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# *Marlowe Studies*

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# *Marlowe Studies*

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*Marlowe Studies: An Annual* is a journal devoted to studying Christopher Marlowe and his role in the literary culture of his time, including but not limited to studies of his plays and poetry; their sources; relations to genre; lines of influence; classical, medieval, and continental contexts; performance and theater history; textual studies; the author's professional milieu and place in early modern English poetry, drama, and culture.

From its inception through the current 2016 issue, *Marlowe Studies* was published at Purdue University Fort Wayne in Indiana. In 2018, the journal was placed under the editorship of Lisa Hopkins at Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom.

For 2016 and earlier issues, please contact the College of Arts and Sciences at Purdue University Fort Wayne. For future publications and submissions, please contact Dr. Hopkins at Sheffield Hallam.

We thank our small community, especially our authors, for their time, attention, and scholarship. Many apologies for the delays affecting this issue. We look forward to seeing the future form our special journal acquires at its new home.

Regards,  
Cathleen M. Carosella  
Managing Editor  
20 July 2018

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## Abbreviations for Marlowe's Works

<i>AOE</i>	<i>All Ovid's Elegies</i>
<i>COE</i>	<i>Certain of Ovid's Elegies</i>
<i>Dido</i>	<i>Dido, Queen of Carthage</i>
<i>DFa</i>	<i>Doctor Faustus, A-text</i>
<i>DFb</i>	<i>Doctor Faustus, B-text</i>
<i>E2</i>	<i>Edward II</i>
<i>HL</i>	<i>Hero and Leander</i>
<i>JM</i>	<i>The Jew of Malta</i>
<i>Luc</i>	<i>Lucan's First Book</i>
<i>Man</i>	<i>Manwood Elegy / Epitaph</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>The Massacre at Paris</i>
<i>PS</i>	"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"
<i>1Tam</i>	<i>Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1</i>
<i>2Tam</i>	<i>Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2</i>

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LISA HOPKINS

## Moving Marlowe: *The Jew of Malta* on the Caroline Stage

In spring 2016, I submitted a proposal to Shakespeare's Globe Education to run a Research in Action workshop on staging *The Jew of Malta* at an indoor playhouse. The workshop took place on June 6, 2016, in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, with the help of Will Tosh from Globe Education and four actors—David Acton, Ben Deery, Robert Mountford, and Aslam Percival—who had not only studied the parts of the play they had been asked to prepare but had read the whole of it and were brim-full of ideas (not forgetting Robbie Hand, who very nobly played the entire Ottoman army as well as taking notes during the workshop).<sup>1</sup> In this article, I am first going to discuss what happened at the workshop and then move on to consider what *The Jew of Malta* might have looked like on the Caroline stage, with specific reference to two other plays that I suggest might have impacted its reception in the 1630s, Henry Chettle's *Tragedy of Hoffman* and John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*.

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1. I should acknowledge at the outset that I was only able to do this because I had help from a number of sources: Sheffield Hallam University, which provided funding; Dr. Will Tosh of Globe Education, who helped me plan the day, directed the scenes, and provided invaluable assistance with the workshop; David Acton, Ben Deery, Robert Mountford, and Aslam Percival; Robbie Hand; and finally the audience, who entered magnificently into the spirit of the occasion and made some extraordinarily helpful suggestions. Thanks are also due to Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper; Patrick Spottiswoode; the events team at Globe Education, with special nods to Rebecca Casey, Emma Hayes, Elspeth North, and Beth Fisher; Faye Powell-Thomas; the box office staff; and the stewards, who kindly volunteered their time. Finally I am grateful to Pavel Drabek, Matthew Steggle, Richard Wood, Daniel Cadman, Kate Wilkinson, Louise Powell, Kibrina Davey, Caroline Heaton, and Shirley Bell, who heard and commented on a version of this paper at the second Sheffield Hallam Caroline Colloquium.



The purpose of the Research in Action workshops is to explore performance practice. My proposal was prompted by the fact that the first performance of *The Jew of Malta* of which we have any knowledge was on Saturday, February 26, 1592, at the Rose, but the text of the play was not printed until 1633, which begs obvious questions about the extent to which the play as we now have it is the same as the play which was acted in the 1590s, or whether it has suffered corruption or revision. In 1977 Kenneth Friedenreich noted that

Criticism of *The Jew of Malta* has persistently sought a satisfactory explanation for the apparent change in Marlowe's conception of his hero, Barabas, who seems cast in the first two acts in the familiar mold of a Marlovian superman, but who is somehow transformed in the last three acts into a comical revenger. Until recently, there was widespread belief among the play's critics that its text was corrupt, and that the radical transformation of Barabas after act 2 was the work of a redactor, probably Thomas Heywood, and not Marlowe.<sup>2</sup>

The 1633 printing was accompanied by a "Prologue Spoken at Court" and a "Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit," the second of which begins "We know now how our play may pass this stage,"<sup>3</sup> and it was that question—which speaks directly to Globe Education's research priority of exploring the history of dramatic texts and their reception—which lay at the heart of the workshop: how *does* a play written for performance in an open-air amphitheatre in the 1590s translate to indoor performance in the 1630s? The prologue spoken at the Cockpit goes on to say that "by the best of poets in that age / The Malta Jew had being, and was made; / And he then by the best of actors played,"<sup>4</sup> but Edward Alleyn was no longer available to play Barabas and the kind of verse generally heard on the Caroline stage was very different from Marlowe's mighty line (the revival at the Cockpit will have been running concurrently with two comedies by Shirley).

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2. Kenneth Friedenreich, "'The Jew of Malta' and the Critics: A Paradigm for Marlowe Studies," *Papers on Language and Literature* 13.3 (1977): 318–326, 318. He also observes that in 1937 Philip Henderson suggested that the play was a collaboration between Marlowe and Kyd (322).

3. Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, in *The Complete Plays*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett (London: Everyman, 1999), 458–535, 460.

4. Marlowe, *Jew of Malta*, "The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit," 2–4.

The research questions I initially put forward were:

- How well is the action of *The Jew of Malta* suited to the stage of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse?
- What happens to Marlowe's mighty line in the intimacy of an indoor theater?
- Although the play was originally written for daylight performance, does it work by candlelight?
- Most importantly, does acting the play indoors enable us to see or guess anything about the nature of the text? Does it act like a play originally written for performance in very different circumstances, or are there any signs that any changes might have been made to it?
- Are there, in short, any clues to whether the 1630s text was influenced by the circumstance of 1630s performance, which in turn might help us to address that crucial question of whether the play as we have it represents the play as Marlowe left it?

In the interval between proposing the workshop and actually doing it, another question also made itself felt: *The Jew of Malta* is obviously a play about religion, but is it also a religious play? I began to think about this after seeing the Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Doctor Faustus* at the Swan in spring 2016, which made me understand for the first time why Alleyn wore a cross when playing the role and how it was indeed possible for so strong a sense of transgression and of the numinous to be created that an audience member might imagine that they saw an extra devil on the stage. During the winter season 2015–16, there were productions of all four of Shakespeare's last plays in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, and each evoked for me a genuine sense of miracle; I was keen to know whether *The Jew of Malta* might, in such a space, equal *Doctor Faustus*'s sense of the unhallowed.

The structure of Research in Action events is for the actors to work on the scenes throughout the afternoon and for the actual workshop (with the paying public present) to run from 6 until 8 pm. We started with the play's two prologues. The questions I had initially proposed were what does the prologue spoken by Machevill sound like on the SWP stage? Can we guess whether "The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit" replaced or supplemented it? And can we get any sense of what else this performer does in the play—could he, for instance, possibly stay on as Barabas, since the information that Barabas "favours" him suggests that he looks like him?

We looked first at "The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit," and experimented with having it read both by David Acton, who was

cast as Barabas, and by Robert Mountford, who spoke it as a performer rather than as any particular character but did suggest that it might be rather neatly delivered by Ithamore in his capacity as duplicitous support act to Barabas. (In the actual workshop, for reasons of time, only Robert Mountford read it.) The actors were much amused by the way in which the Cockpit prologue praised Alleyn at the obvious expense of the hapless modern-day substitute who was just about to take the role; we wondered if the contemporary equivalent would be to introduce a production by reminding the audience that Laurence Olivier had excelled in the title role, but given that we were on the premises of the Globe the comparison that most obviously suggested itself was to imagine a revival of *Jerusalem* twenty years hence and to think about how the actor might negotiate the fact that Mark Rylance had made the role his own. The fact that we were in Shakespeare's Globe also made it very conspicuous that it is Marlowe rather than Shakespeare who is unhesitatingly identified as "the best of poets" (a phrase to whose pluses both actors gave full value).

We then moved on to Machiavel's lines, which were spoken by Ben Deery. He delivered them first sitting down, for us to get the feel of them, then standing in the middle of the stage, and finally decided to experiment with delivering the speech from the gallery. This was an intriguing choice which worked well initially, picking up very nicely on the fact that Machiavel says he has flown (*Jew of Malta*, prologue.2), the idea of "climbing followers" (13), and the idea that he is, technically at least, a spirit; however by the end of the speech, when Machiavel has homed in on Barabas, both Ben and we felt that he seemed too far away up in the gallery. It would of course also be quite impossible for him to be up there if, as I think might be possible, Machiavel's declaration that Barabas "favours" him (35) can be taken to mean that he looks like him, because the actor playing Machiavel could at this point simply *become* Barabas, possibly by donning the red wig and false nose which we know Alleyn to have worn for the part. In the evening workshop, Robert Mountford and Ben Deery spoke the two prologues one after the other, and we asked the audience if they felt that both served a purpose. There were mixed views, but one person felt that to have prologue following prologue added an element of parody, which would be very much in keeping with the feel of the play.

Perverse though it may seem, I wanted to move from the beginning straight to the end. I have always felt that there was something in T. S. Eliot's stricture that the play ends in a very

different vein and tone from how it began, but I am less confident than Eliot that the change comes at the end of the second act.<sup>5</sup> I wondered if it might by any chance be possible to take the audience from the beginning to the end so that they could get a sense of quite how strongly the play drifts away from the promised sense of tragedy, and then take them back to some of the places where I thought the change in direction might become visible. The next passage we looked at, therefore, was 5.5.51–65, which begins with Calymath entering and moves on to Ferneze preventing him from climbing the stairs and Barabas falling into the cauldron instead. Since David Acton had an unaccountable objection to doing a nosedive from the gallery and Globe Education seemed not to want a hole cut in the wood, the scene could not actually be staged, but the actors (and later the audience) had a lot of fun speculating on ways in which the various effects required could have been achieved, and David did in fact succeed in indicating that a fall of some sort was involved by the simple expedient of throwing himself down in the gallery and clinging onto its rails. Our best bet was that there might be a clue in the Lord Admiral's Men property list compiled on March 10, 1598 which includes "one cauldron for the *Jew*" and "one pair of stairs for Phaeton." Although the list does not say so, a pair of stairs intended for one play could presumably also be used for another, and that pair of stairs would have provided a good practical solution on the stage of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and would also have had an added theological resonance, since Todd Borlik notes that in the *Faustbuch*, Mephistopheles tells Faustus that there is a ladder in hell which tempts the damned to climb towards heaven but throws them off when they near the top.<sup>6</sup>

Even without a full staging, though, a number of things about this scene became startlingly clear. In the first place, the stage picture of Barabas above and Ferneze and Calymath below offers the image of a Christian, a Muslim, and a Jew forming an unholy trinity in which the Jew, initially at the apex of the triangle, ultimately ends up lowest of all. Throughout the play, Marlowe repeatedly invites us to reflect on the interrelationship of the three religions of the book. Julia Reinhard Lupton notes that this was a common concern in the period and that in 1597 the anonymous tract *The Policy of the Turkish Empire* declared, "As the Jews had a particular lawe given unto them

5. T. S. Eliot, *Elizabethan Dramatists* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 63–4.

6. Todd Borlik, "Hellish Falls: Faustus's Dismemberment, Phaeton's Limbs and Other Renaissance Aviation Disasters—Part II," *English Studies* 97.4 (2016): 351–61, 353.

and published by God himselfe in Mount Sinai . . . so have the Turkes (in imitation of the same) certaine lawes and precepts or Commandements laide downe in their Alcoran”; she also suggests that Marlowe’s nomenclature is pointed in that Ithamore, the name of one of the most prominent Muslim characters, “is a variant of the biblical ‘Ithamar,’ the youngest son of Aaron and hence part of the priestly line of the Levites, professional upholders of Jewish ritual law.”<sup>7</sup> Secondly, the scene shows that Barabas becomes a parodic food item, an ingredient in what both actors and audience members independently identified as a witches’ cauldron of the kind found in *Macbeth*, but which is also readable as an inverted Eucharist. Barabas takes his name from the reprobate whom the Jews asked Pontius Pilate to pardon instead of Christ; this scene brought home the full meaning of that status as alternative to Christ when instead of body and blood being transmuted into bread and wine for the spiritual nourishment of Christians, they become part of a banquet supposedly intended to be served to the Ottoman army.

From the end we went back to the middle, specifically to the part of the play spanning from 2.1.58 to 2.2.9. My interest in this passage was rather different: 2.1, in which Barabas retrieves his gold from the encloistered Abigail, is an intimate, night-time scene with an obvious resemblance to *Romeo and Juliet*, whereas 2.2 is a big, open, public scene set in daytime. Previous productions in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, particularly *The Duchess of Malfi* in 2014 and *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* in 2015, have made clear how much the mood can be changed by dousing the candles, but this is best done immediately before the interval, to allow for their being relit during it; Ford clearly positioned the death of Bergetto where he did to take advantage of when the trimming of the candles would need to occur. *The Jew of Malta*, though, was written for open-air performance in broad daylight, and there is no scope for a lighting change at this point. I wanted to see whether the transition would work, but this was easily my stupidest idea, because there was not the least difficulty: David Acton as Barabas acted “small” and Robert Mountford as Del Bosco acted “big,” and while Barabas exited through a side door, Del Bosco with Ben Deery as Ferneze and Aslam Percival as a knight made a grand entrance through the central one, which carried them fully downstage and completely changed the dynamic of the space. Staging the end and the beginning of these

7. Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2005), 61 and 63.

two scenes did, though, shine a light on some things that they have in common and that I had never noticed before. Barabas exits speaking Spanish, “*Hermoso placer de los dineros*” (2.1.64), and immediately afterwards a Spaniard enters; both scenes are about incursion, since Barabas should not be at the convent and Del Bosco has arrived without leave; and Barabas’s wish that he should “hover” (2.1.62) is picked up in the fact that Del Bosco’s ship is called the *Flying Dragon*, making this, like *Doctor Faustus*, a play with an interest in flight, and also in ways to bridge the gap between the upper and lower stages, as when Barabas kisses his fingers to Abigail.

We moved next to 4.1.134–84, where Barabas and Ithamore kill Barnardine and prop him up for Jacomo to find and kill again. Since they had all been trained in safe combat, Aslam Percival as Ithamore and David Acton as Barabas strangled Ben Deery’s Barnardine with glee and relish, assuring us that they knew how to kill a man; they were cheerfully unconcerned when Ben turned purple, and left him for Robert Mountford’s Jacomo to fell and club much more convincingly than I had expected. It was quite extraordinary to watch how quickly the whole scene came together out of nothing, and it was also apparent that this episode prefigures the end of the play in that it too has a Christian, a Jew, and a Muslim on stage at the same time, this time with the Muslim and the Jew in cahoots to kill the Christian rather than with Ferneze intervening to save Calymath and send Barabas to his death. The scene also invites us to remember that what really divides the three religions of the book is less scripture than dietary practice when a Muslim tells a Jew that a Christian “stands as if he were begging of bacon” (160), and the pose of Ben Deery’s dead Barnardine almost hinted at a crucified body, which would not achieve a resurrection but had been posed in a parodic simulacrum of continuing life.

Finally we came to 5.1.50–63, the scene in which Barabas is thrown over the walls. It had occurred to me to wonder whether in this play, as I think happens in some others, use of stage levels has any bearing on an audience’s sense of closeness to heaven or hell. Julia Reinhard Lupton declares that

The play’s architecture of conversion and its discontents takes place in and as the scaffolding of the stage itself. Mobilizing the iconography of the Judaeo-Christian turn, the expropriation has a more contemporary reference as well, namely to Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries, including the urban and suburban holdings (liberties) on which some of London’s public theaters, such as Blackfriars, now stood.



For Lupton, “In *The Jew of Malta*, the architecture of the stage discovers within itself a series of real and symbolic transformations—of synagogue into nunnery, of Catholic monastery holdings into Protestant royal property, and of the old monastic liberties into new theatrical ones—infinite riches in a little room.”<sup>8</sup> Along similar lines G. K. Hunter observes that “the Elizabethan stage inherited from the medieval pageant-wagon a moral as well as a physical structure, with Heaven above and Hell beneath; and we should see that the scenic enactment of Barabas’ descent into the pit or cauldron has moral meaning as well as stage excitement” and that “A cauldron was . . . a traditional image of hell.”<sup>9</sup> There are, in theory, four levels available at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse: the gallery, the stage, the trap, and the pit (though Globe Education staff are very aware that actors in the original Globe or Cockpit did not enter or exit through the yard or pit). We actually talked about doing the scene with no change of level at all—just rolling Barabas out through the main door, in line with Steven Mullaney’s suggestion that “it is doubtful that the wall Barabas is cast over was represented by anything but a bare, flat platform”<sup>10</sup>—but in retrospect it should have been obvious to me that we were always going to use the trap because if there *is* a trap, actors are probably going to want to use it. There remained the question of how to get the body of Barabas down from the walls, but this was solved with beautiful simplicity by Ben, Robert, and Aslam, who simply stood on the gallery with their eyes fixed on the progress of an imaginary falling body before David’s head popped out of the trap. This had the added advantage of giving Barabas knowledge of a way in which he could let Calymath in: He simply gestured towards the underground space from which he had just exited, suggesting that the Knights’ method of disposing of him had in fact given him the advantage of superior knowledge.

We are never going to know what Marlowe’s play looked like when it was first staged, or how audiences responded to specific moments. Doing this workshop did, though, help me begin to guess at how it might have felt on the Caroline stage. I never saw so clearly before how language about religion is echoed by stage pictures encoding religious iconography, or why and how it matters how high

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8. Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, 69–70.

9. G. K. Hunter, “The Theology of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964): 211–40, 233–34.

10. Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988), 58.

or low Barabas goes. I saw that some scenes echo and comment on each other more closely than I had thought, and that the play is more tightly constructed than it has sometimes felt on the page. I saw how collusive an experience it is: Barabas is what he is only because the Christian and Muslim characters are what they are, and from the moment that Machiavel identifies the audience as his friends we too are implicated.

Above all, I saw that *The Jew of Malta* is a play about Easter. Marlowe's writing career is bookended by two missing bodies. At the time when he produced his earliest literary work, he was very probably a student of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Corpus Christi took its name from the body of Christ, but the Protestant Reformation had brought very different attitudes to that body, including a denial of the traditional idea that it was supernaturally manifested in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. When he died, leaving *Hero and Leander* apparently unfinished and with who knows what still left him in to write, he was buried in an unmarked grave in St Nicholas's Church Deptford. In the interim, he repeatedly dramatized and narrated stories which featured the absence or loss of one or more significant bodies. In possibly his earliest play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Dido herself, Anna, and Iarbas cast themselves upon a pyre. This was not the only version of Dido's death available to Marlowe: In some versions of her story, she committed suicide with a knife. There are several reasons why Marlowe might prefer a pyre. In the first place, I have argued elsewhere that Marlowe is drawn to writing deaths that are difficult to stage.<sup>11</sup> In the second, he is consistently interested in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* in undercutting any possible suggestion of the heroic, and the repeated leaps onto the flames unquestionably work to comic effect. However, Dido's death by fire also ensures that there is no body to bury. Something alleged to be Queen Dido's tomb used to be shown to visitors to Tunis, and Henslowe's list of properties included "1 tomb of Dido," but this was meant not for Marlowe's play but for a now lost *Dido and Aeneas* acted in 1598; the body of Marlowe's Dido disappears without trace. In *Doctor Faustus*, the hero is borne bodily to hell, and in *Hero and Leander*, Leander drowns, so there is presumably no body to be buried.

*The Jew of Malta*, though, both loses and finds a body. The hero, Barabas, takes his name from the thief whom Pontius Pilate spared

11. Lisa Hopkins, *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008), 108.

from crucifixion instead of Jesus, and the play not only remembers the point in history at which Christianity separated from Judaism but also stages a parody resurrection. The way in which *The Jew of Malta* both withholds and supplies bodies was interestingly illuminated by the production of the York Mystery Plays directed by Philip Breen in York Minster in 2016, in which Lucifer (Toby Gordon) doubled Barabas, whose body thus became literally only a temporary and contingent phenomenon. It also became obvious that Barabas's activity with the hammer in the final scene of *The Jew of Malta* recalls the way in which Jesus is nailed to the cross in the mysteries. Critics have often observed parallels between Marlowe and mystery plays. G. K. Hunter calls "the *consummatum est* with which Faustus completes the sale of his soul to the devil," "the ironic juxtaposition of the words in which Christ completed the ransom of mankind, and the act in which Faustus denied that mercy for himself."<sup>12</sup> Jennifer Waldron notes that

Even as he says Christ's words, . . . Faustus seems to lose sight of the "true substance" of the sacrificial body he imitates and of the divine drama in which he himself is caught. Marlowe's audience, however, is invited to imagine this connection quite clearly through two specifically theatrical effects centered on the actor's body . . . the first is the moment of providential intervention when a supernatural force seems to stop the flow of Faustus's blood and to write on his arm. The second is the scene's resemblance to dramatic traditions of staging Christ's redemptive sacrifice.<sup>13</sup>

She identifies these as being found particularly in mysteries, and though Douglas Cole mentions the play's "clear exploitation of morality play devices,"<sup>14</sup> to me too mysteries seem to be the best clue to *The Jew of Malta*. Perhaps most strikingly, Hunter notes that "by a daring reversal of the standard irony of the play, [Marlowe] seems to imply that, though Barabas is the opposite of Christ, his trial is conducted by figures who approximate to Pilate and Chief Priest," since the Governor echoes the sentiment of Caiaphas when he says "better one want for a common good" and declares that he will not stain his hands with blood.<sup>15</sup>

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12. G. K. Hunter, "The Theology of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*," 211.

13. Jennifer Waldron, *Reformations of the Body: Idolatry, Sacrifice, and Early Modern Theater* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 109.

14. Douglas Cole, *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* (Westport: Greenwood, 1995), 93.

15. Hunter, "The Theology of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*," 256.

In Marlowe's hands, these already resonant motifs take on still further meanings. Catherine Willis observes of Barabas admitting Calymath: "In this violent breach of the city, Marlowe engages a medieval topos, the royal entry, and intensifies the dramatic tradition associated with it—the staging of Christ's entry into Jerusalem"; she argues that "Marlowe disrupts the dramatic tradition of Christ's entry into Jerusalem by replacing it with Barabas enabling Calymath's bloody entry into Malta."<sup>16</sup> The entry into Jerusalem was an important part of the build-up to Easter; Eamon Duffy notes that on Palm Sunday "the story of Christ's entry into Jerusalem and greeting by the crowds with palms was read from St John's Gospel," and that after this "the story of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem from Matthew's Gospel was read to the parishioners in the churchyard";<sup>17</sup> Barabas is not entering Jerusalem, but he is entering the citadel of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, this being the full title of the Knights Hospitaller, and the fact that different gospels were associated with the event may be suggestive in light of the general view that *The Jew of Malta* itself has different textures.

Catherine Brown Tkacz relates the pit into which Barabas falls to Proverbs 26.27, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein," and says "The image of someone falling into a pit he had dug for another occurs seven times in the Bible, always in the Old Testament."<sup>18</sup> Above all, Tkacz points out that "the specific image of the pit . . . featured in the Easter liturgy," in Psalm 57,<sup>19</sup> and Eamon Duffy notes that on Good Friday, the Host and the crucifix were placed within the Easter tomb "while the priest intoned the Psalm verse "I am counted as one of them that go down to the pit."<sup>20</sup> Sara M. Deats argues that

Throughout Act V, Barabas continues his mock imitation of Christ: he is betrayed by his supposed heir and leading disciple Ithamore; he is apprehended and condemned to death by the establishment; he

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16. Catherine Willis, "The Dynamics and Staging of Community in Medieval "Entry into Jerusalem" Plays: Dramatic Resources Influencing Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 27 (2014): 78–100, 78.

17. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992), 23 and 24.

18. Catherine Brown Tkacz, "'The Jew of Malta' and the Pit," *South Atlantic Review* 53.2 (May 1988): 47–57, 47–8.

19. Tkacz, "'The Jew of Malta' and the Pit," 50.

20. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 30.

undergoes a sham death and a bogus resurrection—like everything else in Barabas’ life, a purely physical rather than a spiritual ordeal.<sup>21</sup>

Finally John Parker notes that Barabas “specifically owes a part of his costume” to Judas,<sup>22</sup> whose betrayal of Christ precipitated the events that Easter commemorates.<sup>23</sup> Barabas may start the play by saying “we come not to be kings” (1.1.128), but ironically he himself does come to be a king of sorts as he becomes the central participant in a parodic Easter rite, the occasion on which Christ was proclaimed “King of the Jews” and on which the anthems “Ecce Rex Tuus” and “Ave Rex Noster” were sung.<sup>24</sup>

What then did *The Jew of Malta* mean in 1633? In some ways, one might expect it to be less about Easter, given that the mysteries were so far in the past. In other ways, though, I think it may have been more so because I think it had been given new meaning by two specific intertextualities. In Chettle’s *Hoffman*, one of the most iconic symbols of Christianity undergoes some strange alterations when both Hoffman’s father and Hoffman himself are killed by burning crowns. Paul Browne believes that Chettle may have been indebted to Marlowe’s *Edward II* for the burning crown image in his play,<sup>25</sup> but whatever its derivation, the burning crown clearly parodies the crown of thorns, and the fact that it is ultimately applied to Hoffman himself connects both him and his father to the Christian iconography of father and son. That iconography takes a strange

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21. Sara M. Deats, “Biblical Parody in Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*: A Re-examination,” *Christianity and Literature* 37.2 (1988), 27–48, 31.

22. John Parker, *The Aesthetics of Antichrist: From Christian Drama to Christopher Marlowe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2007), 196.

23. During the workshop an audience member suggested that ideally Barabas needed to be covered in the contents of the sewer when he emerged, to make it absolutely clear what the proposed route was, but while I’m sure this would be lovely, resources did not allow it. It would, though, suggest an intriguing parallel between this play and *Edward II*, another play that remembers the mysteries: Patrick Ryan observes that “to dramatize the arrest, imprisonment, degradation, torture, and murder of King Edward, Marlowe embellishes these dramatic actions with verbal and visual images derived from conventional medieval and early Renaissance descriptions of Christ’s Passion” and that “Marlowe’s Lightborn, the professional torturer and assassin, has chosen as his *nom de guerre* the name of a devil in the Chester mystery plays”; he also relates the spit to the roasting of the Passover lamb (and by implication the Paschal lamb), suggesting an Easter motif here too. See “Marlowe’s *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play,” *Comparative Drama* 32.4 (1998), 465–495, 465, 489, and 479.

24. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 24–25.

25. Paul Browne, “A Source for the ‘Burning Crown’ in Henry Chettle’s *The Tragedy of Hoffman*,” *Notes and Queries* 51.3 (2004): 297–99, 297.

turn, though, when Hoffman declares, “This scene is done / Father, I offer thee thy murderer’s son” (1.1.230–31). The hanging corpse of Otho makes the playhouse look like a church with a crucifix hanging over the altar, an idea emphasized when Martha “christens” Hoffman by a false name with her eyes as the font and her tears substituting for holy water.<sup>26</sup> Hoffman even gestures at a parody of communion when he tells Lorrique, “Nor can my wounds be stopped till an incision / I’ve made to bury my dead father in” (1.1.70–2), with its suggestion of ingesting human flesh with salvific characteristics, and his offering of cakes to Otho has both Eucharistic overtones and also parodies the Last Supper, since Otho, betrayed as Jesus was, is about to die and be crucified.

Hoffman, like *The Jew of Malta*, has a pair of characters called Lodowick and Mathias (and also finds poisoning funny). The inversion of scriptural narrative is continued when Lorrique, in the role of Judas, betrays Hoffman; Lorrique will also attempt to take his own life, as Matthew says Judas did after his betrayal of Christ. Once Lorrique is dead, his body is strung up alongside the bodies of Hoffman’s father and Prince Otho and will further simulate the crucifixion of Christ’s crucifixion with the two thieves on either side of him. Chettle’s play was first acted around 1602, but it was not published until 1631, two years before the first printing of *The Jew of Malta*, and it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that it would have been part of the horizon of reception for Marlowe’s play. Tom Rutter suggests that “*The Jew of Malta* is an especially appropriate play to read Hoffman against,”<sup>27</sup> but I would like to reverse that to argue that, given *Hoffman*’s appearance in print only two years earlier, it is an especially appropriate play to read *The Jew of Malta* against. If one does that, the Easter element of *The Jew of Malta* is sharply accentuated.

The second play that I suggest conditioned the 1633 performance and printing of *The Jew of Malta* is Ford’s *Love’s Sacrifice*. In spring 2015, the Royal Shakespeare Company put on *The Jew of Malta* concurrently with *Love’s Sacrifice*. This was a fortuitous decision because there is some suggestive overlap between the two plays. *The Jew of Malta* was passing through the press in the same year as *Love’s Sacrifice*, and when it was revived on the Caroline stage Richard

26. Henry Chettle, *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, in *Five Revenge Tragedies: Kyd, Shakespeare, Marston, Chettle, Middleton*, Emma Smith, ed. (London: Penguin, 2012), 243–324, 4.2.205–7.

27. Tom Rutter, “Marlowe, *Hoffman*, and the Admiral’s Men,” *Marlowe Studies* 3 (2013): 49–62, 59.



Perkins played in both productions. Ferneze says of Lodovico and Mathias,

Then take them up, and let them be interred  
Within one sacred monument of stone;  
Upon which altar I will offer up  
My daily sacrifice of sighs and tears.<sup>28</sup>

In *Love's Sacrifice*, Caraffa echoes this closely when he says "Behold, I offer up the sacrifice / Of bleeding tears, shed from a faithful spring,"<sup>29</sup> and all three main characters of *Love's Sacrifice* share a monument, just as Ferneze orders that Lodovico and Mathias should do.

*Love's Sacrifice* too can be seen as an Easter play. *Love's Sacrifice* is based on the life of Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, famous both for murdering his wife and for composing troubling, atonal music. In 1611, Gesualdo published a collection of spiritual madrigals called *Tenebrae Responsoria*; these relate specifically to Easter week, when during "the *Tenebrae* services on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday . . . [candles] were snuffed out one by one to symbolize the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples. The standard sermon collections include explanations of this striking ceremony" and include several lines that resonate with *Love's Sacrifice*: Feria Quinta, Response 4, "My friend betrayed me by token of a kiss"; Response 7, "I was led the sacrifice and I knew it not"; and Feria Sexta, Response 3, "How art thou turned to bitterness, that thou shouldst crucify me, and release Barabbas?"<sup>30</sup> *Love's Sacrifice* itself can be seen as drawing on the Easter story, and indeed as offering of a form of *Tenebrae responsoria*. Alex Ross observes of the responsoria "Those services are known as the *Tenebrae*, or 'shadows'; in the old Catholic rite, the candles were extinguished, one by one, until the church was enveloped in darkness."<sup>31</sup> As the 2014 production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse showed, Ford was a master of this effect. In act 3, scene 6, as the Friar began to describe hell to the terrified Annabella, two attendants, studiously mirroring each other's movements, slowly and systematically doused every candle in

28. Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, 3.2.29–31.

29. John Ford, *Love's Sacrifice*, ed. A. T. Moore (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002), 5.3.42–43.

30. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 23.

31. Alex Ross, "The Rest is Noise," *The New Yorker*, December, 9 & 26, 2011, <http://www.therestisnoise.com/2011/12/gesualdo.html>.

all four of the candelabras until the stage itself was the lightless space of which the Friar spoke, with only one taper burning. Hippolita and Vasques then played their brief following scene with hand-held candles, and the way was thus paved for the last candle to be extinguished so that the death of Bergetto could be played out in absolute darkness until the call of "Lights!" was answered by appropriate characters rushing onto the stage with torches, before a strategic placing of the interval allowed the candelabras to be relit for the second half. Clearly the scenes are sequenced in this way precisely in order that this effect may be produced. Neither the hall of Gray's Inn, the venue of the Globe's 2015 Read not Dead production of *Love's Sacrifice*, nor the Swan Theatre, where the RSC staged the play in the same year, lent itself to similar experiments with the lighting of *Love's Sacrifice*, but the scene in which Fernando emerges from the tomb would certainly work best in near-darkness (5.1), and the pointed deferral of the funeral for three days seems deliberately calculated to evoke the idea of the Resurrection. Bianca's tomb thus becomes an Easter Tomb, with Fernando's emergence from the tomb effectively implying the question "Quem quaeritis?"<sup>32</sup>

In 1592, the probable date of its first performance, *The Jew of Malta* might have reminded older members of the audience of motifs from the mystery plays. By 1633, it would no longer have done this, but its latent Easter associations had been energised in new ways and by new collocations. I think these can help us answer the final and most difficult question that I proposed to the actors at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, which is whether *The Jew of Malta* is a religious play. Sara Deats argues that "implied throughout the play by Biblical reference are a series of moral standards against which the squalid society of Malta can be evaluated";<sup>33</sup> in effect, she is suggesting that we see a double picture, an image of what is actually there haunted and doubled by an image of what might be there that we mentally superimpose on the reality, with Barabas not only understudying Jesus but also potentially implying him. There is nothing to tell us that the Bible story is the truer of the two, but there is a lot to remind us that it is more edifying than the one that we actually watch unfolding—that it is, in the terms of Sidneian criticism, closer to poetry, which inspires, than to history, which depresses. Ultimately, while watching *The Jew of Malta* is not likely to

32. For a succinct summary of the history of this idea, see Michael Kobialka, "The *Quem Quaeritis*: Theatre History Displacement," *Theatre History Studies* 8 (1988): 35–51, 38.

33. Deats, "Biblical Parody in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*," 27.

convince anyone that there is a divine power controlling human lives, it might make you think that it would be good if there were. In that sense, I think that, for all its irreverence, *The Jew of Malta* in performance can indeed be a religious play, and that it is therefore not surprising that it should have found an audience at the court of Charles and Henrietta Maria.

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Telescoping Translation: *Hero and Leander*,  
*Lenten Stuffe*, and *Bartholomew Fair*

Thomas Nashe's translation of Hero and Leander's story in the context of English piscatorial politics in *Lenten Stuffe* (1599) has yet to be recognized as both an extension of Christopher Marlowe's thematic departures from his Musean predecessor and a primary influence on Ben Jonson's puppet show in *Bartholomew Fair* (1631).<sup>1</sup> Although C. S. Lewis believes that "our taste is a little offended" by Nashe's transformation of Marlowe's lovers into fish,<sup>2</sup> G. R. Hibbard situates Nashe's "burlesque" of Marlowe's poem as the "high-light" of *Lenten Stuffe* and observes: "To see what happened to 'Hero and Leander' when it was vulgarized, it is only necessary to turn to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, where it is debased into a crude puppet-show by the stupid citizen John Littlewit."<sup>3</sup> Critical conventions clearly position Nashe "between" Marlowe and Jonson. But an analysis of the intertextual exchanges among these works that includes Jonson's telescoping—his compression and conflation—of both Marlowe's and Nashe's versions of *Hero and Leander* with Richard Edwards' *Damon and Pythias* in London's Smithfield remains outstanding. This essay fills this critical gap by demonstrating how

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1. I have argued elsewhere that in Nashe's *Lenten Stuffe*, "praise" emerges as a red herring diverting readers from recognizing how he telescopes his chorography of Yarmouth into a catalogue of arbitrary Crown rule from William the Conqueror's rule through the English Reformation. See Kristen Abbott Bennett, "Red Herrings and the 'Stench of Fish': Subverting 'Praise' in Thomas Nashe's *Lenten Stuffe*," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 37.1 (2014): 87–110.

2. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 415.

3. G. R. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962), 246–247.

the progressive conversation between *Hero and Leander*, *Lenten Stuffe*, and *Bartholomew Fair* formally turns on the dialectical nature of translation. It additionally shows how all three writers exploit Ovidian hermaphroditic imagery in order to undermine the intersecting ideals of linguistic integrity, classically inspired amity, and Neoplatonic harmony.

Marlowe's wonderful punning on "Venus nun," suggesting that Hero is "Venus none," epitomizes the quandary at the crux of translation.<sup>4</sup> Ideally, translation follows its prefix to span "across" and create unity from multiple versions. Thus, the project of *translatio studii et imperii* (translation of learning and empire) aims toward creating a sense of national and linguistic unity. But "translation" is also already subject to having been doubled. A translated text both is, and is not, its source—the paradox is omnipresent.<sup>5</sup> Belén Bistué rightly embraces this contradiction and explains that "while translation theory can be a repository for ideologies of unification (economic, political, doctrinal, and stylistic), it can also be a site of resistance to them."<sup>6</sup> Marlowe's, Nashe's, and Jonson's versions of *Hero and Leander* directly exploit this conflict. On the one hand, Nashe and Johnson reveal an urge toward the kinds of ideological unification Bistué catalogs. Both position Marlowe as a master worthy of imitation and simultaneously elevate the English language to stand, if not "above," at the very least on par with Museaus' Greek and Ovid's Latin. On the other hand, the latent satire that begins with Marlowe's Mercury digression predestinating divine and political authorities to legislative caprice, and then grows more outrageous with Nashe's and Jonson's subsequent translations, resists these ideologies. Ultimately, all of these three versions of *Hero and Leander* progressively expand upon Leander's cheeky arguments that Venus' nun should be "none" chaste in order to emphasize the ruptures of classically inspired ideals of amity and Neoplatonic idealism in early modern England.

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4. Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander: A Facsimile of the First Edition, London 1598* (Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1972), 45. Hereafter references to *Hero and Leander* are cited from this edition by line number.

5. Jacques Derrida has written and spoken much of this paradox. For a succinct exposition of his view on translation, see Derrida and Lawrence Venuti, "What is 'Relevant' Translation?" *Critical Inquiry* 27.2 (2001): 174–200.

6. Belén Bistué, *Collaborative Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate: 2013), 47).

Marlowe and Nashe initially exploit the fluid duality of both Venus and the hermaphrodite to mock hypocritical expressions of erotic love and political harmony in Elizabethan society. Tellingly, Jonson's conflation of his contemporaries' versions of *Hero and Leander* in *Bartholomew Fair* with *Damon and Pythias* exploits the puppets' androgyny and extends his predecessors' satirical portrayals of love and amity in early modern England.<sup>7</sup> Hero's association with the hermaphrodite begins when Marlowe's speaker associates her with Ovid's Salmacis,<sup>8</sup> continues as Nashe transforms her from a human into an asexually reproducing fish, and culminates when Jonson portrays her as a puppet performing at Bartholomew Fair. Renaissance conceptions of the hermaphrodite epitomize both the harmony associated with Neoplatonism and the omnipresent threat of its destruction. In one sense, the hermaphrodite represents an ideal union of "not only male and female, lover and beloved, but also materiality and spirituality."<sup>9</sup> Hermaphrodites also convey the monstrous elision of sexual and species boundaries which Livy suggests violate the natural laws that distinguish sex from sex and species from species.<sup>10</sup> Such ambiguous figures threaten these "natural" laws, largely reinstituted by church and state.<sup>11</sup> Simultaneously, these formal elisions and disfigurations threaten the integrity of the English vernacular and invoke the notion of linguistic barbarism, or the mixing of vernacular and classical languages.<sup>12</sup> Although vernacular fixity is not operative at the turn of the seventeenth century, it is still very much tied to the concept of national identity.<sup>13</sup> These progressive

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7. Friendship and political amity may seem like disparate concepts to modern readers, but Aristotle offers a summary of their interdependence: "City-states are held together by friendship, and lawmakers are more concerned about it than about the virtue of justice. For Concord seems something like friendship; but they see Concord above all else; and civil strife, which is enmity, they above all else expel." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1998), 8.1.25.

8. See Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, ed. John Frederick Nims, trans. Arthur Golding (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2000), 4.89–99.

9. Rossella Pescatori, "The Myth of the Androgyne in Leone Ebreo's *Dialogues of Love*," *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 38 (2007), 115–28, 117.

10. See Livy, *History of Rome*, trans. Evan T. Sage, 32.12.

11. For an excellent discussion on the multivalent symbolism of hermaphrodites in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, see Kathleen Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2006).

12. For the role of barbarism in rhetoric, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1973).

13. By "fixity," I do not mean "fixed" or unchanging. Instead, I point out that spelling,



translations of Hero and Leander's story satirize these intertwined notions of natural (per Livy), linguistic, and national integrity by participating in the culture of barbarism that they mock.

Because of the complexity of the conversation between Marlowe, Nashe, and Jonson, this essay proceeds in three sections. First, I offer a reading of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* that has been informed by Nashe and Jonson's engagement with the poem. Marlowe is less concerned with romantic love than he is with an interrogation of the (ir)rationality for the lovers' tragedy. Specifically, Marlowe's translation highlights the hypocrisy associated with both natural and man-made laws. The second part examines Nashe's imitation of Marlowe's poem and his transposition of Hero and Leander's destiny onto English soil. Nashe translates Marlowe's images of disjunctive unity directly into his chronicle of arbitrarily allocated economic "liberties" favoring Yarmouth's fishing industry at the expense of Lowestoft's. The final section analyzes Jonson's incorporation of both Marlowe's poem and Nashe's variant of *Hero and Leander* with *Damon and Pythias*' epitome of ideal friendship. Amidst Jonson's intertextual cacophony lies his criticism of the hypocrisies and arbitrariness of political amity in Jacobean England.

### "Desunt Nonnulla"

Tempting as it may be to read Marlowe's association of Hero with both Venus and Ovid's hermaphrodite Salmacis as a Neoplatonically idealized androgyny unifying the (female) soul and (male) body,<sup>14</sup> Hero's fluid sexuality ultimately figures disjunction and informs a politically subversive subtext. Arguably, the sexual instability of all of Marlowe's main characters in *Hero and Leander* threaten both amity and *discordia concors*. For instance, Marlowe describes Leander as "a maid in man's attire,"<sup>15</sup> and Neptune notoriously mistakes him for Jove's Ganymede (641) before chasing the boy with his mace and accidentally wounding himself.<sup>16</sup>

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use, and conventions are still formative and as yet unfixed.

14. See Carter, *Ovidian Myth* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2011), 116.

15. Christopher Marlowe, "Hero and Leander," 83.

16. Marlowe may be alluding to Petronius' description of Giton in *The Satyricon*: "A boy who went into skirts instead of trousers, whose mother persuaded him never to grow up, who played the part of a woman in a slaves' prison." See Petronius, *Satyricon*, ed. Michael Heseltine (London: William Heineman, 1913) 81, *Perseus Project*, [www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2007.01.0027%3Atext%3DSatyricon%3Asection](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2007.01.0027%3Atext%3DSatyricon%3Asection)

Judith Haber has argued that Marlowe presents Neptune's self-inflicted wound as an image of castration, "an image (but only an image) of a man who is both intact and lacking."<sup>17</sup> Even if these hermaphroditic images are merely images, their accrual in the figure of Hero is undeniable. Marlowe's Mercury digression departs from his source and exploits Hero's association with both Venus and Salmacis in order to mock the endemic caprice of natural and man-made laws.

From his opening lines, Marlowe establishes Hero's dual nature by introducing her with a superficial blazon which exploits the pun on "nun" ("none") available in the English vernacular and foreshadows his sustained parody of idealized conceptions of Venus: "So louely faire was *Hero, Venus Nun*" (45). Whereas Museaus' Hero harmonizes voluptuousness and chastity as Venus' "youngest Grace" (Beauty), Marlowe's speaker gives readers a red-carpet review of Hero's outfit.<sup>18</sup> By describing how her "wide sleeues greene" tell the erotically charged story of Venus and Adonis (11–14), the speaker translates Hero as a wanton Venus. This association continues through the narrative describing her accessories, notably her "myrtle wreath" and "her vaile [of] artificiall flowers and leaues" (17; 19). Anticipating Cupid's proto-Freudian projection of his mother upon Hero, Marlowe's heroine wears Venus' myrtle wreath symbolizing the duality of chastity and sexuality, war and peace. Hero's "vaile" also suggests a medieval nun's headdress and arguably represents the *discordia concors* associated with Venus. But Marlowe strips this "vaile" of idealistic qualities by both recalling the "vale" where Venus overcomes Adonis, and also by emphasizing its artificiality—its ability to deceive "both man and beast." Marlowe's blazon of Hero's accoutrements emerges not as a portrait of harmony, but as one of cancellation: Hero's clothes mark her as no nun.

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%3D81, accessed 28 June 2018.

17. Judith Haber, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 45.

18. Raphael's painting "Scipio and the Three Graces" (1504) exemplifies Museaus' portrait of Hero as beauty. This painting depicts the tripartite nature of Venus' character: Chastity and Pleasure stand on either side of Beauty, the Grace that represents balance among the three. As Edgar Wind explains, the Graces "unfold the unity of Venus" and are the key to the "mystery" they seek to explain (Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1958), 80–1). Idealized representations of Venus as both chaste and voluptuous rationalize her "unlawful" affair with Mars that produced their daughter Harmony: "born from the god of strife and the goddess of love, she inherits the contrary characters of her parents: *Harmonia est discordia concors*" (81).

Marlowe continues to associate Hero with self-cancelling virtue in Leander's sophisticated portrayal of her virginity. Leander argues that Hero's valuation of her virginity analogizes "idoll" worship, or a worship of false gods (269). Her virtue is fashioned in negativity; it "neither [is] essence" nor has "any place of residence" (270; 272). Calling Hero "a holy Idiot," Leander negates her "holy" status as Venus' nun by alluding to her anatomical "hole" and emphasizing the absence paradoxically representing her virtue (303). Leander exploits this idealistic paradox in order to sabotage it by arguing that, if she were to "abandon fruitless cold Virginitie . . . then shall [Hero] most resemble *Venus Nun*" (318; 320). Deftly shifting the association of nunnery from chastity to sexual desire, Leander situates Hero's duality in a scene of rhetorically doubled negativity which, despite his sophistry, does not result in a "positive," or singular, representation. Instead, Leander's doubling of Hero as "nun/none" anticipates her gradual metamorphosis into Ovid's sexually ambiguous Salmacis, which begins when she swallows "*Cupid's golden hook*" (333).

When Hero swallows Cupid's hook, Marlowe undermines her virtue by tacitly associating her with fish. In early modern English literature, the word "fish" frequently connotes women's leaky sexuality and female genitalia, and is a synonym for "whore." These associations prohibit idealizing Hero and Leander's courtship and recast their dalliance as "anti-erotic."<sup>19</sup> Hero's struggle between reason and desire escalates once she swallows the bait; she is both aware of Leander's sophistry and the rising power of her awakening sexual desire:

Thus hauing swallowed *Cupid's golden hooke*,  
 The more she striv'd, the deeper was she stroke.  
 Yet euilly faining anger, stroue she still,  
 And would be thought to graunt against her will.  
 So hauing paus'd a while, at last shee said:  
 Who taught thee Rhethoricke to deceiue a maid? (333–38)

Hero's concern is not about true (erotic) or false (anti-erotic) love, but instead about appearances. She "strive[s]" to resist Leander even as she plots to control how any slippage on her part may be

19. In Neoplatonic contexts, the term "anti-erotic" is not used to condemn erotic love, but to criticize "low" eroticism, or sex for pleasure's sake. Anti-erotic love contrasts with idealized versions of erotic union stemming from reason and knowledge. Leone Ebreo's *Dialogues of Love* (1535) offers an illuminating discussion of erotic and anti-erotic Neoplatonic love.

perceived. As a temporary solution, Hero rhetorically displaces the burden of the encounter onto Leander by accusing him of rhetorical “deception.”<sup>20</sup> The speaker “answers” Hero by transitioning into the Mercury digression. Ovid’s story of Mercury in the *Fasti* has taught Leander how to exploit rhetorical sophistry to seduce and, failing seduction, to rape a maid. Marlowe supplements his digression with conflated translations of Ovidian narratives that emphasize the underlying hypocrisy of Neoplatonic idealism.

Marlowe’s revisionary mythology in the Mercury digression depicts “alliance” more closely resembling the proverb “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” than any kind of Pythagorean or Ciceronian ideal. At the crux of this long departure from Hero and Leander’s story is a tale of desire and destruction (386-484). Mercury defies Jove while trying to seduce a maid and is thrust from Olympus. In order to regain his position, Mercury courts the “Adamantine Destinies” and forms an alliance through which they overthrow Jove and restore Saturn to reign. But as soon as he gets what he wants, Mercury “despises” the Destinies’ love (460). Furious, the Fates break the alliance, restore Jove, and punish Mercury. These shifting political alliances between Mercury and the Destinies and, later, the Destinies and Jove are not determined by virtue and amity, but sexual desire and revenge. Finally, the girl who started all of this trouble disappears from the digression entirely, underscoring the irrationality informing this catastrophe of Olympian political order.

Marlowe continues to mock the arbitrary legitimization of “unnatural” laws by inventing a story about Mercury’s subjection to the Midases of the world.<sup>21</sup> After restoring Jove to the Olympian throne, the Destinies furiously punish Mercury, ordaining

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20. Leander is clearly well aware of rhetoric’s double nature. Eloquence, in the hands of the ideal orator is “*vir bonus dicendi peritus*” (a good man skilled in speaking), but in “the hands of evil, there would be nothing more ruinous for public or for private life.” See Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2002), 12.1.

21. Excepting Nashe’s imitation, the only other version of Marlowe’s anecdote about the fate of Mercury and scholars that I have found is in Robert Burton’s seventeenth-century text, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Here, Burton supports a misquotation of Marsilio Ficino’s *Liber de Arte Chemica* by quoting Marlowe’s poem: “And to this day is every scholar poor; / Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor” (302).

That he and *Pouertie* should always kis.  
 And to this day is euerie scholler poore,  
 Grosse gold, from them runs headlong to the boore.  
 Likewise the angrie sisters thus deluded,  
 To venge themselves on *Hermes*, haue concluded  
 That *Midas* brood shall sit in Honors chaire. (469–74)

Because he “despised” the Destinies, Mercury is fated to kiss not pretty maids, but poverty; additionally, “euerie scholler” must serve “*Midas* brood.” In addition to his notorious greed, Midas also offended Apollo by preferring Pan’s music and was given ass’s ears for his stupidity (*Metamorphoses*, 11.196–201). As David Riggs observes, “what especially galls the author of *Hero and Leander* is the impact of wealth on the world of learning. Not only do scholars labor under a sentence of poverty,” but “rich boors actually claim the places of honor that rightfully belong to the scholars.”<sup>22</sup> By portraying the Destinies’ absurd elevation of Midas and the scholars’ subsequent subjection to these “rich boors,” Marlowe’s digression emphasizes the material injustice that can result from gods (or monarchs) behaving badly.<sup>23</sup>

Marlowe’s concurrent shift into the present tense, to “this day,” transforms pagan fiction into then-contemporary political commentary emphasizing the material consequences of arbitrary authority. Claude Summers argues that Marlowe uses this “deliciously potted history of the ancient religion to indirectly attack the supernatural order of his own day by turning it on its head.”<sup>24</sup> Summers also asserts that Marlowe’s “literal-minded” translation of Ovid “mocks his culture’s dominant practice of co-opting and Christianizing classical myth and literature.”<sup>25</sup> Ovid, of course, used the fiction of his *Metamorphoses* to mock Augustus Caesar and his government; he was subsequently punished and exiled from Rome. Marlowe’s juxtaposition of Ovidian injustices with “this day” suggests that Elizabethan politics bear a closer resemblance to mythological antecedents than Marlowe’s moralizing or typologically allegorizing contemporaries may admit. I would argue that Marlowe maintains, at least, a tenuous connection between Olympian and

22. David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*. New York: Henry Holt, 2004), 303

23. Riggs, *World of Marlowe*, 303.

24. Claude J. Summers, “‘Hero and Leander’: The Arbitrariness of Desire,” in eds. J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell, *Constructing Christopher Marlowe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 133–47.

25. Summers, “‘Hero and Leander,’” 138.

Elizabethan politics through his subsequent affiliation of the lovers with the Ovidian hermaphrodite.

Following this digressive account of Mercury's eternal subjection to the Mid-asses of the world, Hero faints: "By this, sad *Hero*, with loue vnacquainted, / Viewing *Leanders* face, fell downe and fainted" (485–86). Leander is obviously naked, but the phrase "by this" references the digression as much as Leander's nakedness. Indeed, Hero's faint is in lock-step with the story she has just heard about anti-erotic love, arbitrary authority, and material consequences that do *not* follow; the scholars' suffering for Mercury's misdeeds is plainly unjust. At Leander's kiss, Hero awakens socially and sexually sophisticated. Indicating her imminent association with Salmacis, Hero worries about being "counted light" and flees in order to maintain her chaste reputation (493). But the following flurry of epistolary correspondence implicitly evokes Ovid's more sexually aggressive heroine and turns her into a "greedie loue" (508).<sup>26</sup> Still, Hero's apprehension resurfaces and she continues to oscillate until Cupid "fans the fire" (525):

Now waxt she ielous, least his loue abated,  
Fearing, her owne thoughts made her to be hated.  
Therefore vnto him hastily she goes,  
And like light *Salmacis*, her body throes. (527–30)

Once Marlowe aligns Hero with Ovid's Salmacis, her attraction to Leander turns dark; she is "ielous" and "throes" herself on the object of her desire.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Salmacis rapes an actively resistant Hermaphroditus and the gods, "pliant to her boone," reward her by manifesting their union eternally. Hermaphroditus, horrified that he has become "but half a man," then begs his parents Venus and Mercury to decree that all who enter their pool share his fate (4.479–81). Ovid offers no rationalization for the Olympian legitimization of Salmacis' violent desires and reiterates this subtext of legislative caprice when Hermaphroditus' wish is granted. Marlowe, and subsequently Nashe and Jonson, represent the intercourse between Salmacis' desire and Hermaphroditus' distaste as resulting in the perpetual reproduction of arbitrarily adjudicated justice. Hero's metaphorical association with Salmacis following the Mercury digression not only thwarts *discordia concors*, but may offer

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26. See Ovid, *Heroides*, trans. and ed. Harold Isbell (London: Penguin, 1990), 191–92.



an alternate bastard-child to Venus and Mars' daughter Harmony. Hero's resemblance to Venus, informed by both her attire and the juxtaposition of her story with Mercury's, results in an image of hermaphroditic union which tacitly reminds readers that Harmony is, despite her Neoplatonic gloss, as much a product of illicit union as Hermaphroditus.

The connotations of disjunction associated with Marlowe's Ovidian allusions echo the critique of amity in the Mercury digression. Again emphasizing the schismatic effect of desire on political alliances, Marlowe metaphorically associates Hero's virginity with royalty: "Ne're king more fought to keep his diademe; / Than Hero this inestimable gemme" (563–64). Marlowe's alignment of this "gemme" (virginity) that he then devalues as a "token" of friendship suggests a rhetorical debasement of amity (573). Because Marlowe's portrayal of the lovers is epitomized by Mercury's deceitful promises to the Destinies in exchange for divine favors, this "token" suggests what Tom MacFaul describes as the "purely transactional" nature of "the idea of amity that binds the nation together."<sup>27</sup> This "token"—a metonymic representation that can never be the "thing" itself—explodes amity and the power associated with Hero's "diademe."

One of the most remarkable aspects of Marlowe's poem is that it provides no sense of closure. Romantic comedy all but insists on rough spots before the course of true love can run smooth, but the narrative arc of *Hero and Leander* gives readers something altogether different. Rather than an ecstatic union, we find a pervasive sense of disjunction repeated in the self-cancelling images of "no-things." Ironically, Edward Blount's 1598 publication of the poem concludes with the line "desunt nonnulla," or "some things are lacking." Pointing to the broader sense of what is "lacking" here, Haber observes that "the disruption of end-directive narrative is paralleled by, and indeed equivalent to, the disruption of end-directed sexuality."<sup>28</sup> Haber's observation resonates in the context of Marlowe's hermaphroditic imagery that suggests not only sexual, but also political and rhetorical duplicity. Additionally, Marlowe implicates his audience in the Olympian (or barely-veiled Elizabethan) political and sexual corruption that continues "to this day." Imitating Marlowe's poem in *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe literalizes

27. Tom MacFaul, *Male Friendship in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 116.

28. Judith Haber, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 43.

these images of hermaphroditic metamorphoses, and incorporates his colleague's inventive representations of Mercurial and Midasian destiny directly into the political tension surrounding English fishing politics.

"The dint of destiny"

Invoking his "diuiner Muse, *Kit Marlow*," Nashe exploits the disjunction associated with hermaphroditic metamorphoses to criticize the arbitrariness of desire and its "unnatural" manifestation in both the literary and fish markets of Elizabethan England.<sup>29</sup> Unlike Marlowe, Nashe does not limit hermaphroditic transformation to imagery or suggestive allusions, but metamorphoses Hero and Leander directly into fish. Although *Lenten Stuffe* masquerades as an encomium and chronicle of Yarmouth's fishing industry, Nashe's "praise" obscures a subtext of virulent invective directed against the Crown for perpetuating enmity and material inequity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Subsequently, Nashe localizes Hero and Leander's story on the Norfolk coast in order to recapitulate the disjunction Marlowe associates with political amity and erotic harmony in the context of sixteenth-century piscatorial politics.

Nashe's segue from his chronicle of Yarmouth into his adaptation of *Hero and Leander* adds texture to Marlowe's digressive account of Mercury's subjection to Midas. Although Nashe later discusses the subjugation of Learning to Midas in his narration of Hero's dream, his first mention burlesques capricious authority:

That fable of Midas eating gold had no other shadow or inclusiue pith in it, but he was of a queasie stomacke, and nothing hee coulde fancie but this newe found gilded fish. . . . Midas, vnexperienst of the nature of it, (for he was a foole that had asses eares,) snapt it vp at one blow, & because, in the boyling or seathing of it in his maw, he felt it commotion a little and vpbraide him, he thought that he had eaten golde in deede, and thereupon directed his Orizons to Bacchus afresh, to helpe it out of his crop again. (3.193)

Nashe's emendatory myth suggests that Midas never ate gold, but craved instead this novel "gilded fish." On one level of interpretation, "gilded" connotes "gilded," or a "golden" fish—the red

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29. Thomas Nashe, *Lenten Stuffe, The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, 5 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 3.195-201. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references are from this edition.

herring. When Midas eats the fish, he becomes ill and begs Bacchus to help him vomit. Insofar as Bacchus authorizes Midas' gratuitous gluttony, he epitomizes the kind of arbitrary authority that Nashe repeatedly condemns in *Lenten Stuffe*. But the sick-making properties of this "gilded" fish also cast suspicion on the fishing "guilds" of Yarmouth which regulate the herring trade. Nashe represents Yarmouth's fishing monopoly as having been arbitrarily sanctioned by Crown authorities from William the Conqueror's reign to the present. Throughout the chronicle portion of *Lenten Stuffe*, Nashe tacitly accuses Yarmouth of exploiting her "moath-eaten" neighbors, among them, his home town of Lowestoft (3.174).<sup>30</sup> In the context of Norfolk coast fishing politics, Midas' greedy wastefulness of the herring analogizes Yarmouth's wealth in contrast to her poorer neighbors.

At the same time, Nashe's allusion to Midas expands Marlowe's portrayal of the lovers' subjection to the caprice of "this day" into the literary marketplace (*HL*, 470). Like Midas' herring, Hero and Leander are objects of consumption even before their piscine metamorphoses. Nashe speaks to the popularity of the 1598 printing of Marlowe's poem: "Twoo faithfull louers they were, as euerie apprentice in Paules churchyard will tell you for your loue, and sel you for your mony" (195). St. Paul's churchyard was dominated by booksellers, where printers' apprentices hawked their masters' pamphlets and ballads outside the cathedral. Cynically, Nashe's phrasing elides the discourses of love and profit from the outset ("tell you for your loue, and sel you for mony"). In the same paragraph, Nashe translates the politics of the marketplace into those of the English fishing industry. Leander is from Abidos in Asia; Hero is from Sestos in Europe: "and their townes that like Yarmouth and Leystoffe were still at wrig wrag, & suckt fro[m] their mothers teates serpentine hatred one against each other" (3.195).

After establishing a setting of political conflict, Nashe introduces his heroine as having learned her Marlovian lessons about the hypocrisy of female chastity and the interdependence of desire and fate in both the mortal and immortal worlds. Playing on Marlowe's line, "what vertue is it, that is borne with us" (278), Nashe's Hero

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30. See Henry S. Turner, "Nashe's Red Herring: Epistemologies of the Commodity in *Lenten Stuffe*," *ELH* 68:3 (2001): 529–61; and R. C. L. Sgroi, "Piscatorial Politics Revisited: The Language of Economic Debate and the Evolution of Fishing Policy in Elizabethan England," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 35.1 (2003): 1–24, for excellent discussions of Nashe's representation of sixteenth-century fishing politics.

reflects: "Fate is a spaniel that you cannot beate from you; the more you thinke to crosse it, the more you blesse it. . . . Neither her father nor mother vowed chastitie when she was begote, therefore she thought they begat her not to live chaste, & either she must prove her self a bastard, or shew herselfe like them" (3.196). Like Marlowe, Nashe ascribes the operations of "fate" to desire itself. Hero demonstrates awareness that her fate is tied directly to her parents' carnal appetites, and she jokingly acknowledges the impossibility of extricating oneself from the ardor that initiates human reproduction. Despite the surface comedy, these connotations of desire and hypocrisy run throughout Hero and Leander's piscine transformations.

Much as Marlowe's hermaphroditic imagery hampers the lovers' progress, Nashe's association of Hero with Salmacis impedes intercourse. Nashe's description of Leander through Hero's eyes directly echoes Marlowe's Ovidian allusion: "Of Leander . . . she likte well, and for all he was a naked man, and cleane despoyled to the skinne. . . . O, ware a naked man. . . . Were hee neuer so naked when he came to her" (3.196). Ovid's version reads: "When Salmacis behilde / His naked beautie, such strong pangs so ardently hir hilde, / That utterly she was astraught" (4.426–28). Although Leander's nakedness is all that is necessary for Nashe's Hero to engage in "scuffling or bopeepe in the darke," consummation is ambiguous (3.196). Perhaps because Ovid's *Heroides* have led readers to expect sexual intercourse, "scuffling" and "bopeepe" have traditionally been read as such, especially in the context of McKerrow's conclusion that Hero becomes pregnant.<sup>31</sup> But the *Oxford English Dictionary* has also cited Nashe's phrase as an exemplary derivative of the verb "to scuffle": "To struggle confusedly *together* or *with* another or others."<sup>32</sup> "Bo-peep" is a nursery game of hide and seek.<sup>33</sup> Together, "scuffling" and "bo-peep" imply the kind of sibling play we find suggested in Marlowe's allusions to Aesop (535–36).<sup>34</sup> Nashe echoes Marlowe's lovers'

31. Upon Hero and Leander's metamorphoses, Nashe informs us that Hero is "pagled and timpanized" (3.196). McKerrow glosses "pagled" as pregnant, and "timpanized" as swollen (4.405n31).

32. Oxford English Dictionary (OED), 2nd ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1989).

33. OED, v. 3.1 n. 1.

34. For brevity's sake, an analysis of Marlowe's "crosswise" allusions to Aesopian cocks has been omitted from the body of this essay. Marlowe underscores the hypocrisy of natural and manmade laws by conflating two allusions to Aesop in his description of Leander: "like *Aesops* cocke, this iewell he enjoyed, / And as a brother with his sister

“want” of organs and complicates the trajectory of heteronormative union. These images also augur Hero and Leander’s later species transformation.

But first, Nashe digresses (within his digression) to treat the duration of Leander’s fatal swim as an opportunity to revisit Marlowe’s inventive portrayal of the scholars’ fate. While Leander swims, Hero tries to sleep:

All that liue long night could she not sleepe, she was so troubled with the rheume...The rheume is the students disease, and who study most, dreame most...the blowing and blistring of our braines after our day labouring cogitations are dreames, and those dreames are reaking vapours of no impression . . . Hero hoped, and therefore she dreamed (as all hope is but a dreame). (3.197)

Nashe editor Ronald B. McKerrow has not encountered the association of dreaming with scholarship elsewhere. Nashe seems to build on Marlowe’s invented narrative about Midas and scholars. If scholars are destined to serve the Midases of the world, then Nashe posits their dreams as only “reaking vapours.” Nashe’s parenthesis, “hope is but a dream,” suggests Hero’s dream is, in equal parts, prophetic and fruitless; she awakens to find Leander’s corpse on the beach before throwing herself in after him. Nashe presents Hero’s self-sacrifice as a consequence of her predecessor’s swallowing of “Cupid’s golden hook”; she is transformed into a red herring (*HL*, 333).

Proclaiming that “the dint of destiny could not be repeald in the reuiuing of *Hero & Leander*,” Nashe suggests that the lovers’ fate has been determined not necessarily by Museaus or Marlowe, but by the enmity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft (Nashe, 3.199). At the ostensible “end” of the lovers’ narrative, Nashe recalls the beginning of Marlowe’s poem: “For they were either of them seaborderers and drowned in the sea, stil to the sea they must belong, and bee diuided in habitation after death, as they were in

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toyed” (535–36). “Cocke” and “jewell” allude to Aesop’s much discussed story of the “Rooster and the Pearl.” Aesop’s generally accepted moral posits value as determined by desire for the object at hand; the Rooster does not value the manure-covered pearl, therefore it has none. In the context of this fable, Leander would *not* enjoy “this jewel” because it has no value to him. This intertextual devaluation of Hero’s “jewell” often leads readers to interpret the line: “like *Aesop’s* cock . . . as a brother with his sister toyed” as indicating Leander’s sexual ignorance; yet the suggestion, like the situation, is ambiguous. I borrow “crosswise,” a derivative of the phrase “crosswise intertextuality.” See M. L. Stapleton’s recent descriptions of Marlowe’s simultaneous and multiple Ovidian allusions in *Marlowe’s Ovid: The Elegies in Marlowe’s Canon* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 95.

their life time" (3.199). By recalling Marlowe's opening portrayal of Hero and Leander as "Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might," Nashe returns to Marlowe's Ovidian translations of supernatural hypocrisy and capricious desire in order to project them upon English piscatorial politics (*HL* 3). In the context of Nashe's chronicle of the longstanding political enmity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the text metaphorically aligns "Neptune's might" with the Crown. According to Nashe, Crown-legislated inequity between Yarmouth and Lowestoft is not a strictly Elizabethan problem, but reaches back to the reign of William the Conqueror. Still, Nashe argues, neither Queen Mary nor Elizabeth "withered vp their hands" to offer aid to Yarmouth's neighbors (3.165). Therefore, in the current political climate, the lovers in Nashe's version cannot be united because the local factions are divided. Hero and Leander's ultimate metamorphoses into the herring and ling fish do not prevent the separation incurred by Leander's drowning, but reiterate division.

Hero and Leander's metamorphoses into fish also do not function like the transformations in George Chapman's continuation of Marlowe's poem. Instead of following Chapman and transforming the lovers into birds so they may live on in unison, Nashe's fish compound Marlowe's disjunctive portrayal of love and amity in a definitively English context.<sup>35</sup> In the vein of Livy, Nashe puts pressure on the violation of natural law, which the intersexed and/or interspecies hermaphrodites represent.<sup>36</sup> Nashe does not emphasize the lovers' physical monstrosities, but rather the injustice manifest in their piscine subjection to English Crown politics: "They footebald their heades together, & protested to make the stem of her loynes of all fishes the flanting Fabian or

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35. Chapman translates Marlowe's celebration of eroticism as a crime against marriage, but in his conclusion, he shows some sympathy for the doomed lovers and transforms them into "two sweet birds, surnamed th' Acanthides" (6.276). By turning Hero and Leander into goldfinches, Chapman frees these pagan lovers of the Golden Age from the demands of marriage while retaining a hint of Christian moral condemnation. See Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Poems and Translations*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New York: Penguin, 2007), 29–76.

36. Describing "dread forms of animals," Livy discusses children of "uncertain sex" in the same passage as lambs born with pig's heads. Livy finally expostulates: "All these disgusting and monstrous creatures seemed to be signs that nature was confusing species; but beyond all else the hermaphrodites caused terror" (*History of Rome*, 31.12.6–7). Livy is terrified that the breach of natural law exhibited by an intersexed or dual-species body will extend to the body politic. *Lenten Stuffe's* final metamorphosis of Hero and Leander speaks to this anxiety.

Palmerin of England, which is Cadwallader Herring, and, as their meetings were but seldome...should they meete in the heele of the weeke at the best mens tables" (3.199).<sup>37</sup> Nashe underscores the elusiveness of consummation in Marlowe's poem by prohibiting it entirely. As fish, Hero and Leander engage in external reproduction; the closest they may come to sexual intercourse is to "football" their heads together. Finally, when the lovers do "meete," Nashe puns on "meat" to posit Hero and Leander—yet again—as objects of consumption—as Lenten food, as Lenten "stuff."

Nashe's closing remarks about the fate of Hero and Leander suggests that the "contentions" between Yarmouth and Lowestoft are responsible for the lovers' separation. Ultimately, Hero abandons Leander, and Nashe blames the towns' political rivalry:

Louing Hero, how euer altered, had a smack of loue stil, & therefore to the coast of louing-land (to Yarmouth neere adioyning, & within her liberties of Kirtley roade) she accustomed to come in pilgrimage euery yeare, but contentions arising there, and shee remembering the euent of the contentions betwixt *Sestos* and *Abidos*, that wrought both *Leanders* death and hers. (3.200–1)

Nashe's mention of the Kirtley road confirms Hero and Leander's repatriation in Elizabethan England, and they are now subject to the rules of the Crown, or on a smaller scale, the (disproportionate) fishing liberties allocated each to Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Quite simply, Yarmouth and Lowestoft's political warring has become too much for Hero to bear. Further, Hero acknowledges that she and Leander were killed by precisely these "contentions." The real "highlight" here is Nashe's translation of Marlowe's anti-erotic criticism of the material consequences of sexual desire directly into his chronicle of Crown-mandated inequity that has set Yarmouth and Lowestoft at "wrig-wrag" for centuries (3.162).

"Fresh herring"

Jonson's telescoping of Marlowe's and Nashe's exchange with John Edwards' dramatization of perfect friendship in *Damon and*

37. "Palmerin" and "Cadwallader" confirm Nashe's shift from the poem's classical setting to a decisively English one. Fabian and Palmerin are "of England." Although McKerrow does not recognize the allusion to "Fabian," he claims that "Palmerin" additionally refers to an English translation Luis Hurtado's Spanish romance and "Cadwallader" invokes the last British King of England who died in 689 (4.405n34; Margaret Drabble, ed., *Oxford Reference Dictionary Online*, "The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature," [Oxford: OUP, 2007], 2).

*Pythias* colors the closing reconciliation of the fairgoers. Kenneth Gross comments that the play-within-a-play represents “at best the shreds of both of these works, since all characters in this puppet show have been converted into obscene, violent, and squeaking denizens of contemporary London.”<sup>38</sup> But Jonson’s conflation of *Hero and Leander* with *Damon and Pythias* directly engages with Nashe’s transposition of Marlowe’s lovers from Abydos and Sestos into the political tension raging between Yarmouth and Lowestoft.<sup>39</sup> Jonson’s puppet show translates the accrual of political criticism in *Lenten Stuffe* into the sociopolitical fabric of Jacobean London.

Recently, Scott C. Lucas has rightly argued that Jonson protests too much when the Scrivener in the induction to *Bartholomew Fair* cautions us not to view the play as “a mirror of magistrates,” a generic posture which writers adopt to offer advice—and criticism—to kings. Lucas also asserts that Jonson’s prohibition paradoxically implies a directive to read the play as “topically allusive in form and politically interventionary in purpose.”<sup>40</sup> I

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38. Kenneth Gross, “Puppets Dallying: Thoughts on Shakespearean Theatricality,” *Comparative Drama* 41.3 (2007): 273–96.

39. In the early 1970s, James Savage recognized “three fairly minute” points of contact between Nashe and Jonson’s versions of *Hero and Leander*, but few have acknowledged his observations. Despite identifying a few minor, yet valid, verbal parallels between Marlowe’s and Nashe’s versions, Savage also made a number of mistakes and his claims to topicality in the context of Robert Devereux’s (3rd Earl of Essex) divorce led to swift discrediting by Standish Henning (see “Review: *Ben Jonson’s Basic Comic Characters and Other Essays*,” *Modern Philology* 72.4 [1975]: 418–19).

40. Scott C. Lucas, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the Politics of the English Reformation* (Amherst: U of MA P, 2009), 3. At least one marked personal allusion in *Bartholomew Fair* is borrowed from Nashe’s dedicatory epistle addressed to “his worthies good patron, *Lustie Humphrey*, according as the townsmen doo christen him, little Numps” in *Lenten Stuffe* (3.147). Nashe’s Erasmian punning on Humphrey King’s name to adumbrate his invective against the arbitrariness of Crown authority throughout *Lenten Stuffe* (see Kristen Abbott Bennett, “Red Herrings and the ‘Stench of Fish’: Subverting ‘Praise’ in Thomas Nashe’s *Lenten Stuffe*,” *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 37.1 [2014]: 87–110, 103–5). Among Jonson’s fairgoers, Wasp/Numps continues in the vein of both Marlowe and Nashe to expose the hypocrisies informing the performance of: “the ancient modern history of *Hero and Leander* . . . with as true a trial of friendship between Damon and Pythias, two faithful friends o’ the Bankside” (5.3.7–11). Historically, Jonson and King are associated because both wrote elegies following Nashe’s death that were collected together in Henry Stanford’s commonplace book. Stanford was associated with Nashe’s sometime patron George Carey in 1596. The poems are written in his hand and found in the *Berkeley Bifolium* (see Katherine Duncan-Jones, “‘They say made a good end’: Ben Jonson’s Epitaph on Thomas Nashe,” *The Ben Jonson Journal* 3 [1996]: 1–20, 9). Duncan-Jones also discusses Jonson’s final lines: “Farewell greate spirite my pen attird in blacke / Shall whilst I am still weepe & mourn thie lacke” (29–30). King’s verse might respond to Jonson’s: “Others with showers of teares will dew thie herse/ Ile wepe for the in wine &



would add that Jonson's epilogue, advising the King that he is the best judge of the play, reiterates this mirror/advice trope and begs questioning what form political intervention may take in the play. For his part, Jonson exploits the intersections of arbitrary law making, gender, sex, and species we find in Marlowe's and Nashe's texts to undermine the ideal Edwards offers in *Damon and Pythias*. Whereas "amity" had been corrupted by Olympian and Crown politics in Marlowe's and Nashe's translations of Hero and Leander's affair, Jonson's densely intertextual puppet show explodes the concept into a cloud of vapors and directly implicates Jacobean authority.

As the production of *Hero and Leander* is about to get underway, Jonson deploys Marlowe's and Nashe's Midasian counterpart, Bartholomew Cokes, to compromise the forthcoming love story and "pretty passages of friendship" (5.3.120). Jonson juxtaposes pagan and Elizabethan authority by characterizing Cokes as Midas, licensed by Bacchus to consume indiscriminately and by the Fates to figure the disjunction between knowledge and desire. Moreover, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Apollo transforms Midas into an ass when he fails to proclaim his preference for the god's music over Pan's. Collectively, Midas figures the greed, stupidity, boorishness, and arbitrary authority that Marlowe and Nashe also exploit.<sup>41</sup> In *Bartholomew Fair*, Cokes embodies the fluidity of these Midasian connotations. First, Jonson materially figures Cokes' buying power into the license permitting him to marry Grace Wellborn. Yet Wasp suggests Cokes is too stupid to possess this license. Wasp takes it from his master for safekeeping, explaining: "you are an ass, sir" (3.5.221). Later, possibly alluding to William Shakespeare's "translated" Nick Bottom from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (3.1.113), Jonson reiterates the association of Cokes with Midas when Edgworth "tickles him in the ear with a straw twice" to distract Cokes and steal his purse (3.5.147s.d.). Finally, when Cokes appears eagerly anticipating the puppet show—if the audience has missed these asinine nods to Midas—Jonson has him punningly exclaim, "mine ears long to be at it" (5.4.103). In conversation with Nashe and Marlowe, Jonson's extension of the Midas story through

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not in verse" (9–10).

41. Midas is too stupid to realize the contest is fixed (Olympian gods always beat terrestrial deities) and his failure to engage in hypocrisy paradoxically emphasizes that of the townspeople who voted the "right" way. Apollo's punishment offers another example of arbitrary authority; he shouldn't have asked Midas' opinion if he didn't want it (see *Metamorphoses* 11.163–216).

the characters of Wasp and Cokes burlesques Marlowe's explanation of how the scholars' subjugation to the rich Midases is "licensed by authority."<sup>42</sup>

The marital alliance between Cokes and Justice Overdo also raises questions about the degree to which the licensing authorities may also be considered Midas-like. Keith M. Botelho explains that "the fair itself is a place of dangerous license for Jonson, where the attempts to impose order on this disorderly public space...proved fruitless because the many warrants that circulate freely authorize behavior and actions that they were not intended to authorize."<sup>43</sup> Most often, "license" represents an exchange of commodities, of wives, pigs, prostitutes, ballads, gingerbread, and even plays. As Richard A. Burt establishes, the terms "license" and "licentiousness" are commodified as "things" undifferentiated from the wares on sale at the Fair.<sup>44</sup> Because Overdo's wife is Cokes's sister, Cokes (Midasian "license") and Overdo (licensed authority) are related by law. Jonson's comic genius is on full display when he exploits this association in the context of Nashe's gluttonous Midas. Cokes's sister, Mistress Overdo, gets so drunk at the fair that she publicly vomits (5.6.67s.d.). In this scene, regurgitation analogizes the derivation of "licentiousness" from "license."

Jonson embodies the commodification of "license," in all of its heteroglossic glory, in the puppets. Developing Nashe's portrayal of Hero and Leander as objects for consumption on the literary marketplace, Leatherhead surveys the "license" Littlewit has taken in modernizing the play. Leatherhead explains that the puppets do not play "according to the printed book" that Cokes has (miraculously) read (5.3.99) because, as Leatherhead explains, "that is too learned and poetical for our audience. What do they know what Hellespont is, 'Guilty of true love's blood,' Or what Abydos is? Or 'the other Sestos hight'" (5.3.102–5). Laura Levine rightly observes that these lines manifest Jonson's indebtedness to Marlowe's poem,<sup>45</sup> but they additionally indicate Jonson's shift into direct borrowings from *Lenten Stuffe*.

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42. Richard A. Burt, "Licensed by Authority": Ben Jonson and the Politics of Early Stuart Theater," *English Literary History* 54.3 (1987): 529–60.

43. Keith M. Botelho, *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumor and Early Modern Masculinity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 107.

44. Burt, "Licensed by Authority," 529–60.

45. Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 89–107.

One of the most obvious indicators that Jonson draws from *both* sources appears when he suggestively puns on “fish” and geographically establishes “Fish Street” as Smithfield’s prostitution row: “It is Hero. . . . come over into Fish Street to eat some fresh herring” (5.3.143–44). Jonson’s juxtaposition of “Hero,” “Fish,” and “herring” recalls both Marlowe’s and Nashe’s hermaphroditic imagery and the sexual and species crossings that signal the underlying satires of disjunction and inequity. But Jonson literalizes these subtexts by translating Hero, Leander, Damon, Pythias, and Dionysius into puppets.

Upon seeing the puppets, Cokes exclaims: “I am in love with the actors already, and I’ll be allied to them presently” (5.3.122–27). Arguably, Cokes is already a puppet-like figure and, without his purse, is of equal stature with his new “friends.” Jonson posits his Midas figure as a puppet engaged in the cyclical consumption that characterizes the Fair’s economy. Yet Cokes’s affiliation is at the same time painfully superficial and grounded in the arbitrariness of desire that Jonson, following Nashe, exploits to expose the hypocrisy of consumer-driven “amity” through his conflation of *Hero and Leander* with Richard Edwards’ translation of *Damon and Pythias*.<sup>46</sup>

46. Richard Edwards (trans.), *Damon and Pythias*, reprint of 1571, 1578 edition, eds. Arthur Brown and F. P. Wilson (Oxford: Malone Society, Oxford UP, 1957). Classical versions of the story of Damon and Pythias culminate in the virtuous friends’ influence on the state as it is represented by King Dionysius. Edwards’ “Pythagorean” example expands Iamblichus’ version of Damon and Pythias’ story by incorporating Cicero’s ideology of friendship (108–213). Representing Pythagorean friendship in a monistic context, Iamblichus broadly represents his predecessor’s ideal as a translation of the gods’ love for man among one another (see *On the Pythagorean Life*, trans. Gillian Clark, [Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1989]). Cicero later explains that “friendship was given to us by nature as the handmaid of virtue” (*De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, trans. William Armistead Falconer, ed. T. E. Page [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1959], *Amicitia* 22 83.191) and that the antithesis of friendship is “fawning cajolery, or flattery” (24 91–93.199). Edwards illustrates these precepts by positing the idealized Damon and Pythias in contrast to the parasitical relationship of Aristippus and Carisophus. Edwards’ plot is simple: Damon and Pythias are travelling and enter King Dionysius’s realm; the parasite Carisophus immediately accuses Damon of spying. Dionysius sentences Damon to death, but agrees to hold Pythias hostage while Damon returns to Greece to sort out his affairs. The friends are interchangeable: “when one is made away, they take another to kyll” (348). Conflict arises only when Damon returns to take his place and die, but Pythias argues that he would rather die for him: “Damon hath a frinde, / That loues him better than his owne life” (992–93). Ultimately, Dionysius is so impressed with their friendship that he pardons Damon and offers to be their friend. Dionysius, however, must first step down as king. Thus, Dionysius gives up his throne to study the precepts of friendship under the tutelage of Damon and Pythias. Again, central to the classical ideal is that “likeness in both sex and status *is* (the only) political equality in period terms; on the basis of this likeness writers stress the making of a

Jonson's synthesis of *Damon and Pythias* with *Hero and Leander* emphasizes the superficiality of alliances determined not by love, but mutual enmity. Hero's presence on "Fish Street" casts her as a whore and foreshadows her sexual interference with Damon and Pythias' friendship. Leatherhead narrates the scene that follows:

Now, gentles, to the friends, who in number are two,  
 And lodged in that ale-house in which fair Hero does do:  
 Damon (for some kindness done him the last week)  
 Is come fair Hero in Fish Street this morning to seek  
 Pythias does smell the knavery of the meeting,  
 And now you shall see their true friendly greeting. (5.4.207–12)

Puppet Pythias' greeting of "whoremasterly slave" suggests that the "kindness" Hero performed for Damon was to be his whore (5.4.213). Unlike Edwards' version, wherein Damon and Pythias' only quarrel is who will die for whom out of devout friendly love, Jonson's "friends" fight about which of them lay with Hero. When Leatherhead tries to interrupt their quarreling, Pythias calls him a pimp and Damon rejoins his friend to fight their now-common enemy. Damon and Pythias' exchange of "gramercy" and renewal of their alliance is effected by their shared enmity for first Leatherhead, and later Hero and Leander (5.4.246–47).

The puppets' later accusations that Hero is a "whore out of door" reiterate the association of Hero with a prostitute, but Jonson rhetorically fuses the identities of the puppets by making them verbally echo one another's nonsense speech. This fusion simultaneously mocks the interchangeability of true friends and ironically figures the disjunction between love and desire, license and licentiousness. Whereas Edwards' dramatization of friendship's epitome emphasizes the reproducibility of true friendship's virtues, Jonson emphasizes the reproducibility of vapors. The most comically potent lines begin when Leander cries: "A pox on your manners, kiss my hole here and smell" (5.4.129). Later, after Hero is kissing Leander, puppet Damon calls her a whore. Hero then exposes her "haunches"; her ass-whore/hole kissing scene directly echoes Leander's and verbally conflates the two characters.<sup>47</sup>

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consensual and social bond or body that is not inherently subordinating" (Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* [Chicago: U Chicago P, 2002], 3).

47. Jonson's play on the word "hole" additionally recalls Leander's sophistry regarding Hero's virginity in Marlowe's version of *Hero and Leander* (269–76). This scene may also echo Chaucer's fabliau, *The Miller's Tale* (*Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: OUP, 2008), when Alisoun offers her suitor Absolon a kiss while in bed with her lover "hende

Despite the erotic associations easily drawn from such a scene, Hero's open sexuality is not wholly at issue—she is, after all, a puppet. Instead, the real concern appears to be that she and her (literary) comrades—like Marlowe's pamphlets and Nashe's fish—are for sale at the fair.<sup>48</sup>

Dionysius's ghostly reappearance reinforces Jonson's undercutting of amity throughout the play. Leatherhead presents the reformed tyrant king arising from the grave to chastise Damon and Pythias for fighting, but Dionysius does not resolve the puppets' quarrel and restore amity. Instead, Busy interrupts and famously debates with Dionysius until Busy is "converted." Edwards's conversion of the tyrant King Dionysius follows a protreptic two-hour dramatization of the virtues of amity. In contrast, Busy's "conversion" results from a rapid-fire exchange of insults with a puppet and appears absurd by comparison. Many often credit the antitheatricalists Stephen Gosson and Philip Stubbes for Busy's Deuteronomy-inspired rant that men should not wear women's clothing. But I would insist that Jonson also echoes Marlowe's and Nashe's deployment of gender and species crossing to satirize the injustice of both gods and monarchs. The subtext of Busy's argument—what is "profane" about the puppets—is the ambiguity of their gender. Levine has argued that "in the world the puppet presents to Busy . . . there is no 'thing' under the sign, no genital under the costume for the sign to refer to" (89). I would add that, as a puppet, Dionysius is already double gendered. Etymologically, "puppet" is a variant of "poppet" that has evolved from the Latin "pupa" meaning "girl" or "doll."<sup>49</sup> Because "puppet" is consistently gendered feminine, Jonson's use of the pronoun "he" to characterize Dionysius both pre- and post-revelation does not unilaterally negate the puppet's gender, but actively doubles it.

Dionysius' hermaphroditic puppet-genitals rebut Busy's argument by rendering it moot. At the same time, Busy's "conversion"

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Nicholas": "And at the window out she putte hir hole, / And Absolon, hym fil no bet ne wers, / But with his mouth he kiste her naked ers (3733–735). The joke in the *Miller's Tale* comes to fruition when Absolon returns for another kiss—and revenge. Alisoun and Nicholas swap roles and he offers his posterior: Absolon, "redy with his iren hoot, / And Nicholas amydde the ers he smoot (3809–810).

48. Scott Cutler Shershow in *Puppets and "Popular" Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995) discusses the puppets' literal commodification: "At the fair itself the puppet was also a cultural site in which histrionic illusion merged with the commercial power of the marketplace" (48).

49. Shershow explores the implications of this feminine etymology at length (*Puppets*, 69–72).

implicates his Puritanism with all of the arbitrariness and hypocrisies associated with Marlowe's and Nashe's hermaphroditic figures. Jonson likely delighted in presenting the Puritan as a puppet vulgarizing Biblical integrity. Yet the most important component of Busy's "conversion" appears to be the restoration of not amity, but the status quo among the fairgoers.

It is tempting to read Overdo's invitation to the fairgoers to join him at supper as a sweeping resolution of amity. Despite the fact that many of the characters in the play are momentarily leveled with one another—such as when Overdo was put in the stocks, or his wife appeared to be one of the pig-woman's prostitutes—Busy's "conversion" simply restores the fairgoers to their original social positions. Some might argue that Quarlous' caution that Overdo must remember that he is "but Adam, flesh and blood," converts the Justice much as Edwards's Dionysius is converted by the show of friendship between Damon and Pythias (5.6.97). But unlike Edwards's play dramatizing the virtues of friendship grounded in socio-political equality—including a King's abdication of his throne—throughout *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson dramatizes the ubiquity of vice and suggests that the fairgoers—and the audience—are only equal in their greed and hypocrisies. Amity is dependent on the reproducibility of virtue, not vapors, and it is only the latter that the audience gets in this final scene of Jonson's play.

In conclusion, when Jonson asks King James to judge his play—amidst riotously erratic acts of authority—Jonson turns this "mirror of magistrates" onto his monarch. As we have seen, Marlowe's, Nashe's, and Jonson's "Englished" versions of *Hero and Leander* reveal a progressive portrayal of amity ruptured by arbitrary authority and deep-seated sociopolitical hypocrisies. Jonson's addition of *Damon and Pythias* to the mix exposes the topical criticism that Lucas identified. King James may well have recognized himself in this mirror. Following a single performance, *Bartholomew Fair* was never again licensed for courtly entertainment).<sup>50</sup>

Nashe and Jonson translate Marlowe's satire formally and thematically in their digressive renderings of *Hero and Leander*. Unlike Museaus's Leander, who shyly strives to "lay shame by and speak" (115), Marlowe's sophister rhetorically and thematically barbarizes Museaus's portrayal of Neoplatonic idealism. The modesty of Museaus's protagonists, and their alliance with the idealistic paradox associated with Mars and Venus's illegitimate

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50. Burt, "Licensed by Authority," 533.

daughter Harmony, stands in stark contrast to Marlowe's exposure of the multivalent hypocrisy embedded in both *discordia concors* and amity (269). Nashe's imitation of his "*diviner muse—Kit Marlow*" both puts Marlowe's English version on par with its Greek and Latin predecessors, and emphasizes disjunction, injustice, and political caprice in specifically English contexts (3.195). Fishing "before the net," Nashe metaphorically hooks Marlowe's mighty line while preposterously catching his readers among the intertextual filaments (3.333). Finally, from this conversational network, Jonson telescopes the anti-erotic discord underlying Marlowe's and Nashe's versions of *Hero and Leander* and compounds it by parodying *Damon and Pythias* in the puppet show. Jonson's achievement is the vaporization of amity and with it, any virtue associated with "licensed authority." Although Kiernan Ryan has called Nashe "manic digressive,"<sup>51</sup> Nashe's Marlovian excursion bridges what readers can now recognize as a conversational gap between Marlowe and Jonson's mutual exploitation of the omnipresent hypocrisy associated with not only with Neoplatonic harmony, but with English politics.

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51. Kiernan Ryan, "The Extemporal Vein: Thomas Nashe and the Invention of Modern Narrative," in *Narrative from Malory to Motion Pictures*, ed. Jeremy Hawthorn (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), 41–54, 49.

JOHN FRONGILLO

Of Knife, Quill, Horn, and Skin: Inscription  
and Violence in Christopher Marlowe's  
*Edward II*

Thomas Cartelli argued that Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* is the "most modern play of early modern England's most modern playwright." *Edward II*, he contended, resonates today not just because of its interest in a "homosexual monarch," but because of its "demystified portrayal of power politics."<sup>1</sup> This latter entity hinges in part on "personal desires and ambitions" and a convergence of communication tools and skills. It produces, stores, and transmits vital government information: letters, subscriptions, pardons, warrants, and other discourse critical to royal administration. As a result, a significant portion of Marlowe's history play depicts the communication and reception of "news," intelligence, as well as official royal messages.

Readers like Marjorie Garber and Yan Brailowsky have taken note of this epistolary abundance in *Edward II*. Both scholars have tried to account for correspondence, especially that "written, received, exchanged, read, or torn on stage."<sup>2</sup> Garber connected the epistles with an expansive notion of "writing and unwriting."<sup>3</sup> Along similar lines, Brailowsky stressed that the letter as physical object in part lends the play its authenticity: "it is the peculiar *materiality* of these sources

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1. Thomas Cartelli, "Edward II," *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Patrick Cheney (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), 158.

2. Yan Brailowsky, "Subscription and Proscription in Marlowe's *Edward II*," *Études Épistémiques: Revue de littérature et de civilisation* 21 (2012), ¶4, <https://journals.openedition.org/episteme/405>. Hereafter cited as Brailowsky by paragraph number.

3. "In *Edward II*," she argues, "a letter serves as the material embodiment of the concept of countercontext as counterplot." See Marjorie Garber, "'Here's Nothing Writ': Scribe, Script, and Circumscription in Marlowe's Plays," *Theatre Journal* 36.3 (1984): 301–20, 301.



as found in the narrative sources, which first influenced Marlowe's writing process rather than any poetic or structural considerations" (5, emphasis in original). Both critics insisted on the letter as physical object as its defining quality in the play. In their view, a missive was a palpable thing, a "meaningful object" that can wound in the manner of "actual weapons of torture or execution." They argued that letters "lend . . . greater poetic potency" to the drama and thus transcend their conventional uses as props to aid in plot development (Brailowsky, 5).

To complement and extend their scholarship, I argue that correspondence in Marlowe's play functions as a collective performance that acknowledges and emphasizes the actual tools of writing, the materiality of the writing system. However, written correspondence in drama of this type is not just a "mutual conversation between absent friends" as Desiderius Erasmus defines it.<sup>4</sup> It is also a conjunction of signifying practices that transcends the material means of transmission.

In any act of communication, the means by which the sender communicates the signal is naturally decisive. For example, in medieval scribal culture, as Alan Stewart wrote, though "the letter may contain the standard conceit of the absent friend's speech, the messenger is not purely metaphoric: it betrays the fact that the letter cannot exist without 'the messenger,' that the messenger is part of the letter."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the choice of messenger matters greatly in *Edward II*. This element goes beyond mere "proscriptions and subscriptions" that Brailowsky mentions in his title and concerns itself with signification, the producing, sending, and receiving of correspondence. A letter itself is performed and made material not by the royal personage who might order it but by a diverse company of agents such as scribes, secretaries, messengers, heralds, horse-riders, and other "poor men," common laborers who orbit like tiny moons around the royal court. In the Middle Ages, these individuals worked in concert with existing information technology: seals, wax, parchment, quills, ink, spectacles, desks, and wooden posts, each of which enabled the complex event of royal communication.

Again, historically, and as in Marlowe's play, a letter's content proved tangential to its manner of delivery or composition. The importance of the unwritten could outweigh that of the written word, thanks to the system of signifying technologies, labors, and practices

4. Desiderius Erasmus, *De scribendis epistolis*, Collected Works of Erasmus, (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985), 25:20.

5. Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 196.

that preceded the letter like a genetic code. This phenomenon surfaces in one of the most often employed words in *Edward II*, “post,” as in the stage directions “Enter a Post.”<sup>6</sup> Though the substantive normally signifies the item itself, it might also refer to its carrier, the “post-man.” Edward asks such a servant, “How now, what news with thee? From whence come these?” (4.3.24). It could also refer to a wooden pole, just as it does in the twenty-first century. In some respects, I take my theme from James Daybell: “Over the course of the sixteenth century, there developed a network of royal ‘standing posts,’ relays of men and horses on standby to deliver government communications, which could lead to relatively fast and efficient delivery times.”<sup>7</sup> This essay accordingly attempts to expose this “network” of men and information technologies sunk just beneath the surface of Marlowe’s play.

*Edward II* is, among other things, a meditation on the material background of writing, the stuff an Elizabethan poet, playwright, and scholar like Marlowe would interact with daily. The play, as a result, is replete with examples of the mundane requirements of inscription and correspondence used by the king’s administration, the practices that make possible royal discourse. It determines the monarch’s relationship to his subjects, which, in Edward’s case, makes his position unstable, mutable, and ambiguous. Even his death, I argue, is a contingency of writing. This much-discussed regicide exposes the latent violence that underlies the writing process, which as Jonathan Goldberg argues, “begins with a tool of violence, the knife or razor.” The act of writing replays the original scene of violence that makes inscription possible—the (pen)—knife pressed firmly against the animal’s hide. Therefore, “whether the emphasis is on the script produced by the quill, or on the quill produced by the knife, a scene of violence (or of violent suppression and displacement) can be read.”<sup>8</sup> Both outcomes ring true for Edward II: his violent death is a displacement of one ruler for another. The protagonist’s own metaphorical language frequently registers the suppressed violence of

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6. Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II: With Related Texts*, ed. Stephen J. Lynch (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2015), 4.3.23. Unless otherwise noted, all references to *Edward II* are from this edition.

7. James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512–1635* (New York: St Martin’s P, 2012), 7.

8. “At a basic material level, then, writing begins with a tool of violence, the knife or razor, and it produces the point of the quill as another cutting edge.” See Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990), 74.

writing, often at crisis points, such as his forced abdication, when he exclaims, “Such news as I expect—come, Berkeley, come / And tell thy message to my naked breast” (5.1.130–31). In these lines, the next arrival of correspondence becomes metaphorically a sharp weapon aimed at the distraught king’s heart. In another passage, he promises to revenge his overthrow: “Elect, conspire, install, do what you will:— / Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries” (5.1.88–89). Here and elsewhere, the play’s language unites the body with technical aspects of letter writing like seals, ink, parchment, and calligraphy.

The opening scene with Gaveston reading Edward’s letter is a critical touchstone. Readings range widely. John Archer associates political power with legibility, noting that this first scene depicts the “undermining of feudal bonds by patronage and the unstable relationship it fosters” and that “sovereignty and its abuse are construed in terms of writing throughout this play.”<sup>9</sup> Julie Sanders argues that Marlowe does not depict official ceremonies of state except for Edward’s funeral, but rather tends to “favour the side angles and side corridors that reveal the way in which power operates and is performed.”<sup>10</sup> This oblique view of political power is interesting for the insight it offers on the letter that Gaveston reads to the audience. Yet most significantly, the play does not actually begin at this point. The stage directions precede this speech act, revealing the moment that the missive arrives: “*Enter Gaveston, reading on a letter that was brought him from the King*” (1.0 s.d.). At his creation’s earliest juncture, Marlowe emphasizes the assembly of technologies and labor that allow information to be delivered from one place and person to another. He seems to be suggesting that even before matters of administration pertaining to England and Scotland can be executed, scribes, copyists, secretaries, horse-riders, carriers, messengers, and their accoutrement must be already in place: sharp pen-knives; tempered, split, and shaped quills; ink and inkhorns; slanted writing-desks; parchment and paper, to say nothing of the natural resources required like beeswax, oak-gall, goose feathers, lumber, linen, and the hides and horns of goat, sheep, deer, and cattle. Several parts of *Edward II*, including its eponymous hero’s death, appear intensified and accelerated when adjacent to the seemingly inconsequential technologies or occupations that make up the complex occurrence of medieval communication or, often,

9. John Michael Archer, “Marlowe and the Observation of Men,” in *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993), 67–94, 77.

10. Julie Sanders, *The Cambridge Introduction to Early Modern Drama, 1576–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014), 92.

miscommunication. In epistolary culture the letter's defining feature is its insecurity; it proves a shaky, vulnerable medium at best, requiring personal and state seals, secret codes, and instructions to burn correspondence once scanned. In fact, the insecurity of the epistolary medium, not so much the material letter, determines the success and failure, even the life and death, of key political figures, especially Mortimer and Edward, the two mighty opponents.

Before Gaveston can read Edward's letter, for example, he must break a seal, either pendent or applied, bearing the impression of the Privy Seal or the king's own in red wax. These physical emblems guaranteed the authenticity and confidentiality of vulnerable correspondence. More than likely, Edward had secured his communication with his secret seal since the barons, by this time, had largely taken control over the Privy Seal. They would not likely have approved of Gaveston helping himself to the royal treasury with the king's blessing.<sup>11</sup> The ability to direct the king's and the kingdom's affairs with the full backing of Edward's secret seal is a powerful advantage. This fact clearly perturbs the nobles when they witness Edward naming Gaveston "Chief Secretary to the state and me" (1.1.154) and Lord High Chamberlain. After the nobles exit, Edward promises Gaveston unlimited privileges:

Fear'st thou thy person? Though shalt have a guard.  
Wants thou gold? Go to my treasury.  
Wouldst thou be loved and feared? Receive my seal.  
Save or condemn, and in our name command,  
Whatso thy mind affects or fancy likes. (1.1.165–69)

Gaveston's proximity to Edward grants him political dominance. What is more intimate than the king's bed? Or more powerful? As Curtis Perry explains, "In addition to being intimates of the king and recipients of his bounty, Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber or Bedchamber became key players in the competition over the mechanisms of state."<sup>12</sup> Promoting Gaveston to Chief Secretary, Edward entitles him to the same protections and privileges granted

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11. Historically, Edward's personal and secret seal "was always impressed on red wax . . . for red wax was invariably used for all small seals. . . . Fortunately there still survive, on a writ of secret seal of 1314, crumbling relics of wax which indicate a seal one inch in diameter, and show a man on horseback within Gothic tracery. The legend may be read with good probability as SIGILLU[M] SECRETU[M] D[OMI]N[I] REGIS EDWARDI." See Thomas Frederick Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: the Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, 6 vols. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1920–33), 5:170.

12. Curtis Perry, "The Politics of Access and Representations of the Sodomite King in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53.4 (2000): 1054–83, 57.

the monarchy, including use of the seals, a key “mechanism of state.” This distribution of royal speech and prerogative, however, even if willingly granted, foreshadows his eventual abdication. The king cannot apportion the king’s royal speech, even with the closest of friends. This simple political axiom is lost on Edward, but not Mortimer. An astute Machiavell, Mortimer puts the royal symbol in the forefront of his strategy for political ascendancy: “I seal, I cancel, I do what I will” (5.4.51). This usurper and cuckold’s dramatically staged seizure of the Privy Seal signifies his understanding of discourse as an extension of political practice. This emblem of office seems to be a talisman to him, though mundane to copyists and scribes. On seizing power under the guise of Lord Protector for the young Edward III, Mortimer orders everyone away so he may retain the signifier of stately power in absolute privacy: “Let me alone. Here is the privy seal” (5.2.37).

Marlowe, then, was aware of the seal’s significance. In Thomas Tout’s administrative history of the fourteenth century, he implies that control of it helped define Edward’s reign. At the famed Battle of Bannockburn, memorialized in folk ballad, he manages to lose both this signifier of office as well as the military engagement itself. In the chaotic aftermath, though Edward and five hundred soldiers escaped the Scots, they apprehended Richard Northburgh, Keeper of the Privy Seal, two of his clerks, the horse-drawn coach, the entire apparatus of the wardrobe, and the item itself. Even the temporary loss of the item seriously compromised royal communication. For this reason, using Queen Isabella’s seal, Edward II urgently sent messages to local sheriffs advising them to disregard any new order that came to them. Eventually, the Sottish nobles returned the Privy Seal and captives unharmed. Then, *horribile dictu*, Edward accidentally lost it a second time in October 1322 when Scottish forces suddenly attacked Yorkshire as Edward explains in letters on October 15. For a second time, Edward instructs the sheriffs and constables to disregard any mandates they might receive. Eventually the king recovered the Privy Seal within a fortnight. The king’s loss of the ability to communicate on these occasions is rooted in the insecurity of his messaging system. His loss of bureaucratic control of the Seal to the nobles, however, had been already set in motion by historical forces greater than the king’s diminishing authority. As Tout clarifies, Edward’s time as king changed the perception of this emblem of office. The seal began its “gradual separation from the court” and becomes subordinated to the baronial control as a seal of state and not an instrument of the king’s

personal wishes.<sup>13</sup> These same bureaucratic tensions between private affairs and public affairs, between individual prerogative and collective good, supply the context for the epistle that frames the play. As Perry phrases it, “The figure of the sodomite king offers a useful vehicle to explore tensions between personal and bureaucratic monarchy that are exacerbated by the regulation of access.”<sup>14</sup>

Returning to the opening words of the play, we see and hear Gaveston reading the letter delivered from Edward. Literally, in the first two lines of the play, script and missive overlap: Gaveston reads, “My father is deceased. Come Gaveston, / And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend” (1.1.1–2). Marlowe inverts the normal definition of a letter as a confidential communique between intimates by publically displaying the king’s private correspondence. For Erasmus privacy is paramount: such a thing is written and read “as if you were whispering in a corner with a dear friend, not shouting in the theatre. . . . For we commit many things to letters, which it would be shameful to express openly in public.”<sup>15</sup> In contrast, Marlowe develops the prop with an eye to theatrical performance rather than the rhetorical tradition via Erasmus. He is more interested in the epistle’s metadramatic potential perhaps because the acting companies regularly performed like messengers or mail-carriers transporting and delivering correspondence. Commonly classified along with vagabonds and vagrants, acting companies, including the Earl of Pembroke’s Men, were required to carry letters with them that included the king’s seal, which thereby gave them license to travel and to present their plays without interference from local authorities.<sup>16</sup> In

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13. See Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History*, 2:282. Some of the foregoing material in the paragraph is summarized from material in 298–303 of his study.

14. Perry, “The Politics of Access,” 1054.

15. Qtd. in Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 151.

16. “Letters patent were letters with their own conventions, devised by the royal court through their delivery by selected letter-bearers to shape a policy of who received allowance to play. When we recall that all companies toured and when we considered letters patent as letters, we come to realize actors not merely as exceptional letter-carriers with desirable skills for delivery, but also as frequent, accepted members of an epistolary community, in this case functioning as bearers, subjects, first audiences, and interpreters. . . . Because of the public nature of letters patent, the letters consisted of unfolded parchment pages that displayed the King’s Great Seal. This open delivery to actors suggests that the actor-bearers not only would have had access to the content of the letters carried and been part of the reading audience, but also needed to know the content, specifically the names [of actors]. . . . whether actors were carrying for each other . . . or carrying for those who did not make their living from the theater . . . actors regularly took an active and invested part in the discourse about the many kinds of letters outside of the theaters that they habitually carried.” See Kara Northway, “It’s

*Edward II*, Marlowe's interest in letters, I submit, exceeds their connection to "historical verisimilitude," as Brailowsky calls it; instead the playwright is consciously exhibiting his familiarity with culture of correspondence and the ad hoc postal system in which the theater performers have a substantial role (4).

As mentioned, *Edward II* often illustrates the labor involved in the writing, delivering, and reading of letters. One telling example occurs when the knights tell Edward that Gaveston may return from Ireland (in order to be killed), Edward summons the "clerk of the crown": "Clerk of the Crown, direct our warrant forth / For Gaveston to Ireland: Beamont, fly / As fast as Iris or Jove's Mercury" (1.4.369–71). The "clerk of the crown" keeps in his custody the Privy Seal and prepares all royal documents, part of the infrastructure with which the king travels, including his messenger, Beamont. However, we also mark the mythological allusions to "Iris and Mercury" that draw attention to the messenger system of classical culture. All sovereigns, even those on Greece's Mount Olympus, require the faithful services of swift-footed representatives to carry out their communications. The Roman messenger god, Mercury, closely associated with Zeus, represents the deification of the speedy herald or messenger sent from those above. Typically depicted wing-footed with a broad brimmed hat, and a caduceus (a herald's staff or walking stick), Mercury is the god of the road and hence merchants and thieves. Likewise, Iris, a Roman female messenger deity typically associated with Hera, appears traditionally with a rainbow that symbolizes the path trekked by those delivering correspondence. Her name, moreover, puns on two Greek homonyms, "iris," rainbow, and "eiris," messenger. Together these deities, Mercury and Iris, embody the high value placed on a secure and efficient signal transmission system on which the Olympians depended for expressing their divine will. Personal desires and political ambition hinge on such consigned expressions; hence, Mortimer quickly exploits his access to writing as soon as he seizes control of the queen and her son, the future king. Once Mortimer possesses the Privy Seal, one of his first commands is to order Matrevis to

write a letter presently  
Unto the Lord of Berkeley from ourself,  
That he resign the king to thee and Gurney,  
And when 'tis done, we will subscribe our name." (5.2.47–50)

It is clear that the frequent practice of subscription leaves the final wording of the letter to be determined by the scribe, not the king. The king does not write, read, or deliver his own letters. Instead, scribes and copyists, messengers and heralds, couriers and riders, stroke by stroke, word by word, post by post, perform the official correspondence for him.

In the play characters read, speak, write, tear, and exchange letters. The high volume of correspondence on which the play depends points to a simple historical fact: Edward and other kings increasingly sojourned from London for long periods, Edward II in particular. During his absences, an elaborate messenger service allowed him to remain connected to the primary mechanisms of administration, in effect shrinking the distance between himself and London via his post system. In the foreshortened time span of the drama, messages, information, or correspondence arrive in a constant, steady stream, one after the other, almost by the minute. The real fourteenth century king's medieval "post" system was never so speedy or perfect in timing. This "post" system emerges several times in the play as plot device ferrying timely intelligence from Scotland and France: the stage directions read in act 2.2 "*Enter a Post.*" Mortimer asks, "Letters? From whence?" and the Messenger replies, "From Scotland my Lord." Similarly later in act 4 the stage direction "*Enter a Post*" (4.3.24) would obviously have written communications with him. Edward addresses the carrier, "How now, what news with thee / From whence come these?" (25–26). The messenger is expected to supplement the letter with details of its source and content. Later in act 5 Mortimer gives perhaps the fullest account of the postal route; he instructs Lightborn to

Deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis.  
At every ten miles' end thou hast a horse.  
Take this [token]. Away, and never see me more

.....

Unless thou bring me news of Edward's death." (5.4.41–46)

With each ten-mile interval, Mortimer posts a fresh horse in order to accelerate the relay of the letter. Despite such strategic arrangements, however, this elaborate system remains characteristically insecure as Mortimer finds out when Gurney hands over the "unpointed" missive to the king's son, Edward III. The point is that these delivery transactions repeat the official slogan of the play: as Mortimer himself says, "I come to bring you news" (2.2.140).

Just as characters traffic in letters throughout the play, so too in encrypted images. An early informal example occurs when Edward



and Gaveston exchange their likenesses (perhaps with portrait miniatures): As he sends Gaveston to Ireland as Ambassador, Edward says, “Here, take my picture, and let me wear thine. / O might I keep thee here, as I do this” (1.4.127–28). Like the letter, the picture substitutes a representation of the self for an absent other, straddling the line between public and private, intimacy and display. A less friendly but more formal and public exchange of images occurs with the inscribed devices of the barons at the “stately triumph” decreed by Edward. A Latin motto rounds off Mortimer’s device:

A lofty cedar tree, fair flourishing,  
On whose top-branched kingly eagles perch,  
And by the bark a canker creeps me up,  
And gets unto the highest bough of all;  
The motto: *Aequae tandem*. (2.2.16–20)

And Lancaster’s device:

A flying fish  
Which all the other fishes deadly hate,  
And therefore being pursued, it takes the air;  
No sooner is it up, but there’s a fowl,  
That seaseth it. This fish, my lord, I bear;  
The motto this: *Undique mors est*. (2.2.23–28)

Images here join the information wars with their coded messages. In these heraldic devices, the nobles make vocal their enmity toward Gaveston, the climbing “canker” and the “flying fish,” to a larger audience. “Your shields display your rancorous minds,” claims the king (2.2.33). Edward correctly decodes this iconography, identifying Gaveston with the “canker” climbing and the “flying fish.” As the king and nobles battle for public opinion, each side seeks to undermine the authority of the other through their words and images. This attention to image finds additional expression through Gaveston’s devotion to fashion or “fantastic liveries” (1.4.410), a type of visual inscription of the body that noticeably upsets the nobles who criticize the king and Gaveston for the expensive and stylish clothes they wear. As Mortimer Junior acknowledges to Senior, Gaveston’s attention to clothing style is a point of personal contention. Edward and Gaveston, he confesses, mock the nobles in return: “From out a window laugh at such as we, / And flout our train and jest at our attire. / Uncle, ‘tis this that makes me impatient” (1.4.417–19). Clothes make the body legible.

Indeed, the body, especially Edward II’s body, is utterly charged with significance. On several occasions, Edward metaphorically mixes

bodily fluids with the act of correspondence. He characteristically invokes, for example, his body's liquids as a form of ink used to encode a text (or textile). For example, forced to subscribe his name to the noble's letter for Gaveston's exile to Ireland, Edward declares, with some melodrama, that "instead of ink, I'll write it with my tears" (1.4.86). And after abdicating the crown, he sends to Queen Isabella, a token, a handkerchief "wet with my tears and dried again with sighs" (5.1.118). Along the same line, the body's epidermis, our skin, takes on the characteristics of a text, a writing surface one might inscribe, fold, tear, or read. This trope is not so strange if we remember that the highest-quality writing surface is animal skin, parchment, with paper made from linen, a less expensive alternative. The king contemptuously displays a paper letter from his hated rival.

By Mortimer, whose name is written here.  
 Well may I rent his name that rends my heart.  
 [He tears the letter]  
 This poor revenge hath something eased my mind.  
 So may his limbs be torn as is this paper! (5.1.138–42)

Although Edward tearing a piece of paper may be as much histrionics as anger, it does consolidate the connection between writing and the body. Not only does the body make itself legible through fashion, it functions as the very surface upon which writing takes place. In fact, the body as inscribed surface develops into the controlling metaphor of act 5, including Edward's ignoble death at the hands of Lightborn.

Directly addressing the audience, Mortimer informs us, "within this room is locked the messenger" who will kill the king (5.4.17). Mortimer entrusts Lightborn, the "messenger," with the all-important unpunctuated note that results in the king's death. Lightborn, a self-proclaimed sadist, thus serves as an integral part of Mortimer's messaging system. Lightborn bears a "secret token" that demands his own death (5.4.19). Mortimer tells him, "deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis . . . At every ten miles' end thou hast a horse" (5.4.41–42). It could even be said that this agent of regicide is something of an open book. Edward interprets his assassin's encoded physiognomy in just this way: "These looks of thine can harbor nought but death; / I see my tragedy written in thy brows" (5.5.73–74). Perhaps because of the king's confusion, Lightborn to him resembles a type of messenger or scribe to whom one might dictate a letter, whose heart "will melt ere I have done my tale" (5.5.55). Edward asks him to deliver a final dispatch to his neglected queen, as if suddenly recovering his royal power to command correspondence: "Tell Isabella the queen I looked not thus / When for her sake I ran at tilt in France" (5.5.68–69). Yet

his words betoken his end. Lightborn's "bloody hand" will inscribe Edward's with a pen "stroke" (5.5.75).

Before any medieval scribe, however, tempers a goose quill, shapes its nib, or dips it in oak-gall ink, making the first pen-stroke, a "percamenarius" or "parchmenter" must prepare the animal's skin in order to create a suitable writing surface. Transforming animal hide into high-quality parchment is a long, slow process. It begins with an abattoir selecting an animal, primarily goat, sheep, or cow, with skin devoid of blemishes. Next the parchmenter removes the animal skin and soaks it for three to ten days in a "solution of lime and water," with urine a repeatedly mentioned alternative.<sup>17</sup> This saturation makes it easier for the parchmenter to remove the hair from the skin.<sup>18</sup> Eventually, the pelt is stretched out on a vertical frame and scraped with a crescent-moon shaped knife. Once the process is completed, the parchmenter dries and then cuts the thinner skins to the desired size depending on use. The main point I want to stress is that parchment-making includes two primary steps: soaking the animal skin in a solution that sometimes contains urine and shaving off the hair. With these stages finished, the parchment is ready for writing.

To some degree, Edward's torture in Berkeley and Killingworth dungeons corresponds to the parchment-making process—at least the soaking and shaving. The parchmenter soaks the animal hide in a watery solution for three to ten days in vats in order to make removing the hair easier. Something similar happens to the king. Once Edward has resigned the crown, Matrevis and Gurney shuffle the monarch back and forth between Berkeley and Killingworth. They lock him in dungeons, often just storerooms, water-cisterns, or even latrines. Edward's description of his holding cell in Berkeley Castle matches a latrine:

But can my air of life continue long  
 When all my sense are annoyed with stench?  
 Within a dungeon England's king is kept  
 .....  
 O water, gentle friends, to cool my thirst  
 And clear my body from foul excrements. (5.3.17–26)

Moved to Killingworth, he is clearly captive in the castle's sewer system. Even his captors remark on the severity of his treatment: "I wonder the king dies not, / Being in a vault up to the knees in water, / To which

17. A. Gannser, "The Early History of Tanning," *Ciba Review* 81 (1950): 2938–64, 2941.

18. See Christopher de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004), 11, for a full description of the process.

the channels of the castle run" (5.5.1–3). In parchment-making, the soaking of hide occurs in a watery bath of lime (and sometimes urine) for three to ten days. Similarly, Matrevis and Gurney steep the king in urine for the same number of days. Edward declares to Lightborn, "This dungeon . . . is the sink / Wherein the filth of all the castle falls. . . . In mire and puddle Have I stood / 'This ten days' space" (5.5.56–59). Recall also that Matrevis and Gurney earlier shaved off his beard as "barbers to your grace" (28). Fearing for his life, the king resisted; they reassured him, claiming we only want to "wash your face and shave away your beard, / Lest you be known and so be rescued" (31–32). The stage directions read, "They wash him with puddle water, and shave his beard away" (5.4.37 s.d.). Equipped with knife or razor, they shave off his beard so that Edward no longer resembles his own iconography; they have erased his royal signifier. For my analysis of the king's death in his last scene with Lightborn, it is critical to see that the metaphor linking bodies with writing has been literalized. The king, sans his iconic beard, is now illegible; he has emerged a blank sheet upon which to inscribe. Like a piece of parchment shorn of its hair the king is ready for writing.

In his *Chronicles* (1577), Raphael Holinshed depicts Edward's death in ambiguous, even contradictory, terms because he melded multiple accounts of the incident from varied sources:

they came suddenly one night into the chamber where he lay in bed fast asleep, and with heavy featherbeds or a table (as some write) being cast upon him, they kept him down and withal put into his fundament an horne, and through the same they thrust up into his bodie an hot spit, or (as other have) through the pipe of a trumpet a plumbers instrument of iron made very hot, the which passing up into his entrails, and being rolled to and fro, burnt the same, but so as no appearance of any wound or hurt outwardly might be once perceived.<sup>19</sup>

Immediately the coherence of the narrative wavers: is it a table or is it a feather bed? Is it a horn or part of a trumpet? Is it a hot spit or a plumber's instrument? Doubt as to what actually took place is registered by the parenthetical qualifications "(as some write)" and "(as others have)." The lack of certainty regarding the instruments related to his death seems to me to open up a space for interpretation. Could there be another accounting of these tools, these common instruments of table, bed, trumpet, horn, and spit? Are Holinshed's multiple sources for this event accurately describing the contents of

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19. Raphael Holinshed, "Raphael Holinshed, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (1587)," in Lynch, *Edward II*, 101–18, 116–17.

the room in which the king is murdered? In the play, Lightborn explicitly asks for a “red-hot” spit and fire, a “table and a feather-bed” (5.5.30–32), while Holinshed claims it was either “heavy featherbeds” or “a table.”

Critical views of Edward’s extraordinary death reveal an unusual unanimity. With some notable exceptions, nearly all readings concur that the method is, in Stephen Greenblatt’s phrase, “iconographically appropriate” for a homosexual monarch.<sup>20</sup> However, because of the aforementioned historical uncertainty, I would like to try to account for the instruments of torture, the horn, the table, and the spit, in another way. I would argue that this scene is not really “about” sodomy. Instead, something more mundane informs the iconography of this key spectacle: the established tools of a medieval scribe.

If we look for instruments of communication technology in this scene, as we have been doing elsewhere, then our interpretation of the stage properties changes radically. Instead of construing the stage props as a literalization of an anal/sadistic snuff film, we might understand them as a literalization of writing implements: they are not just a horn, a table, and a red-hot rod as Holinshed catalogues, but rather an inkhorn, a writing desk, and a pen (quill or metal nib). Such a notion Brailowsky vaguely suggests when he claims, “Lightborn is an extension of Mortimer’s hand, inscribing the latter’s red-hot ‘will’ into Edward’s body” (34). He is correct about “inscribing.” Pressed against a writing table, Edward’s body substitutes for the parchment and for the inkhorn as the hot spit held by Lightborn stands for the metal nib or quill tip. At this point, Edward’s body, already shorn of hair, shifts ontological categories, away from the human, toward the reified—a common occurrence for victims in Marlowe’s plays. Edward unwillingly merges with the tools-turned-weapons; his body incorporates the signification system. As a result, I would argue, Edward suffers a torture related more to writing than to sex. Lightborn, then, is not the king’s sadistic lover, but a “clerk of the crown.” The “strokes” of his metal spit punctuate the body of king. Now some readers perhaps will object that the featherless quill, the most common of medieval writing instruments, is absent from the

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20. Stephen Greenblatt, “Marlowe and Renaissance Self-fashioning,” in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson*, ed. Alvin Kernan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1977), 41–69, 52. See also J. B. Steane, *Christopher Marlowe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1964), 220; Thomas Cartelli, “King Edward’s Body,” in *Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Richard Wilson (London: Longman, 1999), 174–90; and Thomas Pettitt, “‘Screaming like a pigge halfe stickt’: Vernacular Topoi in the Carnavalesque Martyrdom of Edward II,” *Orbis Litterarum* 60.2 (2005): 79–108.

scene. This absence is true, but recall that the more common quill needed tempering (heat) in order to make the tip less brittle, more flexible. My reading is suggesting that the heated quill and the metal nib coalesce into the single image of the fire-hot spit, itself “a penne of yron.”<sup>21</sup> Edward’s murder then, from my point of view, is a literalization of inscription: his dead body has become an encrypted letter.

Finally, Edward’s death parallels medieval and early modern iconography of inscription. Such representations typically portray a scribe with a quill, usually held in the right hand; an ink horn placed in a hole on the desk or attached to it; a sloped desk for composition; the writing surface, the parchment or manuscript open; and, lastly and most importantly, a knife, usually held in the left hand, to sharpen the quill, to erase mistakes, to mark the line, and to smooth the parchment. The material reality of inscription, a conjunction of various technologies, clearly depends upon a systematic violence that precedes the text. The traces of this violence find muted expression in the tools of the writer’s trade: the plucked goose feather, the flayed animal skin, the severed bullhorn, and the pointed knife. In these separate practices that together constitute the writing system, violence results from a procedural necessity. The script’s calligraphy, however, by a sleight of hand, draws attention away from the materiality of the signifier and toward the apparent content of the message. The inherent violence related to inscription is suppressed by the text; that is, it is suppressed by the text until the play’s metaphorical language and performance activate an awareness of it. The violence of writing resurfaces in Edward’s death. As spectators, we see the king murdered; we hear his scream wake the castle. Marlowe deliberately designs the manner of death as concealment. It intentionally mirrors the “unpointed” letter that Mortimer uses to arrange for the king’s murder: *Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est* (5.4.8).<sup>22</sup>

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21. Daybell, *The Material Letter*, 10.

22. The author wishes to extend his deepest gratitude to Michael Stapleton for his substantial contributions in the editing and revising of this essay.



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## Media Translations: Words and Bodies in Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*

Like other plays of the early modern period, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is partly about play making. In their sustained "metadramatic" reading of the play, Sara Munson Deats and Lisa S. Starks claim that Marlowe, like William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, expresses "a deep ambivalence toward his own medium" and that his plays "self-reflexively probe, censure, and celebrate dramatic art."<sup>1</sup> Along similar lines, Richard Halpern calls attention to the early modern play's unique means of creation, its "double life."<sup>2</sup> He explains that, on the one hand, the play "was a site of representation, on which Danish princes, Scythian warriors, alchemists, Egyptian queens, fairies, whores, shoemakers, caesars, shepherdesses, conycatchers, and gulls played out their imaginary lives" (455). On the other hand, the Elizabethan theater was also a "means of production," which involved costuming, stage props, sound effects, and the like "set in motion by the human labor of actors, gathers, prompters . . . and stage hands of various kinds [to] produce the cultural commodity known as the performance of the play" (455). Halpern, in other words, splits the creation of a play into two indivisible parts: the imaginary and the real, the verbal and nonverbal. He continues to say that an Elizabethan "text could not achieve either artistic or economic realization except within a theatrical apparatus over which Marlowe as playwright could exert little or no control." (459). His subsequent appraisal of *Doctor Faustus* stresses the "theme of linguistic impotence . . . the powerlessness of

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1. Sara Munson Deats and Lisa S. Starks, "'So Neatly Plotted, and So Well Perform'd': Villain as Playwright in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*," *Theatre Journal* 44.3 (1992): 375–89, 378.

2. Richard Halpern, "Marlowe's Theater of Night: *Doctor Faustus* and Capital," *ELH* 71.2 (2004): 455–95, 455. Hereafter cited parenthetically as Halpern.



language” and the “hollowing out of linguistic force” relative to Mephistophilis’s “special effects” (464, 466). Although strictly pertaining to *Doctor Faustus*, Halpern’s formula nonetheless sheds light on several extraordinary narrative elements in *The Jew of Malta*. In this play, the connected activities of writing and dissembling are integral to dramatic entanglements on stage, even attracting commentary in the dedicatory epistle, epilogues, and prologues. In contrast to performance as “cultural commodity,” *The Jew of Malta* frequently portrays writing as a medium of cultural capital: A forged challenge, a composed confession, letters to blackmail—all lead to scenes that dramatize the translation and adaptation of written words. The volatile encounters between the two different means of cultural production, texts and bodies—their interferences and transformations—project social tensions that emanate from a “society in which the three media of speech, script, and print infused and interacted with each other in a myriad ways.”<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Heywood’s first printed edition of *The Jew of Malta* in 1632 carries a dedicatory epistle that links the publication of plays with economic advancement through literary patronage. Printers promote patrons, patrons printers. “This mutually beneficial system,” David Bergeron argues, “has the effect of extending the theater and bringing it into the lives of countless others through print. In this way the play continues to circulate, to energize the culture, to legitimate and define writers, and to offer status and benefits to patrons.”<sup>4</sup> The content of Heywood’s letter seems to confirm Halpern’s earlier equation: that an acting out of the play is a complex contract among disparate activities. Heywood locates the two primary means of production: “This Play, composed by so worthy an author as Mr. Marlo; and the part of the Jew presented by so unlimitable an actor as Mr. Allin” (1–3).<sup>5</sup> Words (“composed”) and acting (“presented”) are placed front and center. Favoring neither, the epistle positions Master Marlo and Master Allin on equal footing as advertisements to attract a literary and nonliterary audience. In addition to the poet and the player, the printer inserts himself into the collaboration, claiming substantial influence over both live performance and publication. He alone, for example, is responsible

3. Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England: 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), 5.

4. David Moore Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570–1640* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 21.

5. All line references to The Epistle Dedicatory, prologues, epilogues, and the play are from Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. James R. Siemon (London: A&C Black, 2009).

for its 1633 revival onstage and the additional paratexts: "I usher'd it unto the Court, and presented it to the Cock-pit with these Prologues and Epilogues here inserted" (3–5). The printed play is exchanged for the possibility of future social advancement via "your curteous patronage" (11). Part of the preference for the printed word lies in its materiality; the printed book is a commodity, an "ornament" like the laudatory epistle itself, to be acquired as a signifier of social status. Part of an ongoing exchange with a "Gentleman," the letter reflects not only a stratified society, but its continuity: "receive it therefore as a continuance of that inviolable obliegemen[t]" (14–15). The printed text of *The Jew of Malta* enters into a circulation of obligations that sustains the social status of Mr. Thomas Hammon of Grayes Inne. For this essay's purpose, this dedicatory epistle is significant because it links three different media—playwriting, playacting, and play printing—in a self-sustaining cycle; the scribe, actor and printer feed off and contribute to the vitality of each other. The writings that range across the *The Jew of Malta*'s stage—legal utterances, challenges, confessions, and correspondences—all are mini-scripts designed for economic advancement.

Heywood's "Prologues and Epilogues" offer an inside glimpse into the anxieties and hopes of the acting troupe. With their liminal position, prologues, it has been argued, "produced one of their greatest attractions for those interested in how these plays were designed to appeal to, and mean for, their audiences. . . . [and] prologues work to define the contours of theatrical representation in early modern England."<sup>6</sup> In a way, they are viewing directions for the audience, fulfilling "the roles of a curtain and footlights as well as playbills and programme notes."<sup>7</sup> In the Heywood's two prologues prefacing the 1632 edition of the play, we perceive two widely divergent strategies for eliciting the good will of the audience based upon social context. The "Prologue at the Cock-pit" promotes an actor-friendly reception even as it indicates a clear dissimilarity between "the best of Poets" and "the best of actors" (2–4). Here both Marlowe and Allin, the poet and actor, are recalled fondly from an earlier era in order to promote the revival of the 1630s; the play's primary marketing tool to this audience is the high social recognition of these original coproducers. Marlowe as playwright, however, is totally disregarded, and instead his narrative poetry, the erotic *Hero*

6. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theater: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.

7. Jacek Fabiszak, "The (Inter-) Theatricality of Marlovian Prologues," *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 29 (1995): 189–97, 191.

and *Leander*, assures “his lasting memory.” This literary Marlowe, not the dramatist, places him closer to what Robert Weimann terms “the literary poetics of writing” than the popular theater’s “cultural poetics of playing.”<sup>8</sup> The performance of the script (“play’d”) by actor Allin and its creation (“made”) by the poet Marlowe affirm the distinction between an imaginative space on stage and a localized place of production. This prologue foregrounds the difference between two different but related signifying systems: the literary and histrionic.

At the opposite end of the social spectrum, “The Prologue spoken at Court,” like Heywood’s dedicatory epistle, displays strategic deference toward its aristocratic audience. In recognition of that class difference between the Court and the Cock-pit, this prologue omits the names of Marlowe and Allen. While those attending the play at the Cock-pit were expected to find offence in the presentation of the new lead actor, those attending at the Court are warned about the content (“story”): “We humbly crave your pardon: we pursue/The story of a rich and famous Jew/Who live’d in Malta” (5–7). In fact this prologue is trying to warn the Royal Court that the main character is a “sound Machiavell” so that the privileged spectators will not be misled by the subtext’s title emphasizing a “rich and famous Jew.” Without preknowledge of the play, those at Court might be tempted to think the play’s title refers to a successful merchant, not a subversive threat against religious and political authority. This kind of disappointment could be physically and socially hazardous to the actors and all involved. At the end of the short prologue to the Court, the superior social position of those in attendance is credited for bestowing “grace” upon the production. Exhibiting a completely different rhetorical strategy based on the social context, this prologue still concludes with the same division of labor seen elsewhere: “You crowne the Action, and renowne the pen” (10). In order to function, this play requires a combination of “action” and “pen,” two forms of labor whose value is weighted differently. The cultural distance between the lettered and unlettered, those that read, and hence rule, and those who do not, is enlarged in Machiavelli’s famous prologue.

Before the curtains part to uncover Barabas sitting in his counting-house, Machiavelli speaks as an author (lecturer) and a Vice-figure, *diablo incarnato*. In this relatively short monologue, he juggles these two different but interdependent roles: the medieval

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8. Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of the Dramatic Form and Function*, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978), 181.

Vice who directly addresses the audience, and the humanist author, who promotes his book, insisting on the political advantage his writing imparts to its readers. His pronouncements clarify the connection between authority and the written word. He aligns power with “reading” books, especially his “books.” Exposing those in power as hypocrites, Machiavelli tells his audience the bold-faced truth: “Admired I am of those that hate me most:/Though some speak openly against my books,/Yet will they read me, and thereby attain/To Peter’s chair” (9–12). It needs emphasis: those who *read* Machiavelli’s works achieve political power. Thus political authority walks lock-step with literacy. Because history’s lessons are now legible, he cites examples from ancient Greek politics. Machiavelli speaks of the absolute necessity of making a “strong built citadel”:

Might first made kings, and laws were then most sure  
When like the Draco’s they were writ in blood.  
Hence comes it, that a strong-built citadel  
Commands much more than letters can import:  
Which maxima had Phalaris observed,  
H’had never bellowed in a brazen bull  
Of great ones’ envy. (prologue.20–26).

It is crucial to note Machiavelli’s reference to the Greek politicians, Draco and Phalaris. The seventh century Athenian legislator, Draco, famously substituted a traditional system of oral laws for written laws inscribed on wooden tablets, the first constitution in Athenian history. He translates one form of media into another. In contrast to the Sicilian tyrant Phalaris, who terrorized his population with this “brazen bull,” a torture device, Draco’s laws, not actually “written in blood,” extended political representation for Athenian citizens. In choosing this historical example, Machiavelli deliberately connects the prominence of writing (and reading) with enduring political rule. Near the end of the prologue, the Italian writer announces a secondary role as presenter. An author of several plays himself, Machiavelli sponsors the play’s protagonist:

I come not, I,  
To read a lecture here in Britaine,  
But to present the tragedy of a Jew,  
Who smiles to see how full his bags are crammed,  
Which money was not got without my means” (28–32).

Again the play sets in opposition intellectual and physical labor equivalent to “reading lectures” and “presenting tragedies.” The

tension between the two modes of signification structures the plot, offering up a murderous dialectic of writing and performing.

The opening scene of *The Jew of Malta* depicts the environment of precapitalism, what Marx terms a stage of "primitive accumulation." The necessary historical conditions are enumerated in the opening act: a global trade network, rich deposits of precious stones and gold, commercial agents, bills of credit, and exploitable labor in slavery. Most importantly the play presents energetic merchants like Barabas that accumulate wealth from repeated ventures that often end in steady profit: "So that of thus much that return was made: / And of the third part of the Persian ships, / There was the venture summed and satisfied" (1.1.1–3). Beyond the ken of most working people, the wealth of this Maltese business man is almost supernaturally abundant: "The needy groom that never fingered groat, / Would make a miracle of thus much coin" (12–13). Despite his immense accumulations, Barabas envies those landowners like "The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks / Without control can pick his riches up, / And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones" (1.1.21–23). Unlike the landowner, Barabas, both a Renaissance merchant and Medieval usurer, must tally his hard won "paltry silverlings," "groats," and "coin" (6, 12, 13). A tedious fate no doubt, but not everyone is rich in Malta or England. The economic activity and inequality of the Mediterranean island is a reflex of England. As Barabas's wealth grows to infinity, the value of men decreases until they are reduced to mere objects, like Ithamore and Abigail, the Jew's slave and daughter. At "The Market-Place," Barabas buys chattel, an easily-to-maintain slave, Ithamore, and sells his only daughter, Abigail, like a diamond that "sparkles bright and fair" (2.3.58). As the Second Officer in the market place declares, "Every one's price is written on his back, / And so much must they yield or not be sold" (3–4). This early form of precapitalism is circumscribed, however, by a feudal system of government which allows Barabas's property to be seized by the Ferneze on the grounds that "better one want for a common good/Than many perish for a private man" (1.2.99–100). A private man and his private property are easily pried apart: "You have my goods, my money, my wealth, / My ships, my store, and all that I enjoyed" (139–40). This type of religious and political repression is hardly unprecedented. What characterizes Marlowe's handling of the situation is his perverse reversal of Tudor practice: in the play the Governor turns Barabas's house into a nunnery while in England, with the Suppression Acts of 1536 and 1539, British authorities turned Catholic nunneries (and monasteries) into houses.

In act 1 when Barabas utters the play's most memorable line, "Infinite riches in a little room" (1.1.37), he is obviously referring to concentrated wealth. At the same time, however, he is imparting key coordinates to theatrical experience. His is referring to the two intertwined planes of theatrical reality: the fictive space of representation—"infinite riches," and the site of staging—"a little room." The physical dimensions of an early modern playhouse were relatively small: The width of stage at the Fortune, the Globe, and the Rose theaters averaged roughly 40 feet long by 30 feet deep and 5 feet high.<sup>9</sup> Fitted to this somewhat restricted space, any figure, locale, or history might be summoned by the playwright's pen to ensure the theater's economic success which like "steel-barred coffers are crammed full" (1.1.14). Like Tamburlaine or Faustus, Barabas symbolizes the rapidly expanding world of the Renaissance with his merchant ships traversing the waves from Persia to Alexandria to Crete: "Thus trowls our fortune in by land and sea, / And thus are we on every side enriched" (102–3). These wide-ranging ships intersect at Barabas's semienclosed "counting-house," part of the imaginary space that exploits the limited dimension of the production site. The stage is a negotiation between medieval and modern elements, the traditional forms and a new, poetic language derived from the university's classical curricula. After Marlowe had produced Latin literary translations at Cambridge, Ovid's *Elegies* and *The First Book of Lucan*, and after he had experimented with dramatic adaptation of Vergil's *Aeneid* in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, he set out confidently with M.A. in hand for the tempestuous theater district, eager to make ample income as a playwright. This newly-forged arrangement between elite poets like the University Wits and popular practice hinges ultimately on what Weimann calls "a style of acting that bridged the gap between play and audience, a stage position such as that occupied by . . . the Vice types, or the Elizabethan clown."<sup>10</sup> Or Barabas. Living within the double-jointed dramatic structure requires a Janus face. Not only does Barabas jump back and forth between the play and audience, he crosses the ultimate threshold; he overcomes death and lives a "double life."

Barabas's recurring use of the aside (direct address), easily the play's defining feature, is like a signal switch from space to place, from text to context. It is a type of "doubleness" that "suspends the boundaries between the actual site for playing and the imaginary

9. Erika T. Lin, "Performance Practice and Theatrical Privilege: Rethinking Weimann's Concepts of Locus and Platea," *New Theatre Quarterly* 22.3 (2006): 283–98, 288.

10. Weimann, *Popular Tradition*, 190.

landscape.”<sup>11</sup> Marlowe’s “revolutionary” handling of this dramatic technique is astonishing in its frequency, with “over 100 moments” counted by Sarah K. Scott.<sup>12</sup> In her examination of the play, Ruth Lunney proclaims, “Direct address is yet another aspect of Marlowe’s transformation of the popular drama . . . [he] liberated the aside. And the revolution began with *The Jew of Malta*.”<sup>13</sup> David Thurn’s economic reading of the play links Barabas’s use of the aside to linguistic excess or “the simultaneous compression and dispersion of meaning.”<sup>14</sup> He goes on to explain that “The asides function here, as elsewhere, to highlight the dual registers set in play by the pun.”<sup>15</sup> For my argument, the aside is a suture that mediates and exploits the gap between the world of the play and the play in the world. The tensions between the competing claims of speaking to the audience and sticking to the script are personified in Barabas’s two-faced role. Juggling the demands of the text and the spectators, Barabas’s manifold asides mark yet another metadramatic component. He functions as a playwright whose rhetorical labor involves balancing script against audience, aesthetic against practical demands. Like Barabas, the playwright employs alterity as a means of economic survival. But there is no mistaking that Barabas’s obsessive use of the aside marks a psychological crisis—a type of schizophrenia—that is the result of political-economic repression. As Chloe Kathleen Preedy notes, his “identity . . . allows his own sufferings to reflect those of religious non-conformists in general.”<sup>16</sup> A symbol for the abject, he is not the only victim of material dispossession and forced religious conversion as the Catholic subjects of Henry VIII can attest.

A play translates text into event; it is stable and unpredictable, a volatile marriage of old and new. The subtle interplay between the two media of writing and speaking is investigated in the Senate House in act 1. Here we encounter a recitation of the “articles of our

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11. Robert Weimann, *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare’s Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 193.

12. Sarah K. Scott, “*The Jew of Malta* and the Development of City Comedy: ‘The Mean Passage of History,’” in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage, and Page*, ed. Sarah K. Scott and M. L. Stapleton (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2010), 91–108, 99.

13. Ruth Lunney, “Speaking to the Audience: Direct Address in the Plays of Marlowe and His Contemporaries,” in Scott and Stapleton, *Marlowe the Craftsman*, 109–24, 109.

14. David Thurn, “Economic and Ideological Exchange in Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta*,” *Theatre Journal* 46 (1994): 157–70, 169.

15. Thurn, “Economic and Ideological Exchange,” 169.

16. Chloe Kathleen Preedy, *Marlowe’s Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 70.

decrees" (1.2.67) against the Jews by the Governor and his administration. Like a courtroom, this scene depicts a staging of the law involving the reading of a script by an actor to an audience. The Officer that reads in this scene functions something like a town crier which in Elizabethan times had legal protection. This scene of reading stages the legal system as the inert text, the letter of the law, given life by the spirit (breath) of the speaker:

FERNEZE. Read there the articles of our decrees.

OFFICER [reading]. First, the tribute money of the Turks shall all be levied amongst the Jews, and each of them to pay one half of his estate.

BARABAS. How, half his estate? I hope you mean not mine.

GOVERNOR. Read on.

OFFICER [reading]. Secondly, he that denies to pay, shall straight become a Christian.

BARABAS. How, a Christian? Hum, what's here to do?

OFFICER [reading]. Lastly, he that denies this, shall absolutely lose all he has. (1.2.67–76)

Viewed from the audience's perspective, this incident, like many more, is a performance of a performance, albeit a small one. First we see Barabas's characteristic use of the aside, which allows him to participate in the play and to step outside of the mimetic illusion to address the audience. But just as writing can set the stage as in a script, so too can writing be staged, as in the ceremonial signing of a law or, as here, the reading of a new law to Barabas and the other Jews. This speaking of the text is placed under rigorous conditions of execution: namely, Ferneze's verbal orders ("Read," "Read on") and the legal institution of the senate. In this one instance at least, writing is deployed and controlled by the politically powerful of Malta. The Reader translates the law from sight to sound, from eye to ear, so that the public can comprehend the decree. In other words, the law depends on a translation of one media into another just as does the play's enactment.

Words and bodies collaborate in various ways through the play. As Thurn observes, the majority of this scheming has an economic incentive: "The pursuit of money in the play is directly correlated with the pursuit of revenge in schemes which align the actions of plotting, performing, and purchasing."<sup>17</sup> Toward the end of act 2, Barabas takes a moment to reflect on his revenge plot against Ferneze, Governor of Malta. He has nearly finalized a design to kill Lodowick, the Governor's son, and Mathias, both suitors for Abigail

17. Thurn, "Economic and Ideological Exchange," 165.



his only daughter, through written discourse, “a challenge feigned” (2.3.373). Barabas promises “it shall be cunningly performed” (2.3.367). This piece of writing will become the script enacted by the young men, but Ithamore wrongly thinks the letter is poisoned, a familiar technique known to experienced criminals: “Tis poisoned, is it not?” (371). The Jew responds with congenial detachment: “No, no, and yet it might be done that way” (372). He then directs his accomplice to “Take this and bear it to Mathias straight, / And tell him that it comes from Lodowicke” (369–70). The play gradually reveals, as Deats and Starks argue, that the “Jew begins more and more to assume the role of the surrogate playwright.”<sup>18</sup> Barabas’s approach here is like that of an industrious director assigning roles and giving instructions on how the work should be portrayed. He cautions Ithamore to “Be not rash, but do it cunningly” (377). The plot works quickly. Shortly after delivery of the letters, the young lovers assume the roles established by Barabas’s script. They kill each other simultaneously in a sword fight. Like a playwright on opening night, Barabas anxiously views the scene he created from an unseen position. Ithamore later comments to the audience, “Why, was there ever seen such villainy, / So neatly plotted, and so well performed?” (3.3.1–2). These lines refer to the play within the play, but they could just as easily be speaking of *The Jew of Malta*. In addition, these lines divide the dramatic performance into two separate realms of work: the plot and the performance.

“Barabas emerges as the surrogate playwright,” argue Deats and Starks, “the mouthpiece through which Marlowe can communicate . . . the creative process and the sheer joy of playmaking.”<sup>19</sup> They are correct, but he is not the only one. Even minor characters get into the game. At the start of act 3, scene 4, the stage directions read “*Enter Barabas reading a letter*” (3.4). Another correspondence impels the storyline. When Abigail, the Jew’s daughter, finds out that her father has caused the deaths of Lodowick and Mathias, her love, she confesses in writing to the Second Friar. She reveals that, “by my father’s practice, which is there/Set down at large, the Gallants were both slain. [*Gives a paper*]” (3.6.29). Again written discourse proves a treasured commodity with a material presence that circulates on stage. Because Abigail is soon poisoned to death, the written word, unlike speech, allows communication from beyond the dead. The written word’s materiality makes possible enduring authority from a

18. Deats and Starks, “‘So Neatly Plotted, and So Well Perform’d,’” 381.

19. Deats and Starks, “‘So Neatly Plotted, and So Well Perform’d,’” 379.

distance. When Abigail's micronarrative, her confession, is possessed by the friars, it easily morphs into a potential source of income. The two friars brazenly confront the Jew with its contents, proving that written discourse is a means to economic gain. The second Friar, with a bit of rhetorical trickery, lets the Jew know that he is aware of the secret: "I will not say that by a forged challenge they met" (4.1.45). Barabas recognizes the truth: "She has confessed, and we both are undone" (46). By the written confession, the friars plan to extort the Jew's "Great sums of money lying in the banco" (75). Of course, Barabas is double-dealing with the two religious hypocrites, instead intending more mayhem for them. He confides to the audience, "Now I have such a plot for both their lives, As never Jew nor Christian knew the like" (117–18). This "plot for both their lives" points toward yet another play within the play. Like the one scripted for Lodowick and Mathias, this plot too has Barabas's enemies acting out their own deaths.

The deaths of the friars Jacomo and Bernadine in act 4 parallel the death of the two suitors: both are highly orchestrated murders of people emotionally entwined with Abigail and her wealth. Their deaths are staged as part of the metadramatic theme. Blinded by greed for Barabas's fortune, the two friars are easily duped into their deaths. Promising his money to each, Barabas nonetheless states clearly to the audience that he is not converting: "are not both these wise men to suppose / That I will leave my house my goods, and all / . . . I'll none of that" (4.1.122–24). After Ithamore and Barabas strangle Friar Bernardine, they boast about their immaculate murder: "'Tis neatly done, Sir, here's no print at all" (151). Barabas approves of the tidy execution: "Then is it as it should be" (152). Without signs of violence on the body, a spectator cannot easily determine if the friar is alive, dead, or asleep; this somatic ambiguity is played upon in succeeding sentences as Ithamore suggests a change in plans, an improvisation. The slave goes creatively off script: "Nay, master, be ruled by me a little. [Stands the body upright against pillar of outer stage.] So let him lean upon his staff. Excellent! He stands as if he were begging of bacon" (153). In performance, a living actor is playing the role of a dead friar made to appear alive to be killed again by Friar Jacomo in a secondary staging. "Who would not think," Barabas observes to the audience and Ithamore, "but that this friar lived?" (155). The actor's body occupies two spaces at once: the world of representation and the place of enactment. The play here turns itself inside out, making a spectacle of its means of production.

Showing us high culture in low places, act 4 involves more letter writing and a dramatic transformation of a character's speech. The

episodes with Ithamore, the renegade slave, Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, the prostitute and her pimp, are interesting not just for their street-level depiction of Malta, but also for their ambitious plans to blackmail Barabas by sending threatening letters. The second time we see Pilia-Borza, for example, he is confirming to Bellamira that he met and delivered her “letter” to Ithamore whom he left “at the reading of the letter” (4.2.6). Interestingly, he meets Ithamore at Friar Giacomo’s public execution, a staging of punishment, “within forty foot of the gallows, conning his neck-verse . . . looking of a friar’s execution” (4.2.16–17). This reference to “neck-verse” points to a special legal dispensation, the benefit of clergy, afforded to those who could read from the Bible, usually Psalm 51. Literacy permits an accused criminal the benefit of receiving justice from the usually less severe religious authorities and escape the “hempen tippet” of a scaffold death (23). Even those at the periphery, like Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, are able to hurdle social partitions when they employ letter writing. They also blur social distinctions by speaking a type of literary, educated discourse above their social standing. Ithamore suddenly spouts poetic verse equal to Marlowe’s own most memorable love lyrics:

BELLAMIRA. I have no husband, sweet; I’ll marry thee.

ITHAMORE. Content: but we will leave this paltry land,

And sail from hence to Greece, to lovely Greece.

I’ll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece;

Where painted carpets o’er the meads are hurled,

And Bacchus’ vineyards o’erspread the world;

Where woods and forests go in goodly green,

I’ll be Adonis, thou shalt be Love’s Queen.

The meads, the orchards, and the primrose lanes,

Instead of sedge and reed, bear sugar-canes;

Thou in those groves, by Dis above,

Shalt live with me and be my love. (4.2. 83–93)

“Dis above” (rather than in the “underworld”) is a calculated malapropism that draws attention to the comic absurdity of social inversion. Just as Dis, the god of the underworld, is inappropriately located, so too is the slave’s discourse. These iambic pentameter couplets alluding to Venus and Adonis deliberately mock poetry like Marlowe’s own amorous epyllion, *Hero and Leander*, similarly composed in iambic couplets, and his most famous love lyric, “Come live with me and be my love” from his “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.” Thus this scene blatantly challenges class distinctions as it shows the most socially marginalized character expressing romantic love to a prostitute in the language of highest Renaissance

poetry. This shift away from the common idiom to poetic discourse is economically motivated. As Adam Fox makes clear in his discussion of changing speech patterns of early modern England, "A varied body of evidence exists from the late sixteenth century to suggest that the lower 'middling sorts' were displaying this tendency towards linguistic emulation."<sup>20</sup> Anticipating money from Barabas, Ithamore shifts his language use so as to confirm that to be rich, one must speak rich.

This attempt at blackmail develops eventually into a bumbling parody of the literary patronage system and social-climbing poets. Thurn's reading suggests there is a hint of self-ridicule: "the extortion scheme hints mordantly of the literary marketplace in which Marlowe practiced his own trade."<sup>21</sup> The pimp prompts the slave: "you know some secrets of the Jew, / Which, if they were revealed, would do him some harm" (4.2.61–62). Ithamore promises his comrades, Pilia-borza and Bellamira a return for their efforts: "Pen and ink! I'll write unto him; we'll have money straight" (4.2.64–65). By extorting Barabas, their social superior, the three conspirators can turn Ithamore's knowledge of his criminal enterprises into their financial gain. Ithamore and his crew seek social advancement through the writing of a letter to a social superior just like Heywood. A printer, a poet, and a pimp are of imagination all compact. Ithamore tells them, "Give me a ream of paper; we'll have a kingdom of gold for it" (107–8). The increasing availability of printed material in the sixteenth century begins to erase one of those imaginary lines that divides ruler and ruled. Suddenly, social mobility seems possible. "You'd make a rich poet, sir," Pilia-borza tells Ithamore (115). Clearly in order for this to occur, the poetry must have an audience, and the poet a patron. The literary message must be decoded by a capable reader, one who understands that "the meaning has a meaning" (4.4.75). Thus Barabas again receives and reads a second encrypted document (the first from Abigail) that threatens betrayal: the stage direction reads "Enter Barabas, reading a letter." This funny episode mix-matches high and low material, upsetting the social equilibrium. Barabas is less dismayed about the money demanded by the trio than Ithamore's disregard for his social superior: "Barabas, send me three hundred crowns.—'Plain Barabas'! O, that wicked courtesan! He was not wont to call me Barabas" (4.3.1–3). With blatant disregard for social and dramatic

20. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, 103.

21. Thurn, "Economic and Ideological Exchange," 166.

decorum, this subplot forms a warped mirror image of the main plot. For this reason the dramatic action, as indicated by the stage directions, repeatedly centers on the corresponding activities of writing and reading. These scenes deliberately concentrate on the communication process from start to finish. They dramatize the encoding, medium, delivery, reception, and decoding of a missive, all the while aligning the ability to write with the “desire of gold” (3.5.4).

I have tried to argue, like others, that *The Jew of Malta* is self-reflexively contrived, openly exhibiting the media, method, and mechanisms of its own production. The final act is no different: Act 5’s metadramatic climax imposes an entirely arbitrary death sentence. After Barabas has risen phoenix-like from the dung pile, successfully dissimulating his own death, he quickly gains political control of Malta. In unlikely league with the Governor, Barabas fashions a final plot which focuses on a “dainty gallery, / The floor whereof, this cable being cut, / Doth fall asunder” (5.5.33–35). More than just a metadramatic “murder machine,” this construction, adjoining the conclusion, takes on additional significance.<sup>22</sup> Barabas and his carpenters are building something vaguely mechanical “above” the stage. The stage directions read “*Enter [Barabas] with a hammer above, very busy; [and Carpenters]*” Nearly finished, he steps back to admire his creation, much like in act 2 with Ithamore. “How stand the cords? How hang these hinges, fast? Are the cranes and pulleys sure? . . . Leave nothing loose, all leveled to mind” (5.5.1–3). The supposed reasoning behind the “dainty gallery” with a trap door is to capture Calymath, the Turkish leader. Barabas fatefully discloses this information to the Governor. As Stephen Greenblatt and others point out, Barabas “hammer in hand . . . is difficult not to equate with the playwright himself.”<sup>23</sup> This stage-like construction amplifies the metadramatic tone with Barabas as playwright directing and starring in his own death: “I see that you have art indeed” (5.5.4) he tells his carpenters when they finish this *deus ex machina*. The gimmicky ending runs counter-current to Aristotle’s notion of the plot unfurling according to organic necessity. In fact, Aristotle disparages Marlowe’s type of tragedy for its “less artistic method.”<sup>24</sup> Aristotle distinguishes between two types of tragedy: one that which elicits pity and terror through an organic plot, and one that which

22. Deats and Starks, “‘So Neatly Plotted, and So Well Perform’d,’” 386.

23. Stephen Greenblatt, “Marlowe, Marx, and Anti-Semitism,” *Critical Inquiry* 5.2 (1978): 291–307, 304.

24. Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics*, trans. Samuel Butcher (New York: Dover, 1951), 49.

produces this effect “by mere spectacle.”<sup>25</sup> He condemns the latter: “To produce this effect [of pity and fear] by the mere spectacle is a less artistic method. Those who employ spectacular means to create a sense not of the terrible but only of the monstrous, are strangers to the purpose of tragedy.”<sup>26</sup> What Aristotle calls the “monstrous” is in Greek “*teratodes*” or the weirdly strange, the unfamiliar, the bizarre—apt terms for the “bottle-nosed” Jew and his “monstrous treason” (5.5.107).

In the last lines spoken by the Governor, his hollow couplet praising “heaven,” not Machiavellian “fortune,” leaves the play open ended (122–23). This much, however, seems certain: the play concerns playmaking, specifically the labor or skills necessary for its production. A production of both intellectual and manual employment, the play is an exemplary commodity fashioned from a division of labor. Hence, in addition to playmaking, the play is also about moneymaking. Barabas, like the famous lead actor Edward Allen, is both a successful capitalist and player. Similarly, Marlowe wrote his plays not for posterity, but prosperity. Thus it is perfectly fitting that Marlowe’s exploration of his own craft is braided with precapitalism (“primitive accumulation”). In opposition to the antique patronage system, the Elizabethan theater provides one of the earliest examples of art as capitalist enterprise. Like Barabas who is both entrepreneur and actor, Philip Henslowe and Allen count the daily box office receipts they get from “telling” stories over a sustained period: they are like “he whose steel-barred coffers are crammed full, / And all his lifetime hath been tired, / Wearying his fingers’ ends with telling it” (1.1.14–16). “Telling” (or accounting) and narrating, moneymaking and playmaking, are comparable, interconnected activities. The most efficient entrepreneurs—Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Allen, Henslowe, among others—reaped handsome profits from their theater business by making sound investments, by keeping labor costs minimal, and by exercising acute business sense just like Barabas.<sup>27</sup> Virtually all aspects of dramatic production—from script, labor, stage properties, and work schedule—were fashioned according to the demands of the “market-place” where “Every one’s price is written on his back” (2.3.3). As Greenblatt and others argue, it is difficult not to see

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25. Aristotle, *Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 81.

26. Aristotle, *Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 49.

27. James Forse, *Art Imitates Business: Commercial and Political Influences in Elizabethan Theater* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State UP, 1993), 47.

Barabas as playwright. If this is true, then the ship, his main tool of trade, might be considered a type of stage. Requiring capital investment, packed with all manner of people, exposed to the elements, composed of ropes, fabric, and wooden planks, the ship, like the stage, transports its audience/travelers oceanic distances. What invisible force impels both ship and stage? Marlowe makes that answer abundantly clear: "The wind that bloweth all the world besides,—Desire of gold" (3.5.3–4).

As the final commentary on the play, the "Epilogue to the Court" and the "Epilogue to the Cock-Pit" take two very different tacks depending on the social status of the audience. The "Epilogue to the Cock-Pit" repeats the formula from the prologue, which is to downplay expectations concerning the present actor's performance relative to the earlier role starring Allen: "our actor . . . only aimed to go, but not out-go" the previous performance. With lowered standards, the presenter of the prologue hopes "but to hear from you, by me 'twas well" (epilogue.8). The audience's applause is eagerly anticipated. The "Epilogue to the Court" is strikingly different; the tone here is fearful, not hopeful. Perhaps because of the play's harsh treatment of government and religion, the presenters anticipate the court's censure, and thus they ask for "pardon," expecting the worst. They crave "pardon" and should not be held accountable for the "too tedious" play because they are not ultimately responsible for it. As they say in the epilogue's couplet, "if ought here offend your ear or sight, / We only act, and speak, what others write" (epilogue.5–6). This statement serves perfectly for the theme of the play even as it makes a political disavowal of it. Ultimate responsibility for what happens on stage, the actor tells us, lies with the playwright whose penned words are translated into performance by the bodies of the actors. This concession essentially places the written text at the center of theatrical performance just as Marlowe's play consistently foregrounds the activity of writing with its many challenges, confessions, and correspondences. The play, as part of its metadramatic strategy, exposes the normally suppressed textuality behind the spoken performance. For this reason writing emerges on stage as a plot device, setting, and theme. Rather than hide the written word behind the spoken idiom of the actors, Marlowe instead chooses to locate the script directly under the spotlight for all to view.

STEPHEN GUY-BRAY

## First Thing We Do, Let's Kill All the Children

My research has shown that people disapprove of parents killing their children, except when they approve of it. My research has also shown that children are the future, except when they aren't. Now that I have cleared these issues up for everyone, I begin this essay with the observation that infanticide is common in Marlowe's seven plays. I could say surprisingly common, if I wanted to compare the frequency of infanticide in his works with its relative rarity in other writers' works. Or I could say understandably common, if I wanted to emphasize that Marlowe grew up in a society tyrannized by a religion based on a god who kills his son, in which case the paucity of literary examples of infanticide is what is truly surprising, and more than a little suspicious. As I see it, Marlowe not only implies that the family fails to provide refuge from an often violent and always unpredictable society, but the institution itself actually promulgates violence and unpredictability. In this paradox, then, our family experiences prepare us for the nightmarish horrors of daily life in societies that could be termed unjust.

I want to start with immortality, however. That humans die, and furthermore, that many of them are unhappy with this, is one of Marlowe's most common themes and appears in some form or another in most of his works. In *Hero and Leander*, for instance, there are references to humans who have become immortal by having sex with gods. In *Doctor Faustus*, Faustus feels that whatever he might achieve will be meaningless because he is going to die. For some people, the solution to an inexorable mortality is felt to be that humans can achieve a kind of immortality through their children. Our children will remember what we did and carry on our names. That, at least, is the theory, and many readers will already have come up with this genius maneuver all by themselves. There is a problem, however, and doubtless many readers have already encountered this as well.



What if your children turn out to be losers? This is precisely the problem faced by Tamburlaine in *Tamburlaine, Part Two*. I think it's important to make the point that while we all know from history that Tamburlaine's sons were rather a disappointment and that his great empire crumbled quite soon after his death, there is no hint of this in the plays. Amyras and Celebinus are very good sons, busily killing foreigners and extending their father's reign of terror wherever possible. It is the oldest son, Calyphas, who is the problem.<sup>1</sup>

Tamburlaine's killing of his son is usually considered one of the many bad things he does. Many critics have found Calyphas sympathetic because of his response to his brothers' exhortations to fight: "I know, sir, what it is to kil a man, / It works remorse of conscience in me" (2 *Tam*, 4.1.27–28).<sup>2</sup> But in context, it is clear that these words cannot be taken seriously either as an expression of pacifism or as a statement of compassion for the defeated. What Calyphas generally objects to in killing is the danger and the effort, as we see early in the play when Tamburlaine gives him the chance to kill the Turkish deputy:

snatch [the crown] from his head,  
 And cleave his Pericranion with thy sword.  
*Calyphas.* If any man will hold him, I will strike,  
 And cleave him to the channell with my sword.  
 TAMBURLAINE. Hold him, and cleave him too, or Ile cleave thee.  
 (1.3.100–4)

To anyone with a knowledge of Tamburlaine, it is abundantly clear that this statement constitutes fair warning. What is significant in this case is that it demonstrates his belief that his sons are no less subject to the rules of war than any of his other soldiers.

What is more, Marlowe reveals at various points in the play that Calyphas also has no objection to profiting from the spoils of killing. He only objects to the work involved and to the possibility that he might get hurt. For example, slightly earlier in the scene quoted in the preceding paragraph, he responds to his father's call to arms by saying

1. For two accounts of these unworthy sons that appeared in Marlowe's lifetime, see George Whetstone, *The English Myrror* (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 82; and Pedro Mexia, *The Foreste*, trans. Thomas Fortescue (London: John Day, 1576), section 2, chap. 14.

2. Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine, Part 2*, in *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Fredson Bowers, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), 1:149–252, 192. All subsequent references to Marlowe's works are from this edition unless otherwise noted.

But while my brothers follow armes my lord,  
 Let me accompany my gracious mother,  
 They are enough to conquer all the world  
 And you have won enough for me to keep. (1.3.65–68)

It is important to note that Marlowe does not present Tamburlaine and Zenocrate as opposites in this regard. As G. I. Duthie points out, Calyphas' reference to his mother is disingenuous: "This suggests that his mother represents complete opposition to the following of arms; but, as we have seen, she does not. Calyphas is presented not only as an unworthy son of Tamburlaine but also as an unworthy son of Zenocrate."<sup>3</sup> Calyphas' comment that his father has won enough for him to keep demonstrates his willingness to enjoy the fruits of very bloody conquest as long as no effort is required of him.

Unsurprisingly, Tamburlaine kills Calyphas before too long and nobody ever misses him. I think that the context of the killing is important in underlining the wretchedness of Calyphas' nature, however. As Tamburlaine and all his army prepare to fight the Turkish kings, only Calyphas refuses to join the field, despite his brothers' entreaties and their talk of the honors their father has promised them. He ultimately retorts: "Take you the honor, I wil take my ease, / My wisdom shall excuse my cowardice" (4.1.49–50). Instead of fighting, Calyphas calls in his friend Perdicas to play cards, saying that they will play for "Who shal kisse the fairest of the Turkes Concubines first, when my father hath conquered them" (64–65). A few lines later, Tamburlaine returns to stage victorious with all his soldiers and the captive kings. By showing, by Calyphas' own admission, that he is cowardly, rather than that he has any opposition either to killing or conquering or to rape, and that he is perfectly happy to enjoy the fruits of all this mayhem, Marlowe demonstrates that Calyphas is not in any sense admirable: the lines about "remorse of conscience" that are so often cited can only be taken seriously if they are quoted out of context. More importantly, Marlowe also demonstrates that Calyphas does not represent an alternative to Tamburlaine's reign of terror.

It must be admitted that Tamburlaine's decision to kill Calyphas is opposed by the other characters on stage, first by Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane, then by Calyphas' brother Amyras, and finally by the conquered Turkish kings. We can agree that it is hardly

3. G. I. Duthie, "The Dramatic Structure of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Parts 1 and 2," in *Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine Part One and Part Two*, ed. Irving Ribner (Indianapolis, IN: Odyssey, 1974), 209–36, 235.

surprising that his own brother would plead for him, and the captured kings are presumably only too happy to have a reason to rail against Tamburlaine. However, the protests by the three men who have fought beside Tamburlaine since the beginning of the first play are perhaps more serious. Nevertheless, none of Tamburlaine's companions reproaches him with the killing later.<sup>4</sup> What I find most significant is his own words for what he does. He announces it as "martiall justice" (4.1.96) and then in response to the criticism calls it "the argument of Armes," "the jealousie of warres," and "wars justice" (100, 104, 147). I think we should consider that he is right in the context of codes of military justice and in that sense his killing of his son is justified. We could say that his military justice should be tempered with parental mercy, but then again we could also applaud his Roman stoicism.

The killing of Calyphas is not the only infanticide in the second part of *Tamburlaine*, although it is the only one to attract almost universal condemnation. The play contains a second infanticide, in which the captive Olympia kills her young son. In fact, Olympia's scenes bracket the killing of Calyphas and we see her kill her son before we see Tamburlaine kill Calyphas, so we could say that Marlowe has structured the play to make us consider the two killings together. We first see Olympia as her husband, the defeated Captain of Balsera, dies from his wounds. She delivers a speech that begins with her asking that she and her son could die with her husband. "Death, whether art thou gone that both we live? / Come back again (sweet death) and strike us both" (3.4.11–12). She then tells her son:

These barbarous Scythians full of cruelty,  
And Moores, in whom was never pitie found,  
Will hew us peecemeale, put us to the wheele,  
Or els invent some torture worse than that. (3.4.19–22)

Olympia wishes to choose her son's manner of death along with her own, and as her actions immediately afterwards show, she also wishes to prevent their corpses from suffering any indignities. This wish results in one of the best stage directions ever: "*Burns the bodies*" (3.4.33 s.d.).

What might strike us as most remarkable is how she represents her decision to kill her son to him: "die by thy loving mothers hand, / Who gently now wil lance thy Ivory throat" (3.4.23–24). The first of these lines describes a situation that we should see as oxymoronic.

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4. For a discussion of the moral ambiguity of the episode, see Andrew Duxfield, *Christopher Marlowe and the Failure to Unify* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 47–50.

The second, with the disturbingly erotic adjective “Ivory” presents the murderous act as entirely maternal. In any case, it turns out, luckily for her, that the boy welcomes death: “Mother dispatch me, or Ile kil my selfe, / Sweet mother strike, that I may meet my father” (29–30). Critics often juxtapose these two infanticides, and the comparison is usually in Tamburlaine’s disfavor, but we should consider what Techelles says when he hears what Olympia has done: “‘Twas bravely done, and like a souldiers wife” (3.4.38). I think we should see the two infanticides as similar. In both cases, the military code of conduct supersedes the standard principles governing parent–child relations. In fact, I would argue that, for Marlowe, at least in the Tamburlaine plays, this military code is always in effect. We could even go as far as to say that Marlowe’s plays depict a world eternally subject to it.

There is a sense in which the infanticides in this play, however distressing they may seem, can be seen as a logical extension of normal parenting. Many parents seek the future through their children but only—as many queer people have found—when the future is one of which they approve. This future must include the rule of violence of which Tamburlaine is, after all, only one of many representatives then and now. In this sense, we could say Marlowe anticipates Lee Edelman’s influential discussion in his book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004) of what he calls “reproductive futurism.” Edelman defines this concept as “terms that impose an ideological limit on political discourse as such.”<sup>5</sup> His interest is in heteronormativity and in queer resistance, and therefore, his work might not seem relevant, but the *Tamburlaine* plays demonstrate very thoroughly that passionate wedded love is compatible with a taste for murderous conquest on the largest possible scale. The killing of Calyphas, a figure who is arguably queer if not at all homoerotically inclined, demonstrates that what we might be tempted to describe as the love and sanctity of family life is in no way exempt from the killing politics that characterize the world of the plays.

The third entry in my infanticide sampler comes from *The Jew of Malta*. As a Jew, Barabas is officially isolated from the Christian society of Malta, and he is perfectly content with that, regarding power gained through money as more durable than power gained through military means. “Give us a peacefull rule, make Christians Kings, / That thirst so much for Principality” (1.1.134–35), he says, comparing the wealth of the Jews with the military and governmental power of the Christian world in which Jews must live. As it happens,

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5. Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke UP, 2004), 2. The book’s introduction, “The Future is Kid Stuff” (1–32), provides a full discussion.

however, Barabas at first seems isolated even from his fellow Jews. For instance, when he hears in the first scene that the Turkish fleet is in the harbor he says "let 'em combat, conquer, and kill all, / So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth" (152–53). Yet being Jewish does have meaning for him. Early on (1.1.82), he refuses to convert despite the fact that it would be prudent and remains a Jew until the end. Clearly he begins as a character who is Jewish in name only, but gradually discovers his deep and abiding association with Judaism over the course of the play.

Barabas is usually characterized as a Machiavellian figure, but in some ways he is actually quite naïve. It is clear that he still believes that the family can be a sort of haven and that his wealth can protect him from the wild world around him. In a society like his, in which money is all-important, it is obvious that financial concerns would override sentiment. What happens in the play, and it would not surprise anyone aware of how societies work, is that rather than protect him from the Christian Maltese, his wealth makes him their prey. His love for money makes him more like the other characters as well, who are all shown to be more or less obsessed with it.

In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe demonstrates that the love for money unites everyone in the world of the play, although, in a drearily predictable manner, the stereotyping Christians of Malta blame the Jews for avarice. In this respect, Marlowe seems to anticipate the famous cash nexus passage from near the beginning of the *Communist Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." . . . for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.<sup>6</sup>

In the situation Marx and Engels describe, religion is, as the play's prologue indicates, "but a childish Toy" (14). Machiavel's cynical words turn out to be a mere statement of fact. In a sense, then, both Barabas and Malta should be seen as typical of the larger world and of England itself. While both of the nouns in the play's title seem to promise the audience something exotic, we could certainly argue that the cupidity the play depicts is not limited to people who are foreign either in religion or in nationality.

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6. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1984), 82. See also Stephen Greenblatt, "Marlowe, Marx, and Anti-Semitism," *Critical Inquiry* 5 (1978–89): 291–307.

This is not to say that neither Barabas nor Malta is at all exotic. In many ways, Barabas is familiar to us as the cosmopolitan, rootless, and untrustworthy Jew of many centuries of anti-Semitic representation. But as a number of critics have shown, Malta itself is cosmopolitan and ruthless. As Virginia Mason Vaughan has pointed out in a study comparing Marlowe's tragedy to the somewhat later play *The Knight of Malta*, "Neither fully European nor African, to early Modern English readers Malta was an international amalgam of sailors, pirates, merchants, and slaves."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Christians of Malta, with their Catholic religion and their Italianate names, might not have seemed substantially less foreign to Marlowe's English audience than Barabas might have. Nor is it only a question of different religions or nationalities. Barabas' killing of his daughter Abigail is often felt to show that even the familial bonds that seem to promise mutual protection are subject to his brutal financial calculus. While I am not denying this, although I think the situation is somewhat more complex, what Marlowe shows us of Christian family life in Malta is not very different.

An especially good example of the extent to which Christian family life is also subject to financial considerations can be found in the scene in which Ferneze and Katherina express their grief at the deaths of their respective sons, who have killed each other in a duel stage managed by Barabas:

MATER. Lend me that weapon that did kill my sonne,  
And it shall murder me.

GOVERNOR. Nay Madam stay, that weapon was my son's.  
And on that rather should *Ferneze* die. (3.2.23–26)

As so often with Marlowe, there is a note of black humor here, in this exchange spoken over the corpses of two young men. Ferneze is just as ready to kill himself as Katherina is, but apparently only so long as his claim to this part of his son's estate is acknowledged. The two parents leave the stage with Ferneze uttering a financial allusion: "Come, *Katherina*, our losses equall are, / Then of true grieffe let us take equall share" (3.2.36–37). Ferneze and Katherina sound more like venture capitalists in a partnership than like grief-stricken parents.

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7. Virginia Mason Vaughan, "The Maltese Factor: The Poetics of Place in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Knight of Malta*," in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 340–54, 341. See also Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993), 91–94.

As I take it, Marlowe's point here is that financial considerations have infected all aspects of Maltese society. One of the best analyses of this situation comes from Bob Hodge: "For Ferneze and Katherine, the potentially rich world of social relations has been reduced to a system of commodities. They are not here engaged in selling children or friends, of course: the deformity lies deeper, in their inability to conceive or express genuine feeling about the more basic human relationships in any other currency."<sup>8</sup> The truth of Ferneze and Katherine's grief for their sons is not denied by their rather jarringly inappropriate fiduciary language, however, just as Barabas and Lodowick's frequent references to Abigail as a jewel does not mean that neither actually cares for her. As Hodge suggests, genuine emotions such as a parent's love for a child form the deepest of all bonds and constitute, as we could say, the gold standard.

This point is probably most obviously applicable to Barabas himself, so I want to look more closely at his relationship to his daughter. We first see her after she comes to comfort her father, who has just been stripped of all his wealth by Ferneze:

ABIGALL. Not for my selfe, but aged *Barabas*:  
Father, for thee lamenteth *Abigaile*.

.....

BARABAS. No, *Abigail*, things past recovery  
Are hardly cur'd with exclamations.  
Be silent, Daughter, sufferance breeds ease. (1.2.228–29, 236–38)

When Barabas comes up with a plan to recover some of his goods, Abigail instantly gives unqualified assent: "Father, what e're it be to injure them / That have so manifestly wronged us, / What will not *Abigall* attempt" (1.2.274–76). I cite these lines to stress that the first glimpse we have of the father-daughter bond here is that it is characterized by affection and mutual condolence.

Commentators have typically ignored this passage and focused on a later scene in which Barabas equates his daughter with his possessions. Two passages are relevant in this connection. In the first, he says "Oh my girle, / My gold, my fortune, my felicity" (2.1.47–48). A few lines later, he says

O *Abigal*, *Abigal*, that I had thee here too,  
Then my desires were fully satisfied,  
But I will practice thy enlargement thence:

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8. Bob Hodge, "Marlowe, Marx and Machiavelli: Reading into the Past," in *Literature, Language and Society in England 1580–1622*, ed. David Aers, Bob Hodge, and Gunther Kress (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981), 1–22, 15.

Oh girle, oh god, oh beauty, oh my blisse. (2.1.451–54)

In both passages, Abigail and the money are referred to in such a way that they form an alliterating pair which is then linked with another alliterating pair. As Maurice Charney remarks, “Barabas links his ducats and his daughter in a context that is celebratory.”<sup>9</sup> The lines do not indicate that Barabas does not love his daughter or that he prefers his money to her. Instead, they indicate an equality between the two in his affections. To be surprised by this or to disapprove of it reveals a certain disingenuousness. In a world in which Jews can only have even temporary safety through their wealth, Barabas cannot be expected to be more high-minded than Ferneze or Katherina.

The only character in the play who appears to be exempt to this equation of love with money is Abigail. She miraculously exists on an altogether higher plane than her father, and indeed than all the other characters in the play. One obvious parallel to Abigail as an admirable Jewish character is Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*. As usual, however, Marlowe is bolder than Shakespeare, since Abigail is not only more virtuous than her father but also more virtuous than the play’s Christian characters. To some extent, Jessica is the ideal Jewish character for a bigoted world. She is a Jew who steals her father’s wealth and delivers it to her Christian husband, converting to Christianity in the process. In contrast, in *The Jew of Malta*, there is no equivalent to Belmont, no Christian refuge simultaneously supported by and cordoned off from commerce. This makes Abigail’s isolation, once she has separated from her father, more complete and her situation more tragic. Indeed, on the affective level at least, the play could legitimately be considered the tragedy of Abigail. While the Jewish Jessica can be redeemed by being absorbed into genteel Christianity, and while the love story in which she features obscures the overriding importance in the play of transferring money from Jewish to Christian hands, there is no possible escape for Abigail.<sup>10</sup>

The undeniable sadness of Abigail’s fate, as well as her centrality to *The Jew of Malta*, means that her death is more upsetting than the deaths of the wretched Calyphas and of Olympia’s son, who is killed within about a minute of appearing on stage. Marlowe profits from the resulting pathos, but he also does a good deal to indicate to us

9. Maurice Charney, “Jessica’s Turquoise Ring and Abigail’s Poisoned Porridge: Shakespeare and Marlowe as Rivals and Imitators,” *Renaissance Drama* 10 (1979): 33–44, 36.

10. Two excellent recent discussions of Abigail are Vanessa L. Rapatz, “Abigail’s Turn in *The Jew of Malta*,” *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 56 (2016): 247–64; and Michelle Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Renaissance Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 113–32.



that the play takes place in a world in which the parent–child bond is not sacrosanct. For one thing, there is the question of her name. As everyone will recall, the biblical Abigail was the wife of a dreadful man called Nabal. When David approached Nabal for food for himself and his man, he was rudely refused, so naturally David prepared to attack him. Abigail, whom the Bible describes as “a woman of singular wisdom, and beautiful” (1 Samuel 25:3), prevented the assault by bringing food to David. Ten days later Nabal died suddenly, and, it must be said, suspiciously. The result was that “David sent to commune with Abigail to take her to his wife” (1 Sam. 25:39).<sup>11</sup> The critics who have commented on this parallel have made a fairly straightforward equivalence between Nabal and Barabas as awful old men. Yet if we equate David’s relationship with Abigail to his dalliance with Bathsheba, then Nabal resembles Uriah, another inconvenient husband who must be neutralized. In any case, surely the point of this allusion is to remind us that even in the Bible the ties sanctioned by God—marriage, in these cases—may be broken, even by violence.

There are three other allusions that I think are crucial for my purposes in this essay, two Biblical, one classical. The first comes early in the play when Barabas enumerates his assets and concludes by saying, “I have no charge, nor many children, / But one sole daughter, whom I hold as deare / As *Agamemnon* did his *Iphigen*” (1.1.136–39). At the beginning of the second act, Barabas, furious at the theft of his money, invokes the God of his fathers:

O thou that with a fiery pillar led'st  
The sonnes of *Israel* through the dismall shades,  
Light *Abrahams* off-spring; and direct the hand  
Of *Abigail* this night. (2.1.12–15)

The offspring of Abraham are the Jews in general, of course, but most specifically Isaac, the son miraculously saved at the last minute from being sacrificed by his father on a woodpile: “Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood” (Gen. 22:9). Marlowe makes the connection clear in one of Barabas’ asides somewhat later in the play. Responding to Lodowick’s obvious desire for Abigail, Barabas says “e’re he shall have her / I’le sacrifice her on a pile of wood” (1.3.51–52).

These references to Iphigenia and to Isaac are even more pointed than the one to the biblical Abigail. All three supply precedents for

11. Biblical loci are taken from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969).

the idea that there are forces more important than those that bind members of the same family. I would add that Marlowe follows these two precedents for infanticide closely in *The Jew of Malta*. Barabas' decision to kill Abigail resembles Abraham's decision to kill Isaac in that it is motivated by religious feeling. The killing resembles Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigenia because the necessities of war demand it, as indeed similar factors seem to compel the infanticides that Tamburlaine and Olympia commit. In both plays, violence travels along the routes of kinship, and those closest to us are seen to be most likely to suffer from us, another one of the many uncomfortable insights Marlowe provides in his works.

One of my main points in this essay has been that the infanticides in *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta* should not be taken as evidence that the parents in question do not love their children, but rather that love is superseded by the demands of politics in the broadest sense of that word. It could also be said of both plays, like *Dido, Queene of Carthage* and *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris*, feature characters who seem obsessed with dynastic succession, with the ways in which children seem to guarantee a kind of immortality by carrying on a family name and a family's possessions. And while these plays obviously deal with noticeably elite characters, this would appear to be a futurity that is within almost everyone's grasp, even if they have only very modest possessions. It is, admittedly, a futurity typically denied to most sorts of queers, who have historically often been criticized precisely because queer sexuality is not reproductive. These days, of course, many queers have children, but what Marlowe demonstrates in all his works, most pointedly in those that feature infanticide, is that our sense of our place in futurity, and our way to cheat mortality, is mistaken. You too, like Tamburlaine, might be the Scourge of God, or at least the terror of your department, but that is certainly no indication that your children will be so gifted or even that they will keep what you have acquired. The only thing carried forward by futurity is the scourging itself. And that is what we call history.

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“Another Bloody Spectacle”: Excessive  
Violence in Christopher Marlowe’s  
*Tamburlaine* Plays

In one of the most shocking scenes of Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays, the central character imprisons the defeated ruler Bajazeth in an iron cage. Instead of slaughtering his prisoner or holding him for ransom, Tamburlaine proclaims “There, while he lives, shall Bajazeth be kept, / And where I go be thus in triumph drawn.”<sup>1</sup> The conquered ruler, subjugated and displayed, signifies Tamburlaine’s power. Yet this cruel treatment functions as more than just a symbolic representation. The suffering of Bajazeth, who is drawn to the banquet hall in his cage, made to serve as a footstool, and continuously mocked by Tamburlaine, also serves as a source of entertainment for the new ruler. When Tamburlaine asks his guests “doth not the Turk and his wife make a goodly show at a banquet?” (*1Tam*, 4.4.49, 60–61), his use of the term “show” suggests the theatrical nature of his cruelties. Tamburlaine tellingly also notes that “The ages that shall talk of Tamburlaine, / Even from this day to Plato’s wondrous year, / Shall talk how I have handled Bajazeth,” thus linking his treatment of the imprisoned emperor to his creation of lasting earthly renown (*1Tam*, 4.2.95–97). These moments of seemingly insane degradation of others and the spread of excessive violence throughout the plays are not just displays of power. Rather, they operate as set pieces highlighting the aesthetic pleasure Tamburlaine derives from brutality and emphasizing his use of the tortured and objectified human body as a monument to his fame.

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1. Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part One*, in *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, ed. Frank Romany and Robert Lindsey (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 2.4.85–86. Quotations from *Tamburlaine the Great, Part One* and *Part Two* are from this edition and are cited as *1Tam* and *2Tam* respectively.

Indeed, Marlowe portrays Tamburlaine as a self-aware artist of the violent through his verbal aestheticization of the very spectacles of horror he creates.

Marlowe's spectacular violence showcases his unique portrayal of the suffering human body. From the murder of Edward II, who is executed by a poker thrust into his bowels, to the suicide of Bajazeth, who brains himself against the bars of his cage, Marlovian characters die in stunning and theatrical ways. While other playwrights, in particular John Webster, aestheticize death and torture through characterizations, stage directions, and props, Marlowe's central characters paint shockingly beautiful violence with words, using alliteration, imagery, and musicality.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the self-conscious celebration of the spectacles of horror Tamburlaine devises creates a sublime violence, and this sublimity distances the plays from the traditional moral or political lessons usually expected of sixteenth century drama.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Tamburlaine experiences pleasure in his bloody creations and attempts to preserve memories of his cruelties after his death. But why would Tamburlaine do this? I argue that by developing an aesthetics of violence in his *Tamburlaine* plays, Marlowe portrays his central character trying to subvert the leveling power of death. By controlling the physical sufferings and deaths of others, Tamburlaine resists the specter of death and attempts to create for himself an artistic immortality. The *Tamburlaine* plays, unlike more acceptable routes to posthumous immortality, explore the creation of remembrance through spectacle and language, suggesting that physical violence written on the bodies of others can serve as a way to fashion posthumous identity and lasting renown.

Scholars remain divided on the function of Marlovian violence. While early critics like Douglas Cole interpret Marlovian violence as demonstrations of the moral failings and subsequent divine punishments of his central characters, more recent scholars tend to see Marlowe's poetic use of bloodshed as cultural critique.<sup>4</sup> Janet

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2. In *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), Webster's conflicted villain, Bosola, for instance, seems to revel in the psychological torture and execution of the Duchess. Yet, the spectacles devised by Bosola rely more fully on staging than language. The horror the Duchess encounters is based on a severed hand, waxen figures meant to represent her dead family, and cavoring madmen. Marlowe tends to use words more than props to support his aesthetics of violence.

3. Jonas Barish points out that William Shakespeare rarely uses the "bizarre or outlandish forms" of violence employed by Marlowe or even Thomas Kyd. In addition, he argues that "even his [Shakespeare's] most sadistic torturers rarely gloat over their own cruelty." See Barish "Shakespearean Violence: A Preliminary Survey," in *Violence in Drama*, ed. James Redmond (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 101–21, 102.

4. See Douglas Cole, *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Princeton:

Clare, for instance, suggests that Marlowe's bloody spectacles need to be studied in light of Antonin Artaud's manifestos of a "Theatre of Cruelty" (1932 and 1938) in which Artaud contends that cruelty and violence are the foundational components of all theatrical displays.<sup>5</sup> Other scholars argue that Marlowe's bloody death scenes subvert governmental power, focus on bodily suffering to understand contemporary interest in anatomy and human identity, or respond to early European colonization. Karen Cunningham, for example, believes that Marlowe's spectacles of terror reveal what state sponsored violence sought to subdue—the ironic portrayal of the honorable death, the ambiguity of divinely sanctioned punishment, and the artificial quality of execution speeches.<sup>6</sup> Matthew Greenfield, in contrast, views Marlowe's obsession with physical pain as a response to sixteenth century concerns about the human body's link to individual identity.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Stephen Greenblatt proposes that the plays' violence reveals the politics of colonization.<sup>8</sup>

While issues of identity, political power, British colonization, and catharsis through spectacle definitely shaped Marlowe's work, I suggest an alternative reading of Marlovian death and dismemberment in *Tamburlaine*. Although such spectacles celebrate an aesthetics of violence and subversion of death's annihilating power, Marlowe's

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Princeton UP, 1962), 247–53.

5. See Janet Clare, "Marlowe's 'Theatre of Cruelty,'" in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, ed. J. A. Downe and J. T. Parnell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 74–87, 74–87. Clare notes that by separating violent spectacle and morality, Marlowe, like the "Theatre of Cruelty" proposed by Artaud, assaults the senses of his audience, effects the catharsis of dangerous emotions, and more realistically reflects sixteenth century cultural understandings of violence. Yet, while Clare makes good use of Artaud to note the sensory aspects of Marlowe's dramatic works, Artaud dismisses dramatic dialogue, which remains central to Marlowe's work. See also Antonin Artaud, "The Theater of Cruelty: First Manifesto," in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988), 242–51, 251; and Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double* (New York: Grove P, 1958), 71.

6. Karen Cunningham, "Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death," *PMLA* 105.2 (1990): 209–22, 210.

7. Greenfield argues that by highlighting the dismembered body and individual characters' awareness of physical suffering, Marlowe suggests a "self-dissection," or attempt to understand the connections between the physical body and the interior identity. See Matthew Greenfield, "Christopher Marlowe's Wound Knowledge," *PMLA* 119.2 (2004): 233–46, 241–42.

8. Noting that Marlowe seems "fascinated by the idea of the stranger in a strange land," Greenblatt interprets Marlowe's central protagonists as embodiments of "the voice of conquest" and the violence of the plays as mirrors of the real life violence of the colonial project. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980), 194, 196.

plays also equate torture and the violation of human bodies with the construction of Tamburlaine's earthly fame.<sup>9</sup> As a major playwright, Marlowe obviously intended his works to convey meaning beyond shock value, and the excessive violence in his work often reveals his characters' attempts to establish rhetorical power over death.

In this light, Marlowe's work responds to contemporary fears about death's power. Due in part to the religious reformations of the sixteenth century, which shifted the responsibility for salvation from the community to the individual, as well as the growing importance of both individualism and skepticism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, early modern people found death increasingly fearsome and threatening to individual human distinctiveness. Robert Watson, for instance, contends that "the fear of death as annihilation produced a crisis in English Renaissance culture," while Michael Neill believes that early modern tragedy focused on mortality "because it catered for a culture that was in the throes of a peculiar crisis in the accommodation of death."<sup>10</sup> Such anxieties and doubts led individuals to construct their identities, therefore, not only for heavenly ends, but for earthly posterity, especially through the creation of monuments of remembrance.<sup>11</sup> These commemorations took a variety of forms, including poems immortalizing loved ones and the self, dramatic acts of revenge that perpetuated the legacy and importance of the dead, and procreation, which provided children to carry on the name and memory of the deceased. In addition, Renaissance macabre art, both visual and textual, while focusing on the power of death over human lives, also memorialized its creators, transforming the specter of death into a personal fame that outlived the artist. Tragedies, therefore, became memorials to their central characters, symbolically investing the protagonists with a probable future beyond their own staged ends. Marlowe's master of horror—Tamburlaine—fashions physical and rhetorical memorials that in their poetic brutality call for remembrance.<sup>12</sup> Marlowe provides Tamburlaine with words that paint the

9. Douglas Cole notes, for instance, that "not only does Tamburlaine claim to be master of Fortune, but lord over life and death as well." See Cole, *Suffering and Evil*, 88.

10. See Robert Watson, *The Rest Is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2003), 1; and Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997), 30.

11. See Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (New York: New York UP, 2009), 233–48.

12. In a recent article about Marlowe's treatment of death, Andrew McCarthy contends that Marlowe, in his dramas, questions the traditional death rituals as outlined in the *Ars Moriendi*. According to McCarthy, "Marlowe's plays reveal a medieval sensibility, specifically that old comforts must give way to new understandings of one's place, albeit a lonely and

stage with metaphorical as well as physical blood. Bodies dismembered and corpses artfully arranged are physical signs of Tamburlaine's desire for fame. And at the end of his life, the Scythian shepherd turned "scourge of God" (2*Tam*, 4.1.154) reminds the audience of these spectacles as if declaring personal power over death and urges his sons to continue his violent work, thus perpetuating Tamburlaine's name and deeds after his demise.

In both parts of *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe infuses Tamburlaine's speech with poetic language to emphasize his attempts to equate violence with beauty. From the opening lines of the first play, the playwright compares acts of war to rare delights. Mycetes, the Persian king, imagines the return of Theridamas with his war horses, skillfully juxtaposing the language of aggression and art:

That I may view these milk-white steeds of mine  
All loaden with the heads of killèd men,  
And from their knees even to their hoofs below  
Besmeared with blood, that makes a dainty show. (1*Tam*, 1.1.77–80)

Mycetes's words, rather than adhering to the heroic aspects of battle, equate gore and death with aesthetic pleasure. Bloodshed here functions not as a reality of warfare, nor even as a means to glory through battle, but rather as a theatrical "show" with merit outside the political realm.<sup>13</sup> By highlighting the red blood against the white horses, Mycetes plays with the stereotypical depictions of feminine beauty often used by early modern poets to suggest sexual desire and fertility.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the word "dainty" expresses both the elegance of the blood running down the horses' legs and the delight the men find in the sight. The violence of the battlefield, therefore, becomes an opportunity for verbal eloquence and a celebration of the visual artistry of bloodshed. Mycetes's statement offers the audience a unique ideology, suggesting that the world of *Tamburlaine* is predicated on an appreciation for violence as a form of art.

From the beginning of the first play, *Tamburlaine* links such aesthetic notions of martial violence to his intended destiny. As he

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often tragic one, at the end of life." McCarthy, "Marlowe's *Ars Moriendi*," *Marlowe Studies: An Annual* 2 (2012): 58.

13. In Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) threats of violence are often used to instill obedience from both subjects and foreign entities or to mobilize troops. Henry's speech to the citizens of Harfleur, for example, uses violent imagery to effect surrender. See Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. Claire McEachern (New York: Penguin, 1999), 3.1.

14. For a more detailed description of the typical uses of red and white imagery, see Linda Woodbridge, "Black and White and Red All Over: The Sonnet Mistress Amongst the Ndembu," *Renaissance Quarterly* 40.2 (1987): 247–97.



points out to the captured Zenocrate, he “means to be a terror to the world” and offers as proof of this eventuality “this complete armour and this curtle-axe” (*1Tam*, 1.2.38, 42). Yet while his weapons and armor become markers of Tamburlaine’s power to instill fear and obtain kingdoms, they also operate as artistic tools that imply his ability to construct bloody and memorable spectacles. Therefore, when Tamburlaine shares his vision of world domination with his followers, he reminds them they “in conceit bear empires on our spears,” thereby conflating weapons with the artistic imagination (*1Tam*, 1.2.64). The spears here function as a “conceit,” an elaborate image of the possibility of kingdoms built on the bodies of the dead; indeed, the spears employed by Tamburlaine and his compatriots become the artistic and rhetorical tools through which an aesthetics of violence is perpetuated. Techelles later echoes this theme when he reminds his fellow soldiers that “Our swords shall play the orators for us” (*1Tam*, 1.2.132). Thus, swords and spears become ciphers that connect the destiny Tamburlaine claims as his birthright to the means of obtaining such fame and power; through the creative use of his weapons Tamburlaine hopes to assert his dominance over death.<sup>15</sup> As Mathew R. Martin rightly notes in his study of Marlowe’s use of violence in *1 Tamburlaine*, “the root of Tamburlaine’s destructiveness is his assertion of his own ontological significance,” which “places the rest of the world in the shadow of annihilation.”<sup>16</sup> This rhetoric of violence, shown in *Tamburlaine* through action, language, and props, functions as more than just an instrument to instill fear and instead serves as a deliberate attempt to shape Tamburlaine’s identity and eternal renown.

Indeed, Tamburlaine uses this rhetoric of artistic bloodshed throughout the play to amass followers, woo Zenocrate, and control events. With his words, he paints pictures for his audience and makes his “bloody colours spread” (*1Tam*, 3.3.159). In creating these poetic representations, Marlowe pays special attention to the color scheme, fashioning his anti-hero as an ever-shifting sign of war. Tamburlaine dons white when “sate with spoil,” decorates himself and his tent with scarlet when “must his kindled wrath be quenched with blood,” and finally wears black to signify “death and hell” when he executes

15. For further discussion of Marlowe’s use of weapons in his dramatic works, see Rick Bowers, “Marlowe’s Knifework: Threat, Caution, and Reaction in the Theatre,” *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27.1 (2009): 19–26.

16. Mathew R. Martin, “‘This tragic glass’: Tragedy and Trauma in *Tamburlaine Part One*,” in *Staging Pain, 1500–1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theatre*, ed. James Allard and Mathew Martin (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 15–30, 23.

terror on his enemies (*1Tam*, 4.1.53, 56, 61). These three colors, as Linda Woodbridge demonstrates, are “part of a semiotic code visible throughout human history, worldwide, encoding seasonal fertility ritual and individual rites of passage.”<sup>17</sup> Tamburlaine, by drawing on these colors as part of a cultural understanding of regeneration, attests to his ability to transcend human mortality and triumph over death.

More importantly, though, Tamburlaine’s use of aesthetic wording reveals his attempts to control mortality. To further his identity as an eternally renowned individual, Tamburlaine frequently alludes to Jove throughout the plays, variously shifting his view of the god to suit his own pursuit of fame. When convincing Theridamas to desert the Persian king Mycetes, Tamburlaine depicts Jove as his personal protector who need only “stretch his hand from heaven / To ward the blow and shield me safe from harm” (*1Tam*, 1.2.180–81). Yet later Tamburlaine compares his own actions to those of Jove, asserting that:

Our quivering lances shaking in the air  
And bullets like Jove’s dreadful thunderbolts,  
Enrolled in flames and fiery smouldering mists,  
Shall threat the gods more than Cyclopien wars. (*1Tam*, 2.3.18–21)

Tamburlaine thus equates his military prowess to Jove’s own power and attests to his god-like ability to wage war. In addition, with his words, the warrior paints a picture, skillfully using repetitive sounds to showcase both his power and artistry. The “threat” that Tamburlaine alludes to is built upon the alliteratively linked “flames” and “fiery” mists while the internal rhythm of bullets and thunderbolts suggests a military march. And after defeating both the Turkish and Egyptian forces, Tamburlaine claims his military might surpass that of the god, stating that “Jove, viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan, / Fearing my power should pull him from his throne” (*1Tam*, 5.1.452–53). By likening himself to Jove and declaring his prowess a threat to the god’s divinity, Tamburlaine fashions an immortal identity based on aesthetically pleasing violence and control of the earthly sphere. Yet it is his creative use of the violated and suffering human body as monument that most fully establishes his reputation in Central Asia.

When the Damascus virgins, in a particularly visceral instance, beg Tamburlaine for mercy, he ignores them and calls on his army “To charge these dames, and show my servant Death / Sitting in scarlet on their armèd spears” (*1Tam*, 5.1.117–18). Tamburlaine’s men kill the virgins and decorate the walls of Damascus with “their slaughtered carcasses” (*1Tam*, 5.1.131). The spectacle of the corpses,

17. Linda Woodbridge, “Black and White and Red All Over,” 247.

according to Tamburlaine, serves as "A sight as baneful to their [the people of Damascus] souls, I think, / As are Thessalian drugs or mithridate" (*1Tam*, 5.1.132–33). The bodies, in this context, function as a sign, a Foucauldian manifestation of Tamburlaine's power and force. Therefore, while the virgin's corpses serve as artistic artifacts of violence, here they also operate as rhetorical devices—unwritten words that instill fear and shame, infect the souls of the living, and subvert the leveling power of death.

In fact, Tamburlaine employs aesthetically pleasing violence both to disgrace his enemies and enhance his own status. His use of Bajazeth as a footstool, for instance, reveals how Marlowe's titular leader objectifies and dehumanizes individuals who stand in his way and reshapes their bodies as parts of his own artistic identity. By remaking his victims into spectacles that shape his earthly reputation, Tamburlaine heightens his role as perpetrator of violence. As Katheryn Schwarz observes, "Bajazeth's imprisonment outlives his body," and the event echoes throughout the second play as a reminder of Tamburlaine's brutality and power.<sup>18</sup> As he predicted, Tamburlaine's imprisonment of the defeated Turkish emperor becomes something "the ages shall talk of," and defines Callapine, who is known as the son of the man once held "in an iron cage" (*2Tam*, 1.1.5).

Furthermore, by objectifying Bajazeth, Tamburlaine insists that not only the bodies of his victims, but also their inward beings will understand the power of his violent aesthetics. More than the pain of their imprisonment, Bajazeth and Zabina concern themselves with the shame such objectification imposes. Realizing the infamy that their treatment will effect, Zabina questions the purpose of their lives, lamenting

By living long in this oppression,  
That all the world will see and laugh to scorn  
The former triumphs of our mightiness  
In this obscure infernal servitude" (*1Tam*, 5.1.251–54)

In their imprisonment, therefore, Bajazeth and Zabina endure not only the bodily shame that forces them into abject positions as art objects meant to delight Tamburlaine, but also suffer the psychological horror of becoming the butt of a joke, the laughingstock of the world.

Few scholars look closely at the black comedy Marlowe uses to further the power of his *Tamburlaine* plays. Yet, Tamburlaine often

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18. Katheryn Schwarz, "'Marlowe and the Question of Will,'" in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 192–201, 197.

treats his excessive psychological and physical violence towards others as a type of humorous game presented to his audience that inculcates a strange mixture of horror and entertainment. For example, Tamburlaine describes his military campaign against Persia as “a pretty jest,” and admits that he “only made him [Cosroe] king to make us sport” (*1Tam*, 2.5.90, 101). Through his use of “us,” Tamburlaine includes both his soldiers and the audience in the enjoyment of his blood military victories and betrayal of the Persian king. Tamburlaine’s fame, built on the corpses and dehumanized bodies of his victims, is therefore based not on the Aristotelian ideals of fear and pity, but rather on its curious blend of pain, art, and humor. In fact, as David Fuller points out, the printer of the first play admitted that he “purposely omitted and left out some fond and frivolous jestures,” thus rendering *Tamburlaine* less comic than Marlowe’s original intent.<sup>19</sup>

The obvious joy that Tamburlaine takes in his bloody creations and his irreverent treatment of the human body, however, never fully resonates with other characters in the drama. In fact, the dissonance caused when Tamburlaine’s aesthetically pleasing language and claim to fame is linked to gruesome displays of battered brains and skewered virgins, often elicits more than simply shock. Although Tamburlaine interprets the deaths of Bajazeth, Zabina, and Arabia as “All sights of power to grace my victory” and reads their corpses as “objects fit” to perpetuate his memory and honor, Zenocrate’s reaction belies his positive celebration of an identity “that consists in shedding blood” (*1Tam*, 5.1.474–75, 477).

When shown the bodies of Zabina and Bajazeth after they brain themselves to death on their cage walls, Zenocrate, for example, appeals to the audience to gaze with her upon the objectified corpses of the couple:

But see, another bloody spectacle!  
 Ah, wretched eyes, the enemies of my heart,  
 How are ye glutt with these grievous objects,  
 And tell my soul more tales of bleeding ruth! (*1Tam*, 5.1.339–42).

While Zenocrate, like Tamburlaine, refers to the bodies of the unfortunate emperor and empress as “objects,” the sight of the dead is “grievous” to the young woman. Zenocrate describes the experience as a type of feeding that moves from her eyes to her inward

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19. David Fuller, “*Tamburlaine the Great* in Performance,” in *Marlowe’s Empery: Expanding His Critical Contexts*, ed. Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2002), 61–81, 73.

being, infecting her soul with "bleeding ruth." In fact, as Matthew Greenfield points out, Zenocrate may actually act "as a proxy for the theater audience" and combine both an attraction to Tamburlaine's rhetorical power and a condemnation of his violence.<sup>20</sup> Yet, like all the violent deeds Tamburlaine commits, it tells a tale that cuts deeply into the memories of those individuals who encounter him and establishes his identity both during his lifetime and beyond.

The reactions of other characters, while often less than enthusiastic about the bloodshed and destruction that Tamburlaine spreads, demonstrate that the ruler's identity is built upon an aesthetic violence enacted upon the bodies of his enemies. When developing a plan to thwart the massacre of his city, the Governor of Damacus, for instance, links Tamburlaine's fame to his use of weapons and ability to inflict death:

I fear the custom proper to his sword,  
Which he observes as parcel of his fame,  
Intending so to terrify the world,  
By any innovation or remorse  
Will never be dispensed with till our deaths. (*1Tam*, 5.1.13–17)

His enemies, therefore, know Tamburlaine throughout the world as a sword-wielding bringer of death and recognize his spectacles as "parcel of his fame." The fame he desires, however, is not just earthy fame; instead, Tamburlaine desires eternal renown. Indeed, his claim in act 5 that "Hell and Elysium swarm with ghosts of men / That I have sent from sundry foughten fields / To spread my fame through hell and up to heaven," points to his hope for an immortal renown based on his ability to create death (*1Tam*, 5.1.465–67). And Tamburlaine's fame as "the scourge of God," established in the first play through displays of tortured bodies and bloody weapons, becomes, in *2 Tamburlaine*, a way for the ruler to establish his posthumous identity and create monuments that will outlive his earthly life.

In Marlowe's second *Tamburlaine* play, the monumental aspects of the central character's violence escalate as he devises new tortures for his victims and forges a particularly bloody memorial following the death of his wife. While in the first play, Tamburlaine imagines himself and his army with "conquering swords" marching "upon the slaughtered foe, / [and] Trampling their bowels with our horses' hoofs," in *2 Tamburlaine*, the ruler devises violence that places in him closer physical proximity to his prey, thus heightening the horror and artistry of his deeds (*1Tam*, 3.3.148–50). Tamburlaine delivers vibrant

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20. Greenfield, "Wound Knowledge," 239.

descriptions of his planned cruelties that involve the ruler more fully in the slaughter of his enemies. Speaking to Almeda, who aided Callapine's escape from his prison, Tamburlaine explains the tortures he hopes to inflict on Almeda's body:

... I'll torture thee,  
 Searing thy hateful flesh with burning irons  
 And drops of scalding lead, while all thy joints  
 Be racked and beat asunder with the wheel. (2*Tam*, 3.5.122–25)

The depiction of his violence evokes the creation of art, with the body of Almeda serving as the canvas. Tamburlaine imagines using irons, lead, and the rack to reform the human frame into art. The trope of the human body reshaped into an aesthetic object echoes throughout both plays as Tamburlaine makes footstools of men, decorates city walls with dead bodies, and forces defeated kings to pull his chariot.<sup>21</sup> These moments of extreme brutality suggest not only Tamburlaine's use of the human body as art object, but also fashion his postmortem fame and serve as memorial artefacts that testify to his individuality.

Techelles, after the fall of Babylon, reveals how Tamburlaine's conquests also remake geographic regions. In describing the lake, Techelles offers no moral or political gloss on the destruction of the town, but instead seems entranced by the images of the drowned citizens being devoured by fish:

Thousands of men, drowned in Asphaltis' lake,  
 Have made the water swell above the banks,  
 And fishes, fed by human carcasses,  
 Amazed, swim up and down upon the waves (2*Tam*, 5.1.203–6)

The representation of the rising and falling fishes suggests the power of the image over the power of the meaning. While the death of the townspeople should ethically evoke sympathy and fear, the polluted lake, the bloated corpses, and the movement of the fish instead appear eerily artistic—a painting of words almost sublime in its rendering of death. Tamburlaine's actions reshape the lake into yet

21. Tamburlaine's use of the human body, and particularly the blood of his victims, may also attest to his ability to shame and feminize his quarry. As Gail Kern Paster notes in her study of early modern bodies and shame, the bleeding body often symbolized a lack of control or "a failure of physical self-mastery particularly associated with woman in her monthly 'courses.'" Male bloodletting through battle or by voluntarily therapeutic purging, however, signified agency and masculinity. Thus, when Tamburlaine cuts his arm and encourages his sons to examine his wound, he is showing his ability to control his own flow of blood. His victims, in contrast, lose their blood involuntarily, which early modern peoples viewed as a sign of bodily passivity. See Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), 92, 64–112.

another monument—testifying to his unique ability to mete out annihilation and stage a spectacle of blood. Glutted on the bodies of Tamburlaine's victims, the fish reiterate Zenocrate's initial shock at finding the corpses of Bajazeth and his queen. Similarly, the stupefaction of the fish may echo the audience's inability to process the extreme violence they've witnessed, while the up and down movement of the fish suggests the spreading of Tamburlaine's fame. Tamburlaine's actions reshape the lake into yet another monument—testifying to his unique ability to wreak annihilation and stage a spectacle of blood.

Likewise, through his parenting, Tamburlaine hopes to instill a desire for bloodshed in his offspring by teaching them the value of bloodletting as a form of artistic self-fashioning. In 2 *Tamburlaine*, the “scourge of God” instructs his young sons on the glories of warfare and torture, telling them:

And I will teach thee how to charge thy foe  
 And harmless run among the deadly pikes.  
 If thou wilt love the wars and follow me,  
 Thou shalt be made a king and reign with me,  
 Keeping in iron cages emperors.  
 If thou exceed thy elder brothers' worth  
 And shine in complete virtue more than they,  
 Thou shalt be king before them, and thy seed  
 Shall issue crown'd from their mother's womb. (2*Tam*, 1.3.45–53)

Here Tamburlaine expresses both his “love” for battle and the virtue he finds in charging his enemies and subjecting human beings to bestial imprisonment. Subsequently describing the beauty of the battlefield, Tamburlaine waxes eloquent, noting the field “covered with a liquid purple veil” of blood and “sprinkled with the brains of slaughtered men” (2*Tam*, 1.3.80–81). These signs of slaughter, rather than signifying horror, become markers of honor and beauty, echoing Mycetes's earlier association of violence with “a dainty show.” Two of his sons strive to live up to their father's aesthetically violent worldview. Celebinus imagines sailing to his father's throne on “a sea of blood,” while Amyras brags that he will create artistic monuments of those he kills: “And I would strive to swim through pools of blood / Or make a bridge of murdered carcasses, / Whose arches should be framed with bones of Turks” (2*Tam*, 1.3.89, 92–94). Imitating his father, Amyras plans to use the corpses of his victims to construct bridges and archways, thus using violence as an artistic tool.

Yet architecture built with human corpses does more than aestheticize death. It affirms Tamburlaine's identity as an artist. As Ashby

Kinch notes in a recent study of late medieval death iconography, the artistic representation of dead bodies “mediates the relationship between affirmation and negation, evident in the flourishes of visual detail that aestheticize a dark moment.”<sup>22</sup> The image of the dead body, therefore, while depicting the annihilation of one human being simultaneously affirms the identity of another person: the individual artist. Tamburlaine and his sons, by fashioning structures from human remains, attest to their distinctiveness while reminding their viewers of death’s inevitability and the bodily indifference of the dead. Therefore, while Tamburlaine believes he may escape the leveling effect of death through his art, those he conquers are relegated to the tools by which he can obtain artistic immortality.

Fittingly, even Zenocrate, whose death elicits passionate mourning from Tamburlaine, becomes a monument not only to her husband’s love, but also to his destructive powers. In his grief, Tamburlaine refuses to entomb her corpse, choosing instead to have her body remain with him unburied until his own demise. Zenocrate’s funeral hearse, containing her body embalmed in gold, becomes part of Tamburlaine’s triumphant progress throughout the last three acts of the play, signifying the ruler’s continuous state of mourning and his bloody memorialization of his love as he carries out further violent acts in her honor. To remember his wife, Tamburlaine burns the “cursèd town” of Larissa and erects a pillar in her honor that “forbids the world to build it up again” (*2Tam*, 3.2.18). Zenocrate’s martial monuments, like the conquered cities Tamburlaine “strewed with dissevered joints of men / And wounded bodies gasping yet for life” continue to spread the bloody fame of the ruler (*1Tam*, 5.1.322–23). In addition, he plans to use her image to further his reputation as conqueror:

At every town and castle I besiege  
Thou shalt be set upon my royal tent,  
And when I meet an army in the field,  
Those looks will shed such influence in my camp  
As if Bellona, goddess of the war,  
Threw naked swords and sulphur balls of fire  
Upon the heads of all our enemies. (*2Tam*, 3.2.36–42)

Tamburlaine, therefore, uses the death of Zenocrate as further justification for his aggression. In death, she becomes, according to Neill, “a kind of muse to his martial art,” and as Martin notes, “From

22. Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 20.



this point onward, every battle Tamburlaine will fight will be a repetition of the burning of Larissa."<sup>23</sup>

In the end, though, Tamburlaine's devotion to the cause of bloodshed "is finally revealed as being . . . a process of furious self-consumption that can issue only in his own end."<sup>24</sup> As the physician tells him,

The humidum and calor, which some hold  
Is not a parcel of the elements  
But of a substance more divine and pure,  
Is almost clean extinguishèd and spent,  
Which, being the cause of life, imports your death. (*2Tam*, 5.3.86–90)

Tamburlaine's life force, deriving from heat, and possibly the cause of his warlike prowess and delight in violent spectacles, dwindles to nothing. The "scourge of God" cannot battle the death he once enslaved to do his bidding. Tamburlaine's attempts to appease death by loading his "bark / With souls of thousand mangled carcasses" fails, leaving him staring into the abyss of his demise (*2Tam*, 5.3.73–74). Yet, although a number of critics interpret Tamburlaine's death as evidence of his vulnerability and defeat, the ruler instead seems to challenge death's power over his identity and assert his ability to craft his posthumous fame.<sup>25</sup> Even while encountering the looming specter of death, Tamburlaine stresses his brutal artistry and continues to fight against the leveling power of mortality.

In the final act of the second play, Tamburlaine catalogues his violent creativity and passes on his legacy of sensational spectacle to his sons. On his deathbed, he asks to look at a map so he can relive his glory. Charting his path of subduing nations and taking prisoners, Tamburlaine notes the lands he failed to conquer: "Look here, my boys, see what a world of ground / Lies westward from the midst of

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23. Michael Neill, *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000), 392; and Mathew R. Martin, *Tragedy and Trauma in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 79.

24. Neill, *Issues of Death*, 207. Harry Levin also argues that Tamburlaine was consumed by his own power. Levin writes that "Sweeping all before him triumphantly, thoroughly exhausting his antagonists, Tamburlaine also exhausted Marlowe's source material; and when the play's unprecedented success demanded a sequel, he was thrown back upon his own imaginative devices. He was forced, by the very impact of his creation, to face the genuinely tragic conflict that was bound to destroy the monster he created." Levin, *The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 34.

25. See for instance Roy Battenhouse's claim that Tamburlaine's death is a "physical and psychological defeat" and "one of the most grandly moral spectacles in the whole realm of English drama." Battenhouse, *Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy* (Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 1964), 146, 258.

Cancer's line . . . And shall I die, and this unconquerèd?" (*2Tam*, 5.3.145–46, 150). In a sense, Tamburlaine uses the map to chart both his mortality and his ability to outlive his bloody military career through memory. The map becomes a reflection of his image—forged on the lands and bodies of the conquered dead—and his desire for world domination that may yet be fulfilled by his sons. As William Engel notes in his study of Renaissance approaches to mortality, "maps . . . provide us with an effective way to discuss early modern responses to being in the world" by demarcating the frame of existence and highlighting the "contours of what otherwise remains inaccessible and just beyond mortal reach."<sup>26</sup> Through his insistence on reading the map, Tamburlaine asserts both his powerful presence in the world and his hope that through his sons the map of human history will continue to be drawn in bloody colors that carry the weight and artistic power of his name.

Aware of his looming death, Tamburlaine attempts to live on through his sons, commanding them to battle on and conquer the world and keep the map of atrocities from unravelling. His heirs, therefore, are prompted to continue the colonial mission that Greenblatt notes informs the drama. Tamburlaine's final instruction for Amyras echoes his earlier teachings in the art of bloody spectacles: "So, reign, my son! Scourge and control these slaves, / Guiding thy chariot with thy father's hand" (*2Tam*, 5.3.228–29). Unable to continue as the torturer of his captives, Tamburlaine passes on one of his most enduring spectacles—the humiliating use of two conquered kings yoked to his chariot—to his son.

Finally, Tamburlaine asserts that his sons are his representatives on earth, carrying with them his spirit and body:

But sons, this subject, not of force enough  
To hold the fiery spirit it contains,  
Must part, imparting his impressions  
By equal portions into both your breasts;  
My flesh, divided in your precious shapes,  
Shall still retain my spirit though I die,  
And live in all your seeds immortally. (*2Tam*, 5.3.168–74)

By viewing his sons as copies of their father, Tamburlaine stresses his belief that his "fiery spirit" will live on through the generations.

In sum, Tamburlaine's violent rhetoric and the gruesome acts depicted on stage point to an artistic appreciation for violence, which

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26. William E. Engel, *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996), 129, 137.

later Marlowe plays like *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, and *The Massacre at Paris* also highlight. The poetic language employed by Marlowe throughout *Tamburlaine* equates blood and gore with decoration and “a dainty show.” These set pieces of violence become marvels of memoria, existing as shocking texts that alter the bodies and landscapes of Tamburlaine’s world and prompt remembrance. For Tamburlaine, the bodies of his enemies function as a blank canvas, meant to be reappropriated for his dark art. Marlowe, rather than presenting his audience with cautionary tales about revenge, offers lyrical images of torture and death, thus aestheticizing the spectacle of violence. Furthermore, by ending the play with a catalogue of his crimes, Tamburlaine makes sure that his deeds will live on after his death and immortalize his name.

In a culture concerned with the construction of violent acts as signifiers of power, Tamburlaine creates aesthetically pleasing violence to showcase his grisly skills and highlight his control over the bodies of others. While many scholars note that Elizabethan and Jacobean drama often represented death as a way to prepare people for their ends and to offer hope for the continuation of individuality through rituals that stressed distinction, Marlowe took this idea one step further.<sup>27</sup> As Andrew McCarthy notes, one of the most innovative aspects of Marlovian drama is its “playful inversion of the craft of dying to crafting the deaths of others.”<sup>28</sup> Tamburlaine attempts to control death both by committing murders and by making these murders works of art. By appropriating death, Tamburlaine struggles to make mortality do his bidding while he lives and by fashioning deaths as aesthetically pleasing, he hopes that his violent legacy will persevere after his death. In addition, if staged death provides individuals—both in real life and in fiction—with the chance to fashion a memorable self, this master of death uses his final moments to remind audiences of his bloody accomplishments, a trope that Marlowe later uses in *The Jew of Malta*.

As a literary artist, Marlowe, like his contemporaries, was concerned with issues of death and posthumous fame. What sets him apart are his choices to have his characters use murder as monument. While other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers offered

27. Robert Watson, for instance, notes that by creating artistic representations of death, early modern people “helped capture death within the arena of ritual and representation.” Watson, *The Rest Is Silence*, 40. Likewise, Neill argues that “tragedy offered to contain the fear of death by staging fantasies of ending in which the moment of dying was transformed, by the act of performance, to a supreme demonstration of distinction.” Neill, *Issues of Death*, 32.

28. McCarthy, “Marlowe’s *Ars Moriendi*,” 70.

religious or poetic solutions to the problem of individual annihilation, Marlowe developed an aesthetics of violence to create an artistic immortality for Tamburlaine. Using the dismembered and bloody human body as a monument to individuality, while subversive, resonated with his audiences, suggesting an openness to radical identity construction during the Elizabethan era.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps, as Steven Mullaney argues, religious shifts and cultural changes, “made possible, for a relatively brief period of time, a theater of ambivalent status but considerable ideological range and license,”<sup>30</sup> which allowed Marlowe to suggest an alternative view of death’s potential as a tool of self-fashioning. In sum, Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays reveal not just a defiance of death, but a reshaping of death as a monument to those who dare to frame their reputations on the corpses of their victims.

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29. The popularity of the first *Tamburlaine* play is attested to in the prologue to the second play. See *2Tam*, prologue. Tom Rutter also notes that Robert Greene, in his preface to *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588), laments his failure to “make my verses jet upon the stage” like Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays, thus confirming their popularity with early modern audiences. Rutter, “*Tamburlaine: Parts One and Two*,” in *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, ed. Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 51–70, 51–52.

30. Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1988), vii.



DAVID MCINNIS

## The Year's Work in Marlowe Studies, 2015–16

In 2016, the four hundredth anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, Christopher Marlowe stole the spotlight. The *New Oxford Shakespeare* attributed parts of all three *Henry VI* plays to him, Thomas Nashe, and an anonymous playwright.<sup>1</sup> One of the general editors, Gabriel Egan, cowrote an article in *Shakespeare Quarterly* on authorial identification in these works, using the "word adjacency" methodology developed by Claude Shannon in the mid-twentieth century, whereby "the likelihood of a data source (in this case, a writer) emitting a given symbol (call it y) immediately or shortly after emitting another symbol (call it x)" can be calculated and compared.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars (MacDonald P. Jackson, Brian Vickers) study distinctive phrases shared by the text under investigation and other works by known authors. Others (Hugh Craig, Arthur Kinney) analyze the frequency of individual words. But Segarra et al. instead deployed "Markov chains" to represent "Word Adjacency Networks (WANs) for entire author canons (and subsets thereof)" (234), and used Shannon's methods to compare the WANs of the uncertain text with those of known authors.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan, eds., *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016).

2. Santiago Segarra, Mark Eisen, Gabriel Egan, and Alejandro Ribeiro, "Attributing the Authorship of the *Henry VI* Plays by Word Adjacency," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67.2 (2016): 232–56, 239. Hereafter cited as Segarra et al.

3. Samples are analyzed for the occurrence and relationship between specified words such as "with," "and," "one," "in." The diagrams that such a process yields provide an initial glimpse of the differences between the texts in question. The results are then "normalized" to express mathematically "for each word the relative frequency with which it is followed, within five words, by each of the other words that are indeed found within five words of it" (Segarra et al., 237). Analysis of target words and their networks is quantified (the mathematics is called "entropy" and the unit of measurement "H," 240), and

Segarra and his colleagues, having found that Shakespeare is largely responsible for *1 Henry VI* with Marlowe the next most likely of the profiled dramatists, compared individual scenes on a binaristic basis to determine possible Marlovian or Shakespearean provenance. Eight scenes in the first part of the tetralogy are likely Marlowe's (246). In the case of *2 Henry VI*, the first act is most confidently assigned to Marlowe along with numerous other sections, and this pattern reoccurs in *3 Henry VI*. Though the authors could not explain how any of these works bear the distinctive marks of both playwrights, they assert that Marlowe's hand "is now undeniable" (249). They see his presence in the first act of *Edward III*, as well (250).

Two monographs and an edited collection on Marlowe appeared in 2015, all from Ashgate just before its buyout by Routledge: Andrew Duxfield's *Christopher Marlowe and the Failure to Unify*, Mathew R. Martin's *Tragedy and Trauma in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, and Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan's *Christopher Marlowe at 450*.<sup>4</sup> Duxfield's book offered a fresh response to what has become a critical commonplace in Marlowe studies, the tendency to emphasize the role of excess in his drama. He considered instead "the process of reduction and the ideal of unity" (1) in contrast with the historical "discordance" (3) of the 1580s in England, that registers in Marlowe's plays. Accordingly, attempts at unification via "national self-fashioning" fail in *Dido* (33). Tamburlaine's many conquests ultimately blind him to the complexities of reality and so that he relies on absolutes, which do not serve him well (46). Faustus wants to unify the world's knowledge, but the play explores the impossibility of this desire, especially in its dramatization of the incompatibility of religious and political knowledge (66). Duxfield attended to the dichotomous tension between the multitude and the individual in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Massacre at Paris*, both of which suggest that political authority actually subverts religious unity. A final chapter on *Edward II* investigated the thwarted attempts to unify the politics of early fourteenth-century England by the competing factions (Edward, Isabella, Gaveston and the barons) and their disparate interests.

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WANs for both authors and for texts are thereby established.

4. Andrew Duxfield, *Christopher Marlowe and the Failure to Unify* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015); Mathew R. Martin, *Tragedy and Trauma in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015); and Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan, eds., *Christopher Marlowe at 450* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015), hereafter cited as *Marlowe at 450*. One need only survey the "Year's Work in Marlowe Studies" pieces that have previously appeared in this annual to appreciate just how significant a supporter of Marlowe studies Ashgate has been.

Throughout his book, Duxfield argued that the impossible feat of creating unity out of “limitless variety” (148) informs Marlowe’s plays because this reflects the politics of his own time.

Mathew R. Martin interpreted Marlowe’s tragedies as “trauma narratives” in *Tragedy and Trauma in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (1). The plays “articulate a sense of the tragic that differs considerably from its definition in the de casibus tradition” because Marlowe reconfigures “the relationship between the tragic frame and the trauma it attempts to enclose” (2). In his Lacanian psychoanalytic approach, Martin claimed that a given character’s psychic “internal wound” is ultimately more important than Fortune or fate (20). Accordingly, *Dido* rewrites *translatio imperii* as “trauma narrative” (42). Tamburlaine “becomes the Other in order to be the traumatizing rather than the traumatized” and enacts a shift “from suffering to sadism” (43), though ultimately his “refusal to accept castration, even in death” makes him “an anti-tragic figure” (83). Martin attempted an Oedipal reading of Barabas in his “womblike space, the ‘little room’” (91). He accounts for the denial of pain in *Edward II* by its alleged juxtaposition of the “Christological model” with a “classical paradigm of the suffering subject’s relationship to history” (103). He subjected *The Massacre at Paris* to a Lacanian interpretation as well. The play’s ostensible incoherence or corruption is deliberate because Marlowe “refuses to bring trauma into narrative order” (132). Each atrocity in the play represents “the obtrusion of all that does not belong and must remain beyond sense in order for reality to make sense, to cohere” (141). *Doctor Faustus* becomes “Marlowe’s most powerful trauma narrative” in which the protagonist “articulates his tragic fantasy response to the call of the Other, a God who has rejected him” (22).

The Deats and Logan edited collection was conceived to mark the 450th anniversary of Marlowe’s birth in 2014, purporting to assess the plays’ critical legacies. The editors described their volume as a “detailed” and “comprehensive” “retrospective.”<sup>5</sup> The book’s first half surveys the trends and challenges in criticism on specific works and its contributors offer suggestions for new directions. Ruth Lunney’s chapter on *Dido* succinctly summarized scholarship about the play’s date of composition and its authorship, accounted for its “reassembling of cultural materials” from Ovid and Virgil, and explored its implicit questioning of “love, responsibility, and the

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5. Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan, “Introduction,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 1–10, 1.



nature of the universe.”<sup>6</sup> She noted the need for a new edition, a book-length study, and further work on “identity, memory, and place”<sup>7</sup> in *Dido*. Richard Wilson considered Marlowe’s work in light of current Islamic militantism. Audiences no longer find homoerotics of *Edward II* shocking, but newly sensitized, react strongly to Tamburlaine’s burning of the Koran and the Turkish threat of battering down Christian towers with brass bullets in *The Jew of Malta*. As a result, “the pathos of Marlowe’s virtual catastrophism had suddenly come to look *too real*.”<sup>8</sup> Constance Brown Kuriyama surveyed recent biographical studies and calls for “more information and less freewheeling speculation in Marlowe biography.”<sup>9</sup> Christopher Matusiak reexamined Marlowe’s popularity, his affiliation with Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn, and the implications of the Rose playhouse excavations (in 1989) for our understanding of the playing conditions in his time. David Bevington and David McInnis provided accounts of theatrical productions and electronic resources, respectively.<sup>10</sup>

*Hero and Leander* garnered considerable critical interest. Patrick Cheney’s contribution to the Deats and Logan volume concentrated on Marlowe’s lyric and narrative poetry and argued that he “reached his apex not in plays but in poems” and that his combination of significant poetry with drama formed the “authorial template” or “career structure” for Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, and other early modern English writers.<sup>11</sup> He accounted for what is known about each poem’s text and date, its relationship to the rest of Marlowe’s output, its sources and genre, and its reception. For future work, he suggested a book-length study of both the “The Passionate Shepherd” and the “innovative and influential heroic couplet” that drives *Hero and Leander*.<sup>12</sup> Will Fisher studied the historical fetishization of the thigh in early modern blazons (1590–1730) and

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6. Ruth Lunney, “*Dido, Queen of Carthage*,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 13–50, 20, 23.

7. Lunney, “*Dido, Queen of Carthage*,” 42.

8. Richard Wilson, “Specters of Marlowe: The State of the Debt and the Work of Mourning,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 227–56, 228.

9. Constance Brown Kuriyama, “Marlowe Biography: Fact, Inference, Conjecture, and Speculation,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 327–40, 337.

10. David Bevington, “Marlowe’s Plays in Performance: A Brief History,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 257–80; and David McInnis, “Marlowe and Electronic Resources,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 309–26.

11. Patrick Cheney, “‘The Passionate Shepherd to His Love’ and *Hero and Leander*,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 163–200, 164.

12. Cheney, “‘The Passionate Shepherd,’” 177, 193.

its “homoerotic appeal” in *Hero and Leander* via Neptune’s focus on Leander.<sup>13</sup> Jenny C. Mann analyzed sexual metaphor in the nondramatic poetry.<sup>14</sup> Rather than virility, she argued, Marlowe presents “softness” and “effeminacy” as “the ground of masculine poetic invention” in the *Elegies*. Therefore, what has seemed like an effeminacy that negates femininity is merely “one more code of masculinity” defined by the tension between mastery and being mastered.<sup>15</sup>

As part of a much larger and ambitious project, Jeffrey Masten offered a “queer philology of Leander, Marlowe’s “amorous boy,” to counter the “sexual cleansing” of the texts associated with an author whose “homosexuality-in-the-modern-sense,” once taken for granted, has more recently been treated with skepticism as unprovable.<sup>16</sup> Masten argued that biographical and textual studies must be informed by the history of sexuality. “The complexity of its forms, languages, and terms must also come to be regarded as indispensable technical expertise—another philological tool that scholars and editors must engage.” Marlowe applied the epithet “amorous” and its cognates as applied to Leander to “revivify the rhetoric of passion.”<sup>17</sup>

Gordon Braden revisited the question of whether *Hero* should be considered complete without Chapman’s additions.<sup>18</sup> Noting that the abrupt ending in the first edition mimics that of the *Aeneid*, he credited Marlowe with an awareness of the authoritativeness of such a conclusion.<sup>19</sup> Its overall meaning, Braden argued, depends on how one resolves what has been believed to be the epyllion’s notorious textual crux in the consummation passage. Editors, beginning with Samuel Weller Singer and C. F. Tucker Brooke, have felt compelled to “improve” the sense of the episode by transposing a fairly large passage. Braden defended the original reading, arguing that Leander converts Hero “decisively into prey” and “Her terror at being in that role informs the now completed bird simile.” Accordingly, the

13. Will Fisher, “Wantoning with the Thighs’: The Socialization of Thigh Sex in England, 1590–1730,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24.1 (2015): 1–24, 18.

14. Jenny C. Mann, “Marlowe’s ‘Slack Muse’: *All Ovid’s Elegies* and an English Poetics of Softness,” *Modern Philology* 113.1 (2015): 49–65.

15. Mann, “Marlowe’s ‘Slack Muse,’” 50, 64.

16. Jeffrey Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare’s Time* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2016), 144.

17. Masten, *Queer Philologies*, 160, 150.

18. Gordon Braden, “Hero and Leander in Bed (and the Morning After),” *English Literary Renaissance* 45.2 (2015): 205–30.

19. Braden, “Hero and Leander,” 209.

morning after, Hero regrets the sexual encounter and her “disgust is what drives the emotional turbulence of the poem’s conclusion” as Marlowe left it.<sup>20</sup>

M. L. Stapleton complemented his Roma Gill Prize-winning monograph on Marlowe and Ovid with a chapter for the 450 volume on “Translations of Ovid and Lucan,” in which he addresses the oversight whereby the “interrelationship” of Marlowe’s translations of these two authors has been “hardly explored” even though these “subtly skilled renditions” of the *Amores* and the *Pharsalia* “illuminate” Marlowe’s other writings.<sup>21</sup> Rather than offering a mechanical concluding paragraph proposing future work on this material, he intended his essay itself to exemplify what needs to be done: close and cogent analysis of the interpenetration of the dramatic and nondramatic poetry. As in *Marlowe’s Ovid* (2014), Stapleton analyzed the author’s experimental poetic techniques that he learned through engaging in these translations. They informed his dramatic composition with devices such as irony, “proto-soliloquies,” and “artistic perspective.”<sup>22</sup>

Two scholars analyzed Ovid as an innovative presence in Marlowe’s plays. Heather James noted Ovid’s pervasive influence on the depiction of girlhood in the second quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* with Marlowe as a mediator. “Marlowe’s bold voice, which yearns for liberties and always demands yet more,” found a new outlet in “the part of a girl, played by a boy”: Juliet.<sup>23</sup> Roy Eriksen’s study of allusion in the B-text of *Faustus* utilized “syncretist interpretations of myth in classical and medieval literature” and “exegesis to underscore the magician’s transgressive practices.”<sup>24</sup> He reexamined the “imperial scenes” featuring Benvolio in terms of the Actaeon story that Marlowe invokes. The playwright deliberately linked the fates of the knight and the title character with the voyeuristic myth from the *Metamorphoses* and the story of Paris and Helen.

Three articles examined the legacy of Ovid and Virgil in *Dido*. Lucy Potter wrote about representations of the goddess Fama in in

20. Braden, “Hero and Leander,” 220, 221.

21. M. L. Stapleton, “Translations of Ovid and Lucan,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 201–26, 202. See also his *Marlowe’s Ovid: The “Elegies” in the Marlowe Canon* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

22. Stapleton, “Translations of Ovid,” 222.

23. Heather James, “The Ovidian Girlhood of Shakespeare’s Boy Actors: Q2 Juliet,” *Shakespeare Survey* 69 (2016): 106–22.

24. Roy Eriksen, “Marlowe’s Actaeon: Syncretism on the Elizabethan Stage,” in *Allusions and Reflections: Greek and Roman Mythology in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivré (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 137–49, 137–38.

Marlowe's play by way of the two classical poets, exploring the idea of the playwright as a representation of this rumor-mongering abstraction. She argued that this allowed him to "immortalize Virgil's literary fame, as Ovid had done before him."<sup>25</sup> Kathryn Rebecca Van Winkle theorized that *ethopoeia*, the humanist drama-based pedagogical tool probably used at the King's School in Canterbury, strongly influenced Marlowe's conception of character. Just as students were to imagine themselves as legendary figures in epic or story, the future playwright learned to write dramatic roles by this same empathetic projective activity as a "spur for speech."<sup>26</sup> Jonathan P. A. Sell read the Virgilian presence in *Dido* through the emblem of Aeneas encountering his father's statue in the deserts of Libya, suggesting that its origin might have been a rock formation on Mount Sipylus that published accounts in the sixteenth century reported as having a human face.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the playwright complicated Virgil's ekphrasis, since the epic Aeneas saw such frescoes and his sixteenth-century reanimation merely hallucinates. In this way, *Dido* emphasizes "the material limitations of theatrical representation."<sup>28</sup>

The *Tamburlaine* plays attracted a wealth of critical attention. In *Marlowe at 450*, Tom Rutter accounted for mid-twentieth-century criticism of the two-part dramatic chronicle in comparison with contemporary studies.<sup>29</sup> He observed that their emphasis on militarism complemented the times that begat them, World War Two and the September 11 attacks. Rutter called for more attention to style, versification, historical context, reception history, and the influence of the title character and his actions on subsequent early modern drama. Vanessa Ivette Corredera focused on the use of "astrological physiognomy" in *Tamburlaine*, a reading of alleged astral characters visible on the body for fortune-telling purposes, such as "the hand (known as chiromancy) or the forehead (known as

25. Lucy Potter, "Telling Tales: Negotiating 'Fame' in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Christopher Marlowe's *Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*," in "Fama" and Her Sisters: *Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Claire Walker and Heather Kerr (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2015), 37–63, 55, 59.

26. Kathryn Rebecca Van Winkle, "'Then speak, Aeneas, with Achilles' Tongue': *Ethopoeia* and Elizabethan Boyhood in Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage*," *Theatre Symposium: A Publication of the Southeastern Theatre Conference* 23 (2015): 42–51, 45.

27. Jonathan P. A. Sell, "A Tragedy of Oversight: Visual Praxis in Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 29 (2016): 130–53, 133.

28. Sell, "A Tragedy of Oversight," 139.

29. Tom Rutter, "*Tamburlaine*, Parts One and Two," in *Marlowe at 450*, 51–70.

metoposcopy), in order to discern his or her fortune”<sup>30</sup> This adjunct to humoral theory concerns the first rather than the second play. There Tamburlaine's bodily self-awareness complements his rhetoric in his rise to power. Chloe Kathleen Preedy read Marlowe's twofold chronicle against Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* and Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV* (1599) to consider the relationship between depictions of invasion or conquest and issues of spectatorship.<sup>31</sup> Onstage sieges found a parallel in the warlike terminology that antitheatrical polemicists used to describe London theaters. John D. Cox historicized prayer on the early modern stage, and argued that Marlowe was the first playwright to treat its efficacy with true skepticism in *Doctor Faustus*, *Tamburlaine*, and *The Jew of Malta*. Aaron Kunin examined the idea of the footstool as metaphor and theatrical prop in *Tamburlaine* (Bajazeth) and *Doctor Faustus* (Pope Bruno), and the tendency for rulers in Marlowe's plays to use rival kings as footstools (Bajazeth in *Tamburlaine* and Pope Bruno in *Faustus*). Roslyn L. Knutson interrogated the critical commonplace that Marlowe's “mighty line” electrified contemporary audiences as her starting point for an investigation of “the tastes of early modern playgoers in dramatic poetry.”<sup>32</sup> She called for better methods of evaluating the quality of dramatic poetry in the late sixteenth century.

*The Jew of Malta* inspired a number of innovative critical approaches in 2015–16. Stephen J. Lynch speculated about likely audience responses to the play prior to Edmund Kean's radical Drury Lane adaptation (1818).<sup>33</sup> He included several traditional topics in his analysis, such as the Vice from the morality tradition, early modern conceptions of Judaism, Machiavellianism, and the diverse critical tradition surrounding Barabas. Mark Hutchings revisited the staging problem surrounding the protagonist's final moments before his serio-comic descent into the cauldron. He argued that the “architecture of the playhouse made Barabas's fall

30. Vanessa Ivette Corredera, “Faces and Figures of Fortune: Astrological Physiognomy in *Tamburlaine Part 1*,” *Early Modern Literary Studies* 18.1/2 (2015): 1–26, 3.

31. Chloe Kathleen Preedy, “Breeches in a Battered Wall: Invasion, Spectatorship and the Early Modern Stage,” *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 88 (2015): 65–79.

32. Aaron Kunin, “Marlowe's Footstools,” in *This Distracted Globe: Worldmaking in Early Modern Literature*, ed. Frank Marcie, Jonathan Goldberg, and Karen Newman (New York: Fordham UP, 2016), 64–78; and Roslyn L. Knutson, “Dramatic Verse and Early Modern Playgoers in Marlowe's Time,” *Early Modern Drama in Performance: Essays in Honor of Lois Potter*, ed. Darlene Farabee, Mark Netzloff, and Bradley D. Ryner (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2015), 11–24, 11.

33. Stephen J. Lynch, “*The Jew of Malta*,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 101–24.

impossible.”<sup>34</sup> Hutchings’s alternative theory: the actor for the role exited discreetly, with a doubled or “dummy” Barabas dressed identically appearing on the upper stage. By “stage magic,” the surrogate pretended to fall, and the original Barabas supplied his place in the kettle below him.<sup>35</sup> Clayton Mackenzie read this episode allegorically and noted that it “resonates with the so-called Murderers Pots in medieval doom murals,” five of which survived the iconoclasts in Reformation England.<sup>36</sup> According to this tradition, the devil boiled alive “those who have committed the most damnable of earthly sins.”<sup>37</sup> The Governor, Ferneze, thus adopts the doom mural devil’s role in punishing the sinner for his treachery.

Other scholarship on *The Jew of Malta* explored the topic of friendship, the problem of Abigail, and the play’s relationships with drama of the period. Bradley D. Ryner compared Barabas with the eponymous usurer of Chapman’s *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598).<sup>38</sup> This “nearly complete revenge comedy” resembles Marlowe’s tragedy in its economic motif, with *Beggar* celebrating consumption rather than showing its evils.<sup>39</sup> Vanessa L. Rapatz argues that Abigail is “left to navigate new spaces and identities in a changing world when she is turned out of her home,” her plight comparable in some ways to that of English nuns in the wake of the Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries.<sup>40</sup> She uses the idea of the “turn” in a convent’s architecture, which facilitates exchange between the nuns and the outside world, and the same word as a verb, which connotes spiritual and material change. Therefore “conversion becomes a strategy for recovery and revenge” in Marlowe’s play.<sup>41</sup> Maurice A. Hunt examines the idea of friendship in *The Jew of Malta* and *Doctor Faustus*, where he views it as a “positive phenomenon” that contributes to the “sense of waste” in the death of each play’s protagonist.<sup>42</sup> Barabas and Faustus seek

34. Mark Hutchings, “Barabas’s Fall,” *Theatre Notebook* 69.1 (2015): 2–16, 14.

35. Hutchings, “Barabas’s Fall,” 14, 11–12.

36. Clayton Mackenzie, “Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* and the Murderers Pot,” *Notes and Queries* 62.4 (2015): 542–45, 543.

37. Mackenzie, “Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*,” 544.

38. Bradley D. Ryner, “The Usurer’s Theatrical Body: Refiguring Profit in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*,” in Farabee et al., *Early Modern Drama*, 25–34, 25.

39. Ryner, “The Usurer’s Theatrical Body,” 26, 30.

40. Vanessa L. Rapatz, “Abigail’s Turn in *The Jew of Malta*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 56.2 (2016): 247–64, 247.

41. Rapatz, “Abigail’s Turn,” 253.

42. Maurice A. Hunt, “Friendship in Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*,” *Medieval*

companionship but fail to acquire it because of their alienation. Since the two characters, and perhaps, Hunt conjectures, Marlowe, could not be friends to others, they could not be friends to themselves.

Much work on *Edward II* included performance-oriented material. Bevington continued the stage history Charles Forker produced for his Revels Plays edition (1994).<sup>43</sup> He accounted for Mark Lamos's graphic American Conservatory Theatre production (San Francisco, 2000), Richard Monette's staging at the Ontario Stratford Shakespeare Festival (2008), its first Marlowe play, the futuristic rendition at the Red Bull Theater Company (New York, 2007–08), the "bloody and confrontational" spectacle provided by the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (2010), and Joe Hill-Gibbons' much praised *Edward* at the National Theatre (London, 2013).<sup>44</sup> These versions featured elements "once so offensive to audiences: frontal nudity, male kissing, the red-hot poker, the doubling of Gaveston and Lightborn by the same actor, introducing actresses into what were originally male roles."<sup>45</sup> Where, he asks rhetorically, will directors look for new concepts now?

Other significant publications accounted in part for the stage history of *Edward II*. Kristina Mendicino investigated causality, chronology, and textuality in Marlowe's and Bertolt Brecht's versions of the king's story. James Wallace revisited the revolutionary 1970 Ian McKellen Prospect Theatre production that was filmed for television.<sup>46</sup> He analyzes its significance, describing it as "a rare moment of an actor marrying undeniable talent and skill with a provocative and deeply felt sense of liberation."<sup>47</sup> Logan observed that gender and sexuality have shaped such productions and influenced traditional criticism since 1964, when the four hundredth anniversary of Marlowe's birth renewed interest in his work.<sup>48</sup> He

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and *Renaissance Drama in England* 29 (2016): 103–29, 104.

43. David Bevington, "Edward II in Performance from the 1980s to the Present," in *The Text, The Play, and The Globe: Essays on Literary Influence in Shakespeare's World and His Work in Honor of Charles R. Forker*, ed. Joseph Candido (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2016), 75–94.

44. Bevington, "Edward II in Performance," 86.

45. Bevington, "Edward II in Performance," 91–92.

46. Kristina Mendicino, "Writing Coincidence: Brecht's and Marlowe's History Play," *Monatshefte* 107.1 (2015): 46–63; and James Wallace, "Marlowe and McKellen on Screen: The Prospect Theatre Company Production of 'Edward II' 1969–70," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 33.4 (2015): 595–608.

47. Wallace, "Marlowe and McKellen," 606.

48. Robert A. Logan, "Edward II," in *Marlowe at 450*, 125–44.

suggested a return to historically-informed close reading of the language of the play so that its “purposeful ambiguities” might yield clues to its early performance history.<sup>49</sup> Lynch created a texts-and-contexts edition of *Edward*, including excerpts from Raphael Holinshed, John Stowe, Michel de Montaigne, and Marcus Tullius Cicero, each designed to guide the nonspecialist reader in evaluating Marlowe’s sources. Vickers and Hutchings contributed traditional scholarship concerning the text of the play.<sup>50</sup>

As always, *Doctor Faustus* inspired the most critical attention. Deats summarized the play’s disputed particulars (date, textual problems, authorship, and performance history), its central ethical conundrum, and significant recent scholarship. She identified possible new critical directions such as “non-religious controversies—political, theatrical, aesthetic,” the influence on playwrights besides Shakespeare, and matters of form.<sup>51</sup> Jakob Ladegaard attended to one such formal quality in the play, its pervasive comic element.<sup>52</sup> He argued Marlowe used this motif to criticize the politics and morality of his culture: the construction of identity, metatheatricity, and the implied parallels between Hell and Elizabeth’s England. Swapan Chakravorty wrote about “the converging lines of response to the ethical implications of theatrical representation” in *Faustus*, bringing to bear an unlikely source, an eighth-century Sanskrit manual on theater and dramaturgy.<sup>53</sup> Kevin Chovenac surveyed hitherto unexplored early modern theater history, English players on the Continent, with Marlowe’s play as case study, popular with audiences in Germany because of its source material. This may also explain the B-text additions.<sup>54</sup> Todd A. Borlik’s two-part essay on stage flight and “hellish falls” in *Faustus* argued that the aerial stunts in the B-text “heighten the play’s magical ambiance and tragic grandeur by

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49. Logan, “*Edward II*,” 137, 128.

50. Stephen J. Lynch, ed. “*Edward II*”: *With Related Texts* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2015); Mark Hutchings, “Marlowe’s ‘Greekish Stumpet,’” *Notes and Queries* 62.1 (2015): 66–69; and Brian Vickers, “Marlowe in *Edward II*: Lender or Borrower?” in *Candido, The Text, The Play*, 43–74.

51. Sara Munson Deats, “*Doctor Faustus*,” in *Marlowe at 450*, 71–100.

52. Jakob Ladegaard, “The Comedy of Terrors: Ideology and Comedy in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*,” *Textual Practice* (2015): 179–95.

53. Swapan Chakravorty, “Being Staged: Unconcealment through Reading and Performance in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* and Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*,” *Philosophy East and West* 66.1 (2016): 40–59, 49.

54. Kevin Chovanec, “*Faust mit Springen*: On the English Players Returning Faustus to the German-Speaking Lands,” *Renaissance Drama* 44.2 (2016): 125–55, 126.



confronting contemporary attitudes toward flight as both a diabolical enterprise and one of the loftiest aspirations of Renaissance man.”<sup>55</sup> The protagonist's aerial acrobatics resemble those in other Admiral's men plays including the lost “Phaeton” (1598) and “Brute Greenshield” (1599). “*Faustus* showcases a technological optimism about flight that undercuts the play's ideological pessimism.”<sup>56</sup> Rebecca Lemon explored *Faustus*'s pursuit of study as a form of early modern addiction, since it is explicitly labelled such in the *English Faust Book* of 1592. Since Roman contract law and Ciceronian and Senecan-inspired sixteenth-century treatises used similar language, these must have anticipated modern notions of “addiction as pathology.”<sup>57</sup> For Lemon, then, the play attends to “the struggle inherent to devotion,” “Overpowering dedication,” and “the wonder and terror of addictive release.”<sup>58</sup> Rebecca Bushnell investigated how *Faustus* “might frame a reader's experience of time.”<sup>59</sup> Since the printed texts of the play conclude with a Latin tagline and printers' devices, she proposed that they might have provided a “moral function” with their symbolism of justice and aspiration, that the “apparent fixing of an end is a fiction,” and that Marlowe meant to interrogate our concepts of time.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast with *Faustus*, and as usual, *The Massacre at Paris* drew the least critical attention. In the Deats and Logan collection, Leah Marcus provided a brief overview, defending the play against allegations of corruption and inferiority. Duxfield devoted half a chapter to *Massacre* in the previously mentioned study. Brian Walsh, however, contributed a substantial essay to this field in 2015–16.<sup>61</sup>

55. Todd A. Borlik, “Hellish Falls: *Faustus*'s Dismemberment, Phaeton's Limbs and Other Renaissance Aviation Disasters - Part I,” *English Studies* 97.3 (2016): 254–276 and “Part II,” *English Studies* 97.4 (2016): 351–61.

56. Borlik, “Hellish Falls,” 267.

57. Rebecca Lemon, “Scholarly Addiction: *Doctor Faustus* and the Drama of Devotion,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 69.3 (2016): 865–98, 866.

58. Lemon, “Scholarly Addiction,” 868.

59. Rebecca Bushnell, “The Ends of Time in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*” in Candido, *The Text, The Play*, 23–41, 24.

60. Bushnell, “The Ends of Time,” 33, 37. Further *Faustus*-related publications include Roy Eriksen, “Marlowe's Political Balancing Act: Religion and *Translatio Imperii* in *Doctor Faustus* (B),” in *The Circulation of Knowledge in Early Modern English Literature*, ed. Sophie Chiari (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015), 107–22; and Carlos A. Matheus López, “About the Devil, Literature and Arbitration,” *Law and Literature* 27.3 (2015): 383–94.

61. Leah S. Marcus, “*The Massacre at Paris*,” *Marlowe at 450*, 145–62; Brian Walsh, “*De Facto* Pluralism, Toleration, and *The Massacre at Paris*,” in *Unsettled Toleration: Religious Difference on the Shakespearean Stage* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016), 16–38.

He sought to rehabilitate *Massacre* by inquiring “how Marlowe’s play intervenes in questions of pan-Protestant solidarity, both in terms of England’s relationship to reformers on the Continent, and in terms of Protestant divides within England.”<sup>62</sup> It might have constituted a plea for religious toleration, since English playgoers could have recognized themselves as a persecuting majority. Therefore, “it gave voice to and thus offered up for scrutiny the genocidal imagination behind acts of ‘cleansing’ in which one group seeks to exterminate another segment of its society.”<sup>63</sup>

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62. Marcus, “*The Massacre at Paris*,” 28.

63. Marcus, “*The Massacre at Paris*,” 37.



## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Kristen Abbott Bennett** earned her PhD at Tufts University in 2013, her dissertation title is “Thomas Nashe and Early Modern Protest Literature.” She has since published an edited collection, *Conversational Exchanges in Early Modern England (1549-1640)*, plus multiple articles exploring the intersections of early modern writing across genres with classical and late-medieval sources. She is a module mentor and guest editor for the University of Victoria’s *Map of Early Modern London* project, and a research partner with Northeastern University’s *Women Writers Project*. She has served on the scholarly advisory committee for the Folger Shakespeare Institute’s *Digital Anthology of Early Modern English Drama* and is presently on the editorial board of *This Rough Magic: A Peer-Reviewed, Academic, Online Journal Dedicated to the Teaching of Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. She works with students and faculty at Stonehill College using digital approaches toward innovating research and classroom pedagogies.

**John Frongillo** is an Assistant Professor of Humanities at Florida Institute of Technology. He has published scholarly articles on early modern drama, folk culture, and media studies in various journals. He is currently at work on a book-length manuscript on Christopher Marlowe's major plays.

**Lisa Hopkins** is Professor of English at Sheffield Hallam University and co-editor of *Shakespeare*, the journal of the British Shakespeare Association, and of the Arden Early Modern Drama Guides. She is the author of *Christopher Marlowe, Dramatist* (2008), *A Christopher Marlowe Chronology* (2005) and *Christopher Marlowe: A Literary Life* (2000). Her recent publications include *Renaissance Drama on the Edge* (2014), *Drama and the Succession to the Crown, 1561-1633* (2011), and *The Cultural Uses of the Caesars on the English Renaissance Stage* (2008).

**Stephen Guy-Bray** is Professor of English at the University of British Columbia, where he specializes in Renaissance literature and queer theory. He is the author of three monographs and the co-editor of two collections. He has also published numerous essays and book chapters, chiefly on Renaissance poetry, although also on the drama and prose fiction of the period and on literature both earlier and later. His current work is on the queerness of representation in Renaissance poetry and painting.

**Jennifer Lodine-Chaffey** teaches English literature and composition at Washington State University, Tri-Cities. She received a PhD in Renaissance literature from Washington State University. Her dissertation, “Shaping the Deathly Self: Engagements with Mortality in Early Modern English Literature,” explores sixteenth- and seventeenth-century textual confrontations with death, finding that encountering death often meant more than mounting a defense against the indistinction of mortal ends; rather, writers frequently believed that exploring mortality could bring individuals to fuller knowledge of themselves. She is working on a book-length study of the representations of female death and posthumous memorialization in Renaissance poetry and drama, analyzing how textual monumentalizations of women could positively influence the living.

**David McInnis** is the Gerry Higgins Senior Lecturer in Shakespeare Studies at the University of Melbourne. He is currently editing Dekker’s *Old Fortunatus* for the Revels Plays series and *If This Be Not A Good Play, The Devil Is In It* for Jeremy Lopez’s new *Routledge Anthology of Early Modern Drama*. He is author of *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (2013) and co-editor (with Matthew Steggle) of *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England* (Palgrave, 2014). His essays have been published in *Review of English Studies*; *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*; *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*; *Notes & Queries*, and elsewhere. With Roslyn L. Knutson and Matthew Steggle, he is founder and co-editor of the *Lost Plays Database*.