

2-28-2017

A Note On Sanity In Stage Productions Of Shakespearean Plays

Patrick Le Boeuf

Bibliothèque nationale de France

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/mimejournal>



Part of the [Acting Commons](#), and the [Theatre History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Le Boeuf, Patrick (2017) "A Note On Sanity In Stage Productions Of Shakespearean Plays," *Mime Journal*: Vol. 26, Article 16. DOI: 10.5642/mimejournal.20172601.16

Available at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/mimejournal/vol26/iss1/16>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Claremont at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mime Journal by an authorized editor of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

A Note On Sanity in Stage Productions of Shakespearean Plays

Edward Gordon Craig

edited and introduced by Patrick Le Boeuf

This text is preserved as a holograph manuscript in the Edward Gordon Craig Collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in the Département des Arts du Spectacle.¹ The manuscript is dated March 23–April 21, 1937, with additional footnotes and corrections dated April 1944. The typescript was probably made in 1938, with corrections dated October 1938, and was reread by Craig on March 20, 1940. The corrected typescript forms the basis for the present edition, which also takes tacitly into account the 1944 corrections and additional footnotes in the manuscript.

The typescript is the third item in a dossier titled by Craig: “Shakespeare Plays & Performance. The Place. The Voice. Music. Dance.” This dossier comprises: 1) a printed copy of the German edition of Craig’s *The Art of the Theatre* (*Die Kunst des Theaters*, 1905); 2) a printed copy of a pamphlet by Austin Clarke, entitled *Verse Speaking* (1937), with Craig’s holograph annotations; 3) the typescript of “A Note on Sanity”; 4) the typescript of a brief undated article by Craig, “Meditations on Publicity”; and 5) the typescript of another brief undated article by Craig, “Discoveries.”

The text was typed by Daphne Woodward (1906–65), Craig’s secretary and companion. It is preceded by two unnumbered manuscript leaves in Craig’s hand, which contain the following indications and draft introduction:

On Sanity in stage-production of Shakespeare’s plays. 1937. Spring.
Taken up again October 1938.

Briefly—a Shakespeare play is rarely produced^a well enough anywhere.

And there is no mystery why this is so. It is due to the failure to provide the Essentials necessary to a *more than adequate* interpretation of the piece: I say more than adequate, meaning high-tide, because the word “adequate” has come to signify the lowest point of low tide.

Then the boat is stuck in the mud; high tide, and it floats.

The main thing to do when producing a Shakespeare play is to get it to float.

The Essentials (which are never found) are the place, the voice, the movement.

a As any reader of this first sentence of mine may trip up over the word “produced,” and take that to mean scenery and costumes, [let it be clear that] it doesn’t mean that. Produced means the entire *mise-en-scène*, i.e. the entire putting-on-stage.

You would perhaps say that money, the right public, and star actors were the three Essentials; but we have always had these three things, and yet with rare exceptions have never had worthwhile productions.^b

This draft introduction is immediately followed by this apparently unrelated note:

Nature is certainly lovely and vile. Nature meditates—reposes and flutters—it squeaks and howls—it is fearless and fearful—like real trees and real kings, like false cats and cardinals.

So when we hear of a person that it or he is “so natural,” if it mean anything, it means a good deal more than we are led to suppose.

For nature is everything:

“F was a little Fish
Cook in the river took it
Papa said ‘Cook, Cook, bring a dish
And Cook be quick and cook it.’”²

Plenty of nature is in this little verse by [Edward Lear](#). Were nature merely “so sweet” as it is often described, it would not be nature; were it “too horrid,” again it would not be nature.

“C was a little Cook
Fish in the kitchen spied him
Papa said ‘Fish, Fish, bring a hook
And Fish say when you’ve fried him.’”³

The manuscript reveals that this essay is actually just the first section of a larger, unwritten essay, which would have comprised four sections. The first page is preceded by the following indications:

The Place conditions the rest. If *first* place, it must be all of a piece “1st.” [If] *second* place, [it must be all of a piece “2nd.”]

Also following is this outline of what the complete essay would have looked like:

- Part 1. The old Elizabethan way and the pseudo.
- Part 2. The modern way.
- Part 3. A comparison between the two ways.
- Part 4. The conclusion.

Footnotes introduced by letters are Craig’s own; endnotes introduced by Arabic numerals are the editor’s. Craig’s spelling, punctuation, and use of capitals are idiosyncratic. Woodward normalized much of it while typing Craig’s text; this edition further normalizes it only when it is indispensable for a good comprehension, and keeps as many of Craig’s idiosyncrasies as possible.

^b There was money to build the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and to run its Festivals; there is always the right public in any large city; and star actors are only a nuisance.

The following essay is published with the consent of the Edward Gordon Craig Estate.

(1937. *St. Germain-en-Laye, March 23rd.*)

Chapter 1. The Place.⁴

This is to be no tilt against the more advanced tendencies in staging Shakespeare, held by many to be crazy methods and in their opinion suitable to a crazy poet—one of whose plays they have read. I shall tilt against nothing except the utter failure in England to produce Shakespeare's plays well. It is only a word on the obvious—that obvious outlook which we must preserve in spite of everything today which conspires to destroy it.

Plenty of times I have glanced sideways—this way, that way—to take a peep at the eccentric: even followed up the glimpse, running up its by-paths for closer inspection—but always returning to travel along the most excellent highroad on which I love to travel ... all tradition behind me, and the same miraculous view ahead of me; and the only road to travel.

It is perfectly possible to experiment, to be as dashing as you will, without forgetting that important thing—the obvious.

I am thinking especially of the stage-production of the Shakespeare plays—what to do and what not to do: how to see it all, how not to see it. The technical details, of great importance, are all but the subservient to vision⁵—in fact, come to be thought of only having *seen*. These technical things: how to shape a theatre, how to use its stage, how to let loose the actors onto it, how to clothe them and furnish the boards on which they are to walk, how to light their faces, and how to help them to illumine the words they speak—all this, and so much else, has to wait upon the even more serious matter: how to see the whole thing.

From what I have learnt about dramatic art and theatre, the whole thing cannot possibly be seen at one glimpse, nor dealt with in a few thousand words: but if we are content to go slowly, the first thought about it all can be considered. Books have already dealt exhaustively with this first thought and, I think, have dealt with it unsatisfactorily, and so it has to be reconsidered.

What is the first thought—is it the spectators? No, for the spectators are a reality, not changeable: they are the same old fools, the same good people, the same cynics and the same troubled or delighted souls who have filled theatres ever since the first theatre opened its doors. Elizabethan audiences and Victorian audiences, so utterly unlike each other to look at, were at heart, in soul, in their doubts and fears, their hopes, illusions and delusions, exactly what the audiences are today. If, in this town or in that, the majority of people are sticks or mugs or crooks or respectable hypocrites, this does not damn the public, which is and will remain the same mixture of good and bad which it must ever remain till light and shadow cease: and this mixed audience is just the one a theatre attracts—but it must be a theatre of spirit to do that. It is supposed that we spectators know more today than we did in 1600; maybe, maybe not, but we probably feel about the same. We may not believe in ghosts, because we are inclined less and less to believe in them—I mean, when we don't *see* them; and nowadays we manage to see fewer and fewer. No one is held to be in his right senses who can enter Claridge's Hotel and assert that he has just seen the ghost of a King of

England and spoken with it, and seen it move here and there, and seen it go. No one can then sit down to the excellent luncheon in the same hotel, and within five minutes stand up and assert that a ghost is pushing him from his chair.

But suppose one day someone, at the right hour and place, should say quietly to another that he has seen a ghost; that other, say what he may, think what he may, will also know what he knows. Ghosts, like shadows, cannot be entirely chased away: we can always do with a few. Even as we can always do with the imagination. Educate us ever so excellently, our logic, reason, sound good sense can always admit of the impossible now and again. Even realists are occasionally imaginative.

But so as to avoid as much as possible the unreal, I propose as a starting point to the sanity of production not persons, but things; and I select that thing, the place on which we produce: the stage itself, as the first thought for our consideration.

1. *The simple stage.* This stage is the most real of things—this stage of boards. From English oak these boards should be cut, and pinned together by pegs of wood; not a scrap of metal is to be allied with them: commonsense warns to take great care to see to this.

2. *The complicated stage.* But how about the 150 or 300 theatres which already exist and are made of wood and iron and wheels and cogs and electrically worked up and down and here and there, and are complicated in the extreme? I shall come to these complicated stages later—the simple ordinary stage is our theme for the moment.

Having stated what I think is our starting point, and having said it is the stage itself, I do not want you to forget (nor think I forget) that the word is more important, the thought still more (maybe), the action (the whole of it and each part of it) and the *sound* of the word, the *glance* of the thought, the tempo of words, thoughts and actions so very important to production. But however important these be, not less important, because so real, is the starting of all these; and they cannot start to exist for us unless there be a place for them to start from—and that place must be a real place on which we can plant our two feet.^c

The place, then: the stage.

There is but one stage, though it have many shapes, two of which I have mentioned: the first, the plain oak stage, and the last, the complicated one made of woods, metals, electrical contrivances ... elaborated till one thinks one will be strangled by its innumerable devices and gadgets.

(*March 25th.*)

We will think of these two shapes as “the first” and “the last,” because the wooden stages of the *Globe Theatre* and the *Fortune Theatre* of Shakespeare’s time are those for which the plays were first made, and these we will refer to as “the first;” and the latest stage, the modern mechanized place, the typical modern theatres of Europe and America, we will refer to as “the last;” and what is stupid to insanity in our “last” stages we can perhaps correct by a careful and not too enthusiastic consideration of our “first” stage.

c For in the air, in the fields, at sea, in dale or on the hills, the dramatic thought and word can come to life and be pronounced. In the imagination itself, thought may begin to live and then die: but it is of the real, the actual (or you say the material) that our drama is born; and the thought and the word need a place to lodge in, if they [are] to live longer than a moment—and this is why I choose to write first of all of the place, its cradle: the very stage itself.

Sanity cannot reject either of these two extremes. Let me explain more precisely what I mean. To begin with, I do not mean rejection in theory. We may reject both the first and the last in theory—but if we practise, if we are given a theatre and the means to work there freely as a producer, we accept whatever we can get ... provided we are not to be shunted out of it six months later, for that sort of going-on is insane, and I am dealing here with sanity in production.

So, then, I as producer accept either theatre—the first or the last—whichever becomes mine; accept it, and overhaul it.

Now to practise.

What may I do, what may I not do? I may do whatever is fitting: I may not “distort the heavens from pole to pole,”^d I may not believe a lie. What, then, is truth in stage production? First of all, it is, we are told, to see all things through the eye and not with it ... through the Eye of Imagination. Yet even here, take care. Even as you look at the world and the heavens through the Imagination, you are looking at a divine creation, and a divine creation has in it an appearance of confusion—that we call foul, as well as that we call fair; call dark as call light; call pain, call pleasure, call hope, call despair. And the great work of our leader, Shakespeare, often seems to us like just such confusion. (It will never do to be too cocksure about it and suppose we have an answer for every thought, every action, every word of it.)^e

In fact we can say, to begin with, that we know very little what the Elizabethan stage was like. Sir [E.K. Chambers](#) and a host of other investigators have searched in unsuspected corners, and found a certain amount of facts regarding the construction of the Theatres of the Elizabethan age. To this they have added a great amount of

d “This Life’s dim windows of the soul
Distorts the Heavens from Pole to Pole,
And leads you to believe a lie
When you see with not through the Eye.”

e I have been puzzled by some of the statements made by [Granville Barker](#) in that lecture read by him on May 13, 1925 (“From Henry V to Hamlet”), where he found himself able to state that “We know well enough what the Elizabethan stage was like. We do not know fully all the effects that could be gained on it, for only experiment will show us.” He then goes on to say:

Such experimenting, therefore, will always be valuable. But surely the principle can be agreed upon that, whether or no one can ever successfully place a work of art in surroundings for which it was not intended, at least one must not submit it to conditions which are positively antagonistic to its technique and its spirit. Such an agreement involves, in practice, for the staging of Shakespeare—first, from the audience, as much historical sense as they can cultivate without it choking the springs of their spontaneous enjoyment; next, that the producer distinguish between the essentials and the incidentals of the play’s art. Many even of its essentials may be closely knit to the Elizabethan stage. But curtains are at most a background; and, for any play in any sort of theatre, a scenery that pretends to be more sins even against its own nature. Further, if my contention of today be allowed, Shakespeare’s progress in his art had involved an even greater concentration and reliance upon effects that could only be produced by the art that *is* irrevocably wedded to the playwright’s—and was largely in this case his own incidental creation—the art of interpretative acting.

(P. 25). Yes, Mr Barker is all right up to a point; but when he thinks he knows—“*we know well enough*”—what the Elizabethan stage was like, he is being becomingly rash. Rashness was never a fault of H.G. Barker—he was blessed with so much caution that I should have liked to have borrowed a little of it—but here he is entirely uncautious, saying “we know well enough” that which we do not know at all. (20.3.40 EGC).

supposings, saying that it is “possible,” “likely,” and “probable” that such and such a bit of the stage was used in such or such a way. None of these supposings will do. We have to know, and with precision, or the confusion is only increased.⁷

And so when we brush away all the suppositions from the facts, those facts which remain are insufficient for us to be able to reconstruct a Shakespearean stage (as it was), place on it one Shakespearean actor (as he was) with the Shakespearean voice (as it then sounded), the movement (as it then moved), the scene (as it then looked), the light of day—or tapers, or whatever was used (as it then shone), the speed of the play (as then it ran on), the thousand touches, large or little, given not only by the actors, but by the producers, painters, workmen of all kinds, as the performance advanced.

Lacking these eight essential parts which I have named (and there were more), how can we for a moment think that we are in a position to perform the plays as they were performed in Shakespeare’s day? ... We are crazy if we think we are anywhere so near that position.

And I am concerned here with the sanity of stage production as applied to the Shakespearean plays, not with the so-called “crazy” way of doing them: a way which can justify itself, since it has often been proved the best way, by this or that “crazy” genius who, spite of breaking all the rules and flinging “sanity” to the winds (and much of Shakespeare with it), has proved to the three thousand spectators that the crazy way was anyhow a delight to even the regular playgoer. A dreadful thing, but a fact—for the spectators, all of one mind, approved the deed.⁸

But I am not to be turned aside by this to consider the wonder of it; my attention here is concentrated upon the sanity in stage production: a very desirable thing, exemplary, and very rarely enjoyed, since sanity is the *perfect balance of mind*, and perfect balance of mind in stage production is rare—very.

So then, self-deception being anything but sane, we must reject all the suppositions of Sir E.K. Chambers and the others who have deceived themselves, as useless and, as who should say, rather deplorable—for we will not be deceived. But for all this, with our eyes open and the guess-words “probable,” “possible,” “perhaps,” brushed from our minds, we can roughly sketch in a kind of Shakespearean stage of our own. How do this? Well, not with the book of the words open before us. The books must be put away. We must have passed through our schooldays of study and have all the real information in our heads now—lest we grow pedantic. We then begin to use our senses—our common senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

To explain by a word or two more, I mean this: that to fuss any longer over the inches which the stage of the Globe or Fortune, Blackfriars or Swan is said to have measured, is foolery now. We have the ground-plans, lots of them, measured out, pinned up on the wall somewhere; we can always refer to these plans if in search of an inch more or less, when we wish. We must not fuss any more about the hangings, the straw, the inner room, the upper chamber, and so on. We have the cross-sectional drawings and the façades. And we have our dictionary, “The Shakespeare Stage,” our compact reference-book in one volume—have we not?^f

So we have enough now to start on, and more discussion is futile.

f I don’t know who was the author or publisher, but we cannot have been talking about Shakespeare for over a hundred years and have failed to produce the standard reference-book.

But how do we begin work, since no actual building has been preserved? We have preserved churches and houses as Shakespeare saw them, but not one theatre. What to do, then?

If. And I put a full stop there, and gravely too, before I continue. If what you want is a real Shakespeare stage, you must be content to want, and there an end. For you can never have that. If you will be content with a pseudo-Shakespearean stage, you can have one tomorrow ... You probably will, and may you enjoy it. But be sane, even as you console yourselves with a fake. However talented your architect and builders may be, let there be no pretence about what you are all doing: you can, if you will set about it sanely, vamp up a really lovely thing in its own way, but it won't be the Elizabethan way; it can't be genuine: admit it, and no harm is done. It will strengthen your disappointed souls as you work on, if you realize that neither can an Elizabethan play—genuine Elizabethan—be staged on this fake stage that you are erecting; and so be happy since all is to be fake, all pseudo-Elizabethan.^{8 9}

You now have full liberty of expression in the realms of sham.

(Now, since honest sham be sane, whereas falsehood, even over sham, is crazy, is a passing glance at the nature of all stage-work permissible, or will it distract us? I think two words can do no harm: and they are, "take care." What we all have to take care of is, never to forget that theatre, play-acting, and all that goes on on a stage, is a sham. It is a pretence which is not comparable to the pretence of art, but only to the pretence of life. Actors are mimes—mimics—just as, when we put up a pseudo-Elizabethan stage, we are pretending it is Elizabethan and no more.)

So that's better. We have confessed. We have no longer a fear of being more than mildly comic figures, men who seriously suppose they are erecting a theatre for which no one possesses the plans, a genuine work of 1600, but ones which can be taken quite seriously, as men who deliberately want to pretend. An ambition of the nursery—"Let's pretend!"—a lisping and a clapping of little hands.¹⁰

(*March 29, 1937.*)

So then let us start building. We build the "first" theatre. What's the first step?

It is to work in wood—but before doing that, to acquire a sense of wood, for this is what the Elizabethans did. That it is our fate to be unable to. We are but pseudo-Elizabethans at present, but by working hard—who knows—we may come in time back to where we began: Globe alley.¹¹

I will not admit that even when setting about this pseudo-business we need to be careless, sceptical or lukewarm. Let us hunt old Pseudo fiercely; let us deceive ourselves thoroughly.

So, then, let us start building at once. To build this "first" place (I will come to the second plan later).

Our first step is to acquire some real sense of wood, of woodwork, of what has been done by the carpenters and carvers of wood of Europe, and especially by our Englishmen in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For when 1600 was reached, the carpenters and carvers could rely upon a tradition of which we too, we pseudoists, must not forget to avail ourselves.

g It seems likely that one such pseudo-Globe will be shortly built; one hopes that one will be enough to satisfy the people who like the sort of thing, and that one in each town and village of England will not be felt to be a necessity. April 7, 1937.

I cannot devote a hundred pages or so to describe in detail what exactly these men of 1600 had inherited in the way of tradition: but take a glance at the pictures of the 15th century houses reproduced here,¹² and I take it you will get a better inkling of what I mean. For here is style. And without a pretence of that style, its spaciousness, its richness, its elaboration: three qualities we must not forget. We have forgotten these qualities, for when we take fine oak and elm and beech wood and begin to erect a “simple” room of beams and panels with these grand materials, we whittle down the oak and dwarf the elm and potter with the beech and niggle with the other gorgeous woods, until we arrive at a Wordsworthian simplicity and a Wesleyan bareness which, good in themselves, are antagonistic to all that Shakespeare and his age stood for—still stand for.

We must not employ men to plane away all the richness of wood: we must not set the turning-lathe going, to destroy. This is why we must acquire a wood-sense—not a wooden sense.

See all that has been constructed in wood. Don’t try and look for a theatre: dismiss thoughts of theatre from your heads—look for other buildings.

In England there are first of all the barns to help you. Go and see them. See them whole at first, and then take a close look at the parts. Sit down on a sack, for sitting is the best way to look at a thing which sooner or later is to become *of the theatre*. The barn—its beams, rafters, pillars of wood. Nothing ruled with a ruler, nothing planed away, nothing straightened when it wanted to bend or twist or turn slightly. As solid a construction as man ever made, and as light and easy-going in its appearance as though drawn in with a pencil. Don’t photograph these places. Do as [George Clausen](#) did, or [Breughel](#) before him: draw them as best you can. You can’t draw? Then ask a draftsman to do it—but not a photographer.

The thought occurs to me that you may suppose that in speaking of barns I want to lure you to constructing a barn theatre—whatever that is. Empty barns have been adapted and used for performances of plays.¹³ Let us forget that: pianos have been used for vamping on, but vamping or improvising is not what concerns us here. To get a wood-sense we shall have to look at churches and at old inns, but this is not to lead us to make a church-like or an inn-like theatre.

So your old barn is merely to help you to realize what the most skeleton-like frameworks look like when put up by men of mark like the Elizabethans: and your job is easy enough—all you have to do is to look at it. When one is not at all seeing—when, spite of looking at a thing (especially a remarkable and lovely thing), one sees next to nothing in it, this easy job is apt to be trying.

It’s not everyone who sees alike when looking at the same thing. The sun is to one man a golden guinea, to another a host of singing angels:¹⁴ the moon is a dot over an i, or a balloon, or a cheese—it depends so much on who is the observer.

So an old 16th-century barn of beams, struts and the rest may look to me like the unfinished attempts of a builder to construct a chapel; you it may remind vaguely of something ship-like; and both of us may turn away from looking at it, saying: “Well, it’s only a barn.” And that’s all it is: but if you look at five or six such barns, though you’ll find them all like each other, each will have many points of difference. And most will give a different impression—create, shall we say, a different effect.

It is this which has to be looked into—this effect.

The only thing to do after drawing each, is to write down everything you can observe about it. Where the windows or doors are, if more than one; how high from the ground; what they may face; and specially what is *in* the barn—on the floor, on the first raised floor, and on the walls. Don't look for carpets or tapestry: I mention this, for I once thought I saw a Persian carpet on the floor of a barn which seemed hung with tapestry—both these effects proved to be illusions. Here I saw more than another might have seen, and there is nothing to forbid your seeing more rather than less, if you happen to see more: in fact we are getting on famously when we can see anything at all.

The trouble with barns is that they are not haunted—they are not helpful in that way: and it is only if we will haunt them, that in time we shall come to see more—indeed, even a great deal. A casual ten minutes per barn is not enough: one should go there daily for an hour or so, and do whatever one can do when sitting quietly there like a spectator at a play. Then one is bound to see something—and something of the utmost importance to the Shakespearean drama.

But do not think that I wish to exaggerate about this: barns are not the only places which the intrepid seeker after the wood-sense can visit, for chapels and churches are also very important.

There is a church in *Sogn* in Scandinavia (which I know of through pictures only), which will repay a visit. It should be carefully inspected. Its wood is beautiful: there are many suggestions in its wood.

In Hungary too—a hundred churches, I believe: I have not visited any of them, but have seen a few pictures. Even one is illuminating to the seeker after the magic which lies in wood.

Now for a page of pictures—for to write more about this first step towards a Shakespeare stage would be unprofitable. I will write under each picture anything which may occur to me as useful.¹⁵

(April 7, 1937.)

This simplifying, dwarfing and whittling down of wood, of which I spoke on page [...], needs an illustration or two, because there are thousands of people who cannot visualize—who cannot even see a thing without it's pointed out to them—who need to have it pointed out dozens of times, and to be given pictures to remind them of it. It is these people who so often sit on committees, and who sit firm there. Weak in eyesight, they are strong in voice; they pronounce, as a rule, in favour of what is ugly, sloppy, feeble, "simple," expressionless. I have known fine writers, fine poets, favour trivial designs before grand ones.

There was a poet (a dramatist and a novelist too) who lived, I think, in Northumbria. He had a private theatre built for him by I know not whom; whether it was an architect he employed, or whether a builder, or whether he designed it himself, I did not ask him.¹⁶ I could but guess, and I guess it was the combined effort of local talent: builder, carpenter, mason. It was a kind of barn—a modern, brick-built barn: one solid, well-laid wooden floor, long and wide, and at the end a stage, and on this stage an inner stage, as in the so-called Shakespeare stage; and above it, a balcony or gallery stage. Both inner stage and gallery stage were hung with curtains; not gorgeous curtains of many colours and wonderfully embroidered, but plain grey or khaki—I forget ... but plain. A staircase of the plainest kind (pitch-pine the wood employed, I fancy) led up to the balcony stage. I am not sure there were not two such

staircases, one on each side. All was framed by a proscenium. The whole effect was by no means austere—but was a bit stiff: it had no definite character, it looked to me a little awkward and bare—it seemed weak.¹⁷

But I would not blame this poet's failure to invent a stage or to reconstruct one.

He had not, it seems, called in an architect who was as deep a student of Shakespeare and his stage as was needed: an architect who was a passionate lover of the carver's craft and who had seen all the Tudor woodwork of England. The great ships which lay in Thames coming from every land: some English, some Dutch and Spanish, French and Italian. The designs for these are in existence and reveal what richness woodwork was in this age made to yield.

One or two American and English scholars have reconstructed "typical Shakespearean stages,"¹⁸ and this after considerable thought and careful research. And all of these reconstructions have been wretched affairs. I say all, for I mean all, though I do not mean that they are worthless, for here and there the research and the thought, such as it was, did suggest ideas to other scholars. All rather hopelessly scattered, it is true, and all very thin and lifeless; but to suggest anything is something after all. There are two or three of these "reconstructions" which are continually being reproduced in books and pamphlets, and which for this reason have come to obsess the mind's eye of most of us, so that if asked: "What was Shakespeare's stage like?", we sketch out a something which faintly resembles all these celebrated errors.¹⁹

The engravers of the seventeenth century have left us a few records of the outside of the Globe and other playhouses or bear-pits; but except for the anonymous Dutch visitor who saw the inside of a London stage in 1596 and drew a rough sketch of it, we seem to have no inside views.

This inside view can prove very misleading if you accept it without question: but questioning every one of its points, every slip of the pen or pencil which drew it, may help you to come at something.

I reproduce this famous sketch once more, here and now.²⁰

Questions are necessary. For example, there are three actors on the stage. One seems to be dressed as a lady, in leg-of-mutton sleeves, and seems to hold in her right hand a fish. It may not be a fish, though: it may be a glove, or a pair of gloves, or a handkerchief, or even a fan—but it looks just like a fish. Another actor, seated, seems also to be dressed as a lady: she seems to have her hair in curl-papers. Her head-dress is anyhow not at all neat, as is that of the lady with the fish. She also seems to have a black beard.

The third actor is dressed as a man: he carries a wand, staff or spear. He seems to carry a fish on his head and another in his mouth. Caliban, perhaps—as Benson showed us Caliban.²¹ This that I take for a fish on his head may be a hat; the fish in his mouth, a big moustache, or an upright collar sticking out each side of his face. The face is vague, to say the very least of the face. One arm is outstretched, holding spear, wand or staff, or even crook; the other is bent—but whether bent to let the hand rest on the right hip, or bent because carrying another fish under his arm, or a packet, or bent because pointing to his stomach to suggest that he is hungry, or merely bent because it's not straight ... all these points are uncertain.

Who do these three figures represent? Are they the Lady Olivia, Maria and Malvolio, or are they Portia, Nerissa and a messenger? Or Portia, Nerissa and the

Prince of Aragon? Or Cleopatra, Charmian and a Roman general? They can hardly represent Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, for this was not written, says [John Masefield](#), until 1600—though he queries the date.

Anyhow, this uncertainty of every line of the drawing must give us trouble to the end—until we come across a document showing us exactly how the stage of a London theatre (and the theatre must be specified) was constructed, and to what use each part was put. Till then (and even after that), we shall not know.

But we can know this: that as there have been carpenters who have constructed feeble-looking four-poster beds, so have there been carpenters, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who constructed gorgeous-looking four-poster beds; and we can know from this that, given the excellent carpenter of that day, he would fashion an excellent-looking theatre—a gorgeous theatre of wood, with gorgeous fat pillars, not pillars like wooden matches, for the gorgeous plays of the day.

But we never think of this; we never look at the grand wooden furniture of the Elizabethans, when wondering about their stages. We look into our own minds, and these reveal something which we reconstruct on paper, using rulers and sharp steel pens and compasses and tracing-paper; and the net result is a scraggy kind of drawing of a shivering sort of place such as is shown as the frontispiece to the pamphlet, *A Typical Shakespeare Stage*, by [Victor E. Albright](#), M.A.—a clever student, but a much misguided one in this matter.

A far better construction has been imagined by Mr. [Godfrey](#).^h One realizes that he has seen something real: but, for all that, it is not the real Shakespeare stage, for it lacks richness, beauty, and does not even hint at the mastery of woodwork which the English constructors of that age possessed.

(April 8th, 1937.)

It was [William Poel](#) who, in 1890 or earlier, was to be heard talking about this Elizabethan stage, and who, year by year, borrowed or rented for an afternoon one or another of the old Halls of London ... Barnard's Hall, Fishmonger's Hall, Middle Temple Hall? I forget which, but I remember that he used these Halls for an occasional Shakespeare show. I saw *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in one of them.²² And he devoted the best part of his life to talking of, and when possible demonstrating, that the best way to produce and act Shakespeare was the Elizabethan way (accepting the conditions of the stage of her times). And I remember that instead of building for him a replica of the Globe or Swan or Blackfriars theatre, his "friends and disciples" did nothing at all, excusing themselves.ⁱ Money was not lacking, for money poured in to build a theatre at Stratford-on-Avon: with a small fraction of the surplus, the Stratford-on-Avon committee would have built a replica of the Globe some couple of miles from the town, where Poel and his students would have worked and made experiments to the

h In some ways, Mr. [G. Topham Forrest](#), in his designs (1921, London County Council publications) takes us still further, for he tries to reconstruct the place and the moment. Mr. [Joseph Quincy Adams](#), with Mr. (name undecipherable) [[Henry Roenne](#)], shows us (in 1923) another notion or two: the notions are not bad, but there is the same stiff collar and cuff touch—not of the gentleman of England, but of the dude—about these notions about the look of the place. It's tailor-made, like all these attempts at reconstruction; whereas woodworkers in 1600 were not stiff and starched in their work, nor ironed and pressed as are the tailor-made coats and trousers and collars and cuffs of 1890-1900-1920. *It is this you all forget*. You take Elizabeth's men and their minds to be like the men and minds of the age of George V of blessed memory.

i (1944, April.) Poel, had he proposed his notions in Germany or in Russia, would have been listened to, and (provided no one came along to rob and "develop" the notions) he would have soon had a Theatre and financial support.

lasting benefit of the Theatre in Stratford. Moral fear seized all these Poelites and anti-Poelites—press, friends, enemies and all—and nothing was done, except by Poel—who died.²³

In America it is different. In Washington they did build a Shakespeare Theatre, and built it in the Folger Library—and I have not the heart to be too critical of this reconstruction.²⁴ Perhaps it is being used, and used well, and daily used? I hope so, for it sadly needs wear, being too spick-and-span for an Elizabethan playhouse, which could never have been too perfect in its appearance. For the fact is, it's a polite, a diplomatic bit of work, this at the Folger Library; whereas what would have been better—even for that library—would have been something *rather* more like a thieves' kitchen and much less like a Baronial Hall—of 1846. The woodwork will not do. It may be of the most perfect, most costly wood known to mankind, and put together with all the care in the world: but the result is lifeless ... it appears so in the photographs, and photographers often have a way of making things look better than they are.

But how can a reconstruction be anything but lifeless?

Exactly: they can rebuild Admiral Nelson's "Victory;" but what gives *life* to it is Nelson and the rough seas and the *reality* of those days and its struggles—the real fights, deaths, and victories. These cannot be "reconstructed."

And 'tis far more difficult when you try to reconstruct the Shakespeare stage: for plans of the type of the Nelson battleship exist, but no plans of the Shakespeare stage exist.

(April 9th. 1937.)

But now consider for a moment what else besides the theatre you will have to reconstruct if you wish to get back the Shakespeare plays done as they were done in his day.

First, the voices. They will have to be returned to year 1600, will have to become as rich as then, not as thin as now ... trained voices, trained by minds Elizabethan. (How do this?)

Secondly, the movements—trained movement—the physique of 1600 trained by the conditions of 1600 existence, by seventeenth-century trainers. (How do this?)

For do not tell me that a box is only for emptiness to go into it: it must hold something, and that box, the Globe, held marvellous, beautiful, and strange sounds and movements, as well as marvellous lovely verse and prose, and wondrous thought and vision.

What old collar-and-cuff objects to is that anything *theatrical* should go into this Shakespeare theatre. If he means bad-style theatrical, all right—but he really means anything at all expressive, for he can't express, and he hates those who can.

In place of voice rich as a throttle's,²⁵ he would have pious whispered murmurs.

In place of real movement, he would allow an occasional lifting of a hand, an eyebrow—a pair of eyes upturned.

This is really all he does risk, lest we profane.

We lost the right royal Elizabethan richness in all things when Cromwell came along; and when we tried to get it back after Cromwell had gone, we only got a Dutch-Frenchified manner—an exaggeration. It was a good try at it, but we commoners were to be badly punished for trifling with the Tudors. We've had to pay

heavily for that. It was Tudor England which was genuinely English, and if anyone doubt it, let him go to Hampton Court Palace and see for himself, passing from Henry VIII's courtyards into William III's courtyards, and then back again.²⁶

(9th April, 1937.)

Chapter II. The Voice.

Much more could be said about this building—this *place* for the plays—this Shakespeare stage.

And perhaps before I have done I shall return to it, adding many a long side-note to what I have written. But now I am impatient to get on. I'd sooner be impatient than pedantic, and I feel I cannot potter any longer among the beams and struts and panels of either the imagined real, or the made-up false, sixteenth-century stage. Now I must get on to the next thing.

That is the v o i c e .

We are still considering production in the Shakespeare way—attempting through the imagination to see and hear it as it was, as it really was, but apprehensive that all we can ever see is but crooked, all we can ever hear but cracked. Never mind, let us stick to it, having attempted to reconstruct the wooden stage, forget that now and use our ears ... listen to see whether we can catch the sound of it all—those clear sounds, those rich notes which once were heard in that wooden O.

So—to the voice. Ha ha keep *time*—for even music when the time is broke, no proportion kept, no measure, how (what's the word?), how sour it is when it should be sweet (*Richard II*, V 5).²⁷ And that's true—as true as most things Shakespeare says: but what to do when Shakespeare is made to break down: when, at the end of that passage in *Richard II* about sweet music and clocks and men's lives, the scribes or the printers of the rolling, running verse suddenly lose their heads—and smash goes the verse and all time is lost. And this at the very climax of the drama.

Lost, the plans and details of the wooden stage; lost and broken, the very swing of the verse, *the very sound of every word*. It is not easy for us who work to produce a Shakespeare play on stage to be left in a no man's land, the ground pulled away from us, in a confusion of sounds, tumbled back again into chaos—nothing to guide us.

Here, in *Richard II*, Act V scene 5, Shakespeare keeps that *time* which he craved for music, until a keeper enters with a dish and trips up, catching his toe in a rug—and down goes the play: keeper, dish, Richard, chair, music, time, and all.

Now, wiseacres, tell us what to do? For the play was marching on grandly, all was perfect; and although it was very difficult to carry on, it wasn't quite impossible—as now this keeper with his dish has made it.

The whole drama now sprawls in the middle of the stage: nothing funnier than this tragic situation was ever conceived by [Grock](#), [Grimaldi](#), or [Frederick Robson](#).

An actor or a stage manager [ed.: British term for director] will save the situation by cutting ... He releases the keeper, kicks his dish over there, helps Richard to his feet, rights the chair, and gets to the end of the scene: disgraced for ever, perhaps, but gets to the end anyhow, to the satisfaction of the pit and gallery who recognize an

accident as an accident and are quick to forget, to stop laughing, and to help the play to its limping end. Not so the stalls, boxes and dress-circle, who will chatter about this Shakespearean catastrophe to the end of their lives.

This book is not for gallery and pit: they don't need books, they need nothing but the show, the play, the persons appearing, the rhythm, and the most they can get of old Shakespeare. It is you others who have made Shakespearean production so difficult. It was a swell, not a groundling, who lost the original manuscripts, who printed garbled versions and brought about so much confusion. It is swells who want it all done as it was in 1600, or better.^j English swells shut eyes to a slip, object to cuts, argue in a thousand books against our theatre ways (and they are not defensible), grumble, or are bored, sit dumb and dead in their seats, talking of household matters ... Whatever we do they are discontent, stuck up, superior fools.

This is the everlasting situation in England; but only discovered by each producer when he comes to try his hand at producing a Shakespeare play. Every Shakespeare play is in parts defective, broken and twisted, and this thanks to Elizabethan swells. Since if the swells had done their duty in 1600, a perfect record of the words would exist, a perfect plan of the stage and of each production would have been made. It wasn't ... What are we to do with the wreck as it is?²⁸

What do with the text: first as a text for the reader? next as a text or song for the voice, for the actor?

What do about it? (*Remember we are still considering the Elizabethan way of producing a play, not the 20th-century way.*)

The first part of the problem, the text for the reader, has been gone into by countless writers, and I can add nothing here.

Of the second part—the text as a song, or as pure sound in the actor's voice—I can say something.

(April 16th, 1937.)

But only a very little, since I have to do all the speaking. Come and speak with me about this—you taking a fair share and a fair responsibility for the statements made, for the guessings, inventions, and all that goes to make up hard-working conversation—and I'll keep going as long as you. But I can only be quite brief here and now.

When we come to the words, the spoken words, we come with the actor to listen to the author. I have been an actor, from 1889 to 1897, and studied one actor all that time—Irving;^k and I have studied many fine actors with care since then ... Petrolini, Novelli, Zago, Zacconi, Moissi, Musco, Grasso, Artem, Katschalov, Viviani, Michoels and his collective, the Habimah collective with Friedland and Rowina. Besides these, Duse, Bernhardt, Ellen Terry, Bodil Ipsen, Koonen, the Campagna family ... these were among the best actors I have seen playing.

It may be of some value to know about actors and acting; but the more valuable thing is to act. Those who have never been actors can write on paper about how to speak the verse of Shakespeare; but asked to speak one verse, they fail to give satisfaction. I can speak Shakespeare in a way which I think does him best. There's no

j "Swells" is the only title to use, for swells are puffed up, swollen, have swelled heads.

k There is a small book on him which I wrote in 1929-30, in which the question of voice is touched on.

other phrase to use than this, “It does him best” ... it suits him best, this way that I speak Shakespeare, because I follow no fixed *rule*, I follow every *suggestion*. It won’t do, theoretically, to do that: there must be the one and perfect way of speaking the words of this poet; but it is not recorded, this perfect way.

And now, look you, wherefore do you put on airs? and you ... and you ... Pray, what do you know about it, about this perfect way you seem to know about? Poets, translators of Greek plays, scholars at Oxford and at Cambridge, clever fellows in London, sages in Settignano, Roman sages, and sages of Vienna, of Warsaw, of America: one and all are down on the actors (but only the best actors) for mutilating and wrecking the rhythm of Shakespeare.

The only “sage” who writes on Shakespeare whom I can always read with delight is John Masefield, though I enjoy all the books by scholars like Fleay and J.M. Robertson, [] and [],²⁹ who keep strictly to their scholarship and do not stray into the theatrical craft, as do Quiller-Couch, Dover Wilson and Gilbert Murray, accidentally discovering what has been known for centuries—a kind of calf love of theatricals [ed.: blank spaces in original]. Masefield knows how difficult it is to be faced with the task of having to perform a Shakespeare play—or indeed, for that matter, any play.

Yes, it is difficult; but I would not suggest that it is terribly difficult—it is not: it comes easily to those who know how to; and those who know how to act and speak and dress and walk through a Shakespeare play on a stage are the English. By that I mean they have it in their blood and bones, how to do it ... just as a king is born, not made, so is an actor; and English actors are born, were always born, to interpret our Shakespeare, when it has been decided what is Shakespeare and what is some other writer, and when we have conceived what is the way to *act Marlowe*—to act him, not stage him: to speak his lines, not to stage the plays—and when we have in like manner discovered the special way to act and speak the lines of Chapman, of Middleton and Webster, of Kyd and Heywood (both John and Thomas). For *this* seems to have been forgotten: that if there is a special way of speaking the lines of Shakespeare, there must be other ways of speaking the lines of Webster, Kyd, Marlowe and the others, which have to be carefully avoided when uttering this other, greater, and so different Poet’s lines. Who can tell us this, and tell us truth? Only a group of men of all sorts, clubbed together, able to drink, able to think, and free in speech. All the rest are nowhere in this game.

I would give much to hear what a certain Duke might have to say about acting and these plays.³⁰ I know a painter or two who could add to our knowledge on this subject more than even Malone or Chambers has added to it; there is a bookseller in Paris, another in Lyon, a bookbinder in Verona; a journalist in Rome, a second in Paris, a third in []; an architect in [],³¹ a businessman in Amsterdam, and a poet near Oxford.

Add to these those few rare actors in Moscow, Tiflis, Naples (I mean the De Filippi), in Warsaw and Copenhagen, in Sicily and in Ireland and down in Provence ... and we should soon discover what are some of the signs of the good actings and the curiously fine speech of the actors of 1600 who played Marlowe one way, Webster another way, and Shakespeare in *his* way.

But these and their like—their kin in brains, in *esprit*, in common sense, that fine rare thing—are the only men who could get at the truth. I would like to make one at that party, in this club of thinkers, drinkers and easy talkers ... though I can think, drink but moderately, and can only talk among two or three when they lead me on.

But I have instincts—bad and good in plenty—I have some imagination, and I can grow warm hearing a line of verse *however it be spoken*, and I can grow mad hearing it spoken by [Michoels](#), [Friedland](#), [] or [].³²

But I cannot grow warm, nor feel mad nor exalted, when I hear my friend [Masefield](#) speak a line of Shakespeare... he whose whole book on Shakespeare I love, he who is so splendid a man, who only needed to live in the Elizabethan age to have been a proud, defiant speaker even as he is proud and defiant when he writes of the poets and of the artists to whom he is so devoted. Neither could I listen to [Yeats](#) when he spoke verse: it seemed so pedantic, so reserved, even woebegone. I heard him deliver verse round the years 1900 to 1903. It was not well done—couldn't hear the verse for the words—couldn't hear the words for the crooning. Then later, towards the end of the year 1936, Yeats was to be heard on the Radio, speaking about poets and their verse. He delivers prose delightfully, and his voice has a hundred varieties in it; but when he speaks verse he seems transformed into the clergyman. It's up and down and down and up, and "Oh, my dear brethren"—and this is all very unlike Yeats, especially the mature Yeats of these later years. As I listened to his voice, I thought that as an actor in a play by Shakespeare or one by Yeats at the Old Vic, he would have been about as impossible as Shakespeare obviously was as an actor ... almost as impossible as he, not quite.

Yet he and Masefield are poets.

They say [Tennyson](#) could speak his own verse. I wonder. I'll tell you who I think could speak verse: [Daniel Defoe](#). He is so all that is not lyrical in what and how he writes: when he refers once to Shakespeare, it is to call him "old Shakespeare" ... never have two words struck with such a ringing, bell-like sound as those two did when first I heard them; not like the Big Ben bell-sound, but rather those littler, richer, evening bell-sounds from English country steeples.

But to return to the difficulty of speaking Shakespeare verse ([Marlowe](#), [Kyd](#), etc.) on a stage. And returning to this, we must also return to that doubly, trebly difficult thing: the speaking both the verse and the prose *as the Elizabethans heard it*; for this is the job we have to do if we are to revive the Shakespeare stage as it was for one time, not as it was for all time.³³ Can it be done? I think it cannot be done, any more than the exact reconstruction of the Globe can be achieved. And unless both are exact—are facsimiles as good as the facsimiles made today of the Folios and Quartos, it's more or less worthless.

Not entirely worthless would be the attempt; but then this attempt, being in the nature of an experiment (the experiment might have to be continued for eight or ten years or longer) would have to be carried on in some school of experiment—and as yet none exists for this purpose. Something might come out of such tests; it would cost a great deal to discover a little, even as it costs much in time, life and money to discover how to split the atom.

Is it at all worth the cost, this experiment to discover exactly how Shakespearean verse ([Marlowe's](#), [Kyd's](#), etc.) was spoken—and exactly on what stage? You and I cannot discover these things here, neither can we even find the answer to my question. Let us go on. We go for some assistance to a few wise men, to those who have written well about the sixteenth and seventeenth century manner of speaking.

Henry Bradley, in his "Shakespeare's English," divides his essay into three parts: 1. Pronunciation; 2. Orthography; 3. Grammar.³⁴ It is pronunciation which is the important thing with us at this moment. At the beginning of this part, he writes:

When we try to call up in imagination the conversation of the men and women of the Elizabethan time, we find it quite natural, and indeed inevitable, to think of them as using many words and forms of speech which are no longer current; but it hardly occurs to us that even when their sentences were word for word such as we might use ourselves, there must have been a remarkable difference in the manner of uttering them. Nor, when we read a play of Shakespeare with our modern pronunciation, have we ordinarily any consciousness that we are not reproducing the very sounds that were heard by the audiences at the Globe Theatre. Yet it has long been well known to scholars, and is now beginning to be known more widely, that the changes which the English language has undergone in pronunciation during the last three centuries are quite as striking as those other changes which our reading of the older literature enables us to recognize.

Then, a few lines further on, he writes:

It is therefore quite worthwhile to try to ascertain as far as possible how the English language sounded three centuries ago.

He closes his section on "Pronunciation" with:

The general result of the researches that have been made on the subject may be expressed by saying that if a courtier or a scholar of Shakespeare's time could come among us speaking as he spoke when alive, his utterance would sound to us like a mixture of vulgarisms and peculiarities of various provincial dialects.

Now this is a finely written essay with much good sense in it, but not too easy to read. My reason for quoting from it is to get you to read it all: that which I have quoted is but an opening of the door. I expected wonders, and if there were a school of experiment, I could test what he says by having hundreds of lines learnt by able speakers, and spoken by them from the stage of a facsimile reconstruction of the Globe Theatre. Only then could I say whether it was worthwhile (and *why* it was so worthwhile) for Sir Toby, when calling Sir Andrew *Sir Knight*, to sound the K as Mr. Bradley says it was sounded ("as in the German *Knabe*") ... and he adds: "the g in gnat and gnaw," *pull* rhyming with *dull* (i.e., pull, doul), *bush* with *brush* (i.e., bush/broush, which is not good, or brush/busch: "There was an old man who said: 'Hush, / I perceive a young bird in that busch.'").

Therefore, presumably, when []³⁵ says: "[]", it is to sound: "[]".¹

1 I give here a list (too short) of twenty-seven words that Bradley reconstructs for us, so that we may hear how they sounded from the Globe stage. We must value these twenty-seven words, although so few. I do—for I know that I could not have discovered one of the twenty-seven. *Vowels*. Coal: like call. Bold: like bald. Call: like cah1. Bald: like bahld. Tune: like tiwn. Rule: like riwl. Fruit: like friwt. Union: like iwnion. Day: like dye. Boy: like boye or boui (one syllable). Point: like poynt (one syllable). Bush: like hush. Dull: like pull (i.e. doul). Hate: like hat with a long a, i.e., haat; not like pate (modern). Queen, quean: like queen and quane. Time: like team. Ride: like riyd. I will add this: "Cardinals might" / "Henry the Eight" from ballad sung in London after the fire of the Globe Theatre. [*Consonants*.] Knight: the k sounded. Gnat, gnaw: the g sounded. Ad'vertise: like adver'tise. Should, would, could: the l sounded. Light, night: as licht, nicht (sometimes). Laughter, daughter, after: laater, darter, arter or a'ter (EGC query). Example cited: "Jack and Jill," "water ... after" (i.e. a'ter—anyhow waater, not worter. EGC). Laugh: staff—alike. Nation, question: na-si-on, ques-ti-on. Mansion, vision: man-si-on, vi-zi-on. Alms: the l sounded. Arms: the r sounded.

Now, as I read this essay by Mr. Bradley, and found it hard and slow going, I saw what everyone will see: that before we can read Shakespeare as he was spoken (in 1600 A.D.), we need a dictionary giving us, word for word, the correct Elizabethan pronunciations. Of course it may exist: if so, how is it we are not told more often of its existence? How is it that it is not used to train the modern actors of Shakespeare to speak the speech as *he* pronounced it? After that, say I, the school or schools for experiment, if you please ... but quickly, don't delay another ten years.

Then we might, with careful work, get a whole page of Shakespeare spoken correctly, i.e., Shaxperianly. But to speak *correctly*, be it Elizabethan or Victorian, is not in the nature of the dramatic fire which is in life, and which the dramatist seizes and brings flaming into his play. That correctness has to look to itself then: it crackles and flares up, it burns, it warms, hurts or soothes, it reddens or pales, it frizzles and it blinds; smoking, it goes hurrying or slows down; damped, it hisses and steams. A hundred different changes are rung on these correct tones.

Meantime (and indeed even after we have those schools for experiment), some study of the music of the time is necessary. Where can it be heard today? I have always thought that a permanent (if small) orchestra which should play on afternoons at the South Kensington Museum in the room where the tapestries hang, ought to be heard daily from five to six o'clock. It is the place for music of past ages to be heard.³⁶ Theatre music, as well as chamber, dance music and singing.^m It would not be unpopular, and it would be instructive in the finest sense. We need to hear the old instruments; we need to hear the old songs sung with the words as rendered in the Elizabethan ages by singers. This would help us to recapture the pronunciation of the actors in the Globe Theatre.

In the performance of *Turandot* which I saw in Moscow in 1935,³⁷ the orchestra had among its instrumentalists one who played upon a comb; perhaps more than one combist was playing. I recall making the suggestion in 1911, when producing *Hamlet*, that some of the musicians in that scene called "the play scene" should play upon combs, for I wanted sounds in that play-within-a-play which should, in quality, volume and artificiality, be exaggeratedly theatrical.³⁸

Now this sound of comb-music is excellent when used in precisely the right place, and leads me to suppose that when Massinger wrote down, in his script of *The Roman Actor*, that for the ghost he wanted "*dreadful music*," or Dekker, in *If It's Not a Good Play*, that he wanted "*hellish music*" on the entry of Plato and Charon, instruments which could give some strange new sound were possibly used.³⁹

There were pipes which were called *still pipes*,ⁿ used with what is known as *still music*. Middleton in one of his plays describes still music as "that which no man can hear"—which seems to me to mean, at the very most, but very little.⁴⁰ But *still music*, though sometimes played on recorders (see *Two Noble Kinsmen*) or on flutes, seems to me to have been less dependent on any special instrument than upon the time. It was not what is known as "*soft music*," because that word *soft* would have been used; whereas *still* is the word. It was "*still*," I think, in that it had no movement as a march has, as a waltz has, as a saraband has: it was music which neither marched, glided nor

m (1944, April). Men, learned in old music; men and women trained to sing old music; *musicians* less up-to-date and more "1066 and all that"; research workers and active musical intelligences—all these could be brought together by the South Kensington Museum authorities, and ancient (and modern) music given a good long chance to grow.

n Both Marston and Gascoigne call them into use.

stepped, there was no dance in it, so it seems to me. It seemed to hover, to vibrate, perhaps—something anyhow heavenly, something entirely in harmony with the first words of Hymen (*As You Like It*, V.iv): “Then is there joy in heaven.” That word “then” placed as a first word—ever so slightly stressed—suggests to me much that is meant by “*still music*.”

(April 17th, 1937.)

Music can help—Elizabethan music, I mean.

And carpentry. How so? Well, Professor [Bradley](#) admits that it is not easy to determine approximately how the English language was pronounced by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, even after investigation; and any architect will tell you that it’s not easy to determine how the Shakespeare stage was constructed by [Burbage](#), and what it looked like; but some craftsmen and artists try to determine what a thing isn’t, when searching to find what it is.

Now it is here that a careful look at the material stuff visible to the eye, all the sixteenth and seventeenth century things we can see today—woodwork, leatherwork, glasswork, paper, printing, handwriting, models of ships—can lead us to say what the Shakespeare stage was *not*; and this can help us to move a bit nearer to what it was.

The woodwork was not too thin, bare, pinch-nosed, planed and dollied up till it became too pretty for words, as is the woodwork of the twentieth century. It was rich and beautiful in its plainness. It was all that fancy, imagination, could make it. A beam was a joy to look at, to touch, to pat with the flat of the hand ... as is the flank of a fine horse, which it resembled more than the long, dry beak of a stork.

Get hold of two ordinary sheets of paper of the year 1600—unprinted on, and printed on—it’s easy enough—and look at them long enough, touch them, smell them, taste them (printers do this, so you may); and when you have had them with you for a month or so, get hold of two ordinary pieces of paper of today, and I think you will see such a difference between them that you will be able to define these easily. When you have done that, see whether your definition does not greatly help you to a definition of the differences (in essentials) which are to be found in the carpentry of the Shakespeare stage and modern carpentry—the sound of the Shakespearean voice and that of the modern voice. It is such a pity not to let the eye help where it can, not to trust the eye more. Sight, and touch too, are grand servants and should be trusted.

Again, you sometimes see old models of Elizabethan ships—models made in the seventeenth century. Yet I rather fancy you see little in them. Why not look for some serious and fundamental direction from these constructions? One raised platform of that time is like another, especially if put to the same use, or something of the same use.

Compare the leatherwork of today with that of Elizabeth’s time, look at the handwriting of those men and our men of today. Get at some legal documents of the year 1600—one is enough—and lay it side by side with one of our handwritten documents of today. It is more than likely that most people today would say they don’t call the 1600 document “writing,” and really consider it no better than a scrawl. But it really *is writing*, real live writing, writing which gives life away, not artistic, pretty, or washed-out, school-made writing. Ink and pens were different from our ink and pens; and paper too, and parchment: and these materials helped to some extent to make the writing what it was—what we can see it was and is. And such writing helps me to understand what sort of carpentering went with/into the wood of the sixteenth century, to build the Globe Theatre, on which stage actors moved and had their being.

[Chapter III.] Movement, Action, Acting, Costume.

And how learn what sort of movement it was which preceded the words so often—which followed them up, and closed so many a scene? What quality of movement—how much or/and how little dowered (sic)⁴¹ by the dance, the sword, the fan, and how interwoven with the very stuff and pattern of the cloaks, the doublets and the bonnets of the men, the farthingales, the collars, muffs and chopines of the women.⁴² And here again we can be helped by learning aright—by looking at the wearing-apparel of the Shakespearean times. It is something to read about what they wore, even as it is something to read about the wood construction of the time; but it is far more to read the things themselves—to look and look long at them. Then you'll have a vision, for the imagination has all the secrets stored away in its mysterious record-office (chamber?)[.]⁴³ That strange place is not a place where dead things are preserved, as sardines are in tins—but is a place where live things are preserved alive. Communicate through to them by the help of the eyes, and the answer comes back. Ask (through the eyes) whatever you want to know, and the imagination will reply—but be careful how you look.⁴⁴ If you look at hay like a donkey does, the answer will be as satisfactory to you as to the old moke: but if you look at a model of an old sixteenth-century ship as a Yarmouth fisherman does, you will still see nothing but herrings; and you can see those in seas or in shops.

Look, then, with eyes which know how to see ... but then, maybe to-day that will mean a new training.

The dance can help (we are still considering the reconstruction of the Shakespeare stage—its place, movement, speech and all). The practise of the old dances of that day is quite possible to-day—taking care not to thin them down to a plain walk.

When an English artist gives a warning not to flatten, whiten and make too plain your dancing, acting and the rest, the English mind is apt to suppose that the artist wants the dancer to go on like a lunatic in a farce, or like a foreigner as we have caricatured the foreigner since the earliest times. The Englishman seems to be unaware that in the Elizabethan times there was colour in most things which are black, white or grey to-day, and that a dance then was as full of fire as to-day it is of milk and water ... and that without being in the very least continental quadrilles—or affected minuets with their eternal curtsies.

Do you recall *The Beggar's Opera* at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, so well prepared by [Playfair](#), [Fraser](#) and others, and the sickening recurrence of those curtsyings which every one of the women indulged in as she came on? The poor things seemed at a loss what to do except curtsy. Catching sight of someone in a wig, each one would sink low, her skirts ballooning, her face turned into a mug—her simper or ecstasy a *cliché*. Once or twice she'd dip; then, at a loss, would curtsy again to the conductor of the orchestra, or to the limelight man at the wings; then, again at a loss, seeing a table, down she goes to it—up again—and now is dipping first to one chair, then to another. As she gets into her bus to go home, she curtsies to the ticket-collector... . she ends her days in a lunatic-asylum, curtseying to space.

The practise of old dances is therefore dangerous, and must not be left to women. Some sort of tyrant (like [Cecchetti](#) if you can find one!) must have *this* ballet-school under his control if what is valuable in them is to be brought out and, when

made visible, studied by men who do not care a rap whether the executants are charming or not—and naturally they are all charming. Very charming: and to be charming is a nice thing, but to be that, and that only, all through a play—in every part—speaking, looking, acting, moving as charmingly in the roles of Lady Macbeth, of Goneril and of the three Witches, as in the roles of Rosalind and Viola—and always emitting the *same* charm—and each person in the play trying hard to be like the most charming actress or actor—this is most horrible.

In these dances will be found something which will help the investigator in his search to reconstruct the Shakespearean stage and voice. But here you must take care to look long and carefully at these performances of the music and dancing of the costumed actor moving here and there, speaking, singing ... performances which may not be given before the public, but in schools only.

After coming to know these dances, songs and the rest quite thoroughly—

(April 20th, 1937.)

and alas, I suppose it is not possible to come to know all these things well without loving them well—a group of performers will be in some sort of condition to begin to read the Shakespeare plays with understanding ... Shakespeare not being entirely understandable by untrained, unexercised body and mind. It is like athletics: train you must, to be in good condition; and these exercises with ancient music, ancient speech, in ancient costume, in an ancient hall (lit by tapers or daylight) are to train your body and your perceptions, so that you may in some sort become sensitive to all that an Elizabethan could sense—not so that you can play Horatio, Rosencrantz or the Gravedigger in the play of *Hamlet* “in the Shakespeare manner,” for that is impossible.^{o 45} For you must first cease to be yourself: you will really have to forget motorcars and the punt on the Thames—speed and dawdling as we know them nowadays—because both things are quite foreign to our investigation which, I must repeat and repeat, is the reconstruction of the stage and all that was on it and around it in Queen Elizabeth’s day.

You may begin to suppose I am making poor fun of this matter, but it is not so. I am quite as serious, now I come to look carefully into it, as anyone else has been. How could I not be serious, when there is something in these ancient doings which may count—may be essential to us of to-morrow, when there will be more people than there are at present who will wish to search and find and establish once and for a long day (say the day without the ever) the sane rules for stage-production of the plays of Shakespeare.

Nor shall we go back in one long jump to the Elizabethan stage. We shall have to cover the ground step by step, and up the stairs which lead there—passing back through the days of [Irving](#) to those of [Kean](#) and [Macready](#) and those of [Garrick](#), [Macklin](#), [Betterton](#), till we reach [Field](#), [Alleyn](#), and at last the [Burbages](#) and “old stuttering [Heminges](#).”⁴⁶

No, I am serious enough.

The empty foolery, so full of direct mischief, which governs the English stage today, is enough to make one serious ... this mischievous foolery which over and over again somehow succeeds in robbing our stage of all the worthwhile people and their best powers. Years ago, the cry was raised that there was no money with which to develop the best things the best men and women had to give to our stage. It may have

^o My friend [John Masefield](#) refers to “the Shakespeare manner” in his [] [.]

been true at that time, though I fear it was a lie. Since then, we have had proof that there is now money enough and to spare. One immense theatre has been built at Stratford-on-Avon. Much money still remains over to run that Theatre in a manner worthy of Shakespeare,⁴⁷ and this is not done. The British men and women possessors of the best talents in all the branches of the Dramatic Art, and therefore the only men and women for the task, are excluded from that playhouse. And able director Mr. [Iden Payne](#) is at the head—and, so far as I can see, has his hands tied: and his mind and spirit accept the bondage. This is the only criticism I pass on him. He is obliged (by whom, God knows) to employ men and women not of the first rank ... with here and there an exception, as in the case of Mr. [Baliol Holloway](#), an actor of considerable genius, who is sometimes put to play parts he is not fitted for. This man is a real actor; he can therefore act anything and everything, but he excels most when in the roles the gods intended him for. The other day he was put to fill the role of Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*,⁴⁸ and was surrounded by what seems to me a very adequate group of supporting actors and actresses—[Miss Tudor](#), for example. Yet the critic of *The Times*, a man of discernment, tells us that the best performance was that of Miss Tudor as Mrs. Page, whereas [Miss Bland](#) as Mrs. Ford, [Mr. Wolfit](#) as Ford, and [Holloway](#) as Falstaff were no good at all—except that “sheer technique” (whatever that means here) “saved Mr. Holloway from disaster.”⁴⁹

“Disaster!”—that’s clear enough. The critic does not mention the performances of [Mr. Maxon](#) as Shallow, [Mr. Stephenson](#) as Slender, [Mr. Leigh](#) as Sir Hugh Evans, [Mr. Layne-Smith](#) as Dr. Caius, [Mr. Howlett](#) as Bardolph, [Mr. Souper](#) as Pistol, [Mr. Hagan](#) as Rugby, or [Miss Iden](#) as sweet Anne Page. Yet the play revolving round Falstaff, revolves in a galaxy of stars—Slender, Shallow, Evans, Caius, Bardolph, Pistol, are immortal figures—magnificent roles made for the BEST British actors.

“Not available ... ” “We so much regret we couldn’t get [Sir George Robey](#) down to play Falstaff, but he was not free.” “Not free to be jiggered,” is the sole reply to that ... Mr. Robey (or [Mr. Laughton](#), were the older man unwell) is available if a serious theatre with plenty of funds really wants him. Miss [Edith Evans](#), [Miss Forbes-Robertson](#), and two or three others who to-day are considered most excellent Shakespearean actresses, are available—but someone and something down at Stratford-on-Avon slams the door on all the best talent and miscasts the rest.

The theatre has been open for quite a few years now, and there is not the slightest excuse for the way all is mishandled there. I hold no brief for dictatorship, but it’s not a scrap worse than this sort of thing. It destroys more deliberately, more openly, that is all. I am quite certain that if [Edmund Kean](#) and [Frederick Lemaitre](#) were living to-day (were Frederick an Englishman), neither of them would be made welcome at Stratford-on-Avon.

I hope I am harsh enough: the case deserves harsh treatment from everyone who wishes England to possess a fine theatre.⁵⁰

But if actors in England have become impossible in their demands—expecting all privileges and not prepared to shoulder any responsibilities or hardships—then something more has to be said. Forgetting these selfish workmen, the Stratford Theatre should have set about training a few hundred actors so as to have good ones when the need came—as it has come now. The school for training them could have started in 1930 or even earlier ... I suppose some sort of school has existed for some time, but it cannot be teaching anything, if a fine company of performers is still lacking.

No forethought.

This is all an example of the insanity of production—and I touch upon that lamentable horror here because I have been writing of careful investigation into the ways of the ancient stage, and here is a lunatic modern stage of England without any serious aim but to get through its productions as best it may—supported by plenty of funds, given every chance, and with a world-public to witness its awful results.

(21st April, 1937.)

F I N A L.

Summing up, I feel that the sane way is to produce Shakespeare with two dates well in mind: 1600 and to-day.

1600, when well remembered: not the pinched or florid we take to be Elizabethan, not the narrow thoughts and things still more narrowed by the pinched mind of pedantry; but not the flashing, empty pageantry, so over-pageanted to-day.

Instead of pedantry and pageantry, we must show beauty and its power, ugliness and its power, as Shakespeare pronounces both, as he reveals them to us through his vision.⁵¹

So much of 1600, and of 1937 or the to-days of to-morrow: no pedantry, no vulgar show—again Beauty and its shadow.⁵²

NOTES

1. Edward Gordon Craig, "A Note On Sanity in Stage Productions of Shakespearean Plays," manuscript shelf number EGC Ms A 24, numbered MS 16 by Craig; typescript EGC Ms B 83.
2. Lear 308.
3. This stanza is not to be found in complete editions of Edward Lear's nonsense poems, and may have been written by Craig himself.
4. On the manuscript: "PART I. Chapter I. The Place."
5. The typescript originally reads: "Technical details are of very great importance, but are all subservient to vision." Craig's handwritten corrections transformed it into: "The technical details of great importance but the but are all subservient to vision," which does not make sense. The edited text strives to capture what Craig's intention may have been when he made those modifications.
6. Blake 520; lines 97–100.
7. In his review of E.K. Chambers's *The Shakespearean Stage*, published in *The Mask*, vol. 10, no. 3, July 1924, Craig wrote: "Fled is any hope that I might some day write a famous history, which, I will now admit, I did once contemplate writing. It was to have been in about sixteen pages, this history of mine... Its lightness would have been ... not entirely unrelated to the fact that I had promised myself there was to be no word, no date in it, which was not absolutely *true* ... I would at first, possibly, have allowed to remain in the two dates which we take to be those on which Shakespeare was born and died; but since I believe that no one can positively swear to either, out they would go ... [T]he word *probable* should never be allowed to be seen inside a book of history; as for "it is possible," what is that? Everything is possible, anything is probable" (132–33).
8. Craig's annotation on the typescript: "Revised a bit up to this point. March 20, 1940."
9. Experimentations in rebuilding Elizabethan stages had taken place since the late nineteenth century. In 1912, a replica of the Globe Theatre, designed by Edwin Lutyens, was part of the "Shakespeare's

England” exhibition in Earls Court, London. Another replica, designed by Thomas Wood Stevens, was built for the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair. American actor Sam Wanamaker saw the latter; in 1969, he began a campaign for the reconstruction of a permanent Elizabethan playhouse, which eventually resulted in the erection of the New Globe Theatre in London in the 1990s. See O’Connor and Falocco.

10. On the manuscript, Craig made a comment that Woodward did not type: “At the end of this description come to the *last* theatre, the modern one.”
11. The rest of this page consists of informal notes that Craig probably jotted for himself only (on the manuscript they are penciled, while the rest of the text is written with ink), but that Woodward typed as though they were part of the essay itself:

Now:

- voice: Elizabethan
- movements: Elizabethan
- ...
- ...
- ...
- etc. (the place, actor, etc., are ready.)

Now are you content? You are—take care!! take awful care.

No. You have only a school now. Let no public see this grim “revival”—lovely here and there—full of hints for the workers in theatres—no more. It is your school, and no more.

Now for Theatre 2—i.e., “the last.”

This is, I fear, your only sane Theatre.

First danger: do not Elizabethanize it, or it will become eccentric. It must remain of the day, 1937, 1947, 1957, and so onwards.

12. Here, Craig intended to insert two plates with photographs of “Elizabethan houses of wood; staircases of ditto,” namely Moreton Old Hall and Gawsworth Old Hall.
13. Craig is alluding to the Barn Theatre, founded by his sister Edith Craig (1869–1947) at Smallhythe Place on July 21, 1929 as a memorial to their mother Ellen Terry (1847–1928): “Norman MacDermott had reported that in America the conversion of barns into theatres had enabled exponents of the new theatre to build their own space, rather than work within the constraints of existing theatre architecture. Edith Craig was to make the Barn Theatre a memorial to her mother, a place of experiment as tradition” (Cockin 155).
14. Craig is paraphrasing here a passage from William Blake’s “A Vision of the Last Judgment”: “When the Sun rises do you not see a round Disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning Sight I look thro it and not with it” (Blake, 565–66). This passage was an important source for Craig’s mysticism, and may have inspired his illumination of November 17, 1908, which he represented graphically as a vision of the sun seen through a window opened through a thick wall.
15. Here, Craig intended to insert a “full page of illustrations—some 6 or 8 on one page,” which would have contained reproductions of “the screen of the Middle Temple Hall; the staircase, Hatfield; the ‘Schouburgh’ at Amsterdam, 1637 theatre (near to Shakespeare’s theatre).” Craig added: “None of this is stage scenery in the modern sense of the term, but is genuine fine woodwork.”

16. Craig is discussing John Masefield (1878–1967), and his private theater, the Music Room, which he had built at Boar’s Hill—although Boar’s Hill is in the neighborhood of Oxford, not in “Northumbria.” In an undated letter to Craig, Masefield wrote: “I am debating building a sort of barn for our plays here, if support could be found for it. I want a stage 20 x15 feet, with 8 feet clear on each side, and an *avant-scène*, or apron, of 12 feet square, right out among the stalls. At back of stage a balcony, with inner rooms on and below it. Then we will do rumbustious things, like *Bussy d’Amboise*, of whom you did the famous cut” (Edward Gordon Craig Collection, BnF, EGC Mn Masefield John). Craig published an article on Masefield’s private theater in *The Mask*, vol. 11, no. 1, April 1925, pp. 50–51, but he actually saw it in July 1928 only, when he eventually paid a visit to Masefield at Boar’s Hill.
17. Cancelled paragraph: “But this was to be expected, for the poet-dramatist had no eyes. He could see to write, to walk, to recognize friends and to drive a car; but to help him realize a poet’s stage, this his eyes could not do. He was one of the few men who have ever written well about Shakespeare—he could see with his inner eye.”
18. The phrase in quotation marks refers to the title of an essay (explicitly mentioned by Craig later on) by Victor Emmanuel Albright, *A Typical Shaksperian Stage, the Outer-Inner Stage: The Third Chapter of a Study of the Shaksperian Stage*, of which Craig published a review in *The Mask*, vol. 2, nos. 1–3, July 1909, pp. 41–43, ending thus: “Mr Albright’s book is thorough and most scholarly. He prepares the way for the stage manager of the future, and for this we tender him our gratitude.” But on his copy of Albright’s study, Craig had written this harsh comment on Albright’s drawing: “Does this resemble your notion of any playhouse whatever? Did you ever speak with an architect? Have you ever seen a Tudor house in England? Did you ever read a page of Shakespeare?” Edward Gordon Craig Collection, 8 EGC 18.
19. Here, Craig intended to insert reproductions of reconstructions drawn by “Godfreys Albrights Quincy Adams. Topham Forrest Poulsen’s. Gorthan [?]. Gern[?]”
20. Craig intended to insert a reproduction of the copy (discovered in 1888 and held by the University Library in Utrecht, Ms. 842, fol. 132r) by Arendt van Buchell (1565–1641) of a sketch of the Swan playhouse by Johannes de Witt (1566–1622).
21. In his memoirs, Craig derided Sir Frank Robert Benson’s (1858–1939) performance as Caliban: “F.R. Benson had a season at the Lyceum Theatre [in 1900]. It seemed to me rather ridiculous. I saw him as Caliban in *The Tempest* . . . Benson’s idea of Caliban was to come on the stage with a fish between his teeth” (Craig, *Index* 221).
22. In 1896, Craig attended a performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* by the Elizabethan Stage Society at the Merchant Taylors’ Hall. In 1901, he saw *Everyman* performed by the same at the Charterhouse.
23. The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon was destroyed by fire in March 1926. A new theater was “built at great expense according to the architectural designs, chosen by open competition, of the young architect Elizabeth Scott and was aggressively modern Dubbed the ‘jam factory’ in the local papers, it also boasted a revolving stage, impressive fly-space and a state-of-the-art lighting system” (DiPietro 120). For many years Craig regretted that this opportunity had not been seized to build a theater in which Poel could have experimented with Elizabethan techniques. In one of his manuscript drafts for the unpublished second volume of his memoirs, he wrote, probably in January 1950:

Poel went on working to perfect his idea for over 30 years or so, praised by a few newspapers but ignored for the most part by the rest, getting a bit of financial help here, a bit there, but never receiving the solid encouragement necessary to the development of his idea, i.e., the reconstruction of the Elizabethan stage. Stratford-on-Avon had a Memorial Theatre then, inadequate as a workshop, though pretty to look at from the outside; but I suppose it was never seriously offered to Poel—or that he could never seriously have considered any work there. But when this playhouse was burnt to the ground, and energetic steps were

taken to build another, we ordered a Festival Theatre of the modern kind, and forgot all about Poel. Yes, we failed him. Is it possible? Yes, it was possible: and then Poel died. He was the one man needed at that moment and in that place. But that place needed no such man, no such ideal, and if anyone of the Committee at Stratford did whisper the name Poel, it was considered an interruption of proceedings, and "Silence there" was the order.

Edward Gordon Craig Collection, EGC MS B 34, p. 6v–7r.

24. The Folger Shakespeare Library and Elizabethan Theatre in Washington, D.C. was founded by Henry and Emily Folger in 1932.
25. In both manuscript and typescript: "throstle's".
26. Cancelled paragraph: "But to do this he must be curious, *very* curious, about the attempt to reconstruct the Shakespeare theatre."
27. Craig is misquoting *Richard II*, 5.5.42–43: "Ha, ha, keep time! How sour sweet music is / When time is broke and no proportion kept!"
28. At this point Woodward typed the following text, although she was not sure it fit here and wrote by hand: "This somewhere here?" (in the manuscript, this passage is to be found much earlier, in Chapter I, between "will be strangled by its innumerable devices and gadgets" and "(March 25th.) We will think of these two shapes ..."):

Of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson wrote: "He was not of an age, but for all time" ... which does not mean that his works are like rock, like steel, and lasting because nothing could wear them down, but because they are like something growing.

And this eternal growth and change is always surprising those of us who read these plays. Had they been novels, or anything else but plays, we should not be so often surprised—surprised so that we ask ourselves: "Have we read this before—is this the same Cleopatra, the same Banquo, whose words we read last month?"

And we are puzzled, and we turn to reflect how myriad-minded Shakespeare was and is ... we get no further than that: "myriad-minded." ...

But the puzzle would be less if we could remember something that we are apt to forget—that we are reading *a play* and not a novel, not a poem, not even an autobiography.

And a play does no more than this: having set the scene, it brings men and women onto it and then sets them talking. This talk is called the play—this invented talk, fantastic in form, often utterly unlike anything anybody would think to say—is sometimes not in the very least the thing we expect to hear from, say, Macbeth, Polonius, or the lady Olivia; and it is this which startles us. Only good actors, speaking from a stage, can reassure us again.

Once startled, we buy some five hundred books which we hope will explain *how* this can be—but they never do explain: it is too simple to say and too impossible to believe.

March 27, 1937.

Malone

Chambers

Fleay

Barker.

Edward Gordon Craig Collection, P. 167, MS 16.

29. In both manuscript and typescript, the two names were left blank.
30. In the manuscript, Craig originally wrote “the Duke of Windsor,” which he corrected into “a certain Duke.”
31. In both manuscript and typescript, the two place names were left blank.
32. The names are left blank in both manuscript and typescript.
33. Craig is paraphrasing Ben Jonson’s dedication in the First Folio edition of *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies Histories & Tragedies* (1623).
34. Henry Bradley, “Shakespeare’s English,” in *Shakespeare’s England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age*, vol. 2. Craig possessed a copy of the 1926 reprint (now in the Edward Gordon Craig Collection, 8 EGC 1498), “bought with some of the £10—a present from mother on my birthday, 1927 Jan. 16.” On p. 539 he wrote: “Read first December 1935 or Nov.; reread April 1937.”
35. Craig intended to insert here a quotation from a Shakespeare play, containing as many words as possible that are listed in the footnote, so as to show how different the original pronunciation of that line would have been from the modern pronunciation (the missing words are followed by Craig’s statement for himself: “here a passage from S: containing some of the words in the Footnote”). The “ballad sung in London after the fire of the Globe Theatre” mentioned by Craig in his footnote was published in Adams 437–38. It contains the two following lines: “Regarding neither Cardinal’s might, / Nor yet the rugged face of Henry the eight.” In his copy of Adams’s book (Paris, Craig Collection, 8 EGC 3), Craig highlighted the two rhyming words “might” and “eight.”
36. Craig pasted on the typescript a press clipping, the content of which reads as follows:

October 19, 1938. Paris Notes and News. *Museum Sight-Seeing To Music*. Before very long a Folk-lore Museum will be opened in the Palais de Chaillot—as the Trocadéro is now called. Its curator is M. Georges Henri Riviere, who has original ideas about museums. They ought not, in his view, to be solemn and stuffy, but alive and attractive. Of his originality in these matters we need no further proof than his belief in music in museums. He means to have performances of old provincial airs on the harpsichord, and other ancient instruments in the rooms in which provincial costumes of days gone by are shown.

37. A play by Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806), in a *mise-en-scène* by Evgeni Vakhtangov (1883–1922).
38. In *The Gordian Knot*, a puppet play published in 1918, Craig also wrote: “Tune on the comb here steals in” (3).
39. On his copy of H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon’s article “Instruments and their Music in the Elizabethan Drama,” in *The Musical Quarterly* (1931)—in which he was so keenly interested that he transformed it into one of his “opuscles,” designing a new cover for it (Paris, BnF, Craig Collection, 4 EGC 352)—Craig wrote:

By “unpleasant” music, “infernal,” and “horrid,” “dreadful music,” and “hellish music,” *dissonance* is implied—yet I have not yet heard any but melodramatic music in a minor key in such scenes—and trembling shivering music—but no dissonance (hautboys could be described as “dreadful”). Nowadays when whole operas are a string of dissonances, we cease to call it “horrid,” “hellish,” or “dreadful.” (How stupid and without thought are our *metteurs-en-scène*). And not only *dissonance*, but two instruments each moving at his own pace—opposed in time, in tune, in timbre (320).

40. Thomas Middleton (ca. 1570–1627) and William Rowley (ca. 1585–ca. 1637), *The Spanish Gypsy*, 3.2.76–78: “both loud music and still music; the loud is that which you have heard, and the still is that which no man can hear.” This line was quoted by H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon in “Instruments and their Music.” On Fitzgibbon 321, Craig jotted the following annotations: “‘Still music’ is music without any marked movement, but which can be said to hover—to shake—maybe to *spread*—not to march, glide or step—no dance in it—not to climb or fall and probably always on pipes or *plucked*

strings or both (as harp). While Shakespeare uses the word 'still' in connection with *sound* ceasing, he uses it too when he would speak of *motion* ending. 1935," and (probably in the early 1950s): "I know that I have heard music which had no *definite movement* in it or I would not stop to consider what, exactly, it can be."

41. In the manuscript, Craig initially had written "and," which he cancelled and replaced with "or" and "and," one above the other. Woodward typed the two words one above the other as well. "Dowered" is the verb used by Craig in the manuscript; Woodward had doubts about it, and she typed a question mark after it.
42. Craig has always shown a keen interest in studying how garments and clothing accessories can exert a positive influence on performers' movements, by constraining them to follow patterns designed by the stage director. This is the very principle of the übermarionette ("an actor encased in a sort of armor, so he could make none but graceful, slow, sweeping gestures," as Craig's collaborator Michael Carmichael Carr (1881–1929) defined it in 1910), which Craig reasserted again in his article "Animadversions on Dancers," in *The Observer* (May 29, 1932).
43. Craig did not decide between the words "office" and "chamber," both of which, in the manuscript, are in brackets and followed by a question mark.
44. All this passage once again echoes William Blake's use of the word "imagination" and of the phrase "not with, but through the eye."
45. The reference to Masfield is incomplete. Craig probably had in mind John Masfield, *Shakespeare and Spiritual Life*, Clarendon Press, 1924. Masfield presented Craig with a copy of it on June 5, 1924. Craig himself designed a new cover for it in 1934.
46. The phrase "old stuttering Heminges" comes from the "ballad sung in London after the fire of the Globe Theatre" published in Adams: "A woeful burning did betide / To many a good buff jerkin / Then with swollen eyes, like drunken Flemmings / Distressed stood old stuttering Heminges" (437–38).
47. The typed text reads as follows: "the best spirit and the best intellect in our nation." "Shakespeare" is a manuscript correction in Craig's hand.
48. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* were performed at Stratford by the Royal Shakespeare Company, in a *mise-en-scène* by Henry Kiell Ayliff, from April 5, 1937, with the cast indicated by Craig.
49. On the manuscript, Craig pasted two press clippings, one showing the complete cast of Ayliff's production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in April 1937, the other with the *Times* review of that production. The manuscript also contains an unfinished draft for a letter to the editor of the *Times* as a response to that review.
50. This manuscript correction replaces the following text: "the case deserves the harsh speech and the harshest decisions of the public and the critics."
51. The typed text originally read, prior to Craig's manuscript revision: "as Shakespeare pronounces it, as he reveals his vision of it."
52. "And its shadow" is a manuscript addition on the typescript.

WORKS CITED BY THE EDITOR/WORKS CONSULTED

Adams Joseph, Quincy. *A Life of William Shakespeare*. Constable, 1923.

Albright, Victor Emmanuel. *A Typical Shaksperian Stage, the Outer-Inner Stage: The Third Chapter of a Study of the Shaksperian Stage*. Knickerbocker Press, 1908.

Blake, William. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, revised edition, edited by David V. Erdman. U of California P, 1982.

- Bradley, Henry. "Shakespeare's English." *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age*, vol. 2. Clarendon Press, 1917, 1926.
- Chambers, E.K. *The Shakespearean Stage*. Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Cockin, Katharine. *Edith Craig (1869–1947): Dramatic Lives*. Cassell, 1998.
- Craig, Edward Gordon. "Animadversions on Dancers." *The Observer* (May 29, 1932); reprinted in *Gordon Craig on Movement and Dance*, edited by Arnold Rood. Dance Horizons, 1977, pp. 68–71.
- . (as "Tom Fool"). *The Gordian Knot. The Marionette. The Mask*, 1918.
- . *Index to the Story of My Days*. Hulton Press, 1957.
- . "Book Reviews." *The Mask*, vol. 10, no. 3, July 1924, pp. 132–33.
- . "A Poet's Theatre." *The Mask*, vol. 11, no. 1, April 1925, pp. 50–51.
- DiPietro, Cary. *Shakespeare and Modernism*. Cambridge UP, 2006.
- Falocco, Joseph. *Reimagining Shakespeare's House: Early Modern Staging Conventions in the Twentieth Century*. D.S. Brewer, 2010.
- Fitzgibbon, H. Macaulay. "Instruments and their Music in the Elizabethan Drama." *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1931, pp. 319–29.
- Jonson, Ben. "Dedication." *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies Histories & Tragedies*. Issac Jaggard and Ed[ward]. Blount, 1623.
- Lear, Edward. *The Complete Verse and Other Nonsense*, edited by Vivien Noakes. Penguin, 2001.
- Masefield, John. *Shakespeare and Spiritual Life*. Clarendon Press, 1924.
- Middleton, Thomas, and William Rowley. *The Spanish Gypsy*, edited by Edgar C. Morris. D.C. Heath and Co., 1908.
- O'Connor, Marion. "Reconstructive Shakespeare: Reproducing Elizabethan and Jacobean Stages." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, edited by Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton. Cambridge UP, 2002, pp. 76–97.
- Shakespeare, William. *Richard II. The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, edited by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan. Thomson Learning, 2006.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON PERSONS WHOSE NAMES ARE MENTIONED BY CRAIG

- Adams, Joseph Quincy (1880–1946). American Shakespearean scholar, first director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.
- Albright, Victor Emmanuel (1878–19?). Author of a study on Elizabethan playhouses: *A Typical Shaksperian Stage ...* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1908), which Craig criticized.

Alleyn, Edward (1566–1626). English actor and manager.

Artyom, Aleksandr Rodionovich (1842–1914). Russian actor. Craig wrote about him a brief article that was published in the French magazine *Arts* on December 7, 1945.

Benson, Frank (1858–1939). British actor-manager.

Bernhardt, Sarah (1844–1923). French actress.

Betterton, Thomas (ca. 1635–1710). English actor.

Bland, Joyce (1906–63). British actress.

Bradley, Henry (1845–1923). British philologist.

Brueghel, Pieter, the Elder (ca. 1525–69), or the Younger (1564–1638). Dutch painters. Both made paintings in which barns are visible.

Burbage, Cuthbert (ca. 1566–1636) and Richard (ca. 1567–1619). English actors and managers.

Campagna. Family of Italian actors, who specialized in Sicilian dialect plays in the first half of the twentieth century. Prominent members were Angelo, his wife Giulia, and their daughters Vittorina and Jole.

Cecchetti, Enrico (1850–1928). Italian ballet dancer. He founded the Cecchetti method, characterized by a rigid training regime.

Chambers, Edmund Kerchever (1866–1954). British literary critic and Shakespearean scholar.

Chapman, George (1560–1634). English poet and playwright.

Clausen, George (1852–1944). British artist.

De Filippo. Family of Italian actors from Naples. Prominent members of this family include: Titina (1898–963), Eduardo (1900–84), and Peppini (1903–80).

Defoe, Daniel (ca. 1660–1731). English writer. In the 1930s, Craig cut a series of engravings to illustrate his *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

Dekker, Thomas (ca. 1570–ca. 1632). English playwright.

Duse, Eleonora (1859–1924). Italian actress.

Evans, Edith (1888–1976). British actress.

Field, Nathan (1587–ca. 1620). English actor and playwright.

Fleay, Frederick Gard (1831–1909). British Shakespearean scholar.

Forbes-Robertson, Jean (1905–62). British actress.

Forrest, George Topham (1872–945). British architect.

Fraser, Claud Lovat (1890–1921). British artist and stage designer. He executed designs for John Gay's (1685–1732) *The Beggar's Opera* in Sir Nigel Playfair's production at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith in 1920.

Friedland, Zvi (1898–1967). Israeli actor and stage director. He directed the Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv.

Garrick, David (1717–79). British actor, manager, and playwright.

Gascoigne, George (ca. 1542–77). English playwright and poet.

Godfrey, Walter Hindes (1881–1961). British architect and historian of architecture.

Granville-Barker, Harley (1877–1946). British actor, director, playwright, and theater scholar. In 1925, he delivered a talk, titled *From Henry V to Hamlet*, as the British Academy Annual Shakespeare Lecture, which was published the same year by Oxford UP.

Grasso, Giovanni (1873–1930). Italian actor from Sicily.

Grimaldi, Joseph (1778–1837). British clown. See Edward Gordon Craig, "How to bring Grimaldi, Kean, Buckstone, and others to life," *The Mask*, vol. 13, no. 1, January 1927, p. 44.

Grock (1880–1959). British music hall clown. Craig intended to write about him in his unpublished collection of essays *Tritons and Minnows*.

Hagan, George (dates unknown, twentieth century). British actor.

Heminge, John (1556–1630). English actor.

Heywood, John (1497–1578). English playwright.

Heywood, Thomas (ca. 1570–1641). English playwright and actor.

Holloway, Baliol (1883–1967). British actor.

Howlett, Stanley (dates unknown, twentieth century). British actor.

Iden, Rosalind (1911–90). British actress.

Ipsen, Bodil (1889–1964). Danish actress. Craig wrote an article about her in May 1929.

Irving, Henry (1838–1905). British actor-manager, and Craig's mentor. Craig devoted a study to him: *Henry Irving*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1930.

Kachalov, Vasili Ivanovich (1875–1948). Russian actor. He played Hamlet in the Craig and Stanislavsky production of Shakespeare's play in Moscow in 1912.

Kean, Edmund (ca. 1789–1833). British actor.

Koonen, Alisa Georgievna (1889–1974). Russian actress. Craig met her in Moscow while he was working on the *Hamlet* production.

Kyd, Thomas (1558–94). English playwright.

Laughton, Charles (1899–1962). British actor and director.

Lear, Edward (1812–88). British artist and poet, famous, among others, for his “nonsense poems.”

Layne-Smith, Donald (dates unknown, twentieth century). British actor.

Leigh, Andrew (1887–1957). British actor.

Lemaître, Frédéric (1800–76). French actor.

Macklin, Charles (ca. 1697–1797). British actor.

Macready, William Charles (1793–1873). British actor-manager. He acted as Iago in 1832, with Edmund Kean as Othello.

Malone, Edmond (1741–1812). British literary critic, editor of Shakespeare’s plays in 1790.

Marlowe, Christopher (1564–93). English playwright and poet.

Marston, John (ca. 1575–1634). English playwright.

Masefield, John (1878–1967). British poet, playwright, and novelist. He authored the foreword and introductory poem to Craig’s *Scene*, Oxford UP, 1923.

Massinger, Philip (1583–1640). English playwright.

Maxon, Eric (1882–1963). British actor.

Middleton, Thomas (ca. 1570–1627). English playwright.

Mikhoels, Salomon Mikhailovich (1890–1948). Russian Jewish actor. Craig was extremely impressed by his performance as King Lear in Sergei Radlov’s production of Shakespeare’s play in 1935 at the Moscow State Jewish Theatre—to the point that he saw it four times in a span of six weeks. He went so far as to compare him with Irving.

Moissi, Alexander (1880–1935). German actor.

Murray, Gilbert (1866–1957). British classical scholar, poet, and philosopher, noted for his translations of Euripides.

Musco, Angelo (1871–1937). Italian actor.

Novelli, Ermete (1851–1919). Italian actor.

Payne, Ben Iden (1881–1976). British actor. He was the director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon from 1935–43.

Petrolini, Ettore (1884–1936). Italian actor, playwright, screenwriter, and novelist.

Playfair, Nigel (1874–1934). British actor-manager and director. He managed the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith from 1918 to 1934. There he directed Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* in 1920.

Poel, William (1852–1934). British actor and director. He founded the Elizabethan Stage Society in 1894.

Quiller-Couch, Arthur (1863–1944). British professor of English literature.

Robertson, John Mackinnon (1856–1933). British writer. He authored, among many other books, *The Shakespeare Canon* in 1922.

Robey, George (1869–1954). British actor and singer.

Robson, Frederick (1821–64). British actor.

Roenne, Henry (dates unknown, early twentieth century). In 1922, he drew two conjectural reconstructions of the Globe Theatre for Joseph Quincy Adams; the following year, these drawings were published in the latter's *A Life of William Shakespeare*, Constable, 1923, as unnumbered plates between pages 284–85 and pages 286–87.

Rovina, Hanna (1893–1980). Israeli actress. She was a member of the Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv.

Souper, Gerald Kay (1871–1947). Australian actor.

Stephenson, Paul (dates unknown, twentieth century). British actor.

Tennyson, Alfred (1809–92). British poet and playwright.

Terry, Ellen (1847–1928). British actress, and Craig's mother.

Tudor, Valerie (1910–97). British actress.

Viviani, Raffaele (1888–1950). Italian actor and writer.

Webster, John (ca. 1580–1634). English playwright.

Wilson, John Dover (1881–1969). British professor, scholar of Renaissance drama.

Wolfit, Donald (1902–68). British actor-manager.

Yeats, William Butler (1865–1939). Irish poet and playwright. Craig collaborated with him between 1909–12 and influenced profoundly his theatrical conceptions.

Zacconi, Ermete (1857–1948). Italian actor.

Zago, Emilio (1852–1929). Italian actor.

Patrick Le Boeuf has been head of the Archival and Printed Materials Unit within the Performing Arts Department of the National Library of France since 2014. He was in charge of the Edward Gordon Craig Collection from 2006 to 2009, and again since 2014. He wrote several articles about Craig and curated in 2009 the exhibition in Avignon titled "Craig et la marionnette".