At one time Shakespeare scholars and critics could with justice be accused of ignoring the practical theatre. Stories were told of their sitting in the stalls at performances of Shakespeare’s plays with the book on their laps, more concerned to spot divergences from the true, authentic text than to immerse themselves in the dramatic situation. I suspect that such stories were often exaggerated. A.C. Bradley, the author of Shakespearean Tragedy, published in 1904, has often been accused of reading the plays in an untheatrical way; yet he was a keen theatregoer, and declares in the introduction to his great book that his “one object” is “to increase our understanding of these works as dramas”, and that true lovers of Shakespeare aim to “read a play more or less as if they were actors who had to study all the parts”. Edward Dowden, whose Shakspere: His Mind and Art, first published in 1875, had a longer life in print than most other books of literary criticism, is also often thought of as a critic who was more concerned with literary than with theatrical values: yet when I went through some of his papers in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, I found among them a notebook in which he had made detailed notes during a performance by Beerbohm Tree of Hamlet.

Still, it is true that many earlier critics, even if they were interested in the theatre, tended to make no connexion between it and their academic work. The classic case is that of G. Wilson Knight. Throughout his long life he had an extremely lively interest in the theatre. He directed plays and acted in them. He played most of the leading male roles in Shakespeare — Romeo, Shylock, Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Macbeth, Timon, Caliban — and even in his mid-eighties went on giving dramatic recitals with a vocal sonority that fascinatingly took his audience back to the theatrical speech habits of the early years of the century. Knight wrote about the theatre, too, most notably in his several-times revised book Principles of Shakespearian Production (1936, etc.); yet you could read most of his books of Shakespeare criticism — The Imperial Theme, The Wheel of Fire, The Shakespearian Tempest — with no sense that he thought about the plays in
theatrical terms. The compartmentalization appears to have operated in the other direction, too: I was talking to him once about the performances of Hamlet that he gave at the Westminster Theatre before the war. This was after he had written a famous essay on the play called "The Embassy of Death" (The Wheel of Fire, 1930) in which he presented Hamlet as a life-denying "dark force" in the world of the play, and Claudius as a "typical kindly uncle". I asked him if he had attempted to project the views of the play put forward in his essay while enacting the role. "O, no", he replied, "I forgot all about that".

Of course, it is only fair to say that there was a time when the plays performed under Shakespeare's name in our leading theatres were so far distant from the scripts as printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, and as re-printed in scholarly editions of the works, that anyone with a serious interest in Shakespeare could be forgiven for ignoring the theatre. In the Romantic period, Charles Lamb considered King Lear to be unactable, and William Hazlitt — one of the best of all theatre critics — nevertheless declared that it was better to read Shakespeare than to see his plays performed. Their criticisms fall into perspective if we remember that when they saw King Lear, what they saw was not Shakespeare's play but an altered version of the adaptation made in the Restoration period by Nahum Tate; a version which ends with King Lear, Kent, and Gloucester going into peaceful retirement, and with wedding bells for Edgar and Cordelia. If, on the other hand, they went to see Edmund Kean play Richard II, they might have seen a version of that play in which Richard's Queen mourned over his body in the words that Shakespeare wrote for King Lear grieving over the death of Cordelia, interspersed with a few lines from Titus Andronicus. A century later, at the time that A.C. Bradley was writing Shakespearean Tragedy, the old adaptations had at last been abandoned, but the plays were still severely shortened and altered in other ways. The greatest actor of the age, Henry Irving, omitted almost half of King Lear and of Cymbeline, and not much less of Hamlet — in which he scored one of his greatest successes; when he played Shylock, he sometimes omitted the entire last act of The Merchant of Venice (in which, of course, Shylock does not appear); and he omitted hundreds of lines from relatively short plays, such as Macbeth and Twelfth Night. "In a true republic of

art”, wrote Bernard Shaw, “Sir Henry Irving would ere this have expiated his acting versions on the scaffold”.

Nowadays all this has changed — more or less. Cuts are often made, radical adaptations — John Barton’s of King John, Trevor Nunn’s of The Comedy of Errors — the R.S.C. production that won the Society of West End Theatre Managers’ award for the best musical of the year in 1977 — still occasionally turn up, but by and large the Royal Shakespeare Company, and, occasionally, the National Theatre, give us full texts, seriously interpreted. This is partly, of course, because the academy has infiltrated into the theatre; most British directors nowadays are university trained; the R.S.C. particularly has been greatly influenced by George Rylands, and a different kind of influence came from Cambridge, too: Peter Hall wrote in his Diaries on the day of F.R. Leavis’s death, “All the textual seriousness at the basis of Trevor [Nunn]'s work and of mine comes from Leavis, and there is a vast band of us. Comical to think that Leavis hated the theatre and never went to it. He has had more influence on the contemporary theatre than any other critic”. This is an example of the kind of influence that is very difficult to assess, but no less important for that. It forms a link between the Cambridge school of criticism, the New Criticism of the 1930s, and the emphasis on “exploring the text” associated especially with the work of the Cambridge-trained John Barton, whom Peter Hall imported into the Royal Shakespeare Company with the particular aim of improving the Company’s verse speaking. And the National Theatre has had John Russell Brown pursuing a double career as University professor and dramaturg — and, on occasion, associate director.

The climate, then, has drastically changed, and this has had its effect on the writings of critics and scholars. Academics nowadays ignore the theatre at their peril; many of them take a positively unhealthy interest in it. American critics in general are somewhat behind British ones in this respect, though American study of the history of the British theatre far surpasses our own; the disciplines remain more compartmentalized on the other side of the Atlantic. Problems still remain, but the vocabulary and techniques of literary criticism are more sophisticated than those of theatrical

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3 Peter Hall, Diaries (1983), entry for 18 April 1978.
criticism; and Shakespeare’s plays are the product of so very highly developed a degree of literary as well as theatrical art, that, except for the semioticians, it is very tempting to talk of them still in mainly literary terms.

It is partly the result of the development of departments of drama in our more forward-looking universities (the provincial ones) that academics have developed guilt complexes about the theatre. What I am now beginning to wonder is whether it is time for us to attempt to inculcate a few similar complexes into the world of theatre: whether, that is to say, the tables have not been turned: the theatre could once fairly accuse the academy of taking too little notice of it; has the time come for the academy to complain that it is unfairly ignored by the theatre? I do not wish to attack the theatre for being too theatrical, but I should like to consider some ways in which scholarship and criticism are at present interacting with the world of Shakespeare production. Both criticism and scholarship have to look backwards in their attempts to put the present into meaningful contact with the past. Theatre belongs more obviously to the present; it must be effective in the here and now. Only occasionally dare it offer historical reconstructions — as, for example, William Poel did of Elizabethan theatrical conditions, or as has, from time to time, been done with productions of Shakespeare’s plays in a conjectural simulation of Elizabethan pronunciation — and then only in the knowledge that audiences would be made up largely of specialists, and might be very thin on the ground. Mainstream theatre cannot hope for audiences of an antiquarian bent, willing to suspend judgment, and to endure tedium, in the interests of historicity.

Still, the difference between scholars and critics, on the one hand, and theatre folk, on the other, is not as great as might at first appear. Just as scholars and critics devote much of their energy to the study of texts from the past, so directors and actors, too, frequently and unselfconsciously employ scripts written long ago in the attempt to provide entertainment for today’s audiences. From the time of the Restoration, at least, the repertory of the English theatre has consistently drawn upon plays of earlier generations, whether adapted or not. In doing so, it has only with difficulty avoided employing methods that are related in some degree to the concerns of scholarship and criticism. Theatre is a constantly changing art. As soon as you engage with plays of the
past (even, indeed, with plays belonging to a different segment of
the present from your own) you are faced with the need, not
simply to put on the play as written, but either to adapt the play to
your particular circumstances, or to adapt your circumstances to
the play. It is, I suppose, a recognition of this fact which caused
the planners of the National Theatre in London to design three
separate auditoria — the Olivier, the Lyttelton, and the Cottesloe
— in order to go some way towards coping with the varying
demands of plays of different periods. Indeed, during the past
forty years or so there has been a revolution in theatre design
deriving largely from a recognition on the part of theatre designers
that their buildings must be adaptable to a wide variety of plays —
a very different attitude of mind from that of earlier generations of
theatre designers, whose basic philosophy seems to have been that
they knew perfectly well how to design theatres, and that any plays
misguidedly written in a style unsuited to these theatres must be
adapted to the buildings, however much they lost in the process.

To appreciate this point you need only compare the Shakespeare
Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon with the theatre in the
Canadian Stratford, in Ontario. Although the English one, opened
in 1932, was specifically intended for the performance of
Shakespeare's plays, its design is firmly rooted in the period of its
construction: the dominant influences are those of the three-act,
representational dramas popular at the time, combined with the
cinema. It was built with a proscenium arch, a front curtain, an
orchestra pit in front of the stage, and seating which placed
spectators staring at the stage as if it were a cinema screen. In the
past twenty or so years the front curtain and the orchestra pit have
been abolished, the stage has been built out into the auditorium,
and the circle and balcony have been rounded off forwards so as
to increase intimacy of contact between actors and audience: but
nothing can be done about the proscenium arch; if it were
removed, the whole theatre would fall down. The Canadian
theatre, opened twenty-five years later, in 1957, was far more
obviously conceived with the idea that Shakespeare's plays might
profit from being performed in a building that approximates in at
least some respects to the theatres in which they were originally
given: it has a thrust stage, no front curtain, a built-in upper level,
and seating that places spectators to the sides as well as in front of
the stage. It was a revolutionary building: since it opened, the
design of new English theatres — such as those at Chichester,
Nottingham, Leicester, and elsewhere — has acknowledged that the performance of a variety of plays of different periods and styles demands theatre buildings which are flexible in design. This is a symptom of one area, at least, in which we may claim to have made some kind of progress: an increased historical consciousness, an awareness of the demands of the past and, related to this, of the rewards that the present may reap by drawing on its historical heritage.

There are under way at present two exceptionally determined attempts to harness the services of scholarship to the practical theatre: one in England, the other in America. Each centres on an effort to reconstruct one of the theatres in which Shakespeare’s plays were first performed. In England the aim is to rebuild, as close as possible to its original site on Bankside, the Globe Theatre that was put up by the Lord Chamberlain’s — later the King’s — Men in 1598 and in which some of Shakespeare’s greatest plays were first performed. The leading spirit behind this is an actor, Sam Wanamaker, who, though he once played Iago, to Paul Robeson’s Othello, at Stratford-upon-Avon, has been associated mainly with modern plays and films. In Detroit, on the other hand, the theatre to be reconstructed is the second Globe, the one that replaced the first theatre of this name after it had been burnt down during a performance of Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *All is True* (*Henry VIII*), in 1613. At present the more flourishing enterprise is the English one, and I shall concentrate on this, though some of what I shall say is applicable to both.

It would be wrong to give the impression that these endeavours are totally original. The realization that plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries might benefit from performance in theatrical conditions related more closely to those for which they were written rather than to those prevailing at the time of the performance goes back for well over a century. The key figure is William Poel, an eccentric, semi-professional director and actor who, in 1881, put on a performance of the first, “bad” quarto of Hamlet, with himself as Hamlet, using Elizabethan costumes and performing the play with neither interval nor scenery. He continued with his missionary endeavours for over fifty years, during which he had some notable successes. Indirectly, his impact upon twentieth-century Shakespeare production has been incalculably great, but his own productions remained in the amateur domain, mainly because of an egocentric eccentricity which caused his practice
often to run counter to his principles. He sought some degree of authenticity in staging methods: for example, he did not use representational scenery, he dressed his performers in Elizabethan costume, and even sometimes had pseudo-Elizabethan spectators smoking clay pipes and seated on the stage; but his pseudo-Elizabethan stages were generally set up within modern theatre buildings, and he bowdlerized, re-arranged, and cut Shakespeare's text unmercifully. A genuinely Elizabethan performance would, of course, employ boy actors for the female roles. Poel can, perhaps, be forgiven for not going to this extreme. After all, Elizabethan boy actors were highly trained professionals such as were not available to Poel. But it is less understandable that he should have gone to the opposite extreme of casting women in men's roles. His 1912 production of *Troilus and Cressida* is of historic importance because it is the first fully acted English production of that play since Shakespeare's own time; but respect for this achievement must be qualified when we learn that he cast women in several of the male roles, including Aeneas, Paris, and Thersites. His excuse was that "a man would be sure to over-act". The flavour of Poel's personal oddity is well conveyed by Robert Speaight's account of how Bridges-Adams — who was to become one of Poel's most fervent disciples — first met the master:

He found Poel wrapped in a grey muffler, nibbling at a biscuit and sipping a glass of milk. In front of him a lady, shimmering with sequins and no longer in her first youth, was in an attitude of visible distress. Poel's voice was raised in querulous criticism: "I am disappointed", he said, "very disappointed indeed. Of all Shakespeare's heroes Valentine is one of the most romantic, one of the most virile. I have chosen you out of all London for this part, but so far you have shown me no virility whatsoever".

It is no doubt because of this kind of eccentric behaviour that Poel himself did not become a leading figure in the professional theatre. He has nevertheless exerted an immense influence. When he first appeared on the scene Shakespeare production was in its spectacular Victorian heyday, and for another thirty or so years this tradition remained the dominant one, especially in the productions of Henry Irving and Beerbohm Tree. But gradually Poel's disciples carried his ideas into the professional theatre. The

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key figure has undoubtedly been Harley Granville-Barker, but his principal achievement was not to reconstruct Elizabethan-style performances with greater visual and textual fidelity, and a more effective professionalism, than Poel, but to show how Poel’s theatrical scholarship could interact with the mainstream theatrical tradition to provide performances of Shakespeare’s plays that were truer to Shakespeare’s vision than any given since the Restoration while continuing to use many of the techniques and resources of modern theatre. Granville-Barker was not a reconstructionist, but a mediator. Both in his published Prefaces to a number of Shakespeare’s plays and in his own all-too-rare productions, he showed that investigation of Shakespeare’s plays in the light of the conditions prevailing when they were written can be valuable even to directors who do not aim to reproduce those conditions. His emphasis on the need for such Elizabethan qualities as speed, continuity of action, fluidity of location, and responsiveness to the varying styles of the language has influenced productions as diverse, and as superficially un-Elizabethan, as those of Tyrone Guthrie, Peter Brook, and many other modern directors.

This has been all to the good; but it has not resulted in the creation of a dramatic laboratory which would take Poel’s experiments to their logical conclusion, permitting us to test Shakespeare’s scripts, in full, in theatrical conditions resembling those in which they were first performed. Theatre scholarship has greatly advanced since the time of Poel and Granville-Barker. About some matters we know more than they did; about others, we have a more healthy state of agnosticism. There have been attempts to build theatres on the Elizabethan model, mostly outside England: most successfully, perhaps, in Ashland, Oregon, and also in Vermont, in Texas, and in Perth, Australia. But a need continues to be felt for a building which will come as close as possible to the theatres of Shakespeare’s day; and it is a need that unites scholars and men of the theatre. The theatre has come to realize that unless a reconstructed theatre has a high measure of scholarly authenticity, it will be merely a gimmick, a setting like any other; and the scholars know that a theatre without performers is dead: there is little point in attempting a reconstruction unless the theatre will be peopled by actors to put its equipment, its acoustics, its back-stage facilities, its balconies, stage doors, trap-doors, thunder-runs and music-room to the test, and unless it
is peopled, too, with an audience that can test its side of the facilities — the size of the seats, the height of the balcony ceilings, the sight-lines — as well as respond to and encourage the actors.

It is perhaps because of the stimulus provided by reconstruction plans that research into theatre construction is at present in a flourishing state, particularly in Canada. This produces a kind of scholarship which is remarkably unliterary in some of its manifestations. The scholar most deeply involved with research into Shakespeare’s theatre who is also involved with Wanamaker’s Globe project is John Orrell of the University of Alberta. He has written a fascinating book, *The Quest for Shakespeare’s Globe* (Cambridge, 1983) and, of course, though he is himself a Professor of English, the research methods that he employs are largely those of the historian of architecture. Some of his conclusions are surprising; for example, he shows that the Globe could hold more than 3,000 spectators — well over twice as many as the Olivier Theatre or the Barbican. He attempts, too, to investigate the kind of seating that was offered to these spectators, and shows that at a royal performance which took place in 1605 in the hall of Christ Church, Oxford, members of the audience were allowed eighteen inches each from side to side, and that most of them had to sit on benches six inches deep and eighteen inches from the bench in front. He estimates that similar conditions obtained at the Globe, and deduces, very reasonably, not merely that Elizabethans and Jacobians were smaller than we are, but also “that they were prepared to put up with much discomfort in the theatre” (p. 129).

The making of plans to reconstruct theatres means that the planners must make decisions which, once put into practice, are in most cases irreversible, and this has induced in those concerned with research on these buildings a sense of urgency not commonly associated with academic endeavour. A very simple basic factor is size. Until a few years ago, the standard view was that the Globe was about 80 feet in diameter. Now, John Orrell and other leading scholars, using newly-developed methods of research, have decided that it was probably 100 feet, and this is the measurement to be used for the reconstructions. Important, too, is the question of orientation. Being open to the air, the theatre was influenced by natural light and by the weather far more than if it had been an enclosed building. The standard opinion is that it faced about 48° east of north. Elaborate tests conducted with the aid of a three-
dimensional model of the Globe, a large lamp, and a revolving and
tilting draughtsman’s table, have shown that this means that
during the hours of the afternoon in which performances were
given, the whole of the stage would be in shade, even when the sun
was highest in the sky; hence Hamlet would never have been “too
much in the sun”, though some of the spectators might have been.
The quality and direction of the light would be important to the
performance, so the original orientation will be preserved.

The result of these and of other investigations will be, if all goes
well, to produce a kind of dramatic laboratory: a building which
will be of interest in itself — and which can be used as museum —
but also, and primarily (the sponsors hope) as a place in which
actors and audiences will collaborate in presenting and experienc-
ing Shakespeare’s and his contemporaries’ plays in conditions
approximating as far as scholarship can ascertain to those in
which they were first given. It is an ambitious enterprise; the
question that hangs over it is whether it will result in mere
theatrical antiquarianism or whether the search for historical
authenticity can be wedded to an immediacy of theatrical appeal
which will bring the plays to the same kind of vivid life for modern
theatre-goers that they had for their first spectators. Will these
performances, like William Poel’s, appeal only to the historically
minded, or will productions in Wanamaker’s Globe achieve the
kind of success that the greatest directors of the modern theatre
have achieved in their unhistorical productions? Certain produc-
tions at the National Theatre — such as Peter Hall’s of Macbeth
and Othello — and elsewhere which have aimed at textual fullness
and an Elizabethan style might seem to offer little cause for hope;
but even if the productions are not widely successful, they may
teach us something which can be applied to different kinds of
interpretation, and it may be that some theatrical genius will be
able to fuse ancient and modern in the theatre in the same way
that the most successful practitioners of the early music movement
have done in their sphere.

Research into Elizabethan theatre building is complemented by
research into the conventions adopted by the dramatists who
wrote for them. Such research will have an obvious practical
utility in historically reconstructed performances. For example,
Alan Dessen, in his recent book Elizabethan Stage Conventions
and Modern Interpreters (Cambridge, 1984), has a chapter
investigating the conventions of presenting scenes supposed to
take place in darkness. In the modern theatre, these scenes are usually presented in, at least, subdued lighting; a performance with claims to authenticity would be obliged to present them in full light, and Dessen gives good reasons for supposing that observance of this convention might add to the play's meaning rather than detract from it.

It is particularly valuable for us to be reminded of the very different conventions obtaining in the non-illusionistic, open-air theatres of Shakespeare's time at a period such as ours when a kind of neo-Victorian illusionism and reliance on spectacle is particularly prevalent. When Shakespeare's plays first appeared in print they included no indications about where scenes were supposed to take place. Such indications—a room in the palace, a street, Macbeth's castle, another part of the forest, and so on—were imposed on the text by, mostly, eighteenth-century editors. In recent times, editors have begun to abandon these directions. Both scholars and critics have emphasised that the plays took place on a stage, that Shakespeare was highly conscious as he wrote of the medium of his art, and that he manipulated the reactions of his spectators partly by making them, too, conscious of the conventional nature of the experience they were undergoing. Many books and articles have concerned themselves with what has come to be called the metatheatrical aspect of Shakespeare's art, with his "idea of the play". Yet, paradoxically, while editors have been stripping away directions which imply that the action occurs in real places, theatre directors have been tending to return to a more representational kind of setting. Undoubtedly one influence here has been the television. I do not mean simply the expectations of naturalism aroused by much television comedy and drama; I mean specifically the style of presentation adopted for almost all the plays in the B.B.C. television Shakespeare series. With a few exceptions (notably Jane Howell's productions of the early histories) the settings and even the style of acting have suggested actuality rather than generality, realism rather than symbolism. And it is during the years in which these productions have been shown that the Royal Shakespeare Company has moved from a somewhat austere, non-representational style—such as may be exampled by Trevor Nunn's Other Place production of Macbeth—to a style of detailed pictorialism.

such as may be exampled by Trevor Nunn's no less successful Edwardian-style *All's Well That Ends Well*, with its highly convincing representation of a gentlemen's club, an army field station, and a continental estaminet, and with its bevies of serving maids and convincing off-stage sounds of motor-cars and railway trains.

To say that some present-day productions operate in a manner that is diametrically opposed to the plays' original style of production is not, of course, to deny that such productions may be triumphantly successful in their own way. They may tell us something about Shakespeare's plays, if only that these plays are infinitely tolerant of adaptation. But, conversely, to say that neo-realistic productions can be highly successful is not to deny either the validity of research into Elizabethan staging methods, or the fact that such research may provide insights into the plays' structure and technique which may be valuably applied to staging methods quite different from those that will, and should, prevail in the reconstructed Globe.

Let us take an example from *As You Like It*. When I was editing *As You Like It* for the Oxford edition of the complete works, I puzzled, as many before me had puzzled, over the staging problems posed by the banquet set out for the Duke in Act Two, Scene Five. The scene ends with the statement "His banquet is prepared", but before he comes on to eat it, there occurs the short scene in which old Adam appears with Orlando in desperate need of food: "O, I die for food", he exclaims, and Orlando declares "If this uncouth forest yield anything savage, I will either be food for it or bring it for food for thee". Agnes Latham has an Appendix in her new Arden edition (1975) arguing "that the attendants unobtrusively remove the feast as part of their comings and goings in the background at the end of scene v, and bring it on again at the beginning of scene vii" (p. 133), but, of course, this leaves unanswered the question of why, in that case, it should have been introduced in Scene Five at all; Richard Knowles, in his New Variorum edition (New York, 1977), also discusses the subject, concluding "The early setting of the table seems to me thoroughly puzzling; it is totally unnecessary, for the banquet could have been carried on, as banquets usually were, at the beginning of scene 7" (p. 109). Directors, too, have been puzzled by the problem; thus, in a Stratford, Ontario, production Robin Phillips re-arranged the order of the scenes so that the Orlando-Adam one
preceded the other two, while at the R.S.C. Terry Hands cut the references to the banquet in Scene Five. My own conclusion in editing the play was that the problem is one that exists only in the light of our conditioning to the ways of the modern theatre: that for the banquet to be set up at the end of Scene Five, and to remain on stage in full view of the audience while Adam bemoans his starving condition, and while Orlando declares his determination to find food, would make a strong ironic point in a nonillusionist theatre. Consequently, I did not add a direction for the removal of the food at the end of Scene Five, and I was greatly encouraged when I read Alan Dessen’s book to find that he, too, regards this as “a clear example of the kind of simultaneous staging often found in earlier English drama”6.

I cite this example particularly because I think that the same theoretical point could be made by the same means even in a production which was not rigorously “authentic”; indeed, even one which introduced live animals into the wood and presented the banquet as a kind of Glyndebourne picnic could still conceivably have Adam and Orlando play their scene in ironic unawareness of its presence. Stylization, in other words, is not incompatible with modern, even with spectacular, staging techniques. Few Shakespeare productions of recent years have matched the R.S.C.’s 1984 Richard III for sheer splendour of setting, and for marvellously vigorous theatricalism; but that is a production in which four elaborate and large tombs were present on stage throughout the battle of Bosworth Field. The splendour of the ecclesiastical settings in which the often sordid action was played out made a critical point, and one in which, I take it, the director was trying to make concrete for us some aspects of the play’s verbal imagery. In this case, at least, splendour of setting was not to be equated with naturalism. Peter Hall’s more recent production of Coriolanus at the National Theatre offers another illustration. In it the stage was dominated throughout the action by a pair of gates resembling those of the Roman Pantheon: an historical image, but also a timeless one, because, of course, the gates are still there; and as the audience assembled before the performance began, they heard air-raid sirens, and saw people

6 Ibid., p. 102; see also B. Beckerman, Shakespeare at the Globe (New York, 1962), p. 159.
bearing placards demanding corn — so the setting simultaneously evoked, for some spectators, at least, three periods — that in which the play is set, that in which it was written, and the present.

I have mentioned one or two aspects of the editor’s function. The editor’s task is, by and large, to present Shakespeare’s dialogue in the form in which it would have been made available to the actors in Shakespeare’s own company: he must determine the text in terms of the theatre for which it was written. What happens to it after this is, strictly speaking, none of his business. He will, if he has any theatrical sense, acknowledge that the theatre is unlikely to present the texts exactly as he conceives that they were originally given. He is likely, himself, to be at heart a purist. After all, if he spends countless hours worrying over the minutiae of what Shakespeare wrote, it is understandable that he should feel discouraged if the theatre blithely cuts, rearranges, and rewrites the texts that he has conscientiously laboured over. But if he looks around, he must acknowledge that the most successful Shakespeare productions of our time are not necessarily those that employ full, unaltered texts. Trevor Nunn’s Other Place Macbeth, greatly cut and to some extent adapted, was far more successful (artistically as well as popularly) than Peter Hall’s far purer National Theatre version. A production like Peter Brook’s of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, which manages to overturn received theatrical ideas about the play while altering scarcely a word of the text, is the exception rather than the rule. Modern criticism, in some of its manifestations, denies the sanctity of the authorial text. Nevertheless, many theatre directors do acknowledge some degree of duty to submit themselves to the challenge of making Shakespeare’s texts work in terms of the modern theatre, rather than simply using these texts as quarries of raw materials for their creativity; and the reconstruction of the Globe will have been pointless if those who work in it follow William Poel’s example in bending the text to their own ends.

There may, then, be some cause for hope that theatre directors will take an interest in putting some of the findings of textual scholarship to the test of practical theatrical realization. In the last twenty or so years, for example, scholars have increasingly come to accept that the surviving texts of some of Shakespeare’s plays demonstrate that he revised these plays after the initial stage of composition. In 1964, Nevill Coghill argued that the Folio text of
Othello represents a revised version of that found in the quarto. At around the same time, E.A.J. Honigmann independently argued the same case, while also suggesting that the same is true of Troilus and Cressida and Hamlet. Not everyone believed Coghill and Honigmann, but interest in their findings has been greatly revived in more recent years by the very strong case made by a number of scholars for the proposition that the 1608 quarto of King Lear represents, not a badly reported text of the Folio version, but Shakespeare's first completed version of the play which he revised a few years later. Not only textual scholars, but also critics concerned with what Shakespeare actually wrote, could find great interest in productions of the plays which based themselves on one or other alternative text rather than on a conflation of the two. Of course, directors cannot reasonably be expected to provide such productions until scholars provide them with edited texts of the alternative version, which I hope we shall do before long.

There is one case in which we know for certain that Shakespeare effected a revision against his will, as the result of official action. It required only the substitution of one name for another. It would be perfectly easy to restore the original name, and to do so might well restore to the play a set of historical resonances which were lost as the result of censorship. People might be far more willing to restore the original name if Shakespeare had not gone on to write several more plays featuring the same character, and if that character had not become one of the most famous in dramatic literature; still, perhaps it is not too much to hope that one day, somewhere, there might at least be an experimental production of the first Part of Henry IV starring Sir John Oldcastle in place of Sir John Falstaff. On a less exalted level the recent Oxford Shakespeare edition of Henry V acts on the editor's belief that Shakespeare, having wavered in his first draft of the play about whether to make the Dauphin of France present at the Battle of Agincourt (as he is in the Folio text) finally decided to put the

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7 Nevill Coghill, Shakespeare's Professional Skills (Cambridge, 1964), chapter vii, "Revision after Performance".
Duke of Bourbon there in his place (as he is in the generally "bad" quarto text, and as is historically accurate)\textsuperscript{10}. This text is, of course, readily available, and a director who followed it would give pleasure to a few people who recognised the departure from tradition, while doing no harm to those who did not.

On the whole, most directors simply follow the text that, for whatever reason, they have decided to use, while departing from it for their own practical or interpretative reasons. Some of them lack the confidence to meddle in textual matters; but there would be no lack of offers of help for any who expressed an interest. I was amused to see that the only recent R.S.C. programme to acknowledge expert assistance with the text of the play was for James Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

I have been concerned almost entirely with scholarly rather than critical issues, partly because every production is to some extent an exercise in practical criticism, and partly because of the corollary that it is often difficult to distinguish between critical emphases that emanate from the director and those suggested by written criticism. A conspicuous example in recent years was John Barton's 1980 production of *Hamlet*, a production that made much of the play's theatrical imagery — setting the action, for example, on a stage within the main stage, and placing above it a rehearsal lamp; the programme for the production carried a note on the play stressing its theatrical imagery by a critic who has written a book called *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* and who, as it happens, is married to the director of this production. Sometimes directors can be seen to be consciously making use of scholarly information. One of the most influential articles written about *Cymbeline* is a piece by Emrys Jones in which he stresses the relevance to the play of James I's pride in his efforts to achieve national unity, and suggests that "The main, if not the only, attraction of Cymbeline's reign" to Shakespeare as the subject of a play was that while Cymbeline "was king of Britain, Christ was born. ... When, towards the end of the play, therefore, Cymbeline emphatically announces: 'Well, / My peace we will begin...', the audience must have made a complex identification: the peace is both the peace of the world at the time of Christ's birth, in which Britain participates, and also its attempted re-creation at the very

time of the play's performance, with Jacobus Pacificus ... on the throne". While Shakespeare's audience may have made this identification, it is unlikely that a modern audience will do so, particularly since there is, understandably, no reference in the play itself to either the birth of Christ or to James I. The director of a Stratford production a few years ago made a brave attempt to suggest something of all this by causing an immense halo to appear above the characters at the very end of the play (whose last word is "peace"); but I doubt if it meant much to spectators who had not read Emrys Jones's essay.

There is, however, a moment in a recent production of Shakespeare which may provide an apt concluding example of scholarship and criticism coming together to influence a theatre production. In the last act of Love's Labour's Lost, a messenger brings news to the Princess of France that her father is dead. This is his only function in the play, and he leaves the stage shortly after delivering his message. His name is Marcadé. Until recently it has been assumed that this name has no particular significance, but in articles written in 1978 and 1979, two scholars — Anne Barton and J.M. Nosworthy — published their independent findings that the name "Marcadé" for the messenger of death is a corruption of the name Mercury — the messenger of the gods, and also the god responsible for conducting souls to the underworld — deriving from a play called The Cobbler's Prophecy by Robert Wilson. There is no mention of Mercury in the text of Love's Labour's Lost at the point at which Marcadé delivers his message; but at the very end of the play, after the songs of the owl and the cuckoo, Don Armado says "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo. You that way, we this way". It is an enigmatic utterance; the "songs of Apollo" can easily enough be understood as the songs that form the final entertainment of the play: but what are "The words of Mercury"? Well, if Marcadé is truly a form of Mercury, this could be taken as an allusion to the French messenger whose harsh message of the King's death has changed the play's mood from festivity to sobriety. So I was interested to see that in Barry Kyle's 1984 R.S.C. production, Marcadé, for the first time in my experience of the play — and, I suspect, in its

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entire theatrical history — returned to the stage in the company of Boyet as the songs came to a conclusion. They were accompanied by suitcases and dressed for a journey. Armado spoke “You that way, we this way” to the audience; but there was a division of the on-stage characters, too, as Boyet and Marcadé led the Queen and her ladies back to France, while the others remained in Navarre. Marcadé’s sombre presence created at least a subliminal link between Armado’s reference to “The words of Mercury” and the words that the messenger had spoken. It may have meant nothing on a conscious level to those who did not know of the suggested connexion between ‘Marcadé’ and Mercury; but it made a significant theatrical point even without such knowledge. The stage business had both a narrative and a symbolical significance; and it illustrates the possibility of full interaction between the scholarly, the critical, and the theatrical approaches to Shakespeare.

I hope that nothing I have said has suggested that I think the world of scholarship has any right to demand more of the theatre’s attention than it already gets. Scholarship and criticism in Shakespeare studies should always be at the service of the theatre; and the theatre has a right to work in its own way. It would be nice to think that the movement to reconstruct the conditions in which Shakespeare’s plays were originally given might result in productions of the plays which had both the same kind of claims to authenticity, and the aesthetic vitality and audience appeal, that exists in the musical world as the result of collaboration between scholarly editors and performers of the texts of, for example, Bach, Handel, and Monteverdi, but the analogy between the theatrical and musical worlds is, it would appear, an imperfect one. No serious modern operatic producers treat the texts and musical scores of Mozart’s operas as the texts and the theatrical scores of Shakespeare’s plays are treated. Some freedoms have been creeping in, but the recent updating of Handel’s Semele and Jonathan Miller’s Americanized Rigoletto involved no alteration of the music. There is no point in denying the theatre’s right to alter Shakespeare’s plays; they have been freely adapted since the Restoration; possibly, if the bad quartos are anything to go by, they were so treated in his own time. They have yielded entertaining and moving performances in versions which owe nothing whatever to scholarship. On the other hand, scholarship has sometimes enriched their theatrical realization: and I hope it will continue to do so.