

# msan

## Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

Vol. X, No. 1, Spring 1990

### EXCAVATING THE ROSE



Martin Clout, who was active during the excavation of the Rose as the Historian to the Rose Theatre Campaign, spoke at the MSA Annual Meeting. His slides illustrating the various stages of the excavation were one of the highlights of the meeting. Pictured above are Mr. Clout (left) and MSA Past President Matthew Proser.

### NEW OFFICERS

As the result of last fall's election, Constance B. Kuriyama, Texas Tech University, will serve as President, Sara M. Deats, University of South Florida, will serve as Vice President, Laurie Maguire, University of Ottawa,

will serve as Secretary, Robert A. Logan, University of Hartford, will continue to serve as Treasurer, and Bruce E. Brandt, South Dakota State University, will continue both as Membership Chairman and MSA Newsletter Editor.

In another change, Edward Rocklin, California State Polytechnic University, who has edited the MSA Book Reviews for several years, has decided to relinquish the editorship and will bring out his final issue this summer. We are all appreciative of Professor Rocklin's long service to the Marlowe Society.

Our new MSA Book Reviews editor will be Professor Paul W. White of Baylor University. Reviews, books for review, and inquiries should now be sent to Professor White, Editor, MSA Book Reviews, Department of English, Baylor University, Waco, Texas 76798.

### THE ROMA GILL PRIZE: 1987-88

The committee appointed by former President Matthew Proser to evaluate candidates for the Roma Gill Prize has selected a winner for 1987-88. Professor Thomas Pettitt of Odense University has won the biennial award for his essay "Formulaic Dramaturgy in Doctor Faustus," published in "A Poet and a filthy Play-maker": New Essays On Christopher Marlowe (New York: AMS, 1988).

Competition for the prize was particularly keen this year, since a total of 55 works on Marlowe were published

in 1988 alone, and six books appeared during the two-year period. In order to sort out the most significant publications, the committee looked for works that were highly original in approach and contributed very substantially to our thinking about Marlowe. Preference was given to works which were centered on Marlowe, which had implications for more than one of Marlowe's works, and which deepened our insight into Marlowe's literary and social milieu.

Professor Pettitt's article, which emphasizes the parallels between the transmission and creation of texts in ballad and folk narrative and in Elizabethan drama, was praised by all readers for the originality of its approach and for its thoroughly researched, imaginative, and convincing reconstruction of the conditions in which play texts were created. The article has implications not only for Doctor Faustus but for all of Marlowe's plays, and for those of his contemporaries as well. The committee felt that Professor Pettitt's essay was not merely useful in itself, but likely to lead to further productive research and thinking on the nature and evolution of Renaissance dramatic texts.

The committee also made an honorable mention. Marlowe and Canterbury, a biography of Marlowe researched and drafted by the late Dr. William Urry, and prepared for publication by Andrew Butcher, was singled out as a noteworthy contribution to Marlowe studies. As one reader commented, the book "gathers Marlowe biography in ways that no one has in several decades, sifting through a great deal of obscurely available, as well as new, material in the process," and "proves that despite his adventures Marlowe retained close ties to his hometown, just as other Elizabethans did." Andrew Butcher also contributes to the usefulness of the volume by underlining the fact that Marlowe's parents were recent immigrants or "foreigners" in Canterbury, not an old Canterbury family as previous biographers maintained.

The Roma Gill Prize carries a cash award of \$250. Officers of the Marlowe Society are responsible for (cont. on p. 3)

## MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Constance B. Kuriyama, President  
Sara M. Deats, Vice President  
Laurie E. Maguire, Secretary  
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MSA Newsletter Editor  
Paul W. White, MSA Book Reviews Editor

All business and organizational correspondence except for memberships should be addressed to the President:

Professor Constance B. Kuriyama, President  
Marlowe Society of America  
Department of English  
Box 4530  
Texas Tech University  
Lubbock, Texas 79409

New memberships and renewals should be sent to the Membership Chairman:

Professor Bruce E. Brandt  
Membership Chairman  
Marlowe Society of America  
English Department  
South Dakota State University  
Brookings, SD 57007

MSA Newsletter publishes reviews of Renaissance, and especially Marlovian, drama; notices of recent and forthcoming publications; announcements; and brief articles or notes of interest to Marlovian scholars. The opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect that of the MSA. The editor reserves the right to refuse items, to ask for revisions, and to make stylistic changes that he deems appropriate. MSAN reviews are usually around 800 words long, but may occasionally be longer. The beginning of a review should identify the company, the dates of performance, and the director. MSA members are encouraged to announce publications and other items or meetings of interest to the membership. Materials for the next issue of MSAN should be received by October 1, 1990. Send inquiries, announcements, and submissions to Professor Bruce E. Brandt, Editor, MSAN, at the above address.

MSA Book Reviews publishes reviews of books on Marlowe and his period. Reviews, suggestions for reviews, and inquiries should be sent to the Reviews Editor:

Professor Paul W. White, Editor  
MSA Book Reviews  
Department of English  
Baylor University  
Waco, Texas 76798

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the selection of the winner and are therefore not eligible themselves. The committee extends special thanks to Dr. Richard Hardin of the University of Kansas for his generous assistance in providing thorough, thoughtful, and disinterested evaluations of the finalists for the award.

Constance B. Kuriyama, Chair  
Sara M. Deats

**MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION: MEMORY  
IN THE MASSACRE AT PARIS**

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Meeting, Washington, 1989, by Laurie Maguire, University of Ottawa.



The first part of this paper assessed the bad quarto symptoms of The Massacre at Paris and considered the likelihood of the extant text representing a memorial reconstruction of an abridged version. The second part focused on the Folger manuscript leaf of one scene, generally considered to be a rough draft by Marlowe. Palaeographical analysis of the leaf, and comparison with Marlowe's signature, demonstrated the improbability of the manuscript being a Marlowe holograph, and this claim was supported by a survey of other foul paper manuscripts which illustrated the lack of foul

paper characteristics in the manuscript leaf. The paper concluded with the case for scribal copy, but whether this copy was made by a sixteenth or nineteenth-century scribe was left open.

**THE ELABORATION OF PREJUDICE  
IN THE JEW OF MALTA AND  
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Workshop, Washington, 1989, by Elizabeth Berlings, St. John's University, Staten Island, New York.

While literary source hunting has not been a fashionable form of scholarship for over half a century, having been discredited by New Criticism, the use an author makes of his sources can provide insight into his social milieu.

In creating The Jew of Malta and The Merchant of Venice, both Marlowe and Shakespeare appear to have drawn upon the popular Middle English Firumbras romances for the story of the infidel who loses his daughter and his gold (The Sowdan of Babylon, The Ashmole Sir Firumbras, and The Fillingham Sir Firumbras). Like Barabas and Shylock, Balan, the pagan sultan of Babylon and comic villain, has a daughter who falls in love with a Christian, deceives her father, and converts. Some aspects of the romances that appear in The Jew of Malta do not appear in The Merchant of Venice and vice versa, suggesting that Marlowe and Shakespeare made independent use of the same material. Barabas, a composite monster, actually carries out villainous deeds that occur only as ideas in the romances; e.g. killing nuns, the deceitful daughter, and her Christian accomplices. Overall, Marlowe exaggerates the farcical, and Shakespeare adapts the New Comedy aspects of romance comedy.

However, the villainous Balan, unlike the abstract Morality Vice, represents an actual political and social threat. In adapting aspects of this character, Marlowe and Shakespeare add a disturbing dimension to the anti-Semitic element, an element that may reflect social attitudes as well as

create them.

**"COME TO THE TENT AGAIN:  
"THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD,"  
DRAMATIC RAPE, AND LYRIC TIME**

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Workshop, Washington, 1989, by Douglas Bruster, Harvard University.



Like Sidney, Marlowe was eulogized as a shepherd: when Phebe quotes the "Dead shepherd" in Act 3 of As You Like It, she defines through his epithet, one of the bases of his reputation with his contemporaries. Indeed, it was with his short but enduring lyric--"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"--that Marlowe most clearly left his mark on the literature of his immediate posterity. Adapted for no less than six ballad tunes and mentioned in the title sheets of at least nine different ballads, "The Passionate Shepherd" could be labelled the most important lyric of the English Renaissance.

In the decades following its appearance, "The Passionate Shepherd" produced an amazing number of replies, rebuttals, and parodies, many of them within the large context of drama. Through its appropriation and reformation by the dramatists of the English Renaissance, the Shepherd's proposal

offers a historical delineation of the received differences between the two representational modes. The reworking of the invitation in dramatic context also tended to reveal an unstated sexual aggression seemingly implicit in the very form and process of the proposal. This "invitation not an invitation" figured importantly in the way Renaissance playwrights adapted Marlowe's lyric, posing a problematic schema of the self and the dangers inherent in the self's relation to the monological.

**TAMBURLAINE AND THE BODY**

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Meeting, Washington, 1989, by Mark Thornton Burnett, The Queen's University of Belfast.



The paper begins with a brief summary of Bakhtin's theory of the body: he distinguishes between the classical body (manifesting itself in a closed and purified form, the ideology of the establishment) and the grotesque body--open, heterogeneous and of the people. This carnivalesque mode I bring to bear on Tamburlaine.

The play reveals a constant tension between high and low bodily concepts: at once Tamburlaine aspires to

a realm where corporeal functions are banished or excluded. The Scythian claims invulnerability of body, and is described by Menaphon as lofty and classical, a high Renaissance sculpture. Low activities are scrupulously avoided; Tamburlaine only ever eats metaphorically and is bent on aestheticizing Zenocrate as he engineers her elevation. Zenocrate is repeatedly described in terms which marginalize sexuality and, at the end of Part One, is mounted up, possibly on a pedestal, chaste and inviolate.

Part of Tamburlaine's social project simultaneously involves consigning his enemies to a low status, to the activity of the grotesque. Thus, the form of death Tamburlaine most prefers to inflict is penetration. In death the pierced Cosroe dwells upon his body's failing powers while the Virgins of Damascus are hoisted on spears, symbolically breached and deflowered. Acts such as these are an essential part of Tamburlaine's quest to achieve social eminence. Similarly, the punishments meted out by the conqueror also bear the signature of the grotesque: Bajazeth and the captive kings, for instance, are forced to display their buttocks in scenes of reduction and belittlement.

Tamburlaine, though, cannot escape his low origins or the fact of mortality. He strives to maintain his enclosed state, and is only ever opened up by himself when he invites his sons to wash in his blood. His having become a father, and thereby multiple and pluralized, he finds difficult to accept. His sons constitute a threat to his sense of himself as single and unique. There is a sense in which the protagonist has been coarsened and weakened through reproducing and, at the end, the reversion to origins becomes complete. The details of urine and semen in the doctor's speech are significant as discharges and openings (with reference to Tamburlaine) are being referred to for the first time. Responding to this inexorable process of losing his power, Tamburlaine responds by bringing in the hearse containing Zenocrate who has been re-virginized in embalment. The play ends without resolving the questions it

has posed and in bodily limbo: Tamburlaine is both of the high and of the low as Amyras asks for heaven and earth to meet and for all things to end.

### CINDERELLA'S TWELFTH NIGHT

Twelfth Night (1986). Cinderella Productions. Director: Ron Wertheim. Andrew: Alan Coolidge. Antonia: Ajita Wilson. Feste: Ron Wertheim. Malvolio: Yonathan Lucas. Maria: Viju Krim. Olivia: Greta Vayann. Orsino: Carlo De Meijo. Toby: Arthur Mark. Viola/Sebastian: Nicky Gentile.

This tidbit appeared on the Playboy Channel in December, 1988. The plot is Shakespeare's, but the lines are doggerel ("Then it's I who's mad, / For this is the most fantastic dream I've ever had") or "updatings" that signify a new inscription of the on-going narrative ("Hey, tightass: you think, sir, because you are what you are, the whole world should be the same!"). This "manifestation of the story" comes off like the notorious "Joe Macbeth," where Duncan's "This castle hath a pleasant seat" emerges as "I like 'dis place. The air smells good here." One value of such offshoots is that they demonstrate the continuing strength of Shakespeare's phrasing.

One misses other nuances. At the end, Viola and Sebastian merely recognize each other. No tentative and moving reestablishment of joyous rebirth here. No erasure of negative certainty into wonder. Sebastian has leaped off his ship in the splash of a mermaid and has been wandering the sands with a flower woman from 1967. Viola proves she is a girl to Orsino by unbuttoning her shirt. No doubt about it -- it's a girl! No need for maiden weeds here, not when flesh will do.

The film features a lot of slow, soft-porn fantasies of the one-size-fits-all format. Youth's a stuff will not endure because worn out prematurely in interminable fleshy interludes. The "Twelfth Night" story is employed primarily as an expression of the "Playboy Philosophy," as enunciated years ago, ad infinitum, by Hugh Hefner.

But the "bright idea"--Olivia as a reclusive star a la Garbo and Orsino as a bored rock star lizarding along an expensive new property--is good. Gentile is lovely in proportion to the clothes she retains. And Malvolio, last seen warming the scales of a mermaid, proves he is as dumb as the linemen who wander off with a single blonde at the end of an Aqua Velva commercial.

This is a useful film to contrast with the too-few versions of Twelfth Night--singularly a stage vehicle--available. Students tend to recognize the value of Shakespeare's script as a result of their exposure to this rendition.

H. R. Coursen                      Bowdoin College

#### REFUTING THE REVIEWS: TWO D.C. TICKETS

As I write--in November, 1989--the hot Shakespeare ticket in Washington is for Twelfth Night at The Folger. Arena's Dream has been maligned. Frank Rich complains that "One cannot escape the dry tone of the acting," and finds this version "a tepid lover's spat."<sup>1</sup>

The Twelfth Night, however, "achieve[s] a consistency of performance that cannot be bettered by any Shakespeare company I've seen this year," says Rich, crediting Michael Kahn's "unerring direction."<sup>2</sup> Joe Brown calls the Twelfth Night "triumphant," and says that Kahn is "re-establishing Shakespeare's reputation as a hot playwright."<sup>3</sup>

Kahn's Twelfth Night has some very good aspects: convincing identical twins Kelly McGillis and Mark Philpot, each charmingly winsome; and fine ensemble work between Toby (David Sabin), Maria (Franchelle Stewart-Dorn), and Andrew (Floyd King), the latter sliding slowly away from the life he had glimpsed when he was "ador'd." Yosef Bulos delivers a tour-de-force as Feste-Sir Tophas in the excellent prison scene (IV.ii).

The problem is Kahn's fatal attraction to the "bright idea."

Provincial D.C. may believe that Raj India sparkles with originality, but those of us who saw R.S.C.'s Much Ado flounder against an identical concept over a decade ago know otherwise. Here, Malvolio is a cleric, not a steward, leading his flock in Hymn 542 ("Jesus Shall Reign": Duke Street). Why does everyone call this curate a "steward"? While Bulos's chaplinesque Feste is a skillful stage tactician, he cannot sing. The "Indian" settings for the songs are part of the problem. "O, Mistress Mine," does not translate, and the final song is excruciating. It can, given its late seventeenth-century setting, create a powerful bridge from the Globe and its illusions to the "real world." Persons with some grasp of the inherited script are punished when it must be changed to incorporate references to "pig-sticking," Vishnu, and Krishna.

The bright idea blacks out totally with Peter Webster's Orsino, whom even Rich calls "fatuously romantic."<sup>4</sup> What can this vibrant young Viola find in him except his wealth? Not a damned thing. McGillis is forced to play on the same hysterical plane as this Orsino and seems, too often, as silly as he is. The potentially moving "I am all the daughters of my father's house" moment is squandered here. Now were Malvolio an ambitious native tricked into believing that Olivia loves him, the play might make a telling point about the viciousness of colonialism. I do not believe, however, that the D.C. audience is ready for much more than the basic sappiness of Kahn's conception and rendition.

Liviu Ciulei's Dream suffers from Marissa Copeland's misconceived Puck. This is a resentful Ariel, not a Puck who, albeit overworked, delights in human foolishness. "Pyramus and Thisbe" is weak, falling into stale gags as opposed to showing us what this promising company of bad actors have discovered. And too much of the commentary from the courtly audience interrupts the inner play. If all that railery must be retained, let it be "voice over" except when Bottom responds to it. To stop the inner play for the sake of jokes a modern audience cannot get is to obscure the jokes we

can get. The opening of Act Five is also confusing. Theseus scores points at the expense of a Hippolyta with whom he has seemingly been reconciled. Having built powerfully towards Act Five, this production loses its energy and its hold on our imaginations.

But the energy is remarkable. Petronia Paley's powerful Hippolyta is stripped from her battle fatigues and forced into a huge wedding gown of parachute silk. This powerful opening, however, overwhelms Egeus's subsequent vexation. The play has peaked immediately, erasing the Hermia story in the backwash of the rape of Hippolyta. She does not accept Theseus until he, uncued by her, makes the right decision in the matter of Hermia and overrules Egeus (IV.i.). Hippolyta's name-dropping about "Hercules and Cadmus" has been a jibe that draws a defensive pout from Theseus about the breeding of his hounds. Tom Hewitt's Oberon delivers his "Her dotage now I do begin to pity" with jealousy at what Titania has done and guilt at what he has had her do. The revenger has been lashed by his own success. On "There lies your love," Bottom's shadow lies on the stage floor like a Paul Konewka silhouette. Titania is not yet reconciled with Oberon as they exit. Nor have the young lovers figured things out after a superb dream sequence in which they become entangled in the "fog" that Puck has summoned--long whispers of silk wafted by the vague figures that invariably inhabit the edges of nightmares. The lovers rise, as if from undersea, to depict moments within their dream scenario. They tramp out of the woods still unhappy, still figuring out the meaning of their mutual dream and the unpleasant things they have learned about themselves within it.

Call it my perversity: I would happily see Ciulei's Dream again. I saw Kahn's Twelfth Night the first time.

H.R. Coursen

Bowdoin College

<sup>1</sup> Frank Rich, "Kelly McGillis Stars in Twelfth Night," New York Times (4 October, 1989), C17.

<sup>2</sup> Rich, C17.

<sup>3</sup> Joe Brown, "Transporting Twelfth: At Folger, a Pleasing Move for the Bard," Washington Post (26 September 1989), D10.

<sup>4</sup> Rich, C17.

VERSIONS OF EDWARD II'S LIFE:  
CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE VERSUS  
ELIZABETH CARY

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Workshop, Washington, 1989, by Nancy Gutierrez, Arizona State University.

In Edward II, Christopher Marlowe defines the character of Isabella primarily in her role as political person. Acting either as Edward II's neglected queen, or as Edward III's ambitious mother, Isabella is motivated, not by her private needs, but by political exigency. This realistic treatment of Isabella the queen, a treatment that might be termed "modern," in the sense that Marlowe imagines a woman whose private life is subordinate to her public needs, is more clearly realized when compared with another version of Isabella, that by a woman, Elizabeth Tanfield Cary, Viscountess Falkland, who wrote a prose history of Edward II in 1627, The history of the most unfortunate Prince, Edward the Second, which depicts Isabella primarily as a woman pursuing her private needs.

These differing representations of Isabella directly result from the different metahistorical imagination embodied in each work. Marlowe's play essentially dramatizes two actions, that of Edward and that of Mortimer and Isabella. Cary's history narrates a single action, the rise and fall of a ruler, whose reliance upon bad advisors causes his downfall; Isabella's action, her turning from Edward to Mortimer, is described as a microcosm of her husband's. Using Hayden White's historiographical model, we can see that Marlowe argues his point through metonymy, Cary does so through synecdoche. In other words, Marlowe presents the life of Edward and the succeeding treasons of Mortimer and Isabella as separate actions that mirror a ruling principle of individual freedom. Cary, on the other hand, des-

cribes Isabella's life as being contained within Edward's, so that her rise and fall, caused by an unnatural love and reliance upon unsound political advisors, is a microcosm of his. These differing historiographical paradigms result in different world views: Cary's Isabella is a woman using culturally-recognized feminine wiles to find male protection and assistance in a man's world; Marlowe's Isabella is a woman who uses her human wit and cunning to maintain her political position in a man's world. Cary's Isabella operates from her private needs, Marlowe's from her public.

Marlowe and Cary's tropological styles are also indicative of their opposing gender politics. Certainly Marlowe seems peculiarly and ahistorically "modern" in his depiction of an Isabella who acts according to political, rather than personal, motivation, and relates part to part, rather than subordinating a part to a whole. On the other hand, Cary's synecdochic scheme, which does, by definition, subordinate a part to a whole, results in an Isabella drawn according to the conventions of romance and patriarchal stereotypes of women. Marlowe's Isabella demonstrates more autonomy than does Cary's, a situation that might seem surprising in dramatist often criticized for the merely functional nature of his female characters, but which is, in actuality, an appropriate stance for a dramatist concerned with the tragic consequences of individual free choice.

Could Christopher Marlowe be a feminist?

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