

Secondary Sources – Race in Shakespeare

Mario DiGangi

Akhimie, Patricia. *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race Conduct and the Early Modern World*. London: Routledge, 2018. Through readings of *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest*, Akhimie argues that in Shakespeare blackness is read as a sign of the incapacity for civilized self-improvement.

Dadabhoy, Ambereen. *Shakespeare through Islamic Worlds*. London: Routledge, 2024. Dadabhoy demonstrates how Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, and histories engage with Islamic and Muslim tropes, despite the absence of Islamic cultures and Muslim people from the plays.

Espinosa, Ruben. *Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism*. London: Routledge, 2021. Arguing that Shakespeare "embodies whiteness . . . as a cultural icon that many aspire to access," Espinosa uses racist episodes from Shakespeare's texts to address how contemporary racism renders Black and brown people vulnerable.

Hall, Kim F. *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1995. Hall analyzes how depictions of blackness and gender in plays (e.g., Shakespeare's *Cleopatra*), poetry, travel narratives, and visual art were affected by England's early seventeenth-century expansion as a commercial, naval, and imperialist power.

Iyengar, Sujata. *Shades of Difference: Mythologies of Skin Color in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. Iyengar argues that early modern literary depictions of racial difference "at once create and interrogate the assumptions about race, skin color, and gender that we live with today."

Little, Jr., Arthur L., ed. *White People in Shakespeare: Essays on Race, Culture, and the Elite*. London: Bloomsbury, 2023. This collection examines how Shakespeare's texts engage in the process of "making" white people, and also how "white people have used Shakespeare to define and bolster their white cultural racial identity, solidarity, and authority."

Loomba, Ania. *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Devoting individual chapters to *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, this study historicizes early modern ideas about race by analyzing how the plays represent differences of color, religion, geography, and economic practice.



Loomba, Ania and Jonathan Burton, eds. *Race in Early Modern England: A Documentary Companion*.

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Loomba and Burton collect a wealth of primary texts that illuminate early modern ideas about race.

Smith, Ian. "We are Othello: Speaking of Race in Early Modern Studies." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67

(2016): 104-124. Smith considers the implications of reading *Othello* in the contexts of academic racism and popular racism in the contemporary United States.

Thompson, Ayanna, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 2021. This collection provides an up-to-date overview of major historical, critical, and theoretical perspectives for the study of race in Shakespeare.

Thompson, Ayanna. *Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2011. Thompson examines various cultural sites—film, novels, theater, prison programs, etc.—as evidence for the instability of the relationship between Shakespeare and race in contemporary America.

