Error in Shakespeare: Shakespeare in Error. Alice Leonard.
Palgrave Shakespeare Studies. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. xx + 198 pp.
€77.99.

Error is a slippery concept. Nowhere is this more evident than in Alice Leonard's erudite study, *Error in Shakespeare: Shakespeare in Error*, which undertakes a comprehensive examination of error. Positing that its study has long been neglected, Leonard raises questions about what constitutes error and whether it should be corrected. Her overview studies error through figurative language; through the mother tongue and its association with women; through its interactions with the foreign; and through textual editing, revision, and annotative practices. Building upon a body of knowledge from related areas, Leonard argues that error is less a mistake than a means to creativity.

In "Error and Figurative Language," Leonard examines early modern beliefs about figurative language based on classical rules of decorum, where such language was viewed as digressive, manipulative, and even dishonest. She cites Sir Philip Sidney, among other early modernists, who strongly discouraged its use. Leonard notes that error during the period was also viewed as a wandering, which Shakespeare employs as a means to creative expression. She points to *Love's Labours Lost,* where the use of tropes is used to make the text grow from within itself. Far from a mistake, Shakespeare intentionally employs the figurative to question what constitutes correct usage.

In "Error and the Mother Tongue," Leonard examines the vernacular in relation to error. Because the early modern vernacular was associated with women, it was viewed as faulty compared to Latin and learned male authority. Although viewed as native, natural, and innate, the mother tongue was believed to be error prone. Leonard cites Mistress Quickly's faulty language use, noting that this character is "a loquacious gossip, her speech wandering and improper" (85). Shakespeare's Queen Margaret, however, exploits error to achieve power.

In "Error and the Nation," Leonard explores foreign language as a perceived threat to the purity of the English vernacular. Conflicted, often xenophobic early modern views of the infusion of the foreign into native language fueled debates from the likes of Richard Mulcaster and Thomas Wilson, who respectively argued for and against such inclusion. Leonard demonstrates how Shakespeare effectively uses such borrowings to creative ends. Error, in fact, becomes quintessential fodder for comedy, even in a play such as *Henry V,* which wrestles with conceptions of the nation. As she concludes, error —the infusion of the foreign into the native—becomes "linguistic construction rather than destruction of the pure, native tongue" (130).

Lastly, in "Error and the Text," Leonard moves from creative use of error to error which results from editorial, revisionist, or annotative mistake. Assuming that the text is finished and authoritative, it becomes the task of the editor, reviser, or annotator to correct perceived error. Leonard questions, however, whether error should be corrected, arguing that such editorial intrusion often merely introduces additional error. Using

Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors,* Leonard examines the ways in which numerous editors have wrestled with character ambiguity in the text. The F1 copy text, from which many modern editions are produced, ambiguously and confusedly applies incorrect character prefixes to the twins' names. Yet, as Leonard argues, the confusion is crucial to comedy within the play. Moreover, as she concludes, "correcting things which are not wrong and introducing further unclarity in the aim of clarifying it" (162) ultimately does more harm than good.

Alice Leonard's wide-ranging overview of error in Shakespeare and early modern literature is eminently readable, providing new insights into the ways in which error was used to push the boundaries of what was considered proper language use in the period. Leonard's strengths lie in her astute reading of early modern perceptions of error and how Shakespeare in particular masterly uses it to achieve comedic and dramatic ends. As with all good studies, *Error in Shakespeare: Shakespeare in Error* opens the door to further research with its aim of challenging notions of correctness, of exposing gendered, cultural underpinnings of bias, as well as xenophobia's all too familiar role in depictions of error.

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Four Shakespearean Period Pieces. Margreta de Grazia.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021. x + 238 pp. $95.

"A curious transvaluation," Margreta de Grazia notes, "is taking place in our study of the past" (1). This constitutes the focus of her *Four Shakespearean Period Pieces*, which explores how developments in an interrelated set of critical concepts affect the ways we approach time in Shakespeare and Shakespeare in time. In each of the essays that make up this engaging and accessible volume, de Grazia tracks how anachronism, chronology, periodization, and secularization are undergoing significant reappraisal, and its subsequent implications for approaching Shakespeare.

Anachronism violates the linearity of time by placing events, places, persons, and even ideas in a historical timeframe where they ostensibly do not belong. But their presence in Shakespeare's works, de Grazia argues, is not an error to be corrected or a mistake that requires explanation. The volume's opening essay examines the well-known anachronism in *Troilus and Cressida*, where Hector invokes Aristotle in the Trojan debate over the question of returning Helen. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, there was no distinction between the past and present on both the stage and page. Thus, Hector's apparent familiarity with the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the other anachronisms in the play are "updatings attuned to the present of the play's enactment" (38). In a play that sits at "the outmost rim of ancient history"