

fixation on idealized love. The final chapter considers how incest interacts with other forms of lust, love, and desire, especially in *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, and the late romances.

The introduction claims that the book “emphasizes differences, as well as commonalities, between Shakespeare’s treatment of sexual desire and romantic love that builds toward marriage, and our own assumptions about these matters” (1). It accomplishes this goal only implicitly; while the book clearly and thoroughly analyzes Neoplatonic discourses and the love/lust binary in Shakespeare’s work, it focuses narrowly on this one discourse and does not engage in depth with modern cultural productions that might illustrate our own culture’s attitudes (one exception is brief readings of recent stage and film productions of Shakespeare’s plays in chapters 7 and 8). This book also does not take into account queer theory’s contributions to a fuller picture of attitudes toward love, sex, and desire in early modern England and in Shakespeare’s work, and it does not add to scholarship in queer theory or sexuality studies. Its methods are instead anchored in close reading and traditional historicism. It is not likely to contain new information for Shakespeare scholars or scholars of queer and sexuality studies.

Even if this book does not accomplish what it claims in its introduction, it has a number of strengths, including the immense depth and scope with which it analyzes Shakespeare’s language of love and lust. It is written in a straightforward style and is free of jargon, making it approachable and accessible for non-experts and students. For example, chapter 7, which analyzes same-sex relationships and how they influence cross-sex relationships in the plays, articulates the complexities of these dynamics through easy-to-follow close readings. Hall argues in this chapter that some same-sex relationships challenge hetero-marital closure or are sacrificed for this closure, yet others, such as Antonio and Bassanio’s homoerotic bond in *The Merchant of Venice*, remain compatible with marriage. Here, Hall offers a clear, accessible explanation for a concept that is often difficult for a twenty-first-century undergraduate audience to grasp: that same-sex and cross-sex relations are not always mutually exclusive in Shakespeare. This clarity of style and argument remains a positive central feature of the monograph.

Valerie Billing, *Central College*

doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.193

Shakespeare / Sex: Contemporary Readings in Gender and Sexuality.

Jennifer Drouin, ed.

Arden Shakespeare Intersections. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2020. xii + 332 pp. £130.

There is a sense of urgency to *Shakespeare / Sex*, an interest in extending the boundaries of the field of not just Shakespeare studies but early modern research methodologies as well. Part of the Arden Shakespeare Intersections, this collection highlights

intersectional and interdisciplinary ways of approaching sexuality while acknowledging the complexity of such approaches. In doing so, it sheds light on a number of issues, including toxic masculinity, climate change, childhood/compulsory/crip sexualities, and gender normativity.

One of the collection's key appeals lies in its attention to contemporary issues. This is especially true of Sharon O'Dair's chapter on sex and ecology, which provides a glimpse into climate change and the ecological costs of bearing children. Kay Stanton's chapter on *Lucrece* speaks to the transhistorical nature of rape and trauma, offering an interesting reading of suicide as a feminist choice despite its toxic masculinity that Stanton attributes to the poem's setting rather than the poem itself. By attending to these issues, these chapters highlight the importance of recognizing overlaps between the past and the present moment.

The collection also excels in bringing together interdisciplinary scholars with some marvelous insights into disability, trans studies, and race. The essays by Allison Hobgood, Urvasi Chakravarty, and Colby Gordon successfully demonstrate how literary studies can and should learn from critical race, disability, and trans studies models. Hobgood's essay, for example, begins exploring crip sexuality in *Measure for Measure* by looking at nonnormative sex, disability drives, intentional contagion, and facilitated sex. Chakravarty's work analyzes homonationalism in *Richard III* by attending to early modern obstetric texts, accounts of monstrous births, and ableist desires for reproductive sex. Gordon's work looks at the idea of *techné* and trans bodies in Sonnet 20, convincingly reframing the ambiguity surrounding the young man's beauty by detaching gender significance from body parts.

Gender and sexuality remain a binding thread throughout the collection, with each essay playfully subverting normative expectations about identity categories. Like Gordon, Kathleen E. McLuskie explores the uncertainty of recognizing specific gender characteristics, and in doing so, offers a reading of identity as a fluid category that depends on social affirmation. Jessica Murphy's chapter on greensickness extends the study of female health by pointing towards toxic masculinity and gender normativity. Melissa Sanchez negotiates heteronormative and homonormative views through the absence of sexual desire in *Measure for Measure*. Such feminist approaches expand what it means to think of Shakespearean sex by juxtaposing asexuality, Protestantism, greensickness, toxic masculinity, and other important aspects that underline desire and desirability in the early modern world.

Such juxtapositions can be extended to the logic of the collection as well. While the sections are broadly divided according to their focus on heteronormativity, intersectional identity, homoeroticism, and transness in Shakespeare, there are significant overlaps within and across sections. Kate Chedgzoy's intersectional approach and Goran Stanivukovic's queer framework both draw heavily on the comparative analysis of Shakespeare's Roman predecessors. Hobgood and Sanchez's approaches to *Measure for Measure* provide a complementary look at queer and crip sexualities. Jennifer

Drouin and Huw Griffith's readings both depend on queering the gaze, but while Drouin focuses on patriarchal control, ocular excess, and the production of divided subjectivities, Griffith's brilliant close readings draw on the play's performance history in order to identify the conditions that make a text seem homoerotic. Such overlaps demonstrate the value of intersectional and interdisciplinary dialogues while offering multiple ways of approaching the same source texts.

Given that many of these works are actively engaged in constructing and expanding the fields of disability, trans, and environmental criticism, they offer a lot more context for their readings and interventions than may be expected of such short essays. However, this is precisely what makes this collection more accessible to new readers who may otherwise be unaware of some of the stakes of these interventions. As a whole, then, *Shakespeare / Sex* provides some wonderfully succinct and astute readings of important issues surrounding desire, embodiment, and identity politics. The collection succeeds in gesturing towards new directions in Shakespeare criticism, raising a number of tantalizingly open-ended questions that productively leave room for future scholarly engagements. Through their open questions, critical insights, and new disciplinary frameworks, these essays invite readers to reevaluate their own understanding of early modern sex.

Deyasini Dasgupta, *Syracuse University*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.194

Shakespeare and the Play Scripts of Private Prayer. Ceri Sullivan.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xvi + 248 pp. \$80.

This book not only offers a fresh historizing of a handful of Shakespeare's history plays but also examines how private prayer opens up new regions of expressive power and theatrical possibility in dramatic dialogues with God, in model prayers, in popular pamphlets on spiritual life, and in many other modes of lay-composed prayer in the 1580s and onwards. As Sullivan contends, "advice texts" on private prayer, which circulated during Shakespeare's working life, show "prayer as a vital force to free social energies through excitement about what should be and could be" (2). The book's central aim is to explore how modes of private prayer and drama move along these edges of dramatic possibility. Through a critical reading of 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, *Richard III* and *Henry V*, *Henry VIII*, and *Richard II*, Sullivan "tests" the view that these plays "exploit the dramatic quality of prayer" (5).

The chapters draw on a remarkable number of advice texts on prayer. Chapter 1 describes how techniques and approaches to prayer, gleaned from these handbooks and manuals, helped pray-ers learn how to pray. Chapter 2 notes advice about composing, and reciting prayers, whether ready-made or made up, and issues warnings about the dangers of enthusiasms and emotions in the act of praying. The originality of these