

hit the jackpot: bottom of the list. The report is titled "Building skills for all" and was published in August 2016.

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The First Folio

Sir, – If one starts from the assumption that the differences between the 1608 quarto of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and the 1623 Folio edition were not mostly caused by authorial revision, one has to look for other people who made them. Brian Vickers believes that a group of "editors" of the Folio made many of these changes and similar ones for other plays (Letters, September 15), and he cites Richard Knowles calling these intermediaries "scriveners" (that is, scribes). That some plays' quarto/Folio differences – such as the updating of archaic linguistic forms – were made during scribal copying is a safe bet.

But Vickers thinks the alterations in *King Lear* more substantial than those "we would normally expect from theatre scribes", so that we must call them "editors". As long as we all agree that these intermediaries were not editing in the modern sense of diligently researching the textual origins to recover what Shakespeare really wrote, calling them "editors" instead of "scribes" is a distinction without a difference and does no harm. But those studying the vari-

ants between the Shakespeare quartos and Folio should beware the textual latitude that the word "editors" connotes, since it entails a beguiling temptation to blame them whenever we find a reading we dislike and wish not to attribute to Shakespeare. Into this temptation, I think, Vickers has fallen.

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Traitors?

Sir, – I hope I am not your only reader to have found the last sentence of Richard Davenport-Hines's review of *The Traitors* by Josh Ireland ("Not right in the head", September 15) to be itself unhinged. He appears to suggest that a duly elected government, a gap between the wealth of one generation and the next (about which there is general and publicly acknowledged disquiet) and the outcome of a democratic vote to leave the EU with which he disagrees, are justification for considering treason.

May I respectfully suggest that he might benefit from a spell working at some repetitive but productive handiwork – as a dry stonewaller? – here in Cumbria, away from such feverish nonsense, or embark on a pilgrimage – *solvitur ambulando* – to restore his equilibrium?

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