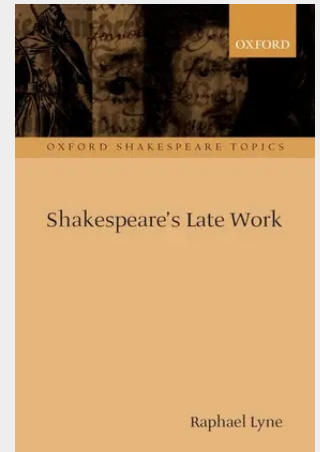


Shakespeare's Late Work

Shakespeare's Late Work is a detailed reading of the plays written at the end of Shakespeare's career, centring on Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest. Unlike many previous studies it considers all the late work, including Henry VIII, The Two Noble Kinsmen, the revised Folio version of King Lear, and even what can be ascertained about the lost Cardenio. From this broadened canon emerge signs of a distinct identity for the late work. Lyne explores how Shakespeare sets great store in grand principles - faith in God, love of family, reverence for monarchs, and belief in theatrical representations of truth. However, there is also a ubiquitous and structuring irony whereby such principles are questioned and doubted. Audiences and readers are left with a difficult but empowering decision whether to believe, or to question, or to accommodate both faith and scepticism. Alongside this interest in the new and characteristically 'late' qualities of this phase in Shakespeare's career, Shakespeare's Late Work puts it in a wider cultural context. A chapter on the collaborations and broader dramatic relationships with John Fletcher and Thomas Middleton illuminates how Shakespeare's canon interacts with other writing of its time. A chapter on how the late work revisits and reconsiders themes from earlier plays shows that continuity needs to be remembered alongside novelty. Overall this is an introduction to the key works of this period which advances a new reading of them. They emerge as fascinating and dazzling explorations of their potential and their limitations.

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