995). Harold will be admired by future generations for his scholarship, his felicitous command of language, his wit, and his robust good sense.

* * *

The late Kathleen Tillotson, a colleague and also the wife of Geoffrey Tillotson, told me that in his adult years Harold changed very little. The Tillotsons and Jenkinses were good friends for decades: when Geoffrey Tillotson died, in 1969, Mrs Tillotson was invited to Edinburgh for long weekends, and went twice. I am indebted to her for two revealing anecdotes about Harold and Sisson. (*a*) Sisson asked Harold to give a course of lectures on 'The History of the English Language'. Harold demurred, saying that there were others who were better qualified to give such a course. Sisson looked at him reproachfully and said 'They'd *kill* it!' (A folder containing Harold's course on 'The History of the English Language' survives among his papers). (*b*) At a dinner to mark Sisson's retirement, in 1951, Sisson made a speech in which he touched briefly on each of his collected colleagues. In passing he referred to 'Harold Jenkins and his dreadful honesty,' which provoked spontaneous applause—no doubt

an allusion to Harold's uninhibited directness, his 'rather sharp tongue.' (*c*) I can add a third anecdote, as Harold himself told it to me. He had gone into Sidgwick and Jackson's and overheard the editor of the *Review of English Studies* say to a colleague 'Another book by the evergreen F. S. Boas! Now who do you think we can persuade to review it? Ah, Jenkins, would *you* like to review this new book by F. S. Boas?' It sounded as if they were scraping the bottom of the barrel, so Harold said crossly 'No, I wouldn't.' Later that day Sisson (the editor of *MLR*) offered Harold the same book to review. Harold said 'I've already been asked.' Sisson was surprised, as the book had only just arrived on his desk, and said 'O—— who are you reviewing it for?'

* * *

There are many delightful stories about Harold and his students. Here are two, contributed by Elizabeth MacGowan (Mrs Kenneth Palmer). (*a*) 'As I entered for my tutorial, I encountered a pink-faced young man making his exit. Harold looked slightly pained. "Do you know?" he said, "—that young man finds the Old English Riddles *funny*." "So do I!" I said. A long pause followed. "O . . . *Do* you?" A further pause. The tutorial began, but I fear that I had lost much ground in his estimation.' (*b*) 'It was the last tutorial before Finals, and it lasted for 1 hr. 40 mins. without let-up or intermission. At the end I rose to my feet, said "Thank you very much, Dr. Jenkins"—and walked briskly and firmly into the closed door of his office. The inevitable recoil landed me on the floor. Harold was appalled. He darted over, assisted me to my feet and, quite literally, dusted me down, murmuring "My dear Miss MacGowan—are you all right? I'm *so* sorry, dear me, I had no idea . . ." and so on. It was the only occasion I can remember when he was at a loss.'

* * *

In his will Harold left his books to Queen Mary and Westfield College. He asked his executors to 'seek and follow' my advice 'in any matters relating to my literary interests and copyrights concerning my papers and books'. With the agreement of his executors and of his niece (Mrs Catherine Warnock) I decided that Harold's literary papers should also go to Queen Mary and Westfield College—that is, his many drafts of lectures, articles, and books, both published and unpublished. Some of his best uncollected essays have now been issued in one volume by the Arden Shakespeare (Thomson Learning): *Structural Problems in Shakespeare* by Harold Jenkins, 2001.

Many of Harold's and Gladys's more personal papers remain with Mrs Warnock. They include several diaries. Harold's are quite short, covering (*a*) July 1934 (33 pages), and (*b*) January 1937 (11 pages): (*a*) deals chiefly with a camping holiday with a friend, (*b*) with his return to South Africa. There are some characteristic touches, e.g. on playing tennis: 'I wish one needn't feel it a personal affront to serve double-faults when playing in partnership with him.' Gladys's diaries are much more detailed; three survive, for the years 1942, 1943, 1944. From these we learn that Harold was keen on surfing, she on painting; that Harold was unhappy to be unable to contribute to the war-effort (23 Aug. 1942); that Gladys seems always to have gone to church on her own. Gladys's diaries give the impression of a very happy marriage of equals, confirmed by many later friends.[22]

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Fellow of the Academy

Note. Obituaries appeared in the *Guardian* (14 Jan. 2000, Sandra Clark); the *Daily Telegraph* (17 Jan. 2000); the *Independent* (19 Jan. 2000, Elizabeth M. Brennan); *The Times* (31 Jan. 2000); and the *Scotsman* (4 Feb. 2000, Alasdair Steven). In the *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 243 (Winter 1999/2000) many friends and colleagues contributed 'Reflections on Harold Jenkins' (pp. 93–107).

There is a List of Publications in '*Fanned and Winnowed Opinions*' (see p. 567, above), to the year 1987, and I know of only four later publications prior to Harold's death: the letter to *TLS* (above, p. 562), the two issues of *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 1991 and 1997 (above, pp. 564 n. 16, 560 n. 12), and '"To be, or not to be": Hamlet's Dilemma' (*Hamlet Studies*, 13 (1991), 8–24).

The letters from which I quote, if not otherwise attributed, were written to me. Mrs Warnock and her mother, Mrs Barbara Jenkins (Harold's sister-in-law) and Mrs Bess Plested (his cousin) gave me invaluable help and advice concerning the early history of the Jenkins family, and Harold's childhood and marriage. I am also greatly indebted to the following colleagues and friends: Dr Elizabeth Brennan (Mrs Eric Lowden); Mr Martin Butcher; Mr Basil Greenslade; Professor Barbara Hardy; Professor John Mahon; Professor Ruth Nevo; Mr and Mrs Kenneth Palmer; Mr and Mrs Piers Plowright (Dr Poh Sim Plowright); Professor Richard Proudfoot; Professor Randolph Quirk (the Lord Quirk); Mr and Mrs Graham Rumney; Miss Rosemary Anne Sisson; Professor Marvin Spevack; Professor Kathleen Tillotson; Professor George Walton Williams.

[22] Many of Harold's friends and colleagues were Fellows of the Academy, and I have consulted their Memoirs. For Fellows mentioned above, the Memoirs can be located as follows: Peter Alexander, *PBA* 66, 1980; John Butt, 52, 1966; R. W. Chambers, 30, 1944; W. W. Greg, 45, 1959; R. B. McKerrow, 26, 1940; Kenneth Muir, 97, 1997; A. W. Pollard, 31, 1945; Geoffrey Tillotson, 56, 1970; F. P. Wilson, 49, 1963; J. Dover Wilson, 59, 1973. An obituary notice for C. J. Sisson was published in *Modern Language Review*, 62 (1967), 382–4.