

msan

Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

Vol. XI, No. 1, Spring 1991

THEATRICAL MANUSCRIPTS AND THE B-TEXT OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Workshop, Chicago, 1990, by Eric Rasmussen, University of Chicago.



Editors of Doctor Faustus have long been virtually certain that the 1616 quarto, the B-text, does not derive from a theatrical manuscript. In spite of the theatrical specificity of many of the stage directions in the B-text (which generally call for props, special effects, and music, whereas the counterpart directions in the A-text provide bare entrances), Sir Walter Greg asserted with some confidence that the printer's copy for the B-text was "definitely . . . not a promptbook," and Fredson Bowers concurred, "it was

clearly not the promptbook." These largely undocumented assurances notwithstanding, a fresh examination of the specific details of the B1 quarto of Faustus reveals that the B-text does, in fact, display a number of characteristics found in surviving Renaissance playbooks.

The systematic censorship of the B-text, in which several references to God are altered to the less objectionable heaven, is identical to the type of expurgation found in playbooks that were altered for performance after 1606 when parliament passed the Acte to Restraine Abuses of Players which forbade the use of "the holy name of God" in stage plays. On the first page of the playbook of Thomas of Woodstock, for example, which was evidently used for the playhouse from the early 1590s until well into the seventeenth century, god is deleted and heaven interlined by a later hand.

In the A-text, mid-scene entrance directions are generally centered, but in the B-text these same directions are printed in the right hand margins. Greg himself observed that one of the "general characteristics of promptbooks" is that mid-scene entrances are "often relegated to the right margin without any break in the text," a feature seen repeatedly, for example, in the playbook of the anonymous Charlemagne (c. 1600). Moreover, mid-scene entrance directions are sometimes found in the right margins in plays that were apparently printed from theatrical manuscripts, such as the texts of Macbeth and Hamlet in the Shakespeare First Folio.

The cumulative evidence of the placement of the B-text stage directions, the theatrical nature of these directions, and the evident censorship effectively challenge Bower's claim that "the general characteristics" of the B-text" do not suggest a prompt-book." On the contrary, the resemblances between the B1 quarto and the dozen or so extant playbooks from the period suggest that the B-text of Faustus may well derive from a late theatrical manuscript of Marlowe's play.

NOTES AND QUERIES

John Shawcross, University of Kentucky, passes along the following information concerning a recent Romanian edition of Marlowe which he has received from Florentin Toma: Christopher Marlowe. Teatru. Tamerlan Cel Mare, Evreul Din Malta, Tragica Istorie a Doctorului Faust, Eduard al II-Lea. Traduceri Leon Levitchi, Andrei Bantas, and Florentin Toma. Note de Leon Levitchi si Andrei Bantas. Prefatã si repere cronologice de Leon Levitchi. Bucuresti: Editura Univers, 1988. The text used for the translations into Romanian is the Everyman's Library, 1967. The contents are "Christopher Marlowe--Viata si Opera," by Leon Levitchi, pp. 5-26; a chronology, pp. 27-30; Tamburlaine, Part I, translated by Levitchi; Tamburlaine, Part II, translated by Levitchi and Toma; The Jew of Malta, translated by Bantas and Toma, Dr. Faustus, translated by Levitchi; and Edward II, translated by Toma and Bantas. Notes are minimal, generally identifying such references as the rivers of Hell (in Tamburlaine) or the legend of Cadmus (in Faustus).

A feature of our "Notes and Queries" column could be to identify Marlowe resources in university libraries. Please let us know the titles of M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations on Marlowe at your institution, especially those that are not listed in DAI. Include the following information: 1. Name of degree candidate; 2. Degree, and year granted (or whether it is still in progress); 3. Name of awarding institution; 4. Title of Dissertation.

MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Constance B. Kuriyama, President
Sara M. Deats, Vice President
Laurie E. Maguire, Secretary
Robert A. Logan, Treasurer
Bruce E. Brandt, Membership Chairman and
MSA Newsletter Editor
Paul W. White, MSA Book Reviews Editor

All business and organizational correspondence except for membership 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 10, 1991. 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

© MSA: All rights reserved to authors.

MISAPPROPRIATING FUNDS:
MARLOWE'S EDWARD II AND
AN ECONOMY OF EROS

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Meeting, Chicago, 1990, by Steven Bruhm, McGill University.



Recent criticism on Marlowe's Edward II has discussed the problem of separating gender preference in Renaissance England from a larger political question of sedition and class structure. This essay analyses that inseparability in strictly economic terms, in an attempt to explain why homophobia in the Renaissance was a particularly thorny problem for Marlowe. I argue that gender preference and class are not only inseparable in Judaeo-Christian history but, as demonstrated by Edward II, have always been antagonistic and incompatible. The antagonism is depicted in terms of conflicting economies. Edward's relation to his minion Gaveston is figured in terms of gifts, material and emotional gifts which, in the theory of Marcel Mauss, constitute an erotic and interpersonal bond. However, while these gifts are part of a personal, libidinal economy, they are circumscribed and controlled by the political economy. This economy, marked by a developing market exchange, demands a balancing of accounts in which all debts are paid,

debts such as those incurred by Edward in his material and sexual "extravagances" with Gaveston. This overwriting of the libidinal economy by the political one of balanced exchange establishes a definition of homoerotic desire as a love which refuses to pay its debt. It is this definition, reified by Renaissance bourgeois capitalism, that has done much to define the construction of masculinity and male erotic desire in the present day.

THE POLITICS OF
MARLOWE BIOGRAPHY

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Workshop, Chicago, 1990, by Rebecca Bushnell, University of Pennsylvania.



The documentary trail left by Christopher Marlowe offers some of the best evidence we have of a sixteenth-century playwright's religious and political opinions and objectives, yet many critics still hesitate to link the plays and life, or insist that Marlowe himself remained a detached observer of the political events that raged around him. This paper explores the impulse, even among historical critics, to erase Marlowe the writer or at least to deny his politics, and suggests some reasons

for reinstating him as a political voice.

Tucker Brooke, in his biography of Marlowe, cautioned that we should not over-interpret the documents and should instead look at the plays' and poems' beauty, which suggests that Marlowe could not possibly have been a political radical. In his effort to construct a conservative Marlowe, in turn, Roy Battenhouse, treated the Baines document itself as a kind of fictional text or "literary creation." But more recent scholars interested in history have also detached the playtext from a politically committed writer. Simon Shepherd limits his use of the name "Marlowe" to "the name that appears appended to certain playtexts." In his introduction to Urry's Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury, Andrew Butcher focuses on the writer's life, but as social historian he seems more concerned with how the culture shaped Marlowe: his analysis produces a Marlowe who was "peculiarly ambivalent" and socially "uncommitted."

What is at stake now, in locating a man, Marlowe, in a play, in history, and in political life? Foucault's influential severing of text and author challenges the image of a political Marlowe who freely and intentionally spoke the blasphemies alleged by Baines and who wrote the heresies enunciated by Tamburlaine. In veering away from literary intentionality, these scholars have suppressed our speaking of his political intentions. But if, in Marlowe's case, we abandon the question of "What difference does it make who is speaking," we cease to confront the problem of how, when, and why people--and playwrights--articulated dissent in early modern England. Further, how can we stop worrying about authorship when the people of Marlowe's time worried so much about it, especially in his case?

THREE REVIEWS

1. Hamlet on the Mat

Hamlet. Performed on PBS, November 2, 1990. Directed by Kevin Kline. With Diane Venora (Ophelia), Peter Francis

James (Horatio), Dana Ivey (Gertrude), Brian Murray (Claudius), Josef Sommer (Polonius).

Directed by and starring Kevin Kline, this production first appeared at the Public Theater of the New York Shakespeare Festival produced by Joe Papp. Its origins and Kline's persona as a movie star have influenced the acting, staging, gestures, and body language. Kline proved he can easily go "over the top" in A Fish Called Wanda, but here he carefully restrains himself and his cast in their delivery of the lines and in the bare staging. On television the scenery would be fairly limited to begin with, but Kline has stripped the stage of almost all props except bare pillars which dominate most scenes. There are no sight lines or horizons created; the play is staged claustrophobically with a kind of mist hovering around the stage creating a sense that we are involved with the minds of the characters which are revealed to us up close. The costumes are modern dress for the most part, fancy suits, white shirts and slacks, and ornate gowns on festive occasions. Only the Ghost wears Renaissance armor, as if he is an anachronism returning to a later time with the truth about the past. In sum, the production is a stripped-down, bare, and abstract American rendition of the great play in which the lines are delivered slowly and straightforwardly with very little poetry, resembling a Shakespearean Our Town.

What follows is a run through of the performance which divides some of its more physical moments into the following types: 1. the striving touch; 2. the supported swoon; 3. the French apache dance, replete with tossing and wrestling with the partner.

When Hamlet encounters his father on the platform, he falls to the ground in awe and reaches out his hand to touch the Ghost's, a gesture repeated more emphatically in the bedroom scene with Gertrude. After the Ghost departs, Kline rolls around on the stage in anguish, holds his overcharged heart, climbs to the top of the parapet, raises his arms like Rocky, and then falls back into the arms of

Horatio and Marcellus, who miraculously are stationed in the exact spot to catch the swooning hero. Similarly, after Claudius's guilty reaction to the play-within-the-play, Hamlet once more swoons backwards, in triumph and relief, into Horatio's waiting arms.

While Horatio is cast in a supporting role, Ophelia emerges as a pummeled partner in a frenetic apache dance. During his anguished delivery of "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I" soliloquy, Hamlet falls on the ground before the raised platform of the stage on which the play-within-the-play will be performed. He kneels and then twirls around as if caught in a whirlpool, ending in a fetal position as he beats his hands on the ground. This is just a warmup for his tempestuous scene with Ophelia while being spied upon by the King and Polonius. Hamlet shakes Ophelia like a rag doll as he screams at her. When she attempts to embrace him, he twirls her around and throws her away as in an apache dance.

The height of the wrestling gymnastics is achieved in the bedroom scene between Hamlet and his embattled mother. There is no bed in the bedroom, just red curtains and a large red, rectangular mat on which the scene will be played. Hamlet and his mother go to the mat as he berates her for her "o'er hasty marriage." He shakes and throws her across the mat in righteous anger. When the Ghost appears above them to prevent the attack, Hamlet reaches out to touch him, but Gertrude holds him back, presumably fearing that the Ghost will come onto the mat to pummel her too. Throughout the violent movements on the mat, Polonius's body is visible in the background and becomes part of the low angle stage action.

Ophelia is not safe from such manhandling even after her death. In the churchyard as she lies in an open casket, Laertes rushed forward to grasp her body as he gives vent to his grief and anger. However, not to be outdone, Hamlet raises Ophelia from the casket and embraces her. All of this frantic movement and cavorting comes to rest in the image of the dead Hamlet being

carried from the stage with his arms theatrically outstretched, straining to touch someone. Because of the deliberate quality of the actors' speech, the lines were totally understandable, an advantage for the large television audience. But the repeated frenetic and violent action occurring on the ground in so many of the scenes soon undercuts the seriousness and dignity of the verbal texture.

2. Zeffirelli's Hamlet

Hamlet. Directed by Franco Zeffirelli. Starring Mel Gibson (Hamlet), Alan Bates (Claudius), Glenn Close (Gertrude), Helen Bonham-Carter (Ophelia), Ian Holm (Polonius), and Paul Scofield (Ghost).

Franco Zeffirelli has directed a bawdy and sumptuous Taming of the Shrew (1967), a romantic, teenaged Romeo and Juliet (1968), and a magnificent Otello (1986), and now he has essayed a box-office Hamlet with Mad Max and Lethal Weapon Mel Gibson and Glen Close of The Big Chill and Fatal Attraction. This Hamlet follows directly upon Kevin Kline's Hamlet, which is more faithful to the original text, running to over three hours, while Zeffirelli's Hamlet, which lops off about half the text, runs to a little more than two hours. Kline's production moves at a deliberate pace, limited and in some sense helped by being played on a stage for TV cameras, but Zeffirelli, as is his wont, has produced a sweeping, sprawling version shot on location at a magnificent castle, which emerges a living presence with its cornices, corners, and crypts. However, the spectacle overwhelms the truncated text, with the result that the movie is definitely not Hamlet by Shakespeare, but as adapted (i.e. abridged) by Christopher De Vore and Zeffirelli.

So much of the text is cut that we do not experience the full personalities of the characters and their relationships. Horatio is practically mute, reduced to a grim hanger-on who becomes less important than the insistent spies, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. More importantly, Hamlet is transformed into a petulant, agile,

energetic, and forceful character who is in charge of the action, often supervising it from a parapet above the lesser mortals. Gibson speaks the lines he has well enough, although in some of the soliloquies and explosive exchanges he loses control of his breath and bites off the words, but the angst of the character disappears in the rapid flow of the movie.

The truncation is not as disastrous to the other characters, whose personalities can be established in fewer strokes. However, even here I am not sure whether the movie establishes their characters or if I have filled them in based on prior knowledge. Gertrude emerges as a frightened woman who responds childishly and sexually to all of the men in her life. She moves easily from her grief for King Hamlet, as shown in the added first scene of his funeral, to rapture with Claudius with whom she smiles, smooches, and flits around the castle. She strives to avoid recognition of the true reasons for Hamlet's continuing anguish until the violent confrontation in her bedroom and the fatal duel. On the other hand, Ophelia never achieves any signs of happiness; she is always controlled by the men around her. After the death of Polonius, she appears swollen with tears, disheveled, and pathetic in her vulnerability and madness, always a pawn never emerging into womanhood.

Claudius, as superbly played by Alan Bates, is an aging, jowly Machiavellian roué who takes what he wants and who will do anything to keep his position and pleasures. Finally, Polonius is a ferret-like, little man, a foolish and repulsive factotum who scuttles around to do Claudius's bidding and dies behind a rich brocade arras set like a stage curtain.

Zeffirelli works hard to create a cinematic flow by having characters not stand and recite but move easily as they speak from one place to another in a natural progression, or by interrupting the dialogue with visual action until the dialogue is resumed. Despite Zeffirelli's attempts to establish a fluid and connected drama, the scenes remain isolated and detached because we

have not been given sufficient motivation to understand their connections.

The play-within-the-play scene contained a superb confrontation between Hamlet and Gertrude and a frightened, angry, blustering Claudius. The bedroom confrontation between Hamlet and Gertrude moves inevitably toward the bed where Hamlet attacks his mother with growing ferocity, mimicking violent intercourse as he lies on top of her and smashes the bed in anger. She, in response to his anger and her own fear and guilt, kisses him lovingly on the lips, emphasizing the Oedipal conflict à la Olivier.

Zeffirelli also follows Olivier's lead in placing the "To be or not to be" soliloquy after the scene when Ophelia and Hamlet are spied upon by Claudius and Polonius. Hamlet sees them planning their action, so he knows beforehand, as in Olivier, that his "private" scene is being invaded, and he both plays to the unseen audience and loses himself in his anger toward Ophelia. After this explosion, he retires to the crypt where his father was buried, and there in the stillness he recites the famous lines, isolated with death as represented by the suit of armor visible behind his shoulder throughout the scene.

Overall, Zeffirelli's Hamlet is a telegraphic version for those who do not want Hamlet in its entirety. The spectacle and pace of the scenes overwhelm the words. About a four-hour version with a more effective balance between text and spectacle would have created a memorable cinematic Hamlet.

3. Wit and Science.

Performed at Shaw Theatre, University of Western Michigan. Directed by Ann Faulkner. May 12, 1990.

John Redford's morality play Wit and Science (c. 1540) provided a fitting entertainment for the twenty-fifth Medieval Conference at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Performed by the estimable Chicago Medieval Players, resident company of the University of Chicago, the production ably exhibits the strengths

of Redford's play as the presenter of highly allegorical action which conveys insightful human dimensions.

The Shaw Theater contains a huge proscenium stage which works to great advantage when the characters wander around in pursuit of their goals. Wit's life does seem at these times to be the dark journey towards his confrontations with the giant Tediousness. But when Wit stops wandering and is reconciled with Science, the huge stage dwarfs them and the more intimate action seems insignificant.

The props, which play a central role in defining the allegorical action, were used expertly by the actors. The relative size of Tediousness and Wit's swords helps to underscore the alternating meaning of their confrontations. When the cocky Wit first encounters the Giant Tediousness, he wields a small sword which is ineffective against his enemy's broadsword. However, during the return bout, Wit carries an enormous sword, while Tediousness's smaller weapon proves ineffective against the strokes which ultimately behead him offstage.

Visual and clothing images were also clearly delineated by the actor's deft use of props. The emergence of a responsible selfhood is central to Wit's journey toward marriage with Science. Wit carries a locket containing his picture, which he consults after insisting that he has not been changed into a fool by Idleness. Claiming that he looks the same as before, Wit peruses his lineaments, checks his habiliments, and sees the marks of Ignorance on his face and the latter's cloak on his back. Realization of his foolishness sets in and he is beset by Shame, who enters wearing high heels and dressed in a scarlet gown and obscuring hood and proceeds to scourge him.

Overall, the troupe did a good job in conveying the simple action with clean, broad styles and clear delivery of the rhymes. At times, however, they chose to add some anachronistic flourishes to their lines and body language which tended to undercut the simple morality tenor, as if the actors and

director believe that contemporary audiences can not accept allegory and must be given modern touches, sexual innuendoes, and purposefully misread lines and flat singing. In these instances, the actors invite us to laugh at them and the play, and in asking for such laughter they undercut its simple effectiveness.

Frank Ardolino University of Hawaii

STUDIES IN MARLOWE

- Abel, Douglas. "Directing Doctor Faustus." The Elizabethan Theatre, XI. Ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee. Port Credit, Ontario: Meany, 1990. 215-224.
- Bartels, Emily C. "Malta, the Jew, and the Fictions of Difference: Colonialist Discourse in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta." English Literary Renaissance 20.1 (1990): 1-16.
- Bowers, Rick. "Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great, Part one, IV. i. 47-63." Explicator 48.1 (1989): 4-6.
- Budra, Paul. "Doctor Faustus: Death of a Bibliophile." Connotations 1.1 (March 1991). [The issue will also include a response to Budra by Paul Yachnin: "Doctor Faustus and the Literary System: A Supplementary Response to Paul Budra."]
- Chaudhuri, Sukanta. "Marlowe, Madrigals, and a New Elizabethan Poet." Review of English Studies 39 (1988): 199-216.
- Cook, Ann Jennalie. "The Transformation of Stage Courtship." The Elizabethan Theatre, XI. Ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee. Port Credit, Ontario: Meany, 1990. 155-175.
- Cunningham, Karen. "Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death." PMLA 105 (1990): 209-222.
- Edwards, Philip. "Thrusting Elysium into Hell: The Originality of The Spanish Tragedy." The Elizabethan Theatre, XI. Ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee. Port Credit, Ontario: Meany, 1990. 117-132.
- Fleche, Mary Elizabeth S. "Dispositions of English Renaissance, a Theory of Historical Drama: Marlowe and Shakespeare." Dissertation Abstracts International 50 (1990): 2495A.

- Hibbard, G. R. "From 'Iyging Vaines of Riming Mother Wits' to 'the Spacious Volubilitie of a Drumming Decasillabon.'" The Elizabethan Theatre, XI. Ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee. Port Credit, Ontario: Meany, 1990. 55-73.
- Honan, Park. "Historical Privilege: Ezra Pound, Robert Browning, and 'Kit Marlowe.'" Author's Lives: On Literary Biography and the Arts of Language. New York: St. Martin's, 1990. 211-219.
- Keefer, Michael. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: A 1604 Version Edition. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 1991. [Now available; originally announced for 1990.]
- Kimbrough, Robert. Shakespeare and the Art of Humankindness: The Essay Toward Androgeny. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1990. [Includes Doctor Faustus and Hero and Leander.]
- Lunney, Ruth. "Transforming the Emblematic: The Dramatic Emblem in the Plays of Marlowe." Essays in Theatre (forthcoming, May 1991).
- Marcus, Leah S. "Textual Indeterminacy and Ideological Difference: The Case of Doctor Faustus." Renaissance Drama 20 (1989): 1-29.
- Mead, Stephen X. "Marlowe's Tamburlaine and the Idea of Empire." Works and Days: Essays in the Socio-Historical Dimensions of Literature and the Arts 7.2 (no. 14) (1989): 91-103.
- Merrix, Robert P., and Carole Levin. "Richard II and Edward II: The Structure of Deposition." Shakespeare Yearbook 1 (1990):1-13.
- Ozawa, Hiroshi. "Kajo no Etosu: Tanbalene Daio to Shumatsu-Shiso." Eigo Seinen 134 n.d. [1990]: 626-630.
- Puhvel, Martin. "Mephostophilis's Manipulation of Faustus." English Studies 71 (1990): 1-5.
- Rasmussen, Eric. "The Black Book and the Date of Doctor Faustus." Notes and Queries 37 (1990): 168-170.
- Sahu, N. S. Christopher Marlowe and Theatre of Cruelty and Violence: A Shaping Thought. New Delhi: Associated, 1990.
- Shand, G. B. "Directing Doctor Faustus." The Elizabethan Theatre, XI. Ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee. Port Credit, Ontario: Meany, 1990. 205-214.
- Shapiro, James. "Revisiting Tamburlaine: Henry V as Shakespeare's Belated Armada Play." Criticism 31 (1989): 351-366.
- Singer, Robert Lewis. "The Faust Film Adaptation: A Study in the Interrelationship between Literature and Film." Dissertation Abstracts International 50 (1990): 2890A.
- Smith, Mary Elizabeth. "Hell Strives with Grace: Reflections on the Theme of Providence in Marlowe." The Elizabethan Theatre, XI. Ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee. Port Credit, Ontario: Meany, 1990. 133-154.
- Wilks, John S. The Idea of Conscience in Renaissance Drama. London: Routledge, 1990. [Chapter 6 is on Doctor Faustus.]

MARLOWE IN THE CLASSROOM

Do you teach a course on Marlowe? At undergraduate or at graduate level? As one of a selection of dramatists in a Renaissance drama course? Or in a drama survey course? What plays do you teach? What approaches do you use? What supplementary material do you recommend? How do the students respond?

Please share your teaching experiences (good or bad), anecdotes, and advice with other Marlowe scholars and teachers.

FROM THE EDITOR

Our next issue features additional abstracts from the Chicago meeting, a discussion of Jean Vauthier's The Massacre at Paris, and information about the 1991 meeting in San Francisco.

Responses to the above suggestions for sharing information about Marlovian dissertations and teaching Marlowe will be much appreciated. Film or drama reviews, announcements, and brief articles or notes of interest to Marlovians are always welcome. Please send contributions for the fall issue by October 10, 1991, to Bruce Brandt, Editor, MSAN, English Department, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD 57007.