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978-0-521-82068-4 - Shakespeare's Late Style  
Russ McDonald  
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## SHAKESPEARE'S LATE STYLE

When Shakespeare gave up tragedy around 1607 and turned to the new form we call romance or tragicomedy, he created a distinctive poetic idiom that has often bewildered audiences and readers. The plays of this period – *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and Shakespeare's contributions to the collaborative *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* – exhibit a challenging verse style: verbally condensed, metrically and syntactically sophisticated, both conversational and highly wrought. In *Shakespeare's Late Style*, McDonald anatomizes the components of this late style, illustrating in a series of topically organized chapters the contribution of such features as ellipsis, syntax, grammatical suspension, and multiple forms of repetition. Resisting the sentimentality that frequently attends discussion of an artist's "late" period, *Shakespeare's Late Style* shows how the poetry of the last plays reveals their creator's ambivalent attitude toward art, language, men and women, the theatre, and his own professional career.

RUSS MCDONALD is Reader in Renaissance Literature at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is the author of *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare, Shakespeare and the Arts of Language*, and, most recently, *"Look to the Lady": Sarah Siddons, Ellen Terry, and Judi Dench on the Shakespearean Stage*; he has edited a number of Shakespeare plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Othello*, as well as an anthology entitled *Shakespeare: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Having taught Shakespeare in five American universities, he is the recipient of several teaching awards, including North Carolina Professor of the Year, 2003.

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There has been no subject less accurately investigated than that of English prosody. And however some may imagine it a trivial affair, and an enquiry about little things; there are others we trust to whom it will appear, that no grand and heroic achievement was ever performed by him that neglected little things.

Anonymous review (1784) of Edward Capell's *Notes and Various Readings*, *The English Review*, May 1784

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