

"Review of Ann Thompson and Gordon McMullan (eds) *In Arden: Editing Shakespeare: Essays in honour of Richard Proudfoot* (London: Thomson Learning, 2003)" by Gabriel Egan

Richard Proudfoot is a general editor of the Arden Shakespeare and at an age when others might be thinking of winding down he launched its third series (the current one) in 1995. In this large collection of fairly short essays, 21 Arden editors, past and present, pay tribute to the generosity with which Proudfoot gives away ideas that others turn into books of their own. "In all fairness", write Ann Thompson and Gordon McMullan, "the name of Richard Proudfoot should be on the cover of every volume, not just as general editor but as, in effect, co-editor". Proudfoot's work has brought stage-centered thinking to prominence in Shakespeare scholarship, via Arden and as textual adviser to the Oxford *Complete Works* that so dramatically (in both senses) altered the scene in 1986.

Roughly coterminous with the rise of stage-centered thinking in editing has been a crisis of confidence about the new bibliography of the early twentieth century, pivoting on a single question: can we determine with tolerable certainty the kind of manuscript used as printer's copy for each of the early printings? Editors who think that we can tend to use this 'knowledge' to discriminate between multiple early printings to find the one they want to base their modern text upon and they conjecturally emend it by reference to their theories of how its errors came about, while editors who think that we cannot so discriminate tend to be more cautious, stressing the arbitrariness of their choices about base text and emendation. One can liken this to a difference between the post-Enlightenment optimism of those trained in the 1940s and 1950s and the post-modern despair of those trained after the failures of 1968, and a charming antidote to that kind of binarism is Barbara Hodgdon's quotation of Stephen Orgel's memorable quip that "actors are the original poststructuralists, assuming . . . that the author does not control the play, the interpreter does".

Hodgdon's essay appears in the book's best section, on "Editing and Feminism", and shows traffic in an unexpected direction: from the theatrical tradition to modern editions of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Petruccio's familiar whip first appeared in John Philip Kemble's performances and indeed the First Folio has no stage directions for Petruccio being physically abusive to anyone; modern editions get this detail from the theatrical tradition from which feminists may dissent with textual warrant. Just because Petruccio complains "You whoreson villain, will you let it fall?" (4.1.141) does not mean that a servant actually *did* spill water--Petruccio might have spilt it himself--so making real this apparently implied stage direction (by adding "*A servant drops water*") is an interpretative act that makes Petruccio seem less mad. Likewise sending a servant off in response to Petruccio's "bid my cousin Ferdinand come hither" (4.1.137) suggest that there *is* a cousin Ferdinand to fetch, but maybe there isn't. Following the Folio, Hodgdon imagines a performance that leaves Kate on stage after Petruccio's final exit, making her rather than him the play's "closural organizing presence".

Revisiting early printings with a feminist agenda is bound to bring new and better solutions to old problems, and Suzanne Gossett explains that the only reason for modern editions' peculiar repetition of Pericles's vow to leave his hair uncut (first said after Thaisa's death and repeated after hearing of Marina's death) is editorial alteration of "All vnstisderd shall this heyre of mine remayne" to "All unscissored shall this hair of mine remain". The original makes perfect sense given the play's concern with dynasty and

sisterhood, and like Hermia and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Marina and Philoten have a "quasi-identity . . . similarly destroyed by competition for men". This is not to say that the quarto should be trusted in every case, and Gossett is explicit that unlike the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition, her Arden 3 *Pericles* will emend where Q has gibberish. In the absence of hard evidence, editing Shakespeare is a critical, not a scientific, matter and as well as providing new solutions feminism reveals the unspoken sexism behind old decisions. Lois Potter's example is that Desdemona is made conform to Brabantio's view ("a maiden never bold") in giving Othello "a world of sighs" (the 1622 quarto reading) instead of "a world of kisses" as the Folio has it, even in editions supposedly based on the Folio. A book of such critically and politically challenging insights--from which editing theory and practice cannot be detached--is an entirely fitting way to celebrate the intelligence and generosity of the most senior of the Arden Shakespeare general editors.

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