

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Magnusson, Lynne, with David Schalkwyk, eds. The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language

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concerns of students and scholars and accurate representation of historical context enhances the teachability of the volume.

Indeed, Helfferich's editorial work constantly reminds readers of the need to view Luther in his own context. Her footnotes provide concise commentary throughout, adding in the relevant Bible passages where these are not specified in the original text and often a short summary of their content, as well as elucidating references to other religions, texts, sources, and historical events. Combined with judicious linguistic and thematic analysis—for example, Helfferich's observations about Luther's frequent use of contradictions (41)—we feel informed but not overwhelmed as we peruse the translations.

A key strength of this volume lies in its use of the narrative of Luther's ever evolving life and thoughts as the driving force behind the creation of, and indeed the decision to include, each text. An argument for the continued study of Luther, *The Essential Luther* also serves as a justification for the study of literature and theological texts as historical sources that teach us not only about events but also about how these events were experienced and ultimately recorded by writers and their peers.

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**Magnusson, Lynne, with David Schalkwyk, eds.**

***The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Language.***

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xiii, 293. ISBN 978-1-107-58318-4 (paperback) \$28.95.

This volume of fourteen essays by established Shakespeare scholars provides a seminal guide to Shakespeare's language. Departing from the postmodernist focus on socio-cultural and political contexts, these essays mark a timely return to textual analysis by reconceptualizing what it means to close read Shakespeare's language from a diverse range of perspectives and methodologies. The essays are arranged in four categories that guide the reader through the manifold ways of approaching Shakespeare's language: by attending to the elements that make up traditional literary analysis of Shakespeare's language, such as lexis, style, metre, and rhetorical figures; by attending to early modern social and

educational practices that shape this language; by applying digital technologies and cognitive methods; and by taking into account the contemporary influences on language, such as translation studies and popular culture, that enhance our understanding and reception of Shakespeare's language.

The essays effortlessly speak to one another as they draw out common ideas and themes whilst taking them in different directions. The first two essays, by Jeff Dolven and Alysia Kolentis, introduce readers to the familiar terrain of Shakespeare's style and his lexical creativity, respectively. Dolven teases out the oft contradictory meanings of "style" in Shakespeare as he traces its usage from literary artifice in Shakespeare's early work to its entanglement with plot and voice in his middle tragedies. Kolentis takes up Dolven's all too brief foray into Shakespeare's coinage of words. Offering diverse examples of invented words, puns, and wordplay, Kolentis dispels the myth of Shakespeare as a creative genius by illustrating that he owed his inventiveness to the historico-linguistic context of his time and the linguistic resources available to him. Both Kolentis and Dolven situate their work within early modern socio-historical and linguistic contexts, which are later more deeply explored in Peter Mack's essay on rhetorical training in the early modern grammar school and Shakespeare's use of it in his plays.

Of particular use to both students and researchers of Shakespeare is Oliver Morgan's essay on "Verse and Metre." Morgan provides a basic account of Shakespeare's verse featuring a pared down vocabulary of its parts: line, rhyme, syllable, and stress. The merit of Morgan's work not only lies in explicating these parts in a lucid manner but also in showing how the "metrical ambiguities" (70) in the plays open up and feed into larger thematic or dramatic ambiguities. Morgan illustrates how the switch from verse to prose in Hamlet's speech following the nunnery scene brings to the surface the play's larger question about whether Hamlet's madness is authentic or feigned; he also shows how the scansion of stressed and unstressed syllables in Hamlet's verbal confrontation with Laertes opens up different possibilities of interpreting Laertes's character.

The essays by David Schalkwyk, Lynne Magnusson, and Carol Chillington Rutter draw on the field of linguistic pragmatics in their examination of what words "do" in dialogue. Schalkwyk, using J. L. Austin's theory of performative utterances, explores the work that perlocutionary and illocutionary speech acts perform in the exchanges between Benedick and Beatrice and between Richard III and Lady Anne, while Magnusson reveals how research in conversation

analysis, social discourse theory, and Bourdieu's theory of linguistic exchange can be used to analyze what characters do with and to their speech in dialogic exchanges. Rutter, influenced by both Austin and Magnusson, focuses on verbal exchanges from the actor's angle; she explores how a character's speech can cue the performance choices an actor makes, and provides an insightful reading of Antony's and Caesar's encounter in this vein. Rutter further demonstrates that soliloquies perform actions; they enact struggles or reveal characters (e.g., Helena), or perform an action in the world of the play (e.g., Hamlet). Although Rutter provides readings of characters' utterances with the actor in mind, a broader discussion of the meta-dramatic framework of these utterances would enrich her analysis. Rutter's assumption that characters possess interiority also warrants attention; it is worth asking whether interiority may be constructed through dialogue.

The essays all feature practical applications of the theories and approaches they cover; some even provide step-by-step instructions, such as Jonathan Hope's helpful essay on how to use digital tools and technologies. An appendix of figures and tropes is conveniently attached at the end of the volume to help readers perform their own linguistic analyses of Shakespeare's texts. Even though the volume is primarily intended for students of Shakespeare, it is no less suited for teachers, theatre professionals, and researchers who seek innovative ways to mine the richness of Shakespeare's language (for researchers especially, Dirk Delabastita's essay on translation and multilingualism opens up new avenues of research). What admirably binds these essays together is their careful scrutiny of the vital work that language does—what Shakespeare does with language and what the language of Shakespeare's time does to him, and what we do with Shakespeare's language and what this language does to us, in turn.

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