

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-13193-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language  
Edited by Lynne Magnusson, David Schalkwyk  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO  
SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

The power of Shakespeare's complex language – his linguistic playfulness, poetic diction, and dramatic dialogue – inspires and challenges students, teachers, actors, and theatregoers across the globe. It has iconic status and enormous resonance, even as language change and the distance of time render it more opaque and difficult. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language* provides important contexts for understanding Shakespeare's experiments with language and offers accessible approaches to engaging with it directly and pleasurably. Incorporating both practical analysis and exemplary readings of Shakespearean passages, it covers elements of style, metre, speech action, and dialogue; examines the shaping contexts of rhetorical education and social language; test-drives newly available digital methodologies and technologies; and considers Shakespeare's language in relation to performance, translation, and popular culture. The *Companion* explains the present state of understanding while identifying opportunities for fresh discovery, leaving students equipped to ask productive questions and try out innovative methods.

LYNNE MAGNUSSON is Professor of English at the University of Toronto. Her ground-breaking articles and chapters treat topics such as the grammar of possibility in Shakespeare's language and the social rhetoric of Renaissance letters. She is the author of *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

DAVID SCHALKWYK is Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Queen Mary University of London. He is a leading Shakespeare scholar and author of *Shakespeare, Love and Service* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and *Shakespeare, Love and Language* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

*A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.*

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-13193-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language  
Edited by Lynne Magnusson , David Schalkwyk  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-13193-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language  
Edited by Lynne Magnusson , David Schalkwyk  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
SHAKESPEARE'S  
LANGUAGE

EDITED BY  
LYNNE MAGNUSSON  
*University of Toronto*

with DAVID SCHALKWYK  
*Queen Mary University of London*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-13193-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language  
 Edited by Lynne Magnusson, David Schalkwyk  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107131934](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107131934)

DOI: 10.1017/9781316443668

© Cambridge University Press 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Magnusson, Lynne, editor. | Schalkwyk, David, editor.

Title: The Cambridge companion to Shakespeare's language /  
edited by Lynne Magnusson with David Schalkwyk.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY:

Cambridge University Press, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019000707 | ISBN 9781107131934 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781107583184 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 – Language. |

Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 – Literary style.

Classification: LCC PR3072.C36 2019 | DDC 822.3/3-dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019000707>

ISBN 978-1-107-13193-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-58318-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

<i>List of Contributors</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii

PART I BASIC ELEMENTS

1	Shakespeare and the Problem of Style	3
	JEFF DOLVEN	
2	Shakespeare's Creativity with Words	20
	ALYSIA KOLENTSIS	
3	The Performative Power of Shakespeare's Language	35
	DAVID SCHALKWYK	
4	Verse and Metre	53
	OLIVER MORGAN	
5	The Dynamics of Shakespearean Dialogue	72
	LYNNE MAGNUSSON	
6	Figures of Speech at Work	93
	RUTH MORSE	

PART II SHAPING CONTEXTS

7	Approaching Shakespeare through Rhetoric	115
	PETER MACK	

CONTENTS

8	Shakespeare and Social Languages	132
	JAMES SIEMON	
PART III NEW TECHNOLOGIES		
9	Digital Approaches to Shakespeare’s Language	151
	JONATHAN HOPE	
10	Authorship, Computers, and Comparative Style	168
	HUGH CRAIG	
11	Reading in Time: Cognitive Dynamics and the Literary Experience of Shakespeare	189
	AMY COOK AND SETH FREY	
PART IV CONTEMPORARY SITES FOR LANGUAGE CHANGE		
12	Writing for Actors: Language that Cues Performance	207
	CAROL CHILLINGTON RUTTER	
13	Language and Translation	226
	DIRK DELABASTITA	
14	Popular Culture and Shakespeare’s Language	244
	DOUGLAS M. LANIER	
	<i>Appendix: Glossary of Rhetorical Figures</i>	263
	<i>Further Reading</i>	271
	<i>Select Bibliography</i>	279
	<i>Index</i>	287

## CONTRIBUTORS

AMY COOK, Stony Brook University  
HUGH CRAIG, University of Newcastle, Australia  
DIRK DELABASTITA, University of Namur  
JEFF DOLVEN, Princeton University  
SETH FREY, University of California at Davis  
JONATHAN HOPE, Arizona State University  
ALYSIA KOLENTSIS, St. Jerome's University, University of Waterloo  
DOUGLAS M. LANIER, University of New Hampshire  
PETER MACK, University of Warwick  
LYNNE MAGNUSSON, University of Toronto  
OLIVER MORGAN, University of Geneva  
RUTH MORSE, Université-Paris-Sorbonne-Cité  
CAROL CHILLINGTON RUTTER, University of Warwick  
DAVID SCHALKWYK, Queen Mary University of London  
JAMES SIEMON, Boston University

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-13193-4 — The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language  
Edited by Lynne Magnusson , David Schalkwyk  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---



## PREFACE

For much of the twentieth century, the close reading of Shakespeare's language played a central role in shaping literary education. With a complex array of established concepts and vocabulary to call on, close reading became the calling card of the discipline of English. And at the centre of that practice, Shakespeare's brilliant language routinely served as the testing ground for innovative approaches and the occasion for so many virtuoso interpretive performances. English studies has since opened its embrace to other disciplines and to what for many have seemed more burning issues than how the language works. The focus has often been much more on cultural and political contexts than the linguistic details of Shakespeare's dramatic texts, increasingly on how the plays speak to questions of gender and race, war and religion, or nationalism and colonialism. The traditional methods of formal text analysis appeared to have little to tell us about these issues. Today, however, more than a little paradoxically, we are being called back more and more to the explication of Shakespeare's language, sometimes by admiration, sometimes by incomprehension, sometimes by a recognition that language use or misuse has an active role in constructing cultural phenomena like race and gender, or war and religion. How can the plays speak to us at all if we forget their language?

The power of Shakespeare's complex language both inspires and challenges today's students and teachers, actors and directors. It has iconic status and enormous resonance, even as language change and the distance of time render it more and more difficult. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language* orients students to important contexts for understanding Shakespeare's experimentation with the English language and offers a range of approaches to enable readers and theatregoers to engage with it directly and pleasurably. Each of the fourteen chapters in the volume incorporates practical analysis and exemplary readings of passages from Shakespeare's plays, carefully modelling the approach under discussion. These up-to-date approaches aim to facilitate students – to be

## PREFACE

both accessible and stimulating. Accordingly, not only do our contributors explain the present state of play but they identify many places of opportunity for fresh discovery. The chapters equip students to ask productive questions, to try out innovative methodological frameworks, and to test-drive newly available digital technologies. The volume is organised into four parts – basic elements, shaping contexts, new technologies, and contemporary sites for language change.

**Basic elements.** The first six chapters treat the key elements of Shakespeare's language. They focus on style, words, speech acts, verse and metre, dialogue, and figures of speech. Jeff Dolven provides an overview of early to late Shakespeare as he explores what it means to think of literary language in terms of style, an important but not unproblematic category in use since Shakespeare's day. What many people think of when they think about linguistic creativity is vocabulary, the storehouse of words. Alysia Kolentsis asks what exactly it is that makes Shakespeare's words stand out? She qualifies some of the standard claims about how many words Shakespeare invented and helps students to appreciate his creativity with the existing resources of Early Modern English. Writing about speech acts in Shakespeare, David Schalkwyk invites us to consider dramatic utterance not in terms of words and stylistic ornamentation but instead as a serious – sometimes transformative – mode of action in the world. Treating verse and metre, Oliver Morgan pares down the complicated systems of scansion to some basic elements, showing readers how a minimalist prosody can yield a rich experience of Shakespeare's verse experimentation. Turning to language as interaction, Lynne Magnusson explores how to interpret Shakespeare's dramatic dialogue guided by the tacit knowledge of social conversation evident in our own highly skilled performances. Considering figures of speech 'at work' in Shakespeare, Ruth Morse takes a fresh look at metaphor and its relatives, encouraging us to see how we experience them not just as original surprises but through expectations set up by previous experience of inherited scenes.

**Shaping contexts.** The next two chapters consider early modern education and Elizabethan social organisation as shaping contexts for Shakespeare's language. Whereas many of the volume's chapters offer insight into the changing English language as a key resource for Shakespeare's verbal artistry, Peter Mack takes us back to the basics of the Latin-based humanist language arts that constituted the curriculum of Elizabethan grammar schools. His chapter on rhetoric as Shakespeare's boyhood guide to composition and as a useful approach to dramatic analysis emphasises what was actually taught in the schools rather than offering an idealised outline of classical oratory or concentrating solely on stylistic figures. (An appendix of useful

## PREFACE

figures and tropes based on a handlist by Mack appears at the end of this volume.) Clearly, Shakespeare's linguistic artistry was as deeply attuned to the social life of language in his time as it was to the classically inflected language arts of the schoolroom. Teasing out the many diverse social languages and dialects that Shakespeare's plays bring into conversation and collision, James Siemon's chapter gives us rich insights into the dramatist's heterogeneous and multi-linguaged world of words.

*New technologies.* The next group of three chapters tests out new technologies and draws on concepts taking shape in emerging fields. Even as the passage of time and loss of historical grounding is making Shakespeare's language more challenging to the current generation of readers and theatregoers, the availability of digital tools, enabling lightning-swift counts and searches, is making it accessible and readable in wholly new ways. Jonathan Hope's two-part chapter on digital approaches provides, first, a how-to guide to methods one can learn quickly and use to make new discoveries now and, second, an account of more complex analytic tools and visualisation techniques that alter the object of study and that effect a conceptual shift in what it is to 'read'. Hugh Craig's chapter uses digital technology that was developed to answer questions about authorship attribution in order to 'read' large corpora of plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries and to study their comparative styles. Amy Cook and Seth Frey offer an interdisciplinary experiment on experiential reading when they bring new work on the cognitive processing of language into conversation with ways that innovative literary scholars have engaged with Shakespeare's poetic artistry.

*Contemporary sites for language change.* The final three chapters turn to three sites – the theatre, translation, and popular culture – where Shakespeare's highly adaptable language is still living and speaking out today. Carol Chillington Rutter considers how Shakespeare, himself an actor, wrote lines and speech exchanges to serve the actors he knew so well, and she shows how that language also serves actors today, cueing performance. Dirk Delabastita reflects on what happens to 'Shakespeare's language' without the English words, translated to speak around the globe. Putting Shakespeare's writing in interlingual and intercultural dialogue can afford a 'stereoscopic reading', illuminating both the host language and Shakespeare's as its guest. In the concluding chapter, Douglas M. Lanier discovers method in how advertising and popular culture reread and adapt Shakespeare's phrases. While Shakespeare teachers and scholars (including many in this volume) often ask that we 'historicise' and read the words 'in context', Lanier takes an appreciative look at our love for Shakespeare's

## PREFACE

words let loose from history and contextual constraint and fitted to our own lives and often incongruous enterprises.

Thanks are owed and most gratefully offered to the Folger Shakespeare Library for hosting a symposium that was a seed for this volume; to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding support; to Lindsay Mason for expert research assistance; to graduate students in repeated incarnations of 'Shakespeare's Language' at the University of Toronto; to Deirdre Baker and Carol Percy for encouragement and to Paul Stevens for generous advice; to the contributors for their patience and wisdom; and to our supportive Cambridge University Press editors, Sarah Stanton and Emily Hockley. For both editors of this volume, being in dialogue with one another about Shakespeare's language is an enduring pleasure.

Throughout this edition, act, scene, and line references (unless otherwise indicated) are to the volumes of the New Cambridge Shakespeare.

Lynne Magnusson

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
<i>AYLI</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>Err.</i>	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>King Henry the Fifth</i>
<i>1H6</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>King Henry the Eighth</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>King John</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Mac.</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
<i>Oth.</i>	<i>Othello</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>R2</i>	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
<i>R3</i>	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Shr.</i>	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timon of Athens</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Tit.</i>	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
<i>TN</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>TNK</i>	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>
<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
<i>Wiv.</i>	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>