

Shakespeare and Immigration. Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiters, eds.
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Shakespeare and Immigration has an explicit concern with an urgent contemporary sociopolitical issue. But it also draws on and includes excellent historical and literary scholarship, contextualizing immigration in Shakespeare's plays with immigration in the cultures of early modern Europe, especially England, Wales, Spain, and Venice.

The book begins with a consideration of the representation of immigrants in the partly Shakespearean play *Sir Thomas More*, not just the lines in defense of immigrants that have recently been included in editions such as the Norton. Throughout, wide-ranging scholarship, careful reading, and concern with political exclusion and inclusion enable many new insights. Eric Griffin draws on biblical and early modern religious history as he finds anxiety about immigration also in *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *The Jew of Malta*. Geraldo U. de Sousa, using Venetian history, analyzes the characters of *The Merchant of Venice* in relation to Harm de Blij's

categories of globals, mobals (de Blij's neologism), and locals. Elizabeth Valdez Acosta finds similarities between the biases of *Merchant's* casket test and that of the United States immigration lottery. Bindu Malieckal argues that some aspects of Miranda, Sycorax, Caliban, and Prospero, "boat people" in their own way, can be related to characteristics of historical early modern refugees — particularly Miranda and Sycorax to women fleeing because of religious persecution — and twenty-first-century refugees and children of refugees.

All the contributors are concerned with ethical issues in immigration, but the analyses are diverse. The introduction speaks of "Shakespeare's seeming call to treat the stranger with dignity" (6). Some of the contributors would stress "seeming." Bernadette d'Andrea argues that *Henry VIII* metaphorically blackens and degrades not only the Spaniard Katherine of Aragon, but also the female strangers within, Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth. Contributors come to different conclusions even about the treatment of similar categories of immigrants. Considering theories of translation as well as of hospitality, Kathryn Volmero Santos shows that in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* "English linguistic identity is defined against and at the expense of immigrants" (69), Welsh and French. But Rubin Espinosa argues that *Henry V* portrays Fluellen as a man who maintains his Welsh culture with dignity.

The two essays on *Othello* are especially valuable and thought provoking as well as historically informed. Imtiaz Habib argues that, like the many black people he has found in the archives of early modern England (including some prized because of specialized skills), Othello was in a condition of "chattel bondage in all but name" (143). His interrogation by the Senate was like those of questionable marriages (some transracial) in Elizabethan courts. As general, he may have been a second choice after Marcos Luccicos. Peter Erickson notes Othello's obsession with the word *fair*, and the conjunction of his history of slavery with the enslavement of most black servants in Europe at the time. He points out that the name of Desdemona's mother's maid, Barbary, suggests the black servants in Venetian portraiture, and finds her invocation of Barbary part of "the destructive cross-cultural competition into which both spouses are drawn" (167). Rather than the final speech in which Othello tries to identify himself in terms of his defense of Venice, Erickson focuses on the slightly earlier speeches in which he "defines his guilt as specifically black" (171). He also observes that Othello's recall from Cyprus must have been issued without knowledge of his breakdown, so perhaps it indicates "the random emergence of an undercurrent of uneasiness about employing a black general" (172). Some scholars (not mentioned here) argue that Othello's position was more secure because Venice was used to having foreigners as generals — but those foreigners were, as far as the records we have show, from other locations in Europe (including other city-states in Italy), and not Moors.

This book, with its wide range of reference, would be valuable to anyone interested in immigration, race, and other cross-cultural issues in the early modern period, from advanced undergraduate to experienced scholar, in history as well as literature. Some essays will challenge those who want to see Shakespeare as the genius who always takes

the most progressive position, but that very challenge is part of what makes the book pedagogically useful as well as full of groundbreaking scholarship.

MARIANNE NOVY, *University of Pittsburgh*