

*Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men.* Lucy Munro.  
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*Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men* is an engaging work that argues for the theatrical practices of the King's Men, particularly after the year 1616, as foundational to our understandings of Shakespeare. While most scholars now agree that performance practices informed and shaped Shakespeare's theatrical writing, Lucy Munro here demonstrates some of the ways they (may) have done so, and built the legacy of Shakespeare in performance, while interrogating established assumptions about the original practices and staging conditions of the King's Men.

Munro's chapters are organized thematically, but she provides a chronological examination of the King's Men, through "interludes" that punctuate her chapters, examining court records and influences from the 1612–13, 1619–20, 1633–34, and 1636–37 court seasons. Munro lays the foundations for her approach of comparative speculations in the preface, noting "the paper trail on which theatre history depends is both fractured and complex" (xix). The first chapter examines extant evidence for which roles the King's Men are likely to have played, with Munro subdividing her inquiry into sections on leading men, comedians, and apprentices. Chapter 2 builds on this to explore the casting processes that lead Joseph Taylor, Richard Burbage's immediate successor as leading performer, to play roles such as Iago rather than Othello. Munro proposes collaboration and competition between actors and the effects of candlelit performances at the Blackfriars as chief reasons for this evolution in casting. Between these chapters, Munro offers a glimpse of professional practices governed by complex systems of personal relationships and evolving artistic tastes, theatrical technologies, and cultural considerations.

Chapter 3 explores the success of *Pericles* in light of England's imperial ambitions, and the literal trafficking of human beings through the African slave trade. Munro notes some of the plays that replaced *Pericles* in subsequent decades, but also that the King's Men kept *Pericles* in repertoire with these later works, placing Shakespeare in dialogue with his successors as cultural anxieties of human trafficking took new forms and audiences seemed to crave more explicit content addressing the topic. Chapter 4 examines the success and influence of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* into the 1630s and offers a glimpse at one instance in which Shakespeare's role as an actor in the company is likely to have influenced his work as a writer. The fourth chapter also postulates that female roles written for apprentices in the 1630s may hint at the particular boy actor's depictions of femininity and suggests how they may have performed some older plays in the repertory.

Chapter 5 highlights the ways the King's Men "strategically exploited the gap between 'insolent' and 'too insolent,' using politics as part of a broader commercial strategy" (176) to draw audiences to the Globe in the summer months. Courtiers, in

turn, used performances of political plays as a scaffold for staging their own political messaging. Munro argues for the importance of the Globe to the King's Men, partially as a venue for staging these political works, tracing their lineage to Shakespeare's history plays, and offers instances of Shakespeare's histories continuing to have contemporary political relevance into the 1630s. An epilogue follows, detailing the afterlives of King's Men's plays when their royal patron, the company, and their original playing conditions were no more. Munro further provides an appendix of Shakespeare's plays in the King's Men's repertory between 1603 and 1642, detailed notes (which helpfully, for those without institutional access, mark original documents available through the Folger's Shakespeare Documented project), extensive references, and an index highlighting King's Men actors and providing basic bibliographical information.

At times, Munro stretches the available evidence to lengths it cannot cover, and her uses of "may have" sometimes do an uncomfortable amount of work, but she offers a rich view of how the practices of Shakespeare's final partners in playmaking, and the first stewards of his legacy, shaped his work. *The King's Men* will be of interest to those seeking to better understand the practices and staging conditions of the Jacobean and Caroline stage, and their influence on Shakespeare's plays.

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*Shakespeare's Englishes: Against Englishness*. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton.  
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The provocative preposition in the title of Margaret Tudeau-Clayton's recent book *Shakespeare's Englishes: Against Englishness* offers a small glimpse into the different and frequently conflicting opinions about the "proper" (3) character and ownership of English, or perhaps the English, in post-Reformation England. The book offers a nuanced study of politics, linguistics, clothing, and, of course, wordplay in the 1590s and early 1600s, setting Shakespeare's early uses of linguistic variety, elaborate wordplay, and vibrant characters against several larger cultural trends. Even as many political, religious, and cultural leaders attempted to standardize the notion of English by excluding words and individuals considered strange or foreign, Shakespeare's plays, Tudeau-Clayton argues, consistently and insistently celebrate "gallimaufry," or a "mobile and inclusive mix of (human and linguistic) 'strangers'" (5) that had recently come under political and literary attack. Through a series of careful close readings of early Shakespearean dramas, she successfully shows how the plots and rhetoric of Shakespeare's early plays celebrate the varied, inclusive, and unpredictable aspects of the English language and people, resisting the ideologies of plainness invoked by several larger projects of cultural reformation initiated in post-Reformation England.