Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

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A Note from the President

The 2013 International Marlowe Conference is a wrap. The signature event of the Marlowe Society of America, the conference was hosted by Mary Baldwin College's Shakespeare and Performance program and held at the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia. Both organizations put Shakespeare to the side for a few days and let Marlowe take center stage, and the MSA extends its gratitude to both organizations for their hospitality and support. Held every five years, the International Conference provides an opportunity not just to inject new energy into the MSA and Marlowe studies at large but also to take stock of where scholars both emergent and established are investing *their* energy. As such, the four keynotes registered the interests and enthusiasms of Marlovians, circa 2013.

Garrett Sullivan's brilliant "Vitality and Futurity in Marlowe" sounded the opening bell and provided a thematically appropriate focus for conference attendees, themselves supremely invested in Marlowe's vitality and future. Borrowing familiar terms from Shakespeare's procreation sonnets, Sullivan outlined a particularly Marlovian poetics of reproduction. This was followed up by Leah Marcus's work on "Marlowe's Magic Books," mirroring a conference-wide emphasis on Marlowe and book history. Laurie Maguire turned traditional emphases on Marlovian character inside out with her stunning "Characterizing Marlowe," including her moving coda on Ian McDiarmid's Barabas at the Almeida in 1999. Susan Cerasano closed the keynotes with an account of "Christopher Marlowe, in his Playhouse," a dynamic talk that renovated understandings of the way Marlowe engaged with the theatrical profession. Together, the keynotes traversed poetics, book history, character study, and theatre history, staking the parameters of the conference as a whole.

Taken at large, the papers and panels that illuminated the four days of the conference evinced a continuing interest in matters of textuality and intertextuality. It is clear that bibliography is still an ongoing concern for Marlowe studies, but so too are the myriad ways in which Marlowe speaks and is spoken by other texts. Shakespeare and Ovid were, of course, prominent among the names that inter-textual approaches took, but so were more surprising ones like Lording Barry and Thomas Dekker. One clear takeaway from the conference is that early modernists are increasingly interested in the latticed network of poets and playwrights in the period – a constellation of writers moving in concert rather than a handful of lesser lights orbiting the Shakespearean sun.

The continued interest in Marlowe and performance found expression both on stage and on screen, as the conference kicked off with a rare performance of *The Massacre at Paris* produced by Mary Baldwin students and was punctuated by a screening of Douglas Morse's *The Jew of Malta* with a discussion with the director the following morning. Evenings were full of professional performances at the Blackfriars and social gatherings throughout the town. In sum, for at least four days at the end of June, 2013, the International Marlowe Conference turned the Blackfriars into the International Marlowe Center, and the MSA is deeply grateful to all the participants in this year's conference.

The next MSA sponsored event will be the panel "Christopher Marlowe and Vulnerable Times" at the 2014 MLA in Chicago, featuring presentations by Roslyn Knutson (past president of the MSA and professor emerita, University of Arkansas-Little Rock), Mary Hill Cole (Tudor historian at Mary Baldwin College), and William Casey Caldwell (Northwestern University). The panel will be ably moderated by M. L. Stapleton (Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne).

Paul Menzer
Mary Baldwin College

MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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MSA Newsletter publishes reviews of Renaissance drama, especially related to Marlowe; notices of recent and forthcoming publications; notices of recent and forthcoming performances related to Marlowe; announcements; and brief articles or notes of interest to those who study Marlowe. The opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the MSA. The editor reserves the right to refuse items, to ask for revisions, and to make stylistic changes that he deems appropriate.

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Marlowe at MLA 2014, Chicago

364. Christopher Marlowe and Vulnerable Times
Friday, 10 January, 3.30-4.45 p.m.
Northwestern-Ohio State, Chicago Marriott

Presiding: M. L. Stapleton, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne

1. "Players and Playbooks on the Move in Vulnerable Times," Roslyn L. Knutson, University of Arkansas, Little Rock

Christopher Marlowe entered the public theatrical marketplace just as major changes were taking place with the leading companies in that business. His own affiliation with companies has sufficient consensus among scholars to be considered fact, but the same cannot be said of the location of players and playbooks. As the marketplace responded to vulnerabilities of the times—i.e., deaths of players and patrons, newly-built venues, entering and exiting playwrights—the leadership across competitive companies and their stock of playbooks also responded. This presentation will address the adaptation of players and playbooks to fluctuations in the commercial environment in Marlowe's time.

2. "The 1580's and Vulnerability," Mary Hill Cole, Mary Baldwin College

The execution of Anne Boleyn for adultery and incest, as well as a series of Parliamentary Acts of Succession and Henry VIII's will, left Queen Elizabeth besmirched, bastardized, and vulnerable. Historians have debated whether Elizabeth ever acted to reassert her legitimacy, or whether her coronation and her monarchy itself created a *de facto* legitimacy. I argue that Elizabeth tried to reclaim the impression of legitimacy in ways that typified her personal monarchy. By examining the acts of her first Parliament that delineated her changing legal status since her birth, I argue that while Elizabeth did not directly erase the stigma of her bastardy, she found ways to reconstitute her family and claim a virtual legitimacy. The byzantine nature of her situation led her to employ tortured ambiguities in pursuit of a recognized legitimacy that ultimately remained beyond her reach. Her failure to erase the stain of bastardy affected her monarchy and left her vulnerable to plots, military threats, and succession crises that wracked England through the 1580s.

3. "The Representation of Vulnerability in Marlowe's *Edward II*," William Casey Caldwell, Northwestern University

I will be asking whether there is a sense in which we can say that there is a particularly Marlovian mode of representing vulnerability. My paper will divide into two parts. In the first, I provide a brief historicizing sketch of early modern emotions and affect, concluding with a consideration of emotional or "affective vulnerability" in an early modern context. In the second part, I turn to a consideration of Marlowe's *Edward II*, applying the sketch of early modern affect I have developed. My aim will be to show that, while Marlowe's own representation of affective vulnerability is continuous with its general form I draw in the first part of my paper, his staging of vulnerability critically diverges from it in the context of power and the destruction of the self. I conclude, however, that pairing affective vulnerability with the destruction of the self in a play like *Edward II* does not retroactively assign vulnerability a *negative* value for Marlowe.

Two Recent Edited Collections

The Jew of Malta: A Critical Reader, ed. Robert A. Logan (Bloomsbury)

Christopher Marlowe in Context, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge). Note: enter code MARLOWE13 at checkout to receive discount

Calls for Papers

***Marlowe Studies: An Annual* 4 (2014)**

MS:A is sponsored and supported by the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne. We are happy to accept essays for consideration for 2014. If you are interested in submitting your work, visit the website, and query the editorial staff by email.

The 2013 issue (3) is available now: $30 for MSA members

Christopher Marlowe at 450: An Anniversary Special Issue
Early Modern Literary Studies (EMLS)

2014 will be a significant year of early modern literary anniversaries. The 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth is certain to attract a significant degree of popular and scholarly attention, but his is not the only milestone of note; 2014 will also mark the 450th anniversary of the birth of Shakespeare's exact contemporary, Christopher Marlowe. In order to recognise this occasion, we invite contributions to a special anniversary issue on Marlowe, which will be published in 2014. We welcome contributions on any aspect of Marlowe studies, but topics to be addressed might include:

- Theoretical approaches to Marlowe based upon recent developments in areas such as gender, race, geography, sexuality, etc.
- The place of Marlowe biography
- Marlowe and editing/textual criticism
- Marlovian afterlives
- Marlowe in performance
- Marlovian genres
- Marlowe's influence
- Marlowe and early modern repertory
- Marlovian poetics

Abstracts should be submitted to Dr Dan Cadman (d.cadman@shu.ac.uk) or Dr Andrew Duxfield (a.duxfield@shu.ac.uk) by 01 Nov 2013. We anticipate a deadline of July 2014 for full submissions.

Early Modern Literary Studies (ISSN 1201-2459) is an open-access refereed journal serving as a formal arena for scholarly discussion and as an academic resource for researchers in the area. Articles in *EMLS* examine English literature, literary culture, and language during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; responses to published papers are also published as part of a Readers' Forum. Reviews evaluate recent work as well as academic tools of interest to scholars in the field. *EMLS* is committed to gathering and to maintaining links to the most useful and comprehensive internet resources for Renaissance scholars, including archives, electronic texts, discussion groups, and beyond. For further details see: http://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/emlshome.html

MSA Theater Reviews · Ann Basso, University of South Florida · Performances Editor

Edward II, National Theatre (Olivier), 24 September 2013

Directed by Joe Hill-Gibbins, an Associate Artist at the Young Vic, the National's recently concluded *Edward II* worked hard to announce that this was not your average Olivier Theatre production. Pieced together with an added opening scene; bonus roles ("The Dogs"); cross-gendered characters; mixed-period costumes; and heady, relentless design elements, Gibbins' production traded in artistic license and the aesthetics of the new wave. Here were knowing gestures at the post modern and at epic theatre, even at the same time as there was a dizzying rush to eschew Marlowe's balanced ironies in favor of youth, sex, and the individual.

Throughout this production, Lizzie Clachan's set and Chris Kondek's video and projection design functioned as key components. Basked in overhead light with Sam Cable playing the harpsichord on his electric piano, the set was on full display when the audience first entered in the afterglow of pre-production meals and drinks. Up-stage center on the thrust's half circle was a small tiered dais on which was positioned a wooden throne. To its right were chairs, to its left was a table set with the golden trappings of kingship—plate, candlesticks and a cross. Behind all of this, visible through the proscenium arch, skulked an awkwardly constructed 10'x40' antechamber of undecorated plywood with a dark medieval door. Behind and around it was the rest of the backstage--ropes, ladders, lamps, props in full view. From time to time, a golden curtain would drop to veil all this business from the audience, but for the most part this busy melding of stage, back-stage, and inner room continually loomed in the first third, a Brechtian dismantling of the line between performance area and backstage, superstructure and base. Clachan's set dramatically changed, however, in the second act, after the entrance of Baldock and Spencer Junior. Enraged both by Gaveston's flaunting disrespect and by a reunion sex-party in the back-stage room, the Barons pursued their political reversal through a violent demolition of the antechamber, scattering its walls this way and that. Behind this, before obscured by the 10'x40' room, a shipping-container was revealed at the rear of the backstage, this an eerie green-windowed space of torture and death. The ruins of the antechamber remained until the end of the 4th act, what was in this production the end of the first half.

For the second half, the remnants of the demolished room were removed and replaced with a tall ramshackle pile of shipping containers and lean-to pallets, on top of which were strewn a chair, golden trappings, a tapestry, and the throne. This would be the raised stage on which Mortimer Junior and Isabella conducted their machinations for the rest of the play. Above and apart from those in the world below, Kobna Holdbrook-Smith's Mortimer Junior basked in his power, roaring commands and defiantly delivering "I stand as Jove's huge tree, / And others are but shrubs compared to me" like a newly crowned Tamburlaine. When finally overthrown by Edward III, he literally was forced to descend to earth. In this, the set helped register him emblematic victim of what for this production was his *de casibus* fate.

Perched on either side of the proscenium arch were two large screens, on which were frequently projected various kinds of video. At the beginning of the production, a montage of British monarchs—past and present—accompanied the added first scene of Edward II's coronation. After this, Kondek displayed scene titles ("Isabella to France"; "The Coronation of Edward III") along with live footage of the production at hand. In a number of instances, characters were filmed with cameras while they were on stage. Reminiscent of *King Lear*'s third act, Edward II, Baldock, and Spenser Junior huddled together downstage in low light before the appearance of the Mower, the three together shot in close up. Later, in one of Kondek's more inspired effects, Mortimer Junior's order that Edward II be removed "from place to place by night / Till he at the last come to Killingworth" (5.2.58-9) was concurrently enacted on stage and on screen. While Mortimer plotted with Matrevis and Gurney, and then with Isabella, the audience could see Edward's Christ-like walk from "place to place," both above on the two screens and in the upper right corner of the backstage. Multi-media moments like these heightened the emotional impact of Hill-Gibbins' scenes. They also offered a not-so-subtle critique of the manipulative potential of modern media. Often in a position to see both footage and its filming simultaneously, the audience was given a 21st-century version of Clachan's exposed backstage. In other instances, action in the closed 10'x40' antechamber was projected onto the screen, providing the audience with access into the restricted space of what essentially was an early modern closet. The Barons' conspiring against Edward II in the first act was projected, as was a sex party involving Edward II, Gaveston, Baldock, and Spencer Junior.

Often a casualty of Hill-Gibbins spectacle driven, conceptual approach was Marlowe's verse--mighty lines et al.. In what was this production's *second* scene, Gaveston was made to deliver his speech proclaiming "What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston / Than live and be the favourite of a king" while acrobatically descending from the upper-left reaches of the audience. Once over and around the startled

and amused, he reached the stage only again to look back, directing his "As for the multitude, they are but sparks" with a wink at the theatregoers seated center in rows D through G. Initially a combination of both the Vice and Elizabethan clown, Gaveston was thus conjured from without; he haled neither from the stodgy English court nor entirely from the world of the play. He was, in other words, a likable knave, and in order to underscore his pleasant informality, Kyle Soller embraced the fixtures of a modern young American—lower-middling accent, jeans, t-shirt, tattoos and all. Marlowe's powerful opening verse, then, became a vehicle of Soller's liminal informality, and this meant in practice that lines like "My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns, / Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay" worked almost entirely as homoerotic suggestion, not as poetical inspiration. This, though, proved not to be the whole story. Particularly energetic and resonant was Mortimer Junior's powerful "let me be feared" speech in the fifth act. Effective too were the play's final lines. Ironically delivered on the upstage dais, curtain again down, Edward III's proclamation of "grief and innocency" filled the theatre while he held up Mortimer Junior's severed head and a sword in either hand.

Consistently presenting the barons and clergy as cruel, cynical and ruthless--Isabella, for example, was played from the start as a chain-smoking, callous drunk--this production fell firmly on the side of Edward II. Indeed, Kent (played as the sister of Edward II by Kirsty Bushell) and Edward III (Bettrys Jones) were repeatedly used to help register England's feudal disfunction. Kent's late uncut musing that "miserable is the commonweal, where lords / Keep courts and kings are locked in prison" (5.3.63-4) and icy relationship with the nobility around her, well underscored the pervading danger of this political world. Similarly, like the boy from the present in Taymor's *Titus* (1999), Jones's Edward III was constantly on stage, made innocent witness to the barons' contempt and violence. Up until the final scene, he functioned as a chorus.

At the same time, John Heffernan's Edward II proved unrelated to Ian McKellan's neurotic and defiant monarch (Prospect Theatre Company 1969), nor was he akin to Simon Russell Beale's petulant and sexually obsessive king (RSC 1990). Instead, Heffernan gave us a lead that was conflicted, awkwardly torn between his naive perception of his political responsibilities and his empathetic connection to those around him—one reviewer called him "a moving, bewildered little boy lost." Edward II's discomfort with his kingship emerged not simply at the start in his long pauses between coronation oaths but in his penchant for stage wanderings. This was an Edward who was uncomfortably weighed down by his golden attire and who was rarely content to be perched on his raised throne. In keeping with this, Heffernan's Edward II tended throughout towards a frequently paused, unevenly paced delivery, especially in 5.2 when he famously observed, "But what are kings when regiment is gone / But perfect shadows in a sunshine day." In direct opposition to the second-half Mortimer Junior, Edward II thrived on close physical encounters with not just Gaveston but with many of his subjects. Throughout, we see him closing in upon his conversations, coming so close to the faces of his interlocutors that at times he seemed to be communing with their very souls.

Set up by Marlowe with the trappings of an emblematic morality-play ending (Edward II punished symbolically by a "Lightborn" armed with a red-hot "spit"), Hill-Gibbins' murder scene—like that of many recent productions—aimed for disgust and ultimately discomfort. Visually, the scene played out in low light downstage on a wide swath of plastic sheeting, this invoking associations between Lightborn and a serial-killing sociopath. Heffernan's Edward II was at this point reduced to nervous exhaustion, and he slowly crawled to Lightborn's featherbed amidst tears and nervous exclamations. He then fell fitfully to sleep, lulled into slumber both by Lightborn's gentle encouragement and—ironically--by what was for Edward II the reassurance of his physical closeness. Edward II, in other words, was—at this production's end--a lamb soothed into slaughter. Most unsettling of all, though, was Soller's doubling as Lightborn. His down-stage-center, anal penetration of Edward II linked homoerotic orgasm and violence. Lightborn's killing of Edward II, though, did not play as poetic justice; instead, it worked as a discomforting fantasy conjured by those piqued and disturbed by Edward II's and Gaveston's frequent on-stage kisses and embraces in the first two acts. In this, what we saw was a staged version of Purvis Boyette's compelling take on the play. Edward II, he wrote in 1977, is "the archetypical Victim, a scapegoat for the personal, cultural, and social forces that have repudiated his essential humanity, his decline into flesh."

Kirk Melnikoff
UNC at Charlotte

The Massacre at Paris, MSA Conference, 24th June 2013 (I)

"It has no pretensions to dramatic interest, and the incidents are confusedly treated," wrote J. P. Collier of *The Massacre at Paris* in 1831. The subsequent 182 years have seen more critics agreeing with Collier than disputing his analysis of *Massacre* as an essentially flawed text, and for the most part the theatrical world has followed suit. There have been only (approximately) twenty productions of the play – including staged readings, French translations, student performances, and an opera – since its first modern revival by students at Yale in 1940.

This year's MSA conference, however, featured no fewer than eleven papers focusing primarily or entirely on *Massacre at Paris.* On the second night of the conference we were also treated to a fully staged performance, in the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse, courtesy of director Jeremy L. West and students from Mary Baldwin College's Shakespeare & Performance program. Perhaps *Massacre* is finally getting its moment in the spotlight.

Of course, in this particular production there were no spotlights. We were in the Blackfriars, whose "early modern staging conditions" include keeping stage and audience equally well-lit, allowing performers and spectators to see each other clearly (and making me feel obliged to apologize to any actors who were put off by the critic scribbling notes in the second row). The atmosphere in the theatre was expectant and positive – many of the audience, even the life-long Marlovians, had never seen *Massacre* on stage and were delighted to have the opportunity.

What we got was a brisk and capably performed play, with excellent verse speaking which combined speed, sense, and poetry, especially from Joshua Brown as Guise. Most of the cast of twelve played four or five characters each and managed to pull off multiple quick costume changes, aided by the basic but effective costuming technique of dressing every actor in identical black trousers and shirts, and signifying individual characters with robes, jackets, sashes, gold chains and coronets.

The show was unafraid to delve into the comedy of violence which litters Marlowe's text. The 'massacre' scenes were played with panache, the Guisians grinning as they chased their victims across the stage. Ripples of laughter could be heard only a few lines into the first scene, at Catherine's deliciously insincere assurance to Navarre that "you see we love you well"; and the unceremonious hanging of the Admiral Coligny from the upstage balcony was greeted with laughs, gasps and appreciative applause. Bits of brutal stage business – a Protestant bludgeoned with a rock, Mugeroun cutting off the cutpurse's ear, the deadpan comic flourish with which the First Murderer (Nicola Collett) produced a chain to strangle the Cardinal – were well received. The biggest laugh of the night, however, from this most academic of audiences, was for Protestant philosopher Ramus' attempt at self-preservation. In response to Gonzago's demand for "more gold, or thou shalt have the stab"; he replies "Alas, I am a scholar, how should I have gold?" James Byers' ironic "*scholar*" ensured that the second half of his line was almost drowned out by laughter.

One of the major difficulties for those studying and performing *Massacre at Paris* lies in its lack of coherent character development. The play presents its readers and spectators with thirty-five named characters (plus "Protestants, Schoolmasters, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, &c"). Only one gets to perform anything like a standard Elizabethan dramatic soliloquy. Several change their names, titles, roles, and personalities over the play's twenty-two short scenes. Critical opinion divides over whether Navarre can be read or played as a genuine anti-Catholic hero, given the dubious, repetitious piety of his speeches. Anjou/Henry III seems to inhabit one completely different character after another: enthusiastic murderer, skilled politician, weak and sportive king, vengeful plotter, bathetic "faithful friend" of England.

Daniel Burrows as Navarre was softly spoken, seeming very young: a boy prince, young enough to have a schoolmaster accompany him to his future kingdom; still learning to be a leader, but confident in his righteousness and his God's approval. It was a convincing performance, drawing close attention and sympathy, and making Navarre seem the best possible future ruler for Marlowe's France, the calm centre of a frantic and amoral world.

Mark Tucker's performance as Anjou/Henry III focused on the character's propensity for viciousness and dissembling charm. During the frenzied, comic violence of the massacre scenes, Anjou was the only character who moved slowly: stalking across the stage to stab a terrified Protestant with lingering, psychotic satisfaction. His denial of involvement in the massacre – "Who, I? You are deceived, I rose but now" – was an advance glimpse of the consummate politician, all unctuous smiles and false modesty, who emerged in the play's middle scenes. His dying conversion to Protestantism was less convincing, but maybe some blame for that lies with Marlowe...

The production's only real shortcoming was how long it took to fully hit its stride. While the early scenes were energetic and amusing, the first moments of powerful, palpable tension did not arrive until scene seventeen, with the series of confrontations between the King, Epernoun, and Guise; Guise and the hired murderers; Henry and Catherine over Guise's body. For such a dramatic, violent, Machiavellian play, it was disappointing that a real sense of danger took so long to appear.

Overall this production managed to answer, intelligently and engagingly, its audience's academic curiosity – does *Massacre* work on stage, and how? It was also an enjoyable hour's entertainment; a show which did not negate the problematic state of the text but demonstrated how an uncut, unaltered 'bad' play can come to fluent and convincing life on the stage – in all its scheming, backstabbing, ear-removing glory.

Hannah Goreing
King's College, London

The Massacre at Paris, MSA Conference, 24th June 2013 (II)

The Mary Baldwin College Shakespeare and Performance program produced a production of *The Massacre at Paris* at the recent International Marlowe Conference that challenged critical conceptions of *The Massacre* as an incomplete or bad play. Even if *The Massacre* is extant from a non-authorial source, is abridged, or is in any other way a "bad text," the MBC SAP production proves that even a bad text can, at least in the right hands, make for a good play.

The Massacre is so rarely performed that this production may be only the second time the play has been performed in the United States. The Marlowe Project produced *The Massacre* in 1999 in New York, but under the direction of Jeff Dailey, the play was transposed and extended from its extant octavo form. Under the direction of Jeremy West, MBC SAP has presented Marlowe's bloody spectacle in a form that more closely resembles what Marlowe's original audiences might have seen, and performed using Marlowe's original staging conditions at the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse. From a director who has graced this particular stage himself on numerous occasions, and with a company largely featuring the talents of graduate students in the ASC's partner program with MBC, it comes as little surprise that the company performs *The Massacre* with deftness and aplomb, at times rising to excellence, no matter how corrupt the source text may be.

Set during the French Wars of Religion, *The Massacre* begins with the marriage of the Protestant Henry III, King of Navarre to the Catholic Margaret, the daughter of Catherine de Medici. Disapproving of her daughter's marriage to a Protestant, Catherine employs the Duke of Guise to attempt to assassinate the Lord Admiral Gaspard de Coligny and the old Queen of Navarre in order to provide a pretext for the titular massacre of Calvinist Huguenots. Marlowe spends more time on the actual massacre than he does on the French politics which bookend the play, and in Guise writes a villain who combines Barabas' blood-thirsty conniving with Tamburlaine's epic cruelty and command of fate.

The role of Guise will make or break any production of *The Massacre*, and any production almost couldn't ask for better than Joshua D. Brown, whose excellent performance was universally, and regularly, praised by conference attendees. Marlowe's Guise is as eloquent as he is bloodthirsty, murdering as well with rhetoric as he does with daggers, and Brown's portrayal hits all the right notes: he gives us a portrait of Guise that brings all of Marlowe's ambiguity to life. Guise claims he schemes and murders for gold, divine command, personal satisfaction, and Brown manages to blend these not-necessarily-competing motivations to craft a villain that would give the best Richard IIIs a run for their money.

Seeing *The Massacre* in performance helped affirm Susan Cerasano's keynote "Christopher Marlowe, In His Playhouse," wherein she argued that scholars have erred in regarding Marlowe as an outsider among his contemporaries in the professional London playing companies. Marlowe was very much a man of the theatre, and his intimate knowledge of the abilities of Edward Alleyn and the Admiral's Men was the foundation for much of his work as a dramatist. Marlowe's skill is best realized when so performed, but it wasn't just the abilities of his actors that Marlowe understood; and the thoroughness of Marlowe's understanding of good theatrical design was very much on display in the MBC SAP production.

One striking feature of this production was the underscoring of the massacre by the omnipresent tolling bell. While Marlowe only gives a few vignettes of the massacre, the bell helps unify them all in time, and reminds the audience that these scenes are repeated much more broadly throughout the city. Narratively, the bell is a sign to Guise's assassins to begin the massacre, and the end of the ringing a sign to stop, but this is symbolically a funeral bell, and the number it tolls for countless. It is a ritual expression of public grief that is all too familiar to us today, and it is difficult to watch the massacre unfold without being reminded of Aurora, Colorado and Newton, Connecticut.

None of this is to say that The Massacre doesn't get its laughs, but the number of times the audiences laughed at moments clearly not intended by the director to be funny was surprising. The scene of the Cardinal of Lorraine's (Katie Crandol) death does not appear to be written in an especially comic way, and West has staged the scene with enough verisimilitude that it feels uncomfortable. While it's possible that it was out of discomfort that the audience laughed, it seems more likely due to Marlowe's ability to let us see ourselves as the triumphant villains of our own stories. While Marlowe allows us to feel sympathy for the murdered, the oppressed, and the abandoned, his elegant verse lets us see ourselves as the victors of his bloody struggles without feeling ashamed. Bodies become stepping stones on the path to greatness in the world of Marlowe's plays, and the irresistible rise of Barabas and Tamburlaine has its echoes in *The Massacre*; both in Guise, and in King Henry (Daniel Burrows). Everyone who succeeds in any way is some kind of villain in Marlowe's world, and when Guise winds up as dead as the innocents whose massacre he engineers, he is no worse than his victims who never aspired to greatness.

The Massacre is a short play, but in the thick of the fast pace and heavy doubling of original-conditions performance, the running time feels about half as long as it actually is. Monica Cross's costume design helps facilitate this by relying heavily on costume fragments to signal character changes, but the effect, combined with Marlowe's light treatment of the reasons for the massacre, create a darker world that Marlowe likely imagined: when everyone looks basically alike, and the trappings of religion are so easily interchangeable, it's difficult to find any reason, let alone a good one, for the massacre. This nihilistic world is governed by a logic of death that lays bare the foundations of aristocratic forms of government; when whoever kills the most uses that as the justification for their governance, one sociopath is basically as good as another. Burrows's Henry is every bit as eloquent and calculating as Brown's Guise, but this is Guise's tragedy, and the result is a Henry who comes across as playing his cards much closer to his chest. If there is a moral in all of this, it may well be that discretion is the difference between being a king and being a corpse.

The real lesson to be garnered from the MBC SAP production is that "bad texts" can not only make great performances, they might even have the potential to be *better* performances than more complete plays. Watching *The Massacre*, I couldn't help be reminded of *Woyzeck*, Georg Büchner's unfinished play (first produced in 1913), which was one of the darlings of both modernist and post-modernist directors in the twentieth century. If the incompleteness of a dark and dismal view of the modern world has been more a selling point than an obstacle for Büchner, why not for Marlowe? The renaissance of the "bad text" is long overdue, and the MBC SAP program, in the traditions of the American Shakespeare Center, is on the avant-garde of early modern play production.

Directed by Jeremy West, with Costumes by Monica Cross, and Stage Management by James Byers. Featuring Joshua D. Brown as Guise, Daniel Burrows as the King of Navarre-Henry IV, with James Byers, Robert Cantrell, Nicola Collett, Katie Crandol, Clarence Finn, Daniel Grathwol, Stephanie Howieson, Stephan Pietrowski, Mark Tucker, and Michael M. Wagoner.

Tony Tambasco
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MSA Book Reviews · David McInnis, University of Melbourne · Book Reviews Editor

Chloe Kathleen Preedy. *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic*. The Arden Shakespeare Library. London: Bloomsbury, 2012. Pp. 256. ISBN: 9781408164884 ($100)

That Marlowe's fictional characters exploit religion in the interests of policy and self-advancement will come as no surprise to any serious student of the Elizabethan playwright. But in Chloe Preedy's impressive new book, this exploitation is carefully examined within the context of post-Reformation religious polemic. Displaying extensive familiarity with Catholic, Puritan, and mainstream Protestant tracts from the Elizabethan era, Preedy convincingly argues that features of contemporary devotional discourse and practice are repeatedly mirrored in Marlovian fictions. The "competing and mutually deconstructive claims" of post-Reformation religious dispute (xix) thus lead to what Preedy calls "cross-confessional scepticism" (15), a form of epistemological doubt which shares the essential structure of Pyrrhonism but which Preedy views as far more germane than Greco-Roman philosophy to Marlowe's intellectual development (23-24). A "significant figure in the history of disbelief" (xv), Marlowe repeatedly examines "religious fraud in cross-confessional episodes" (191), depicting characters of all faiths and allegiances as "uniformly willing to exploit religion for politic ends" (191).

There is a great deal to admire in Preedy's book. It is meticulously organized and lucidly written; it treats the entire corpus of Marlowe's works and draws widely from Marlovian criticism over the past century; it is consistently alert to the performance history of Marlowe's plays; and it routinely offers perceptive analyses of specific Marlovian scenes which gather vitality and power through their association with the instances of "politic religion" (16) that

Preedy inspects. A chapter on religious conformity and feigned conversion, for instance, presents a brilliant discussion of *The Jew of Malta* as viewed within the contemporary English realities of devotional separatism and recusancy fines (62-82); Preedy argues that limiting Marlowe's scrutiny of religious politics to Barabas's Jewish experience is "unduly restrictive" (70), suggesting instead that Barabas displays "an unfixed and shifting denominational identity that allows his own sufferings to reflect those of religious non-conformists in general rather than Catholics or presbyterians in particular" (70). Ithamore, meanwhile, is a "serial convertite" (77) whose confessional "elasticity" (78) highlights Elizabethan anxieties about the links between religious conviction and political allegiance.

Elsewhere in the book, in a section on the taking and breaking of oaths, Preedy offers an original and illuminating discussion of *Dido Queen of Carthage* (98-109), tracing Marlowe's departures from his Virgilian source and demonstrating how Aeneas might be said "to align himself with the Catholic and Protestant proponents of religious resistance" (107). And in Chapter Four, which treats rebellion and regicide, Preedy draws variously on Catholic and Huguenot resistance tracts to move from an initial focus on Tamburlaine's deployment of the Jupiter myth as a model of justified political deposition (121-30) to detailed treatments of king-killing in *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris* (136-59). Focusing especially on exculpatory rhetorical tactics in contemporary religious polemic, Preedy shows that the carefully plotted assassinations of French and English monarchs in these late Marlovian plays reflect both "the theoretical premises and [the] sixteenth-century experience of regicide" (151).

Preedy's chapter on *Doctor Faustus* presents the most ambitious and sustained argumentation to be found in her book (160-90), but it is somewhat less satisfying than the majority of her previous discussions. Certainly it is excellent in its treatment of religious and secular contracts (173-81) and in its characterization of Faustus's imagination as deeply classical in bias: "Faustus builds his rejection of God upon a classicised reimagining of the play's spiritual framework, a rhetorical strategy that enables him to repudiate the Christian model of judgement in the afterlife and so act without fear of retribution" (164). Preedy also introduces Lucretius's account of Epicurean materialism into her discussion (164-66), drawing valuable connections between Lucretian and Faustian rejections of the afterlife. But in speaking of "sceptical denial" (183) or "Lucretian scepticism" (169) she tends to blur the very distinctions between categorical disbelief and sceptical doubt that she is at pains to establish earlier in the book (xvii-xviii, 1-11, 23-27). This is understandable, given the widespread critical tendency to equate scepticism with atheism, but Preedy's arguments would be in no way diminished by sharper adherence to terminology she clearly values. She suggests, for example, that *Faustus* "might be described as the tragedy of an atheist whose scepticism fails him" (184). Perhaps. But it is far from clear how a more thoroughgoing atheism would help Faustus; as Preedy is eager to stress, he "inhabits a supernatural Christian universe" (161) and thus, unlike other Marlovian characters with whom he might be compared, his struggles unfold within a spiritual realm where neither doubt nor atheistic denial can ever, in the end, be profitable. Preedy succinctly encapsulates Faustus's dilemma by writing that he "must prove either a traitor to God or a traitor to Lucifer, having pledged his soul to both" (186), but she could do more to explain why the former choice is easier for Faustus than the latter. No doubt she is right that the general Faustian predicament is profoundly evocative of the dual allegiances and opposed loyalties experienced by Catholic and Puritan dissidents in Elizabethan England (186). Still, such correspondence, illuminating as it is, goes only so far in helping us understand why Faustus fails to trust in a God whose existence, power, and omniscience he clearly comes to accept. Preedy writes that "problematically, the characters who achieve success in Marlowe's drama are those who are willing to embrace religious hypocrisy" (188). Fair enough. But *why* is this problematic – and from what moral, critical, or ideological perspectives? One might equally argue that we value Marlowe precisely because he depicts a world we intuitively recognize, consistently frustrating providential expectations.

In a brief "Coda" at the close of her book (191-204), Preedy sketches an account of Marlowe's legacy not merely among his near-contemporaries (principally Shakespeare, Jonson, and Webster) but among writers much later in the seventeenth century such as Milton, Toland, and Blount. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* is touched upon but deserves more attention than it receives. Jonson and Shakespeare, according to Preedy, retain "a loosely providential framework" in their plays (199) and thus appear to have "shied away from the more extreme implications of Marlowe's literary scepticism, even as they absorbed and responded to his concept that religion is manipulated by heroes and villains alike" (199). Broadly speaking, this assertion rings true – though a play such as *King Lear* surely confronts the implications of a godless world. As for Blount, Preedy quotes Charles Gildon's famous claim (in his prefatory letter to Blount's *Religio Laici*) that since the doctrines of religious polemicists are "so Contradictory," readers of these polemics encounter "a more effectual Blow at Religion, than all the Attempts of professed Atheists" (203). How much credit Marlowe may be given for the insights of Blount and Gildon is highly debatable – particularly given the mid-century discussions of Pyrrhonism in the writings of Chillingworth, Browne, Hartlib, Boyle, Glanvill, Locke, Dryden, and others – but this in no way diminishes the basic image of Marlowe that Preedy seeks to convey.

Indeed, my disagreements with Preedy's book are minor; another reader might dismiss them entirely. Her study is sound in its central argumentative trajectory – and frequently scintillating in its specific analyses. The book is moreover written with an eye toward pedagogical relevance, and I can easily imagine that extracts could be valuably discussed in undergraduate or graduate settings. From a purely scholarly perspective, it is unfortunate that the volume does not offer a more generous index: headings for such topics as atheism, censorship, regicide, scepticism, and resistance theory (Catholic and/or Huguenot) are non-existent, despite the centrality of these topics to Preedy's exposition. But this is a superficial failing. *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism* is an earnest, intelligent, and responsible book: a book that all good libraries should acquire and all Marlovians should read.

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Pascale Aebischer and Kathryn Prince, eds. *Performing Early Modern Drama Today*. Cambridge: CUP, 2012. xiv + 247 pp. Hardback ISBN: 9780521193351 ($99); eBook ISBN: 9781139785549 ($79)

Performing Early Modern Drama Today addresses the second wave of performance scholarship by focusing on various relationships between present-day and historical productions of early modern drama and their cultural contexts. In particular, the volume examines how and why the works of Shakespeare's fellow playwrights have emerged from the shadows recently to share in the glow enjoyed by their contemporary. As the two editors, Pascale Aebischer and Kathryn Prince, state, the collection aims to "bring together chapters that cover some of the key hubs of dramatic activity for the revival of early modern drama in English" (15-16). They place performance scholars, educators, and critics in conversation with one another to introduce readers "to the field in its vibrant multivocality" (16). The collection is of considerable value to several fields, including theatre

history, performance studies, and early modern drama, especially Shakespeare's contemporaries, including Jonson, Marlowe, Middleton, and Rowley.

The volume implicitly follows a tripartite structure, with the first chapters surveying revivals of plays most frequently performed in professional and student venues. "The Early Modern Repertory and the Performance of Shakespeare's Contemporaries" by Lucy Munro investigates the non-Shakespearean plays performed in Great Britain in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Her work leads to an inquiry into the relationship between Britain's major companies, such as the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre, and fringe groups, in particular, "the Lost Classics Project" at the White Bear and Globe Education's "Read Not Dead" series. Munro finds both professional and non-professional theatre in Great Britain to support the school *curricula* of their day. She observes, for instance, that "although tragicomedy was one of the most popular Jacobean and Caroline genres, non-Shakespearean examples are rarely performed" today (25). Munro attributes this to the relationship between the theatre and the classroom, both of which favor tragedy over comedy and tragicomedy. Jeremy Lopez's "The Seeds of Time: Student Theatre and the Drama of Shakespeare's Contemporaries" surveys non-professional dramatic productions from the late nineteenth century to the present. Like Munro, he argues that the popularity of revivals relies on the availability of editions such as the Revels Plays or the New Mermaids. Lopez's discussion of why *Doctor Faustus* is the most popular school play will be of special interest for those engaged in Marlowe studies. He records sixty-one performances of *Faustus* since the end of the nineteenth century, followed by *The Duchess of Malfi* as a distant second at thirty-eight (40). "With its easily defined characters, its episodic narrative and its pageantry," Lopez argues that "*Faustus* is a school play *par excellence*" because it can bear almost as much or as little work as you put into it" (40). The play can accommodate heavy cuts, a large cast and crew, or small. In non-professional and student productions, Lopez writes, "technique becomes a secondary consideration" (41), since audiences are aware of the nature of the production they are viewing.

The second implicit set of essays explores the production and repertory approaches of Shakespeare's Globe, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the American Shakespeare Center. "The Performance of Early Modern Drama at Shakespeare's Globe" by Farah Karim-Cooper analyzes the competing areas of marketing, education, academic scholarship, and artistic production. She finds that the Shakespeare-centric Globe is evolving productively toward a model of plurality that includes the staging of plays and readings of works by playwrights other than Shakespeare. In "Shakespeare's Contemporaries at the Royal Shakespeare Company," Coen Heijes examines the subject's roles through the lens of four RSC directors: Michael Boyd, Gregory Doran, Laurence Boswell, and Barry Kyle. Like the Globe, this theatre space is also finding an audience interested in a wider range of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama, as illustrated by recent themed seasons, including the Gunpowder and the Spanish Golden Age repertoires. The success of such seasons outlined by Heijes, one notes, is demonstrated by the RSC's 2014 summer season of "Roaring Girls" plays (plays centering on strong roles for women) that will stage Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, the anonymous *Arden of Faversham*, and Webster's *The White Devil*. Jacquelyn Bessell's essay that follows describes the American Shakespeare Company's original practices approach. "The Actors' Renaissance Season at the Blackfriars Playhouse" outlines the processes of actors learning from parts, engaging in short rehearsal periods, and developing a production without a director. Her study of the ASC's *The Jew of Malta* will be of particular interest to Marlowe enthusiasts. For example, Bessell details how actors' close attention to the text informed costuming choices and embedded entrances, exits, and asides.

A more specialized focus on individual productions is the general emphasis of the final set of essays. Rebecca McCutcheon and Sarah Thom provide a discussion of the *angels in the architecture* productions of *Dido* in "*Dido, Queen of Carthage*: Site-specific Marlowe." Their comparison of the *angels'* 2006 House of St. Barnabas-in-Soho adaptation to their 2008 Kensington Palace production offers rare insight into site-specific performances of early modern drama in central London, and to the complexities of performing one of Marlowe's least performed plays. "'A freshly creepy reality': Jacobean Tragedy and Realist Acting On the Contemporary Stage" by Roberta Barker asks to what ends directors and actors employ a realist approach to early modern drama, finding that this technique is a vital tool for Jacobean revivals. In particular, Barker observes how realist performance allows for both feminist and liberal humanist interpretations. Pascale Aebischer's "Early Modern Drama on Screen" investigates film adaptations for the study of drama, as well as for explorations into a play's historical and cultural moments. What he finds remarkable in this research is that the film history of early modern drama complements both performance history on stage and plays selected for study in the classroom. Two screen histories conclude the chapter: *Volpone* and *The Changeling*. No doubt teachers of early modern drama will find Aebischer's contribution to be a helpful resource as they design syllabi and assignments. "Letting the Dead Come Out to Dance: An Embodied and Spatial Approach to Teaching Early Modern Drama" by Jonathan Heron, Nicholas Monk and Paul Prescott details the CAPITAL (Creativity and Performance in Teaching and Learning) workshop model for using performance as a means to study drama from the period in the discovery space of the classroom. Their discussion of *The Changeling* reveals how teachers and students may engage in active and meaningful learning by moving "the locus of expertise" from teacher to participant, which reflects "the collaborative nature of the early modern theatre and current editorial practice" (163).

Three valuable appendices complete the volume, and they reflect the careful cataloging of Karin Brown and Lopez: "Professional Productions of Early Modern Drama, 1960–2010" (Brown); and "Performances of Early Modern Drama at Academic Institutions Since 1909" and "Performances of Early Modern Plays by Amateur and Student Groups Since 1887" (Lopez). Scholars will benefit considerably from their accounting. Some will surely contribute to subsequent iterations to provide an ever-clearer understanding of the past and present.

The essays comprising this collection act as a testament to the recent developments in the performance of early modern drama in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. One hopes that it spurs increased production of non-Shakespearean plays. Perhaps soon a wider study will be conducted to encompass efforts in other parts of the world, such as Asia. Given the recent formation of the Asian Shakespeare Association and its upcoming inaugural conference in Taipei, one might imagine that such work is already well underway. It certainly seems time to consider how the information contained in resources such as Ann Basso's *Marlowe in Performance* and the University of Warwick's Touchstone databases might be systematically formalized and combined with indexes such as those of Brown and Lopez to form a non-Shakespearean counterpart to the *World Shakespeare Bibliography*. This is the case for Marlowe especially, in light of the marked increase in the productions of his plays, as well as for those other playwrights who are enjoying a welcome renaissance.

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Editor's Note: MSA Book Reviews provide descriptions and evaluations of recent publications on Marlowe and his period. It gives both new and established Marlowe scholars a forum for expressing their views from a variety of critical approaches. Although reviews of books are the norm, appraisals of recent articles on Marlowe are also welcome. The reviews should be no more than 1000 words in length and should cover the book's purpose, contribution, scholarship, format, and success and achieving its purpose. The editor reserves the right to ask for revision and to make appropriate stylistic changes. A review naturally reflects the opinion of the author rather than the MSA. Reviewers should be members of the organization.