

framework. Singh uses a postcolonial lens to focus on South African capital and class struggles via *King Lear*, racial (sometimes racist) and sexual depictions of Cleopatra through a recent Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the establishment of English nationhood in *Cymbeline*.

Part 3, “Shakespeare, Postcoloniality, and Reception: Performance and Film,” moves to foreground more recent, global appropriations. Employing specific examples to forge a larger point, the first chapter in this section analyzes the discourse and reception surrounding specific intercultural, intertextual, non-Western productions: Ong Keng Sen’s *King Lear*, Salim Ghouse’s *Jatra-style Hamlet*, and Sulayman Al-Bassam’s *Richard III*. One of the book’s aims is to collapse the colonial-postcolonial binary, and Singh tackles this more directly in chapter 6, exploring the concept of contemporary Britishness in a multilingual, multiracial, and multiethnic Britain. Chapter 7 explores Shakespeare on film, particularly stressing Shakespeare within the context of world cinema.

This text provides richly detailed, in-depth analysis of specific productions and the key critical influences of seminal scholarly works; however, its true contribution lies in situating the playtexts, critical responses, and reviews of productions and appropriations within the ongoing—and always evolving—conversations regarding race, religion, ethnicity, nationhood, and gender. Singh’s dual observations that Shakespeare’s early modern audiences themselves lived in a multiracial and multiethnic global city, and that readers and audiences of Shakespeare continue to become “more transnational, trans-cultural, as well as multilingual,” resonates throughout this highly engaging book.

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*Shakespeare and Queer Theory*. Melissa E. Sanchez.

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Melissa Sanchez’s aim in writing *Shakespeare and Queer Theory* was “to make new two fields of study that can, if we let them, become predictable and stale precisely because of their institutional prestige” (178). Bringing to the project both an expertise in Shakespeare studies and queer theory as well as a healthy insistence on the contingency of her own participation in an “ongoing, productively unwieldy conversation,” Sanchez succeeds admirably (2). *Shakespeare and Queer Theory* is an excellent resource for those seeking an understanding of the origins and development of academic queer theory, the history of lesbian/gay/queer Shakespeare scholarship, and the emergence of work that explores early modern queerness beyond homoeroticism. Though accessible to newcomers, Sanchez’s judicious, balanced assessments of these scholarly fields, as well as

her insightful readings of Shakespearean texts and films, offers much of interest to even experts in these fields.

Following an introduction usefully structured around frequently asked questions—e.g., “Why is this theory called ‘queer?’” “Was Shakespeare gay?”—Sanchez devotes a chapter to the rich intellectual and activist genealogies of queer theory. While lesbian and gay scholarship and activism of the 1970s and 1980s gets crucial acknowledgment but relatively cursory treatment, Sanchez gives significant attention to the role of the “feminist sex wars” (including Gayle Rubin’s essential essay “Thinking Sex”), women of color feminism, and HIV-AIDS activism in shaping the foundations of queer theory. Following an account of the classic texts of queer theory—Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990)—Sanchez addresses later challenges to the exclusions of queer theory posed by queer of color critique, transnational critique, trans theory, and disability theory.

In the next chapter, Sanchez posits that exploring homoeroticism in Shakespeare’s texts is valuable to queer theory because it can “attune us not only to forms of homoeroticism before nineteenth-century identity categories, but also to the insufficiency of either simple identification with or distinction between early modern and modern sexuality” (58). In addition to the expected discussions of sodomy and friendship, Sanchez addresses queer feminism—i.e., the specifically gendered forms of women’s queerness, as in the use of dildos and tribadism—queer Christianity, and humanist education.

An important chapter on “Queerness beyond Homoeroticism” explores the “normativizing force of ideals and expectations that cannot be explained by a homo-hetero binary” (86). Here Sanchez looks at recent work on “queer heterosexuality” (e.g., non-binary transgender performance, heteroerotic sodomy); the impact of race, empire, and colonialism on sexuality; methodological questions of epistemology and empiricism (e.g., how do we recognize sex in Shakespeare’s texts? What constitutes empirical evidence of sex?); work on queer language and rhetoric; and issues of temporality and history, including how “queer studies of Shakespeare and pre-modern literature have both engaged in careful historical and archival research *and* challenged new historicist prohibitions against anachronism” (103).

Building on these theoretical discussions, the final chapters of the book model queer readings of plays and films. Sanchez examines the mobility of desire in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Venus and Adonis*; the racial, ethnic, and religious components of sexuality in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*; and queer temporality and historiography in *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. These readings demonstrate that Shakespeare’s works provide a “valuable archive for queer studies” both because characters’ erotic desires and practices “challenge us to formulate nonce terms and taxonomies” and because moments of anachronism and nonlinear sequencing reveal the plays as “structurally and conceptually queer” (112).

In a chapter on film and a short concluding chapter on the conservative fetishization of Shakespeare’s supposed universality, Sanchez demonstrates queer theory’s “real and

complex engagement with contemporary politics” (173). Focusing on form as a way to “approximate at the interpretive level a queer political attention to the need for radical structural change,” Sanchez analyzes the queer pastiche aesthetic of Derek Jarman’s *The Tempest*, and unfolds the “scathing view of modern biopolitics” in Jarman’s *Edward II* and Gus Van Sant’s *My Own Private Idaho* (144, 152). Sanchez concludes by critiquing the conservative racial and sexual politics of Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* and Julie Taymor’s *Titus*, films that convey heteronormative values under the veil of parodic post-modern style.

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*Shakespeare on the Record: Researching an Early Modern Life.*

Hannah Leah Crummé, ed.

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The central question posed by this promising gathering of ten essays is, “can we learn anything new about Shakespeare?” In her introduction, Crummé says that each contribution announces a biographical discovery and explains how they occurred: “they demonstrate how specialist knowledge of entire collections can inform interpretation of early modern records” (1). The contributors themselves include expert archivists, historians, and Shakespeare scholars.

The first of Alan H. Nelson’s two essays is an extended critique of Chris Laoutaris’s *Shakespeare and the Countess: The Battle that Gave Birth to the Globe* (2014), about a successful 1596 petition against the Lord Chamberlain’s Men starting an indoor theater at the Blackfriars. “Elizabeth Russell Dowager [Countess]” is top of the list of signatories. While Nelson disagrees with Laoutaris’s revisionist history, he seems also to have misunderstood it. In exploring the peculiarities of the petition, Laoutaris shows that Russell’s name is first, not because she was a dowager countess (in fact she lost her legal case to call herself one), but because she led the petition herself, through the strength of her own personality. Nelson reads the petition only for social status (29), which was not in fact there in the way he assumes. Nelson’s second essay discusses several Shakespearean-related indentures, one of which, relating to Shakespeare’s purchase of the Blackfriars Gatehouse, Nelson himself has newly identified (114).

Heather Wolfe’s long contribution on Shakespeare’s coat of arms contains useful background information about how one was obtained, as well as some expert close readings of the manuscripts involved. But I could have done with more clarity about what her findings actually tell us, and why they matter to Shakespearean biography. The coat of