

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Brian Gibbons presents the idea of multiplicity as a way of understanding the form and style of Shakespeare's plays: composed of many different codes, woven together in a unique pattern for each play, rather than variations on the fixed notion of comedy or tragedy.

The method of this book is comparison, using an imaginative range of texts and a variety of new approaches, and there is lively discussion of modern stage performance. The study selects plays from different phases of Shakespeare's career. Comparison with major works by Spenser, Sidney and Marlowe is an important feature, while Shakespeare's re-use of his own previous work further demonstrates his artistic decision-making in action and suggests how he himself saw his own earlier plays and poems.

Far from reducing the plays to a formula, Brian Gibbons shows how criticism can make articulate what popular audiences have always instinctively known, that the plays' sheer abundance and variety is their strength. This is an original book: it is scholarly, yet straightforward and lively, and it engages an issue of central interest.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

SHAKESPEARE AND MULTIPLICITY

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

SHAKESPEARE AND MULTIPLICITY

BRIAN GIBBONS



Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
 Brian Gibbons
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
 Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
 Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521444064

© Cambridge University Press 1993

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
 permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1993

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

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Gibbons, Brian, 1938–

Shakespeare and multiplicity : Brian Gibbons.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-44406-3

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 – Criticism and interpretation.

I. Title.

PR2976.G48 1993

822.3'3 – dc20 92-42706 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-44406-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-03124-0 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
 accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
 this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
 or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel
 timetables, and other factual information given in this work is correct at
 the time of first printing but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee
 the accuracy of such information thereafter.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

To my best friend and collaborator

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page xi
1 Introduction	i
2 Fabled <i>Cymbeline</i>	18
3 A speechless dialect: interpreting the human body in Shakespeare's plays	48
4 Shakespeare's 'road of excess': <i>Titus Andronicus</i> , <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , <i>King Lear</i>	79
5 Always topical: <i>Measure for Measure</i>	117
6 Amorous fictions in <i>As You Like It</i>	153
7 Unstable Proteus: Marlowe and <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	182
8 Multiplicity	203
<i>Notes</i>	212
<i>Bibliography</i>	230
<i>Index</i>	238

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

The shape of this book reflects my fascination with the variety of interest Shakespeare offers, and the sheer newness of his work. I argue that we can demonstrate directly from the plays their author's critical intelligence at work, both in his eclectic use of the work of others and his re-use of his own previous writings. 'Shakespeare' in this sense is by no means an invisible poet.

Though it has been long in meditation, this book has finally come together quite quickly, and I am most grateful to two institutions, The Folger Shakespeare Library, where I held a Fellowship in 1989, and The Huntington Library, where I was Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in 1990, for giving me space to think at just the right time, and for the stimulus of good company. Speaking of good company, I count myself fortunate to work in a field where intellectual exchange can be so generous and agreeable. I owe a special personal debt to Andrew Gurr, who read and criticised a draft of the whole manuscript, an act of sheer generosity I will not forget. I am extremely grateful to Mick Hattaway and to the anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press for the spirit as well as the substance of their generous suggestions and shrewd criticism. The inadequacies and errors that remain are all mine. Leo Salinger, whose study *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* I find indispensable, kindly presented me with supplementary notes about Elizabethan views of Native Americans for chapter 2. As to published scholarship and criticism, I have done my best to record acknowledgements in notes and in the bibliography, and I apologise for any omissions.

I thank Sarah Stanton for the prudence and tolerance with

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-44406-4 - Shakespeare and Multiplicity
Brian Gibbons
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

which she has treated this project. For help in Zürich I am grateful to Vreni Bühler and Marianne Kaempf, and in Münster to Lydia Remke, Gabriele Sieweke and Oliver Rachner.

A version of chapter 2 was originally a lecture delivered in 1980, subsequently published in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch-West* 1987. Chapter 6 was published in *Fann'd and Winnowed Opinions, Essays Presented to Harold Jenkins*, ed. John W. Mahon and Thomas Pendleton (Methuen, London, 1987). Material in chapter 5 was first published in my article in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, spring 1991. I extend my thanks to the editors and publishers concerned for permission to reprint.