



Munro, Lucy. Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men

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or a full stop at the end of a speech, in the only speech in Shakespeare that is believed to have been punctuated by the playwright (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, sig. G4r, 5.1.108–20), in relation to the semantic abundance of this speech. From a discussion of punctuation in print, the analysis moves to “the formal description of verse dialogue” (224), and to reflections on the blank spaces in dramatic verse.

This book was a joy to read because of the many colourful twists and turns of its critical language, because the author is a meticulous and imaginative close reader, and because the argument offers a very good model for stylistic micro-analysis as a mode in Shakespeare criticism. I hope that theatre practitioners, students in drama studio programs, and critics alike will find this book of use.

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Munro, Lucy.

Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men.

London: Bloomsbury, 2020. Pp. 240. ISBN 978-1-4742-6261-3 (hardcover) US\$100.

Lucy Munro's book on the King's Men represents a substantial contribution to the historiography of early modern theatre and a major new study of this theatre company, whose activities spanned four decades of London's burgeoning theatre scene in the seventeenth century. At the heart of Munro's well researched and accessibly written book are the player, the playwright, and the theatrical community, as she puts it in the preliminary pages (xvi). Munro has struck an excellent balance between a macro-history of the material conditions of playing and textual analyses of individual plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries that shaped the repertory of the King's Men. The six parts of the book—five chapters and an epilogue on *Hamlet*—are organized around case studies exploring one or several plays, focusing on themes and topics (e.g., magic and gender) as well as examining the staging conditions and playwriting practices illustrated by the plays on the repertory. Primarily, Munro interprets textual and contextual evidence that shows how plays evolved

from earlier drama, how roles and parts were written and inherited across the company's lifetime, and the ways in which Shakespeare's career after 1603 fits into the work of the company. Munro signposts clearly the book's key points when she lists the four "central concerns of this book: the place of Shakespeare's plays" in the company's "changing repertory"; the "role of multiple audiences" in shaping that repertory; the "performance of plays across multiple venues"; and the "impact" of players and the "broader structures of the playing company" (7). She examines these topics cogently in a critical narrative that is both engaging and enriched by Munro's critical sensitivity for interpreting documentary evidence from theatre and drama history, a task she approaches with the help of many details and with exactness. One of the most refreshing features of this book is that it presents Shakespeare's final stage of writing not in isolation but in a creative dialogue and interaction with other plays and playwrights associated with this company. This approach, in turn, also shows the breadth of the company's engagement with the dramatic resources of its age and the cultivation of collaboration and competition as creative activities that drove production of new drama for this company.

The book's concern is also the afterlife of the company's plays in other times, playing spaces, and locations. Thus, the excellent analysis of the 1610 production of *Othello* alongside Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* in Oxford, explored in the second chapter, and an interpretation of the evidence showing how the roles in both plays were shaped in relation to one another demonstrate the superb skill with which Munro yokes materialist history of drama and theatre with textual analysis of several interconnected plays. *Pericles*, *The Tempest*, *Richard II*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry 8*, and other plays are at the centre of extensive readings. In the first chapter, the subject is an investigation of actors' lists, eye-witness accounts, and reports of performance as the kind of evidence that provides the background for the reading of Shakespeare's drama as shaped by the company's role in the complex business of the theatre industry. The third chapter examines the three decades of the stage history of *Pericles* in the King's Men repertory and shows how other plays sprang up in response to this romance. In this chapter, Munro examines plays, narratives, and actors (especially boy actors) that shaped this play's extended stage history. She elevates the status of what critics often consider a less-familiar play by Shakespeare and George Wilkins to a new level, writing that "*Pericles* was designed as a star vehicle" (92) for a company that used it to reinforce the corresponding star—the actor Richard Burbage playing

the eponymous part. Munro's illuminating interpretation of the rich theatrical history of *Pericles* through the semantic dilation of the term "traffic," combining the meanings related to sexual use, endurance, and profitable movement and exchange, is brilliantly brought together in an example of a truly new way of reading theatre history through micro-linguistic analysis. Munro shows that *Pericles* belongs to a cluster of plays engaging with the Mediterranean that the King's Men produced around the same time. But the play's origin in romance writing—in dramatizing the kind of narrative found in the wonder stories of the saints' lives from the *Golden Legend*, stories that were the grounds for popular drama before the Reformation and thus well before the politics of the King's Men repertory engaged with the *Pericles* story—adds a new layer of literary complexity in the process of transformation of material out of which such Mediterranean plays are formed. The book's organizing principle around "the questions of authority, service, commodity and collaboration" (177) is maintained consistently throughout. It is buttressed by a useful and detailed appendix of the Shakespearean plays in the King's Men repertory between 1603 and 1642.

This book will be of great interest to all readers of Shakespeare and drama of the seventeenth century, and to theatre historians and practitioners. It also provides a good model for new critical studies of other theatre companies associated with Shakespeare, and for the study of Shakespeare as part of a collaborative enterprise shaped by a company of players.

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Pires, Tomé.

***Suma Oriental*. Ed. Rui Manuel Loureiro.**

Lisbon: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau; Fundação Jorge Álvares / Macau: Fundação Macau, 2017. Pp. 335. ISBN 978-972-8586-52-2 (paperback) €20.

The Portuguese scholar Rui Manuel Loureiro has provided readers with a fine critical edition of one of the most important yet often ignored sixteenth-century sources of information about Asia: the *Suma Oriental* by the Portuguese