

The sexappeal of *Complete Works*

My paper will discuss the paratext (Genette) of the phenomenon of *Complete works*, *Opera omnia*, *Gesammelte Werke*, *Verzamelde werken*, *Oeuvres complètes* etc. as they fixate texts in a special way. Via a short historical overview based on a corpus of works that has been published as *Complete Works* etc. the meaning(s), function(s) and/or impact of this form of publishing is investigated. The emphasis lies on *Complete Works* of literary authors.

Questions arise as to which authors are worthwhile to get their *Complete Works* published, how do *Complete Works* differ from Collected Works, when are the *Complete Works* published (during their lifetime and/ or after their death), how are these projects financed (by a publishing house, by friends, by institutions), who is editing these *Complete Works* (friends, publisher, editorial board, university scholars), how are they reviewed, what is the intended audience, who is buying them, etc. Special attention is given to the material form the *Complete Works* has in relation to their content and function. It is clear that the added value for the author or the publisher differs from the added value *Complete Works* have for literary critics, the buying public or literary historians. In one case the added value symbolizes the canonization of the author, in another cases it is to impress buyers or to reflect grandeur and splendor.

The Complete Works (Volledige werken, Alle de werken, De werken) of the Dutch play writer and poet Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679) – the Dutch Shakespeare – will be taken as an example to discuss these different questions. To my knowledge Vondel is the author who has had in The Netherlands the most editions of his Complete Works. The last one, in 10 volumes, dates from 1927-1940.