

Queer Faith: Reading Promiscuity and Race in the Secular Love Tradition

Melissa E. Sanchez

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What do Madonna, George Michael, and Lady Gaga have in common with Petrarch? A lot, according to Melissa E. Sanchez's new book, *Queer Faith*. The book unpacks the secular language that Western culture uses to talk about love and race and describes how love songs demonstrate the queerness at the heart of heteronormative culture.

Queer Faith makes the case that faith is queer because human desire and subjectivity are fundamentally promiscuous: omnivorous, malleable, adaptive. The Bible and other religious writings are "queer" in the sense that they tell the story of faith that defies convention and human law. Faith, like love, is disruptive.

Sanchez writes, "True love, as distinct from lust or infatuation, resembles religious faith in structure but is directed at love objects who are in the world rather than saints or deities beyond it." Instead of worshiping God, the lyric poet praises a loved one. This beloved isn't necessarily defined according to gender, and loving them transforms both the singer and the song.

Queer Faith is ambitious in scope. Its five dense chapters are academic, linking venerable texts like Martin Luther's writings to modern events like the US Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which affirmed the constitutional right to marriage for all couples. Sanchez's arguments are eloquent and supported by extensive research—a "who's who" of queer theologians.

From erotic accountability to procreation and orgasms, *Queer Faith* is an incisive exploration of human sexuality's many manifestations. Although the work is not necessarily written for laypeople, Sanchez engages her subject with humor. *Queer Faith* is an enjoyable and outstanding piece of scholarship.

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