

PATRICIA PARKER. *Shakespearean Intersections: Language, Contexts, Critical Keywords*. Haney Foundation Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. Pp. 424. \$59.95 (cloth).

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Through a combination of close textual analysis and expansive historical research, Patricia Parker conducts an “experiment in interconnection” (28) to establish productive relationships between the language of Shakespeare’s works and the cultural milieu of the early modern period. Parker’s attentive readings of individual plays seek to address critical omissions in our recognition of the way the Shakespearean lexicon resonates with a rich network of contexts, including gender and hierarchy, religious tensions, geopolitics, racial identities and otherness, and sexual desire. Positing the “inseparability” (10) of early modern linguistic and discursive structures from these broader sociocultural concerns, and following the example of critics such as Raymond Williams, Parker’s methodology attends to “keywords” in Shakespeare’s plays that motivate deeply historicized rereadings of familiar characters and chronologies. Parker contends that such rereadings enable us to move beyond prescriptive (and proscriptive) structures in multiple contexts, stemming from Shakespeare’s own “preposterous” linguistics.

In each chapter, Parker provides sustained analysis of a play through the lens of one or more keywords identified by the text itself. She addresses Shakespearean comedy in the first three chapters, beginning with an incisive examination of the “preposterous” in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* that illuminates the bodily, scatological, and political aspects of a play too frequently viewed as merely rhetorical. This chapter’s examination of the reversals of gender and class hierarchical orders establishes a foundation for the later chapters and illustrates how such a methodological approach enables “perverse” or queer readings of Shakespeare’s texts, in the fullest sense of exposing the problems of binary logics that falsely separate self and other, text and context, and proper and improper order, in addition to exploring the workings of sexual desire.

Parker further develops this initial exploration of “preposterous” reordering of early modern structures and its relation to expectations and frustrations of the comedic genre (particularly its emphasis on marriage) in the following two chapters. Her analysis of *The Taming of the Shrew* reconsiders the character of Bianca, arguing that she proves herself an intractable wife rather than the expected obedient ideal. And her reading of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, an especially tightly constructed and incisive chapter on the complexity of a single keyword, demonstrates the resonant value of Peter Quince’s surname when we attend to the multiple connotations of this fruit in classical and early modern traditions surrounding marriage and sexuality, and to translational echoes with words like *coining*, *coitus*, and *coing*. In this instance, the focus on the keyword “quince” reveals the potentially prescriptive nature of modern editorial practices, as Parker notes that most editions of the play gloss the name as referencing a carpentry tool rather than emphasize the evocations of the quince fruit she expounds here.

Parker continues her insightful exploration of the resonance of a variety of keywords in individual plays in the final three chapters on history, tragedy, and romance, respectively; the focus on a single genre in the opening chapters, however, allows for more cohesion in the argumentative through-line of the book. In chapters 4 and 5, on *Henry V* and *Othello*, she further demonstrates the interpretive limitations that may be imposed by critical and editorial practices. Returning to the “preposterous,” referenced in *Henry V*, Parker calls attention to the “strikingly recursive relationship” (155) between this play and Shakespeare’s earlier tetralogy that dramatized historically later events, critiquing critical perspectives that isolate this play from its historical and theatrical contexts. The recursivity of *Henry V*, she maintains, exposes what is suppressed and omitted in Henry’s own rhetoric of his progress through time and France while simultaneously evoking audiences’ possible theatrical memories of earlier performances

of later events. Parker also questions editorial practices surrounding a key character in *Othello*: Brabantio, called in some editions “Brabanzio.” The name, Parker demonstrates, is a signal of the play’s preoccupations with Brabant, erased in the alternate spelling, and the attendant issues of religious affiliations, warfare in the Low Countries, ideologies of cash and credit, and immigration patterns, to name only a few of the many contexts identified in this chapter. The inclusivity of Parker’s analysis is valuable here, though it is a somewhat sprawling chapter that is at times overabundant and repetitive in its references to both the text and contextual material. This trait is indicative of the challenges inherent in a methodology that seeks to illustrate the depth and breadth of resonance in Shakespeare’s language (and at times characteristic of other chapters as well); some larger issues, such as the theoretical connection to queer theory attested to in the introduction, are subordinated here. Parker’s final chapter, by contrast, provides a pointed analysis of a romance, *Cymbeline*, and how its “intimations” (273), rather than explicit invocation, of the mythical figure of Ganymede may be seen as a critique of James’s court and his favoring of young courtiers who served as stewards of his bedchamber, returning to the book’s ongoing theoretical concerns.

Though at times the analyses of the plays offered in *Shakespearean Intersections* privilege referential inclusivity over streamlined argumentation, Parker’s innovative readings of Shakespeare’s texts provide a vital demonstration of the viability of close reading and attention to linguistic detail in the larger critical projects of gender studies, historicism, queer studies, and race studies. Parker effectively conjoins meticulous textual analysis with larger historical claims that deepen conceptualizations of how Shakespeare’s works responded to and shaped their contemporary culture. By addressing critical and editorial lacunae with such rigorous attention to both formal and historical matters, Parker models a methodological approach that enables dynamic intersections for the practice of Shakespeare criticism. Future studies will benefit from a similarly deep engagement with the complexities of the Shakespearean lexicon and its intimate relationship with early modern culture.

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W. B. PATTERSON. *Thomas Fuller: Discovering England’s Religious Past*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 368. \$85.00 (cloth).
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Even the most celebrated early modern historians are now more frequently read in excerpt than perused at length, and those who came later are especially prone to neglect. Less familiar today than William Camden or Raphael Holinshed, Thomas Fuller is most often remembered as the author of “Fuller’s Worthies” (*History of the Worthies of England*, 1662), which was both England’s first biographical dictionary and a county-by-county study of notable local features. As recently as the nineteenth century, however, *History of the Holy Warre* (1639) and *Church-History of Britain* (1655) were read with admiration and enthusiasm, and not just for their historical content. Coleridge ranked Fuller second only to Shakespeare in exciting “the sense and emotion of the marvelous,” and his friend Robert Southey listed Fuller’s *Church-History* among the twelve books he could not live without—a library that included works by Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton in addition to Shakespeare (337–38). It is the project of W. B. Patterson’s new book to recapture some of this esteem.

In part a biography of Fuller, Patterson’s work does an admirable job filling in the details of Fuller’s life and the way it reflected or responded to the momentous years he lived