

between February and June of 1626. During this period, Donne also served as prolocutor to Convocation. The volume covers a shorter period of time and contains fewer texts than any of the others in the series, but Lund makes a clear case for the importance of these sermons for an understanding of the mature Donne, notwithstanding their general critical neglect (xxviii). Notably, it includes a series of sermons on Psalm 32, which were previously undated. The editors have established a compelling case for assigning these sermons to this period, and our understanding of the sermons and of Donne are both materially assisted by this.

The introduction to this volume does a fine job of setting the context for these sermons. In clear and elegantly written sections, Lund addresses the biographical context of the sermons, explores the setting in which they were preached—including a helpful discussion of Donne’s use of sermon series—and examines some of the dominant themes of these sermons. Donne’s use of assorted translations of the Bible, patristic writings, contemporary commentaries, and secular learning are also commented upon with economy and clarity. It is also worth remarking that the presentation of the volume matches its contents. The volumes of this edition are beautifully produced, and elegantly laid out, and the editorial conventions adopted by the project are laudably rigorous and sensible.

The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne is an important and significant project, and it has been a pleasure to watch the volumes appear. This twelfth volume maintains the high standards of earlier volumes and stands firmly on its own merits as an exemplary piece of scholarship.

Mark S. Sweetnam, *Trinity College Dublin*

---

*Shakespeare’s Italy and Italy’s Shakespeare: Place, “Race,” Politics.* Shaul Bassi. *Reproducing Shakespeare: New Studies in Adaptation and Appropriation.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. xi + 232 pp. \$95.

---

About a third of the way through his study of Italy and Shakespeare, Shaul Bassi tells the story of “one of those real . . . Jews of Venice” (64), Gino Bassi, his grandfather, who had escaped to Rome in 1944 in order to avoid being sent to the death camps, and who had, many years earlier, on the tercentenary of Shakespeare’s death, published a short essay in which he wrote that Shakespeare “did not use the theatre as a means to disseminate a faith or to fight a political party or a nation; his genius is . . . universal” (qtd. in Bassi, 64). Bassi makes emphatically clear throughout his study that whether one operates within the fraught discourse of the universal or the uneasy discourse of the global, “country disposition[s]” (*Othello* 3.2.204) are more than sources for “ethnic humor” or disciplinary fodder (10–13). Bassi shows with some passionate and intelligent verve throughout his study that incidental and accidental encounters between Shakespeare

and Italy “may . . . illuminate singular potentialities of the plays activated by . . . specific Italian circumstances and simultaneously turn Shakespeare into a special guide to a nation’s changing ethos and political unconscious” (4).

However, for a study too often more apodictic than circumspect in its argumentative style and tone, Bassi is in fact making a more emphatic claim: haunted by its ancient Roman past, its identification with the Catholic Church, and its bordering Europe and Africa, Italy is not just any historical or postmodern site but the preeminent nexus of Europe whose “roots” are Islamic, Christian, and Jewish (96); and with especially the native informant-philosopher-theorists Giordano Bruno and Giorgio Agamben as his guides, Bassi wants to make the case, especially addressing the “Anglosphere” that has presumptuously assumed almost exclusive ownership of Shakespeare and Shakespearean academic discourse, that Italy has a “more compelling [case] insofar as most of the plays under scrutiny are derived from Italian sources” and “each new Italian staging . . . brings a text and set of meanings back to their ‘original’ context, creating in turn new texts and new meanings” (4). Remarkably, Bassi’s own words resonate uncannily with Antony’s “new heaven, new earth” (*Antony and Cleopatra* 1.1.17), a speech Bassi discusses in his chapter on Bruno’s “radical philosophical and political project” (106) and its influence on Shakespeare.

Bassi sets his “generat[ive]” (21) reading of Italy against the Anglosphere’s critical “naturaliz[ation]” of race (12), which he sees as responsible for the emergence there of Shakespeare and early modern race (as opposed to ethnic) studies, which he comes close to categorically dismissing through insinuation, slips, and caricature, even while condoning it as “a corrective to an older color-blind but tacitly racist criticism” (13). While separating race from its “North American inflection” (12–13) is in itself a commendable move, Bassi’s oppositional stance makes the redemptive argument he wishes to make (e.g., 18, 201) less tenable, less intellectually and ethically “manageable” (198). One is left with the impression by the end of Bassi’s book that the philosophical and political traditions and realities of Italy (its cultural, intellectual, and ethical standing) supersede what he sees as the overdetermined identity politicking of the Anglosphere, which flounders in its racial epistemologies and is unable to produce the kind of redemptive work that speaks most saliently to Shakespeare’s genius. Bassi loses at least this reader when he complains that the minority scholar within the Anglo-American “hegemonic academic paradigm” turns his or her marginalization into a kind of hermeneutical privilege (31). Bassi seems to offer his own radical (and passionate but disinterested) Brunian critique as an attenuation or corrective.

The political, philosophical, and, sometimes, the archeological, figure prominently in the book’s nine chapters organized under three rubrics: “Race,” “Politics,” and “Place.” The three chapters of the final rubric—focused on Juliet’s dead body in Verona and Shylock’s ghetto in Venice, stone figures of Moors in Venice, and the heterotopia of the Roman prison in Paolo and Vittorio Taviani’s film *Cesare deve morire/Caesar Must*

*Die* (2012)—offer some of the book's most compelling material and will probably garner the book its most enthusiastic readership. The book will probably be most engrossing to those interested in global Shakespeare, and, ironically, those most especially interested in the global language of race as informed by Shakespeare's texts and afterlives.

Arthur L. Little Jr., *University of California, Los Angeles*

*Queer Shakespeare: Desire and Sexuality.* Goran Stanivukovic, ed.

The Arden Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017. xiv + 406 pp. \$102.

This volume of thirteen essays explores what makes Shakespeare's work queer. Taken together, the collected essays suggest quite a lot. That is how editor Goran Stanivukovic would have it. In his introduction, Stanivukovic wrangles with the ever-territorializing tendencies of the volume's keyword: *queer*. As a trenchant method of troubling identitarian categories, queer theory has often turned to the definition of *queer* itself. Stanivukovic, however, chooses to diffuse rather than to clarify its meaning, claiming, "*Queer Shakespeare* . . . demonstrates that 'queer' means diversity of approaches to desire, sexuality, and embodiment in Shakespeare" (4). Trading novelty for political exigency, such a definition accommodates too much. The efficacy of queer theory—like any literary theory—inheres in a rather specific approach to a diversity of topics. Not everything is queer, but everything might be queered. Fortunately, it is on these latter terms that the volume succeeds. From antitheatrical homophobia to excessive narrativity, from the language of size to the queer style of language, from glass to plague, the volume's essays turn to a variety of subjects to queer Shakespeare.

The volume is divided into three parts: part 1, "Queer Time"; part 2, "Queer Language"; and part 3, "Queer Nature." A few essays warrant mention for their particular contributions to the intersections between feminist and queer theory, methodologies that have, at times, found themselves at odds. In an inspired reading of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Holly Dugan examines the phonetics of female desire in the comedy through the lexicographic and philological history of the letter "h." It is a welcome contribution to a growing body of scholarship on queer philology pioneered by Jeffrey Masten. Offering a feminist critique to Lee Edelman's reproductive futurism, Melissa E. Sanchez demonstrates how *Measure for Measure* treats procreation as iterative and generative but, fundamentally, contingently material and nearly nonhuman. In doing so, Sanchez attends to meanings of early modern procreative sex far more queer than modern heterosexual ideology might otherwise conceive. Simone Chess provides an expressly recuperative reading of otherwise abject or absurd episodes of male-to-female cross-dressing in Shakespeare's plays. It is a welcome addition, but the volume remains wanting in its inclusion of transgender scholars and scholarship.