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Stone, James W. Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within

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outside of the play book. If plays could, through revision and revival, accommodate "new songs over time" (150), then surely, Stern argues, the same could be said for masques. Although Stern's argument in this chapter emphasises the separate trajectory songs and masques had from performance through to print, she makes the point that these particular textual fragments, absent or extant, are to be given the same literary and dramatic weight as the words of the plays themselves.

Tiffany Stern's *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* is essential reading for academics and students of Shakespeare studies, theatre performance and early modern drama. By revealing the fragmented or 'dislocated' nature of plays, Stern invites her reader to reconsider the theoretical modes by which these texts are assessed, written about and taught. This book is not just an account of early modern textual transmission; it provides a riveting narrative about the very textual mysteries that have for ages seemed to be so distant as to be irrecoverable. Stern recovers them with genuine literary curiosity, passion and scholarly distinction.

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Stone, James W. *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Pp. xv, 185. ISBN 978-0-415-87360-4 (hardback) $125.

James W. Stone's book is a true essay, a daring exploration of gender in *Twelfth Night*, *Richard II*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*. Starting from the Ovidian Hermaphroditus myth and leaning on Judith Butler, Jacques Lacan, Janet Adelman, and many others, he retraces the conflicting and sometime painful male and femaleness in some major characters of these plays. For Stone, comedy is the place for gender construction through transvestism, tragedy for the inescapable and fatal implosion that androgyny entails. Before Shakespeare and beyond the common or commonplace Renaissance notion that in a love relationship the male becomes in some way "effeminate," Stone sees the core of male anxieties in postcoital flaccidity, which he finds in Ovid

and Beaumont's translation of Ovid: man becomes woman at the moment of sexual climax because this is simultaneously the moment of anticlimax.

In his chapter on *Twelfth Night*, the author argues that the interchangeability of Viola and her brother Sebastian suggests, like Ovid's description of Hermaphroditus, that they are and are not two sexes in one. The duel scene with Sir Andrew Aguecheek, however, does not allow for such ambiguity, for (as Stone puts it) Viola "reductively attributes her cowardice to phallic diminutiveness" (30)—phallic absence might have been more precise here. In *Richard II*, Stone traces what he considers the surfacing of the feminine in the king, the psychic battle between patriarch and subject. It surfaces as a cleavage or doubleness of the self, marked by repetition of words of denying, words with "un-": "unking," "undo," "none" — a feature that Stone links with Freud's notion (on "The Uncanny") that the unheimlich place that was once heimlich is the womb. Much of this is certainly clever and even convincing, except perhaps when he calls Richard's self-representation as the sun another such "un" word. I cannot fail him, however, for not engaging a question, that I would like to see answered sometime, namely why, of all Shakespeare plays, this one about the effeminate king was chosen by Bertolt Brecht to translate.

Hamlet's famous inaction and delay, his soliloquizing are seen similarly to Richard's self-destructing musings (Richard's unmanning) type-gendered as feminine. Stone describes the collapse of sexual difference as he figures Hamlet as a feminized, impotent man and Gertrude as a masculinized, castrating woman. According to him, the androgynous sexual mixture that consummately joins male and female is the indistinction of death. This is so because he reads the "consummation to be wished" and also "the undiscovered country" cleverly (but for me a touch too ingeniously) as sexual puns. For *Othello* the author suggests that unconsciously Othello wants his marriage to fail: that is why he is so gullible to the tricks of Iago. In this view Othello is not only marginalized by his blackness, but his love for a much younger white woman undercuts his status as a manly general. For Stone it is less his race than anxieties about femininity, age, and impotence that lead him to his crisis.

Since the relative male- and femaleness in characters is at the heart of Stone's subject of gender, his brief chapter on *Antony and Cleopatra* is truly masterful: if before I tended to think of Cleopatra as the ultimate woman and of Antony the ultimate male, then Stone has taught me a valuable lesson. He sets the love-scene reported by Cleopatra in which she puts her "tires and mantles"

on Antony," while she wore "his sword Philippan," against the later scene in which she arms him for battle after making love. In one scene he is unmanned, in the other love is the servant of revivified, remasculinized war. Stone shows convincingly that Shakespeare at every turn presses the question whether love-making vitiates or strengthens martial valour. Of course Cleopatra in the end out-Romans the Romans by enacting the Roman discipline of suicide. In his discussion of *Cymbeline*, finally, Stone points to the similarity of Postumus with the jealous logic of Othello and Leontes: Postumus will consider Imogen in fantasy only chaste enough after having ordered her death. According to Stone, the ultimate male fantasy that the drama propounds is that of single sex reproductivity or parthenogenesis: male blood or spirit unmixed with female matter. But as in other Shakespearean plays (perhaps even King Lear finding [female] hysteria in him), the genders of the characters in *Cymbeline* are mixed: Postumus denounces as impure "the woman's part" within him.

As I said above, this is a true essay, almost always thrilling although occasionally a little vexing. That, when the Romans are driven back by the Britons' stand, this "stand" should be read as a pun on erection (120) is far from evident. In my mind Stone, following French habits overdoes a little the punning. He runs after every possible (and some unlikely) wordplay: dismade—dis-maid; utrumque—neutrumque; sun as "un" word; not—knot; the allegory of (g)love; eye—ay; mater—matter—mother; mere sadness—mère. Some readers might say that wordplay is part of this mode of writing. I would like it even more without.

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