“Rapt in Secret Studies”:
Emerging Shakespeares

Edited by

Darryl Chalk and Laurie Johnson
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“Haven't you finished reading Shakespeare?”

Poised unsteadily between irritable reproof, envy, and grudging admiration, the perplexed fraternal enquiry recorded at the end of Mark Houlahan’s essay, nicely epitomises the way Shakespeareans are often seen—or imagine themselves seen—by a wider public. In so far as it bespeaks a familiar professional anxiety, the imagined reproof matches the guilty sense of belatedness that haunts practitioners in a crowded field where attention is focussed on a relatively small number of exceptionally well-studied texts. In the new corporatised academy, where the practice of the humanities is increasingly constrained by a demand for “outputs” largely defined by scientific notions of research, such anxiety is liable to become especially acute. At the same time, the destabilisation of the canon that resulted from the triumph of critical theory in the late twentieth century has made it difficult to offer an intellectually coherent defence of literary studies—especially, perhaps, in former settler societies like those of Australia and New Zealand, where the life of the mind has traditionally been regarded with suspicion. In this embattled condition literary scholars are perhaps more likely to appear like Jonson’s Subtle, wrapped in the protective fustian of a bogus mystery, than rapt like Prospero into some transformative ecstasy of the imagination.

Yet for Shakespeareans the very conditions that have threatened their profession with dangerous marginalisation, have had an unexpectedly liberating effect. This has been made possible, no doubt, by the continuing fetishization of Shakespeare, which has given his work such an exceptionally privileged position in contemporary culture: apart from his extraordinary theatrical currency throughout the world, Shakespeare now stands as perhaps the only pre-twentieth-century writer with a guaranteed position in the English programmes of schools and universities. This imperfectly understood phenomenon—no longer easily dismissed as a mere relic of imperial ideology—has itself opened new areas of enquiry, exemplified in this collection by Laurie Johnson’s provocative essay on “Shakespeare’s Gifts.” More importantly, however, it has endowed
Shakespeareans—especially those of the younger generation—with a professional self-confidence that has released them from both ideological dogmatism and servitude to critical fashion. Perhaps the most engaging thing about this collection is the broad spectrum of approaches adopted by its contributors, and the unabashed eclecticism of many of their essays: here, the high theory of Derrida can sit comfortably alongside the traditional techniques of close textual analysis, while presentism and historicism, far from being rival methodologies, are simply instruments for opening up different aspects of the text. It is in such intellectual flexibility, I believe, that the future of our discipline lies, because it offers a prospect of infinite renewal.

“Oh, this reading Shakespeare,” as a rapt Frank McCourt might have exclaimed, “there's no end to it!”
The editors wish to thank a number of people who have played a significant part in the chain of events that have culminated in the present collection. While we make mention of Lloyd Davis in memoriam in the introductory section to the book, we wish to record special thanks, each in our own way, for his contribution to the career trajectories that have brought us both to this point. We would also like to register our thanks to Professor Chris Lee, who was integral in converting an idea into a set of achievable targets, and for introducing us to the notion that we were the right team to achieve these targets. For their stalwart efforts, ensuring that the “Rapt in Secret Studies” conference would be a success, Darryl would specially like to express his appreciation to Helen Drury, Geoff Parkes, Michael Smalley, and Bernadette Pryde, and of course we collectively wish to acknowledge the vibrant contributions of all of those who participated in the conference, giving rise to our firm belief that a new generation of scholars in Shakespeare studies existed and that a book collection was necessary to capture the moment of their arrival. Our belief was strengthened at subsequent conferences, AULLA and ANZSA in particular, and for agreeing to let us use these conferences as opportunities to invite scholars to contribute to the book, we thank Philippa Kelly and Lyn Tribble. We also thank the many scholars who agreed to act as readers for the review process, ensuring that the submitted work was of exceptional quality.

For their ongoing encouragement during various stages of the process, we wish to thank a list of other mentors including Rose Gaby, Penny Gay, Jonathan Gil Harris, Peter Holbrook, Jean Howard, Michael Neill, and Robert White, the last of whom in particular for his generous additional assistance in overseeing the contribution from Sue Penberthy. Closer to home, the support from the Public Memory Research Centre, the Faculty of Arts, and other sections of the University of Southern Queensland has been invaluable. Funds from the Public Memory Research Centre, specifically, were made available for resources needed in the production of this book, and Faculty of Arts funding assisted the “Rapt in Secret Studies” conference in the first instance.

On a more personal note, Darryl is forever grateful to Scott Alderdice and Janet McDonald for their belief in what he was doing from the very
beginning, and Laurie is in fact indebted to Darryl for bringing him back to the fold after years spent studying things other than early modern culture. Both editors thank the members of ANZSA and AULLA for their friendship and collegiality. From Darryl, deepest gratitude to Tonia for her unending love and support throughout the entire process; from Laurie, indebtedness and thanks to Angie, Charlotte, and TJ, for love, for support, and for “nugs”. To our extended families and groups of friends, as well, and as always, our thanks.
In the midst of the lengthy back story recounted by Prospero to his daughter Miranda in the second scene of *The Tempest*, he confesses to having allowed events to come to pass by virtue of his predilection for the liberal arts above the management of his own affairs. Putting learning before duty, as it were, he “grew stranger” to his own state, “being transported / And rapt in secret studies” (1.2.76-77). The audience soon learns that this version of the liberal arts is a very liberal one indeed, as it includes the very magic capable of transporting the souls lost at sea in the first scene to dry land on this island refuge. We might even suggest that these studies, being “secret,” represent the opposite to the liberal arts Prospero claims to have mastered “without a parallel” while still in Milan (74). The liberal arts, by definition, are free: the areas of study proper to any man who walks freely among men—as it were, in Ancient Greece—and by which he will govern himself in the free company of other men. For Prospero, the secret studies in which he becomes so “rapt,” however, are proper only in the neglect of “worldly ends” (91). Moreover, these studies in which he has become “transported and rapt” are designed precisely for this purpose: by way of non-worldly means to achieve the transportation and rapture of worldly beings. In Prospero’s opening dialogue with his daughter, we thus catch an early hint of what Caliban will later explain more bluntly about the power of Prospero’s books: “without them / He’s but a sot as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command” (3.2.95-97).

It may be little wonder, then, that when the compilers of the *First Folio* wrestled with the decision of which play to include first among plays in a book collection designed to cement Shakespeare’s authorial name, they eventually settled on this most bookish of plays. It is equally no coincidence that the compilers of the present collection found ourselves
drawn to *The Tempest* for inspiration. Yet we do not derive from the play quite the same degree of emphasis on the importance of books alone. Caliban falsely declares that Prospero’s power inheres solely in the books he possesses. Prospero tells us right from the start—if we are prepared to hear him—that the power to transport is not inherent to the book; rather it derives from the interrelation between scholar and book. Prospero’s studiousness is thus the source of his power. What Prospero knows and yet Caliban can scarce comprehend is that the phrase “rapt in secret studies” describes a labour not to be underestimated. Yet Caliban would most likely have been part of the minority among those present at any of the original performances of *The Tempest*. To the early modern ear, “secret studies” was all but a tautology: scan the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) entry for “study” and one may be struck by the abundance of meanings on offer through the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, not a few of which are obsolete, and which capture notions of introspection, meditation, learning, and reading. Reading for the early moderns was already a silent practice, having emerged during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries on the back of the rise of print culture and, in particular, the use of word spacing in print (Saenger 1982; 1997). Paul Saenger has argued that silent reading “emboldened the reader, because it placed the source of his curiosity completely under his personal control” with the result that individual contemplation could become consonant with reading as the locus for “the development of scepticism and intellectual heresy” (1982, 399).

To the early modern ear, then, whether it was understood as introspection, meditation, learning, or reading—or, we suspect, as any or all of these processes at once—study was a silent and individual, that is, secret practice. In another now obsolete meaning of the term, “study” was also “a state of reverie or abstraction” (*OED* “study” 6a) up until at least the sixteenth century. Study was thus not only secret; it was a state akin to rapture. Whereas Caliban believed that Prospero’s power could be located in his books, the early modern audience would more likely have heard the subtle imbrication of terms in Prospero’s early statement about his studious habits and thus understood that his power was bound up in the silent, rapturous pursuit of studying rather than in the books themselves. Some four hundred years on, the modern ear may be less attuned to such resonances in these terms. Those who have read Foucault may be at least familiar with the notion of “power-knowledge” (1981, see esp. 92-102), through which is explained the interrelations between the ability to exercise power and the control over what passes for truth. Yet, let us be honest, the proportion of those who have even heard of Foucault let alone
read his work is really quite low. The modern ear, understood perhaps more typically, regards “study” in a somewhat functional fashion, as the practice through which a person acquires the qualifications necessary for employment. It is a view that aligns more comfortably with Caliban’s mistrust of Prospero’s books than with any understanding of study as rapture.

Indeed, like Caliban, the vast majority of modern listeners would in all likelihood simply fail to register the possible broader scope of Prospero’s words. This is not simply a case of being lost in translation—since some of the overlapping meanings of the three key terms are of course long since obsolete—but speaks instead to a deeper and well cultivated mistrust. A fact of life for academics in many parts of the world is that their line of work and perhaps their very way of life is viewed in the press, in popular culture, in the speeches of politicians, and in the conversations of people in the street with a curious mixture of suspicion, mirth, and disdain. In Australia, for example, in recent years, such views were harnessed by a stunningly successful $3.6 million dollar advertising campaign designed to divert University enrolments into trade-based apprenticeships (“Launch of New Apprenticeships” 2003). The campaign targeted school leavers with claims that apprentices were earning more money while training on the job than most graduates were earning within a year of completing their three or more years of study. The campaign spoke directly, that is, to the functional mindset to which we referred in the previous paragraph. Society seems content to tolerate academics only insofar as they provide a service by training today the workforce of tomorrow. Certainly, also, this tolerance extends principally only to those disciplines that address a functional worldview: society needs engineers to build better bridges, for example. The Humanities and Creative Arts have endured a well documented decline in the past decade in Australia, with the most staggering recent evidence being the disappearance of the School of Humanities and Human Services at the Queensland University of Technology in 2007.

We make such observations here simply to reinforce the point that many modern listeners would most likely side with Caliban—if indeed they felt Shakespeare to be relevant at all to their lives—at least to the point of exercising a degree of disdain for Prospero and his books. After all, Prospero incriminates himself with the admission of having neglected his material responsibilities, these “worldly ends” (1.2.91). To the functional mind, such an admission is not to be met with a sympathetic ear. Yet we note also once again that the functional mind would fail to register the scope of Prospero’s words. If he is to be held up as a figure of
scorn it is not because he is a scholar; rather, it is because of the type of book he reads: his “secret studies” will register to the modern listener simply as dabbling in black magic. Certainly, in the *OED* definition of “secret,” Prospero’s words are cited in support of the now obsolete meaning of the term as pertaining to “mystical or occult matters” (*OED* “secret” 1g). Thus, Prospero’s books, being “secret,” are to be regarded as occult objects and for this reason are to be destroyed. As occult objects, they possess Prospero rather than the other way around.

While Prospero’s books are viewed as only possibly being magical in nature, he possesses no agency and poses no direct threat. Yet we might consider that Prospero’s “secret studies” can refer to conventional scholarly practices in a more general sense, since “secret” can refer to a host of other possible meanings, many of which Shakespeare definitely used on occasion. The compilers of the *Oxford English Dictionary* even cite Shakespeare for no fewer than ten other meanings of the word “secret” in its form as an adjective alone. This brings us back to the point with which we started this introductory chapter: Prospero’s talk of secret studies is not simply about magic, though it does include a mystic edge; rather, his “secret” studies are to be understood more broadly as a shift in the nature of all scholarly pursuits. The magic in Prospero’s books extends imaginatively and dramatically the idea that words have a power to transport. Perhaps nowhere in Shakespeare is this idea expressed more cogently than in the “wooden O” speech by the chorus at the beginning of *Henry V*: “And let us, ciphers to this great accompt / On your imaginary forces work” (1.pro.17-18). Yet what began in *Henry V* as an appeal to the magic of the theatre to transport is transformed by *The Tempest* into the power of the written word. Reading, being a secret, silent pursuit, automatically involved the power of the imagination. Thus, the magic in Prospero’s books is analogous to the magic in all written text, an idea that is not foreign to Shakespeare and certainly not one that comes to him only late in his career—witness the claim in “Sonnet 18” of the power of “eternal lines” to be able to “give life to thee” (12, 14)—but it was not often realised in the plays in such a direct fashion as in this late play. Importantly, what Prospero tries to tell us from the outset is that the power of the written word is only unleashed in silent reading.

This power of silent reading also speaks to a shift in the nature of the liberal arts and all related scholarly pursuits. Whereas the ancient model on which the liberal arts were founded was based on communal practices like dialogue and reading aloud, the silent reading practice of the early modern scholar had transformed scholarly practice into the “secret studies” that Prospero describes. Thus, the suggestion that Prospero’s...
secret studies are the opposite of the liberal arts he had perfected in Milan can now be retracted. Instead, we suggest that “rapt in secret studies” speaks to two ends of a single spectrum of scholarly pursuits, with the magic arts at one end and the traditional liberal arts at the other, but with being equally secret and, quite possibly to the early modern ear, equally prone to enervating a state of rapture. Could Prospero’s “secret studies” be read equally, then, as meaning “occult” plus any of these other meanings, such as “affording privacy or seclusion” (1b) or “known only to the subject” (1f), along such lines as to suggest he could be referring to any studies that, by definition, are not known to everybody? At this moment we must also remember that “study” in early modern theatre became used as the word to describe the process of committing lines to memory, and that success in studying lines would be measurable in the capacity of the performer to hold an audience in rapture, transporting them beyond the walls of the theatrical space. In Miranda, to whom Prospero first uses the phrase “rapt in secret studies” while recounting his history, we find the construction of the ideal spectator—her name, as Marjorie Garber has noted, literally means “to wonder at” (2004, 857). Yet Prospero and the play in which he exists consistently work to demystify the worlds of wonder at which Miranda is enraptured, telling her, and by extension the audience “collected” therein, “No more amazement” (1.2.13-14). For the early modern ear, then, “studies” would simultaneously invoke both the private world of the book and the public domain of the stage, which suggests that academics should avoid creating any division between these two worlds in our scholarship of early modern drama.

From the perspective of the present collection, the phrase “rapt in secret studies” offers a wonderfully rich ground for interpretation. Moreover, as we hope this account of the early modern meanings of the phrase’s three key terms will attest, there is in this phrase a sense of affirmation for the kind of practices represented by this particular book. As we have noted, a modern commonplace seems to be an assumption that academia should be marginalised, and that the more bookish disciplines, in particular, are the most marginalised. If study should be understood in functional terms as the means to an employable end, then the desire to continue studying long after the acquisition of an academic qualification is seen as thoroughly outside acceptable norms; it is seen, in other words, as the neglect of “worldly ends,” as Prospero had described his own habits. Shakespeare Studies or Early Modern Studies, in general, reside comfortably in this most marginalised domain. We need not document here the myriad cases around the globe of debates about the inclusion of Shakespeare in both secondary and tertiary curricula. What we can
document here is that amid the “crisis in the Humanities” over recent decades, Shakespeare Studies seems also to have experienced a decline, in the Antipodes at least, during the 1990s and into the early years of the new century. Yet it is our belief that the present collection represents one of the positive indices of an emerging generation of scholars in arrest of this decline. We would like to briefly recount the story of the emergence of this book as it coincides with—we would hope, indeed, that it significantly participates in—the emergence of new scholarship in this field.

As recently as 2004, at the annual general meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Shakespeare Association (ANZSA), it was observed that postgraduate membership was on a downward trend, a situation that would be increasingly difficult to reverse with the decision to move the following conference so as to avoid clashing with the World Congress of 2006. Darryl Chalk noted at that meeting that a postgraduate conference could be organised to be held in advance of the Congress, in order to stimulate postgraduate involvement, and a conference was duly scheduled to dovetail with the Congress, to run under the umbrella of ANZSA, with additional support from the Public Memory Research Centre at the University of Southern Queensland. In trying to come up with an idea for the theme of the postgraduate conference, the organisers took to the Shakespeare oeuvre in hopes of finding a suitably apt and pithy phrase. As if by magic, or as chance would have it, one finger descended onto The Tempest and struck upon the phrase “rapt in secret studies,” the relevance of which became immediately apparent. The success of the postgraduate conference that pursued this theme—a full program of presenters over two days—suggested that indications of a resurgence in interest in Shakespeare Studies were looking good. At the 2008 ANZSA conference, Embodying Shakespeare, held in Otago, a significant increase in postgraduate and early career presenters was noted at the annual general meeting. Signs of the demise of Shakespeare Studies were thus short lived.

Following on from the success of postgraduate conference and the subsequent resurgence in postgraduate and early career involvement at ANZSA, the editors of this book agreed that a full collection of essays could usefully mark this emergence of a new generation of scholars in Shakespeare Studies under the aegis of ANZSA. The suggestive theme that had been used for the postgraduate conference was retained, and over the next twelve months contributions were sought from promising new scholars attached to the Association in any capacity—the editors humbly submit to the reader that our own work qualifies us for inclusion, although we equally assure the reader that all contributions have been vetted by double blind peer review. The resulting collection of eighteen essays can
be read to some extent, then, as testimony to this emergent generation of scholarship in this field. More than this, though, we trust that the reader will recognise in these eighteen chapters a broad range of exciting new approaches to Shakespeare Studies and a rigorous critical engagement with received wisdom in the field, which we trust will invigorate thought and discussion with readers in any corner of the globe. In responding to the call to produce chapters that address any of the key terms in the phrase “rapt in secret studies,” our contributors have produced a stunning array of different ways to tackle the challenge of studying Shakespeare and his theatre, quite a few of which we could not have possibly foreshadowed when we first envisaged a collection of this kind, such is their scope and originality.

Such we would also claim is the richness of the phrase around which this collection has been themed, as we have set out to demonstrate in this Introduction. The collection has been organised around three separate sections, each being devoted to one of the three key terms in Prospero’s statement, yet many of the chapters are inevitably drawn into making comment on or responding in some way to more than one of these terms. In their engagement with these three small words—“rapt”, “secret”, and “studies”—the chapters contained herein provide in no small way a proof of the enduring truth of Prospero’s words: in the study of Shakespeare, there is indeed to be found a rich and continuing source of inspiration—a rapture, we dare to suggest, in the power of scholarship, however isolated, to unlock the power of words, texts, and performances.

**Postscriptum: Bookends**

The editors would like to acknowledge the passing of two people, the loss of whom to some extent bookends the resurgence in Shakespeare Studies to which the present collection is addressed. Lloyd Davis passed away in 2005. As an initial co-chair of the World Congress 2006, President of ANZSA, the editor of *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, author, co-author, and editor of no fewer than seven books in Shakespeare Studies (as well as a co-author of books on Academic Writing and Cultural Studies), and key figure in the academic development of many students in the field, Lloyd’s influence in flying the flag for Shakespeare Studies at a time when the field seemed under threat is immeasurable. Having mentored both of the editors in different capacities—Laurie Johnson was Lloyd’s first graduate supervision and Lloyd gave direct guidance to Darryl Chalk in his early career—his impact on the trajectories that culminate to date in this book is
also impossible to overstate. As President of ANZSA, Lloyd also played a
direct and integral part in setting up the postgraduate conference that we
argue was one of the markers of the current resurgence in Shakespeare
Studies in this region. That he passed away before the conference was held
means that Lloyd’s death also provides a sad, initial bookend to the
resurgence that his life had been committed to achieving.

The other unfortunate bookend to this resurgence is the passing of
Susan Penberthy, who contributes one of the chapters included herein.
Susan was awarded a PhD in 1997 for her thesis *Work, Idleness and
Elizabethan Theatre*, following on from a decorated undergraduate career,
and was already a published author of journal articles when she took a
hiatus to raise a family. Her commitment to submit a contribution to this
collection was part of Susan’s plans to recommence her academic career.
Susan passed away in 2008 before being able to submit her proposed essay
on secrecy and contagion in *Coriolanus*, and it is with sincere thanks that
the editors would like to acknowledge the work of Robert White in
securing an extract from Susan’s doctoral thesis to fit in with the theme of
the book for the purposes of ensuring that Susan’s work could be included
in a collection of exciting new scholarship in Shakespeare Studies. It is
without doubt in the minds of the editors as well as all who knew Susan
and her work that she would surely have continued on to be a key figure in
this new generation of scholars had she not been taken from this world in
such untimely fashion.

We would like to dedicate this book to the memory of these two
scholars.

**Works Consulted**


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DARRYL CHALK is a Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies and a member of the Public Memory Research Centre at the University of Southern Queensland. His research is interested in connections between contagion and theatricality in Shakespearean drama and early modern culture. This work has resulted in two further publications: an article on Timon of Athens for Early Modern Literary Studies (Special Issue 19, 2009) and a chapter on Troilus and Cressida in “This Earthly Stage”: World and Stage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England (Brett D. Hirsch and Christopher Wortham, eds., Brepols, in press). He was co-recipient of the 2008 USQ Award for Teaching Excellence, and a 2009 Australian Learning and Teaching Council Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning.

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Laurie Johnson is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature and Cultural Studies and a member of the Public Memory Research Centre at the University of Southern Queensland. He is author of The Wolf Man’s Burden (Cornell UP, 2001) and articles on Cultural Theory, Cyber Studies, Ethics, Phenomenology, Psychoanalysis and related fields. His early interest in Shakespeare Studies has been rekindled in recent years and has resulted in a new article in AUMLA and a review article in EMLS (both in 2009).

Danijela Kambaskovic-Sawers is an Assistant Professor of English and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. Danijela is also a published poet and translator. She was the recipient of the 2008 David Campbell Memorial ACT Poetry Prize in 2008, and has published two collections of poetry. Her work has been translated into Dutch, Russian, and Polish. Danijela is the author of A Personal Short History of Australian Literature (Balkan Literary Herald, 2008), the first work of this kind to appear in the Balkans. A translator of poetry between Serbian/Croatian and English, her translations of Shakespeare’s Sonnets have been highly praised. Her newest book, Constructing Sonnet Sequences in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Study of Six Poets has recently been published by Edwin Mellen Press (2010).

**EDMUND KING** completed a PhD on eighteenth-century Shakespeare editing at the University of Auckland in 2008. He is now a Research Associate at the Open University, UK, where he works on the Reading Experience Database (http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/). Outside of Shakespeare, his interests include bibliography, the histories of reading and authorship, and digital humanities. Edmund has had articles published in The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America and Eighteenth-Century Life.

**Ben Kooymans** recently completed his PhD—on directorial self-fashioning in Shakespeare film adaptations—at Flinders University, South Australia. His research interests include Shakespeare, the Bard in popular culture, film and television adaptations of literary works, horror cinema, and comic books and graphic novels, among other things.

**Fiona Martyn** is a PhD candidate at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. She expects to submit her thesis, “Dying Words in Early Modern English Drama,” in 2010. The chapter in this volume is an extension of her interest in the final utterances of dying characters. A previous article, “‘O die a rare example’: Beheading the Body on the Jacobean Stage”, appeared in Early Modern Literary Studies (Special Issue 19, 2009).

**David McInnis** is a PhD candidate and sessional lecturer in the English program at the University of Melbourne, where his thesis explores representations of travel and the exotic on the early modern English stage. His work has been published in such journals as Parergon, Notes & Queries, Ariel and *Early Modern Literary Studies*, and he has recently edited a special issue of *EMLS* on the theme “Embodying Shakespeare.” He is currently co-editing (with Jessica Wilkinson and Eric Pariseau) a book on “Refashioning Myth” for Cambridge Scholars Press, and is coordinating editor (with Roslyn L. Knutson) of the Lost Plays Database (lostplays.org), a source of information and historical records on the 550+ lost plays of the English Renaissance.

**Susan Penberthy**, as an undergraduate student at the University of Western Australia, was awarded numerous prizes, including the Katherine Moss Prize in English Literature, the James Bourke Memorial Prize for English, and the Amy Jane Best Prize for Honours. In 1997, she was awarded a PhD for her thesis “Work, Idleness and Elizabethan Theatre,” and published essays in Parergon and the book Touch of the Real. She...
lectured and tutored at UWA and at Tabor College in Adelaide, then took time out to raise her two sons. In 2007 she published a volume of poetry, *The Belly of the Porcelain Monkey* and was preparing her essay for this book when diagnosed with a terminal illness. Tragically, Sue died in 2008, on the threshold of re-starting her brilliant career. The chapter published herein is an edited section taken from her thesis in lieu of the piece Sue had intended to write on *Coriolanus*.

**Lucy Potter** is a lecturer in the Discipline of English at the University of Adelaide. She is passionate about the plays of Christopher Marlowe, obsessed with the critical history of catharsis, and privileged to have studied Virgil's *Aeneid*. As well as co-ordinating and teaching courses in Early Modern studies, Lucy is also a specialist ESL educator. She is the recipient of four teaching awards, including a Carrick Citation for outstanding contribution to student learning. She is currently working on a monograph—*Theoretical Marlowe*.

**Emily Ross** completed her PhD at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Her thesis, "The Current of Events: Gossip about the Controversial Marriages of Lady Arbella Stuart and Frances Coke in Jacobean England, 1610-1620," brings together material and techniques from fields such as History, Law, English and Gender Studies to explore gossip about the marriages of Lady Arbella Stuart and Frances Coke. From 2010, she will be taking up a position as an English Lecturer at Chuo University in Tokyo.

**Alison V. Scott** is a lecturer in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History at The University of Queensland. She is the author of *Selfish Gifts: The Politics of Exchange and English Courtly Literature, 1580-1628* (Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2006) and the co-editor (with A. D. Cousins) of *Ben Jonson and the Politics of Genre* (Cambridge UP, 2009). She is currently completing a monograph on *Languages of Luxury in Early Modern England* for Ashgate Press.

**Daniel Timbrell** is a PhD candidate at the University of Southern Queensland. He completed his Honours in Theatre Studies in 2005, analysing Carnival and Carnivalesque Violence in the plays of Thomas Middleton, and is a member of the Public Memory Research Centre. His dissertation analyses games and gaming practices in early modern English drama and culture.
“Haven't you finished reading Shakespeare?”

Poised unsteadily between irritable reproof, envy, and grudging admiration, the perplexed fraternal enquiry recorded at the end of Mark Houlahan’s essay, nicely epitomises the way Shakespeareans are often seen—or imagine themselves seen—by a wider public. In so far as it bespeaks a familiar professional anxiety, the imagined reproof matches the guilty sense of belatedness that haunts practitioners in a crowded field where attention is focussed on a relatively small number of exceptionally well-studied texts. In the new corporatised academy, where the practice of the humanities is increasingly constrained by a demand for “outputs” largely defined by scientific notions of research, such anxiety is liable to become especially acute. At the same time, the destabilisation of the canon that resulted from the triumph of critical theory in the late twentieth century has made it difficult to offer an intellectually coherent defence of literary studies—especially, perhaps, in former settler societies like those of Australia and New Zealand, where the life of the mind has traditionally been regarded with suspicion. In this embattled condition literary scholars are perhaps more likely to appear like Jonson’s Subtle, wrapped in the protective fustian of a bogus mystery, than rapt like Prospero into some transformative ecstasy of the imagination.

Yet for Shakespeareans the very conditions that have threatened their profession with dangerous marginalisation, have had an unexpectedly liberating effect. This has been made possible, no doubt, by the continuing fetishization of Shakespeare, which has given his work such an exceptionally privileged position in contemporary culture: apart from his extraordinary theatrical currency throughout the world, Shakespeare now stands as perhaps the only pre-twentieth-century writer with a guaranteed position in the English programmes of schools and universities. This imperfectly understood phenomenon—no longer easily dismissed as a mere relic of imperial ideology—has itself opened new areas of enquiry, exemplified in this collection by Laurie Johnson’s provocative essay on “Shakespeare’s Gifts.” More importantly, however, it has endowed
Shakespeareans—especially those of the younger generation—with a professional self-confidence that has released them from both ideological dogmatism and servitude to critical fashion. Perhaps the most engaging thing about this collection is the broad spectrum of approaches adopted by its contributors, and the unabashed eclecticism of many of their essays: here, the high theory of Derrida can sit comfortably alongside the traditional techniques of close textual analysis, while presentism and historicism, far from being rival methodologies, are simply instruments for opening up different aspects of the text. It is in such intellectual flexibility, I believe, that the future of our discipline lies, because it offers a prospect of infinite renewal.

“Oh, this reading Shakespeare,” as a rapt Frank McCourt might have exclaimed, “there’s no end to it!”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors wish to thank a number of people who have played a significant part in the chain of events that have culminated in the present collection. While we make mention of Lloyd Davis in memoriam in the introductory section to the book, we wish to record special thanks, each in our own way, for his contribution to the career trajectories that have brought us both to this point. We would also like to register our thanks to Professor Chris Lee, who was integral in converting an idea into a set of achievable targets, and for introducing us to the notion that we were the right team to achieve these targets. For their stalwart efforts, ensuring that the “Rapt in Secret Studies” conference would be a success, Darryl would specially like to express his appreciation to Helen Drury, Geoff Parkes, Michael Smalley, and Bernadette Pryde, and of course we collectively wish to acknowledge the vibrant contributions of all of those who participated in the conference, giving rise to our firm belief that a new generation of scholars in Shakespeare studies existed and that a book collection was necessary to capture the moment of their arrival. Our belief was strengthened at subsequent conferences, AULLA and ANZSA in particular, and for agreeing to let us use these conferences as opportunities to invite scholars to contribute to the book, we thank Philippa Kelly and Lyn Tribble. We also thank the many scholars who agreed to act as readers for the review process, ensuring that the submitted work was of exceptional quality.

For their ongoing encouragement during various stages of the process, we wish to thank a list of other mentors including Rose Gaby, Penny Gay, Jonathan Gil Harris, Peter Holbrook, Jean Howard, Michael Neill, and Robert White, the last of whom in particular for his generous additional assistance in overseeing the contribution from Sue Penberthy. Closer to home, the support from the Public Memory Research Centre, the Faculty of Arts, and other sections of the University of Southern Queensland has been invaluable. Funds from the Public Memory Research Centre, specifically, were made available for resources needed in the production of this book, and Faculty of Arts funding assisted the “Rapt in Secret Studies” conference in the first instance.

On a more personal note, Darryl is forever grateful to Scott Alderdice and Janet McDonald for their belief in what he was doing from the very
INTRODUCTION

“RAPT IN SECRET STUDIES”
AND EMERGENCE IN SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

DARRYL CHALK AND LAURIE JOHNSON

In the midst of the lengthy back story recounted by Prospero to his daughter Miranda in the second scene of The Tempest, he confesses to having allowed events to come to pass by virtue of his predilection for the liberal arts above the management of his own affairs. Putting learning before duty, as it were, he “grew stranger” to his own state, “being transported / And rapt in secret studies” (1.2.76-77). The audience soon learns that this version of the liberal arts is a very liberal one indeed, as it includes the very magic capable of transporting the souls lost at sea in the first scene to dry land on this island refuge. We might even suggest that these studies, being “secret,” represent the opposite to the liberal arts Prospero claims to have mastered “without a parallel” while still in Milan (74). The liberal arts, by definition, are free: the areas of study proper to any man who walks freely among men—as it were, in Ancient Greece—and by which he will govern himself in the free company of other men. For Prospero, the secret studies in which he becomes so “rapt,” however, are proper only in the neglect of “worldly ends” (91). Moreover, these studies in which he has become “transported and rapt” are designed precisely for this purpose: by way of non-worldly means to achieve the transportation and rapture of worldly beings. In Prospero’s opening dialogue with his daughter, we thus catch an early hint of what Caliban will later explain more bluntly about the power of Prospero’s books: “without them / He’s but a sot as I am, nor hath not / One spirit to command” (3.2.95-97).

It may be little wonder, then, that when the compilers of the First Folio wrestled with the decision of which play to include first among plays in a book collection designed to cement Shakespeare’s authorial name, they eventually settled on this most bookish of plays. It is equally no coincidence that the compilers of the present collection found ourselves
drawn to *The Tempest* for inspiration. Yet we do not derive from the play quite the same degree of emphasis on the importance of books alone. Caliban falsely declares that Prospero's power inheres solely in the books he possesses. Prospero tells us right from the start—if we are prepared to hear him—that the power to transport is not inherent to the book; rather it derives from the interrelation between scholar and book. Prospero's studiousness is thus the source of his power. What Prospero knows and yet Caliban can scarce comprehend is that the phrase “rapt in secret studies” describes a labour not to be underestimated. Yet Caliban would most likely have been part of the minority among those present at any of the original performances of *The Tempest*. To the early modern ear, “secret studies” was all but a tautology: scan the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) entry for “study” and one may be struck by the abundance of meanings on offer through the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, not a few of which are obsolete, and which capture notions of introspection, meditation, learning, and reading. Reading for the early moderns was already a silent practice, having emerged during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries on the back of the rise of print culture and, in particular, the use of word spacing in print (Saenger 1982; 1997). Paul Saenger has argued that silent reading “emboldened the reader, because it placed the source of his curiosity completely under his personal control” (1982, 399).

To the early modern ear, then, whether it was understood as introspection, meditation, learning, or reading—or, we suspect, as any or all of these processes at once—study was a silent and individual, that is, secret practice. In another now obsolete meaning of the term, “study” was also “a state of reverie or abstraction” (OED “study” 6a) up until at least the sixteenth century. Study was thus not only secret; it was a state akin to rapture. Whereas Caliban believed that Prospero's power could be located in his books, the early modern audience would more likely have heard the subtle imbrication of terms in Prospero's early statement about his studious habits and thus understood that his power was bound up in the silent, rapturous pursuit of studying rather than in the books themselves. Some four hundred years on, the modern ear may be less attuned to such resonances in these terms. Those who have read Foucault may be at least familiar with the notion of “power-knowledge” (1981, see esp. 92-102), through which is explained the interrelations between the ability to exercise power and the control over what passes for truth. Yet, let us be honest, the proportion of those who have even heard of Foucault let alone read his work is really quite low. The modern ear, understood perhaps more typically, regards “study” in a somewhat functional fashion, as the practice through which a person acquires the qualifications necessary for employment. It is a view that aligns more comfortably with Caliban's mistrust of Prospero's books than with any understanding of study as rapture.

Indeed, like Caliban, the vast majority of modern listeners would in all likelihood simply fail to register the possible broader scope of Prospero's words. This is not simply a case of being lost in translation—since some of the overlapping meanings of the three key terms are of course long since obsolete—but speaks instead to a deeper and well cultivated mistrust. A fact of life for academics in many parts of the world is that their line of work and perhaps their very way of life is viewed in the press, in popular culture, in the speeches of politicians, and in the conversations of people in the street with a curious mixture of suspicion, mirth, and disdain. In Australia, for example, in recent years, such views were harnessed by a stunningly successful $3.6 million dollar advertising campaign designed to divert University enrolments into trade-based apprenticeships (“Launch of New Apprenticeships” 2003). The campaign’s direct, that is, to the functional mindset to which we referred in the previous paragraph. Society seems content to tolerate academics only insofar as they provide a service by training today the workforce of tomorrow. Certainly, also, this tolerance extends principally only to those disciplines that address a functional worldview: society needs engineers to build better bridges, for example. The Humanities and Creative Arts have endured a well documented decline in the past decade in Australia, with the most staggering recent evidence being the disappearance of the School of Humanities and Human Services at the Queensland University of Technology in 2007.

We make such observations here simply to reinforce the point that many modern listeners would most likely side with Caliban—if indeed they felt Shakespeare to be relevant at all to their lives—at least to the point of exercising a degree of disdain for Prospero and his books. After all, Prospero incriminates himself with the admission of having neglected his material responsibilities, these “worldly ends” (1.2.91). To the functional mind, such an admission is not to be met with a sympathetic ear. Yet we note also once again that the functional mind would fail to register the scope of Prospero's words. If he is to be held up as a figure of
scorn it is not because he is a scholar; rather, it is because of the type of book he reads: his "secret studies" will register to the modern listener simply as dabbling in black magic. Certainly, in the OED definition of "secret," Prospero's words are cited in support of the now obsolete meaning of the term as pertaining to "mystical or occult matters" (OED "secret" 1g). Thus, Prospero's books, being "secret," are to be regarded as occult objects and for this reason are to be destroyed. As occult objects, they possess Prospero rather than the other way around.

While Prospero's books are viewed as only possibly being magical in nature, he possesses no agency and poses no direct threat. Yet we might consider that Prospero's "secret studies" can refer to conventional scholarly practices in a more general sense, since "secret" can refer to a host of other possible meanings, many of which Shakespeare definitely used on occasion. The compilers of the Oxford English Dictionary even cite Shakespeare for no fewer than ten other meanings of the word "secret" in its form as an adjective alone. This brings us back to the point with which we started this introductory chapter: Prospero's talk of secret studies is not simply about magic, though it does include a mystic edge; rather, his "secret" studies are to be understood more broadly as a shift in the nature of all scholarly pursuits. The magic in Prospero's books extends imaginatively and dramatically the idea that words have a power to transport. Perhaps nowhere in Shakespeare is this idea expressed more cogently than in the "wooden O" speech by the chorus at the beginning of Henry V: "And let us, ciphers to this great accompt / On your imaginary forces work" (1.1.17-18). Yet what began in Henry V as an appeal to the magic of the theatre to transport is transformed by The Tempest into the power of the written word. Reading, being a secret, silent pursuit, automatically involved the power of the imagination. Thus, the magic in Prospero's books is analogous to the magic in all written text, an idea that is not foreign to Shakespeare and certainly not one that comes to him only late in his career—witness the claim in "Sonnet 18" of the power of "eternal lines" to be able to "give life to thee" (12, 14)—but it was not often realised in the plays in such a direct fashion as in this late play. Importantly, what Prospero tries to tell us from the outset is that the power of the written word is only unleashed in silent reading.

This power of silent reading also speaks to a shift in the nature of the liberal arts and all related scholarly pursuits. Whereas the ancient model on which the liberal arts were founded was based on communal practices like dialogue and reading aloud, the silent reading practice of the early modern scholar had transformed scholarly practice into the "secret studies" that Prospero describes. Thus, the suggestion that Prospero's secret studies are the opposite of the liberal arts he had perfected in Milan can now be retracted. Instead, we suggest that "rapt in secret studies" speaks to two ends of a single spectrum of scholarly pursuits, with the magic arts at one end and the traditional liberal arts at the other, but with being equally secret and, quite possibly to the early modern ear, equally prone to enervating a state of rapture. Could Prospero's "secret studies" be read equally, then, as meaning "occult" plus any of these other meanings, such as "affording privacy or seclusion" (1b) or "known only to the subject" (1f), along such lines as to suggest he could be referring to any studies that, by definition, are not known to everybody? At this moment we must also remember that "study" in early modern theatre became used as the word to describe the process of committing lines to memory, and that success in studying lines would be measurable in the capacity of the performer to hold an audience in rapture, transporting them beyond the walls of the theatrical space. In Miranda, to whom Prospero first uses the phrase "rapt in secret studies" while recounting his history, we find the construction of the ideal spectator—her name, as Marjorie Garber has noted, literally means "to wonder at" (2004, 857). Yet Prospero and the play in which he exists consistently work to demystify the worlds of wonder at which Miranda is enraptured, telling her, and by extension the audience "collected" therein, "No more amazement" (1.2.13-14). For the early modern ear, then, "studies" would simultaneously invoke both the private world of the book and the public domain of the stage, which suggests that academics should avoid creating any division between these two worlds in our scholarship of early modern drama.

From the perspective of the present collection, the phrase "rapt in secret studies" offers a wonderfully rich ground for interpretation. Moreover, as we hope this account of the early modern meanings of the phrase's three key terms will attest, there is in this phrase a sense of affirmation for the kind of practices represented by this particular book. As we have noted, a modern commonplace seems to be an assumption that academia should be marginalised, and that the more bookish disciplines, in particular, are the most marginalised. If study should be understood in functional terms as the means to an employable end, then the desire to continue studying long after the acquisition of an academic qualification is seen as thoroughly outside acceptable norms; it is, in other words, as the neglect of "worldly ends," as Prospero had described his own habitudes. Shakespeare Studies or Early Modern Studies, in general, reside comfortably in this most marginalised domain. We need not document here the myriad cases around the globe of debates about the inclusion of Shakespeare in both secondary and tertiary curricula. What we can
Introduction

The document here is that amid the “crisis in the Humanities” over recent decades, Shakespeare Studies seems also to have experienced a decline, in the Antipodes at least, during the 1990s and into the early years of the new century. Yet it is our belief that the present collection represents one of the positive indices of an emerging generation of scholars in arrest of this decline. We would like to briefly recount the story of the emergence of organised to be held in advance of the Congress, in order to stimulate conference so as to avoid clashing with the World Congress of 2006. Darryl Chalk noted at that meeting that a postgraduate conference could be organised to be held in advance of the Congress, in order to stimulate postgraduate involvement, and a conference was duly scheduled to dovetail with the Congress, to run under the umbrella of ANZSA, with additional support from the Public Memory Research Centre at the University of Southern Queensland. In trying to come up with an idea for the theme of the postgraduate conference, the organisers took to the Shakespeare oeuvre in hopes of finding a suitably apt and pithy phrase. As if by magic, or as chance would have it, one finger descended onto The Tempest and struck upon the phrase “rapt in secret studies,” the relevance of which became immediately apparent. The success of the postgraduate conference that pursued this theme—a full program of presenters over two days—suggested that indications of a resurgence in interest in Shakespeare Studies were looking good. At the 2008 ANZSA conference, Embodying Shakespeare, held in Otago, a significant increase in postgraduate and early career presenters was noted at the annual general meeting. Signs of the demise of Shakespeare Studies were thus short lived.

Following on from the success of postgraduate conference and the subsequent resurgence in postgraduate and early career involvement at ANZSA, the editors of this book agreed that a full collection of essays could usefully mark this emergence of a new generation of scholars in Shakespeare Studies under the aegis of ANZSA. The suggestive theme that had been used for the postgraduate conference was retained, and over the next twelve months contributions were sought from promising new scholars attached to the Association in any capacity—the editors humbly submit to the reader that our own work qualifies us for inclusion, although we equally assure the reader that all contributions have been vetted by double blind peer review. The resulting collection of eighteen essays can be read to some extent, then, as testimony to this emergent generation of scholarship in this field. More than this, though, we trust that the reader will recognise in these eighteen chapters a broad range of exciting new approaches to Shakespeare Studies and a rigorous critical engagement with received wisdom in the field, which we trust will invigorate thought and discussion with readers in any corner of the globe. In responding to the call to produce chapters that address any of the key terms in the phrase “rapt in secret studies,” our contributors have produced a stunning array of different ways to tackle the challenge of studying Shakespeare and his theatre, quite a few of which we could not have possibly foreshadowed when we first envisaged a collection of this kind, such is their scope and originality.

Such we would also claim is the richness of the phrase around which this collection has been themed, as we have set out to demonstrate in this Introduction. The collection has been organised around three separate sections, each being devoted to one of the three key terms in Prospero’s statement, yet many of the chapters are inevitably drawn into making comment on or responding in some way to more than one of these terms. In their engagement with these three small words—“rapt”, “secret”, and “studies”—the chapters contained herein provide in no small way a proof of the enduring truth of Prospero’s words: in the study of Shakespeare, there is indeed to be found a rich and continuing source of inspiration—a rapture, we dare to suggest, in the power of scholarship, however isolated, to unlock the power of words, texts, and performances.

Postscriptum: Bookends

The editors would like to acknowledge the passing of two people, the loss of whom to some extent bookends the resurgence in Shakespeare Studies to which the present collection is addressed. Lloyd Davis passed away in 2005. As an initial co-chair of the World Congress 2006, President of ANZSA, the editor of AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association, author, co-author, and editor of no fewer than seven books in Shakespeare Studies (as well as a co-author of books on Academic Writing and Cultural Studies), and key figure in the academic development of many students in the field, Lloyd’s influence in flying the flag for Shakespeare Studies at a time when the field seemed under threat is immeasurable. Having mentored both of the editors in different capacities—Laurie Johnson was Lloyd’s first graduate supervision and Lloyd gave direct guidance to Darryl Chalk in his early career—his impact on the trajectories that culminate to date in this book is
also impossible to overstate. As President of ANZSA, Lloyd also played a
direct and integral part in setting up the postgraduate conference that we
argue was one of the markers of the current resurgence in Shakespeare
Studies in this region. That he passed away before the conference was held
means that Lloyd’s death also provides a sad, initial bookend to the
resurgence that his life had been committed to achieving.

The other unfortunate bookend to this resurgence is the passing of
Susan Penberthy, who contributes one of the chapters included herein.
Susan was awarded a PhD in 1997 for her thesis Work, Idleness and
Elizabethan Theatre, following on from a decorated undergraduate career,
and was already a published author of journal articles when she took a
hiatus to raise a family. Her commitment to submit a contribution to this
collection was part of Susan’s plans to recommence her academic career.
Susan passed away in 2008 before being able to submit her proposed essay
on secrecy and contagion in Coriolanus, and it is with sincere thanks that
the editors would like to acknowledge the work of Robert White in
securing an extract from Susan’s doctoral thesis to fit in with the theme of
the book for the purposes of ensuring that Susan’s work could be included
in a collection of exciting new scholarship in Shakespeare Studies. It is
without doubt in the minds of the editors as well as all who knew Susan
and her work that she would surely have continued on to be a key figure in
this new generation of scholars had she not been taken from this world in
such untimely fashion.

We would like to dedicate this book to the memory of these two
scholars.

Works Consulted


Launch of New Apprenticeships Campaign. Media Release from Office of
22 December, 2009.


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PART I

[RAPT, ADJ.]

[c classical Latin raptus, past participle of rapere to seize (see RAPE v.2), in post-
classical Latin in sense “rapt in an ecstasy” (from 12th cent. in British sources).]

1. Carried up and transported into heaven. Also with up, to, into.

1577 S.BATMAN Golden Bk. Leaden Goddes f. 29, Fryer Gyles was rapt into
Heauen.

2. Transported spiritually, by religious feeling or inspiration.

1621 R.BURTON Anat. Melancholy III. II. iii. 570 Anthonie was amased and
rapt beyond himselfe.

3. Of a woman: carried away by force, abducted; raped. Obs.

1598 R. P. tr. M. Martinez Sixth Bk. Myrour of Knighthood iii. sig. F⁴, I was
rapt by wanton Alexander.

4. a. Carried or removed from one place, position, or situation to another. Now
poet. Chiefly said of persons.

1615 G.SANDYS Relation of Journey 206 The house of the blessed Virgin..was
rapt from thence, and set in the woods of Picenum.

5. Deeply absorbed or buried in (a feeling, subject of thought, etc.); intent upon.

1601 R.JOHNSON tr. G. Botero Travellers Breviat (1603) 222 As men rapt in
deep contemplation.

6. Transported with joy, intense delight, etc.; ravished, enraptured. Also with
with, by, or away.

1596 SPENSER Faerie Queene: 2nd Pt. IV. ix. 6 With the sweetnesse of her rare
delight The prince halfe rapt began on her to dote.

(Oxford English Dictionary, “rapt”)