

msan

Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

Vol. XXI, No. 2, Fall 2001

MSA ANNUAL MEETINGS NEW ORLEANS, 2001

Marlowe and Genre: Breaking New Ground

Thursday, 27 December, 5:15-6:30 p.m., Salon 828, Sheraton. Presiding: Bruce E. Brandt, South Dakota State University.

- 1 "View but His Picture in This Tragic Glass': Marlowe's Moving Images and the Emergence of Early Modern Theater," Hilary J. Binda, Evergreen State College.
- 2 "The Ovidian 'Recusatio' in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*," Pamela Royston Macfie, University of the South.
- 3 "Consummate Play: Genre, Gender, and Sexuality in *The Passionate Shepherd* and *Tamburlaine*," Judith D. Haber, Tufts University.

Doctor Faustus: Confronting Key Issues

Friday, 28 December, 8:30-9:45 a.m., Borgne, Sheraton. Presiding: Robert A. Logan, University of Hartford.

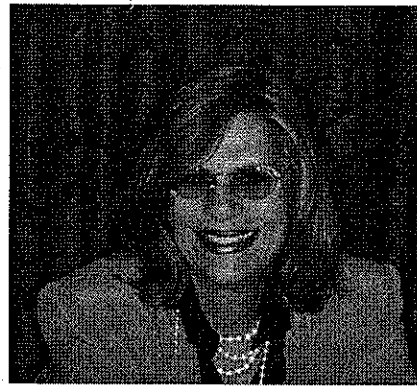
- 1 "The Space of Writing in *Doctor Faustus*," Georgia E. Brown, Cambridge University
- 2 "The Clock Strikes Eleven: Language and the Power of Faustus's Final Moments," Jeffrey Galle, University of Louisiana, Monroe.
- 3 "Re-presenting Helen of Troy," Laurie E. Maguire, Oxford University.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Marlowe Society solicits papers for its December 2002 open-topic session at the MLA Convention in New York. Send abstracts or papers of fifteen-minute length (no e-mail submissions) to Professor Robert A. Logan, MSA President, 23 Dockerel Road, Tolland, CT 06084-3602. Deadline: March 1, 2002.

EDMUND KEAN AND *THE JEW OF MALTA*

An abstract of the paper presented by Stephanie Moss, University of South Florida, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and Dramaturgy," Washington, DC, 2000.



Stephanie Moss

On April 24, 1818, Edmund Kean revived Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, a play that, according to Kean's biographer F.W. Hawkins, was the most "hazardous experiment" in his career. Hawkins's unspoken logic emanates from the cultural anxieties of nineteenth-century imperatives, imperatives that conflicted with the play's edginess and plastic morality. The values of the Romantic artists, after all, were based on spontaneity, passion, freedom, and reform—precepts explicitly undermined by Marlowe's career. In order to play a "Romantic" Barabas, therefore, Kean had to turn him into a "noble alien monstrously wronged and magnificently revenged." He expurgated much of the racial rancor, adding a prologue expressly stating that there was no intention to stigmatize. In May 1818, *Blackwood's* responded, praising Kean for a production that had moral purpose, one in which Barabas was not a mere monster. Indeed *Blackwood's* asserted, "There is no such thing in nature—least of all in human nature."

MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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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. The deadline for the Spring issue is March 1 and for the Fall issue Sept. 1. Send inquiries, announcements, and submissions to:

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

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In order to radicalize the play according to the values of his time, Kean had to register humanity in his acting. The "point system" that had dominated the eighteenth century created "nature" through portrait-like movement, momentary mimetic tableaux. For example, David Garrick portrayed astonishment in Hamlet by using a mechanical wig that made his hair appear to stand on end at the appearance of the Ghost. In order to make Barabas "human," then, Kean first had to humanize the acting style, infusing it with "Romantic" fire and passion. Nevertheless, he rejected his designation as a spontaneous, inspired, and "natural" actor. As he himself stated: "Because my style is easy and natural, they think I don't study and talk about the 'sudden impulse of genius.' There is no such thing as impulsive acting; all is premeditated and studied beforehand."

In rehearsal, the actor practices to "perfection" the movement and outward expression of a character. In this intellectual process each step must be thought out and each line interpreted. Once this is mastered, acting becomes kinesthetic, locked into the body rather than intellectualized. In a similar manner, one might dial a familiar number on the telephone pad but often not remember the actual numbers. Bruce Smith, in *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, "imagines" the experience of the body by elevating the felt over the observed. I will "imagine" the internal experience of Kean's Barabas in order to demonstrate that—despite his rejection of the organic, spontaneous, and unpremeditated impulses prized by Romantic artists—Kean's acting was passionate and "in the moment," felt not thought. In particular, I will focus on Kean's resolution of Marlowe's Vice/Machievel/Jew with Romantic concepts of Democracy.



The Murder of Ramus and the (Mis)recognition of Rhetorical Power in *The Massacre at Paris*

The murder of Peter Ramus in scene IX of *The Massacre at Paris* is an odd sequence of philosophical banter that, cast into the middle of a massacre, is somewhat baffling. At first glance the Ramus scene appears divorced from easy appropriation into either the logic of the plot or the fold of critical concerns regarding the play. Indeed, so troubling is the murder of Ramus that nobody has published any type of lengthy reading of the scene since John Ronald Glenn's 1973 essay.¹ Yet, if we understand Guise's "tragedy" not just as the product of hubris and the inevitable fate of the Machiavellian villain, but as the product of his mistakenly thinking of power as representational, discursive, and rhetorical, we see the murder of Ramus not as outside the trajectory of the drama, but as a focused consideration of the logic that explains how Guise misunderstands his own power.

While it is factually accurate that Ramus was murdered in the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre, it is almost certain that Guise was not personally involved in his murder. So beyond the basic fact of Ramus's death the entire scene is pure fiction.² Marlowe goes so far in the scene as to include Ramus's intellectual assistant, Taleus (Talon) who had been dead for a decade by the time of the massacre. In situating the Ramus scene within the logic of the play, it is what Ramus represents in the philosophical and rhetorical hierarchy of early modern intellectual circles that is important, not what he represents within the religious politics of the historical massacre where representing what "really" happened would be important to a potentially blood-thirsty anti-papist audience.

In terms of philosophical dialogue, Guise argues that Ramus "didst never sound anything to the depth" (ix 26). As Glenn points out, while Guise appears historically correct, considering Ramus's tremendous reputation in the sixteenth-century for both his challenges to Aristotelianism and his transforming of rhetoric, the statement reflects more on Guise than Ramus. Such a hasty dismissal of Ramus is not quite a reasonable contemporary stance. For such a bold position to be deemed legitimate it would need a more elaborate rationale than is provided. So we have a scene here that quite consciously puts into debate the era's dominant religious, dogmatic discourse (in Guise) with Ramus as the figure of an emergent, oppositional philosophic and rhetorical position. Despite Guise being--in a sense--the "victor" this is a debate in which Guise is transparently the fool. Yet, this is so not because Ramus outwits Guise, but because Guise cannot see the connection between his own physical power and his imagined rhetorical persuasiveness.

The actual conversation between Guise and Ramus is balanced like a school debate beginning with Guise making a fourteen line argument and Ramus responding with thirteen lines of his own. Since Ramus is going to be murdered, and he is trying to avoid that fate, he is in no position to refute Guise. Instead Ramus uses his last words to explain his work, get in a quick attack on the "Sorbonnists," and apologize to Aristotle saying that "he that despiseth him can ne'er /Be good in logic or philosophy" (ix 49-50). Within the transparent fallacies of Guise's remarks, the philosophical critique of rhetorical power takes place. After Ramus asks Guise to explain "Wherein hath Ramus been so offensive" (24), Guise responds *not* by addressing Ramus's Protestantism (the crime for which he is being killed) but by pseudo-philosophically, saying,

Marry, sir, in having a smack in all,
And yet didst never sound anything to
the depth.

Was it not thou that scoff'dst the
Organon,

¹ Glenn, John Ronald. "The Martyrdom of Ramus in Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*." *Papers on Language and Literature* vol. 9 (1973) 365-379.

² See Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1958), where he points out that Ramus was murdered "by persons unknown" (29).

And said it was a heap of vanities?
 He that will be a flat dichotomist,
 And seen in nothing but epitomes,
 Is in your judgement thought a learned
 man;
 And he, forsooth, must go and preach in
 Germany,
 Excepting against doctors' axioms,
 And *ipse dixi* with this quiddity,
Argumentum testimonii est inartificiale.
 To contradict which, I say; Ramus shall
 die.
 How answer you that? Your *nego*
 argumentum
 Cannot serve, sirrah. Kill him.

(ix 25-38)

The first two lines make note of the fact that Ramus had a wide intellectual influence, but rather than being a salient critique of Ramus as superficial, Guise's comments indicate his own anti-intellectualism. The five lines that follow make clear that Ramus criticized the authority of Aristotle and are also the lines wherein Guise attempts a philosophical "challenge" of sorts to Ramus. In the remaining seven lines Guise makes an argument against Ramus that begins with a personal attack and ends with the call for Ramus's murder. The first of these lines refers to the fact that Ramus had on numerous occasions fled Paris as a result of the type of dogmatic terrorism being exhibited by Guise. As a result, Guise's way of arguing against Ramus's critique of dogmatic authority in logical arguments is to ridicule the fact that his own dogmatism caused Ramus to flee France. Guise's attempted refutation of Ramus is a simple case of saying the-sword-is-mightier-than-the-pen. So while Guise's ruthlessness makes it so he cannot lose the "debate," he proves Ramus's point about the artificiality of argument by authority. Indeed, it is Guise who is here incapable of "sound[ing] anything to the depth." The artificiality imposed by his dogmatic authority makes it clear that Guise's critique of Ramus never gets past an *ad hominem* attack.

This scene is compelling precisely because the performance of Ramus's death negates the actual rationale for his murder; or rather, the play simply avoids considering Ramus's murder for what it historically and politically was: a murder resulting from Ramus's Protestantism. Instead, the murder becomes situated within a larger consideration of the manufacturing of power and control in which the prioritization of discursive strategies is seen as transparently self-indulgent and false. It is exactly Guise's physical power that allows him to banter with Ramus in the first place, let alone imagine himself as the witty victor independent of his physical power. In the dialogue between Ramus and Guise it is not simply that Guise is a ruthless murderer; rather in this murder he articulates the basic model for thinking about the relationship between power and discursivity that explains the central problem of the play.

The way this works, and what is ironic here for Guise, is that precisely at the moment in the play where he is consciously engaged in a consideration of the importance of rhetoric and the limits of authority both as and through discourse, he never relates this discourse to his own status. In this dialogue where Guise takes time to converse with a victim of the massacre he is discursively overmatched while not even allowing Ramus really to speak. Yet when he overcomes Ramus with his "real," non-discursive power he is so wrapped up in an understanding of his power as discursive--as the product of his ability to respond to Ramus with rhetoric of his own--that he does not transfer his actual refuting/murdering of Ramus into any understanding of the principles of his own power and authority. Furthermore, Guise does not realize that, by implication, he has actually lost the philosophical argument in winning the physical battle.

So it is Guise's concern for rhetorical persuasiveness in the interest of establishing and maintaining power that explains why he bothers with such a curious and comparatively long debate. Significantly, the Ramus scene is a discussion that does not actually ever take up the specific crime of religion for which Ramus

is guilty, but stays focused within the philosophical and rhetorical range that explains Guise's misunderstanding of the constitution of his power throughout the play.

Stephen Schillinger
University of Washington

"I'LL PLAY DIANA": CHRISTOPHER
MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS* AND THE
"ACTAEON COMPLEX"

An abstract of the paper presented by Christopher Wessman, New Jersey City University, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and Dramaturgy," Washington, DC, 2000.



Christopher Wessman

As both playwright and spy, Christopher Marlowe was not only an overreacher, as Harry Levin has argued, but also an "overpeerer." This unusual term, which the dramatist appropriated from the Actaeon myth in Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, initially described one who stands above and looks over or down upon. However, "overpeering" in Marlowe broadens to include spying for political power and sexual pleasure, as well as the emotionally charged aspects of both watching and crafting theatrical displays—often producing imagined orgies of voyeurism, exhibitionism, and violence. He evokes a charged realm of visual observation and display, and the fascination with forbidden vision is central to his work. To understand the illicit sight in Marlowe, especially in relation to his career in Elizabethan espionage, it is necessary

to appreciate the dynamics of prurient gazing and the myth of Diana and Actaeon that he uses as a paradigm of "overpeering." Taboo yet numinous visions pervade the self-conscious, vivid spectacles in his drama.

Doctor Faustus includes many of the central concerns also evident in *The Massacre at Paris*, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, *Hero and Leander*, and particularly *Edward II*. Espionage and voyeuristic sexual spying loom large; and there too classical myths operate as vehicles for the exploration of such issues. In fact, the figures of Diana and Actaeon, used suggestively in *Dido* and *Hero*, recur resoundingly throughout *Doctor Faustus*. However, this play not only goes further in the nature of its engagement with myth in general and Actaeon in particular; it also takes the tale in different directions with deeper ramifications. Following the clues of Marlowe himself, the "overpeering" of secret surveillance and voyeurism in *Faustus* can be profitably examined by focusing upon the Diana and Actaeon myth. Playing with this multivalent text, Marlowe connects Diana's divine power (and Actaeon's transgression) to necromantic and theatrical prowess, interrogating and ultimately problematizing divinity, magic, and theater.

At one point *Faustus* declares that he will "play Diana" (IV.ii.53); this paper explores what it means to be a "play Diana." In a drama in which the eye is titillated and finally trapped by ubiquitous metatheatrical displays, I echo the protagonist's query, "What mean's this show?" (I.v.82). To consider such questions, first it is necessary to look not only at Marlowe's abundant and highly-charged "Actaeonesque" language and imagery, but to see it with and against Ovid, Golding, and its mythographic history from George Sandys in the 1630's to Leonard Barkan in the 1980's. This first step includes application and assessment of Jean-Paul Sartre's "Actaeon complex," involving the visual possession of knowledge, a "violation by sight" in which "to know is to devour with the eyes." Then I demonstrate Marlowe's linking of myth to magic, using Bruno, Agrippa, and Mirandola to show the connections between

"Cynthian" conjuring and metamorphosis. Finally the inescapable connotations of theater will be added to the mix: Marlowe's magical displays, including those of Actaeonesque vision and vengeance, serve for delight, then distraction, and at last fatal self-deception. Somewhat mysteriously, the myth leads the playwright to reflect—often harshly—upon his own identity and theatrical form.

MAN FLY: SAM SHEPARD'S ADAPTATION OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

An abstract of the paper presented by Johan Callens, Free University of Brussels, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and Dramaturgy," Washington, DC, 2000.



Johan Callens

This paper demonstrates how the unpublished and unproduced script *Man Fly* (1975) prolongs Shepard's exploration of national identity, triggered by his stay in England (1971-74). Apart from *The Bodyguard* (1973, 1978), it forms the only example of a systematic adaptation—a self-reflexive and fairly faithful one at that—with obvious ramifications for Shepard's other works produced and published at the same time, including *Angel City*, *Seduced*, and *The Sad Lament of Pecos Bill on the Eve of Killing His Wife*. Building on extensive Marlowe scholarship, this paper touches on issues of gender (patriarchy and its contestation, homophobia), the mythic subtext (Icarus, Tantalus, Actaeon), and variations on the sublime (the postmodern and rhetorical sublimes), to which the play's central dialectic

of expansion and limitation, salvation and damnation, gives rise. Finally, the fracturing of language by the deferral of the signified, fracturing of the stage as split level, and fracturing of the poet protagonist within unresolved Jungian individuation, are shown to reflect the division of the audience into a disparate collection of believers and disbelievers.

**Operation Marlowe: *Edward II*, *The Massacre at Paris*
Sydney, March 7 to March 24, 2001**

"Operation Marlowe" was the major performance project in 2001 for the Australian Theatre for Young People (*atyp*). An ensemble of 19 young actors performed two of Marlowe's plays in repertory over a three-week season, with nine performances of *Edward II* and eight of a "reinvented" version of *The Massacre at Paris*. The company promoted the plays as "deeply contemporary" and "startlingly provocative," with director David Berthold commenting in the Programme Notes that this was "a rare opportunity for a company of young actors to mount an expedition into one of the great untapped heartlands of the Renaissance theatre." It was indeed a rare opportunity for "Downunder" lovers of Marlowe, including a once-in-a-lifetime chance, perhaps, to see a *Massacre* of any kind on the stage.

Both productions were contemporary, provocative, and youthfully enthusiastic, but also very different in performance style and effect: the *Edward* powerful and sensual, the *Massacre* irreverent and macabre. Both were staged within the gracious but elderly Newtown Theatre using a low, elliptical acting area with four entry points and tiered seating on three sides. In the centre and recessed into the floor was an oval "bath" with patterned cover, used for sewer and dungeon and sundry murders, but also for a general, celebratory orgy mid-way through the *Massacre*.

Berthold's production of *Edward II* aimed for strength and clarity. It developed its intensity from the directness of its emotion, from clear

verse speaking, and from its pace: brisk, restless movement on the bare stage, pausing only for soliloquies. Lachlan Chapman played Edward as passionate and wilful, committing himself without reserve to love or suffering. He was matched in sensuality by Gaveston (Alexander Lewis), a muscular and insolent figure. Isabella (Georgina Hart), attired in silk and lace, lusted and schemed with cool elegance. Young Edward (Mark Franklin) was his father's son, emotional and impulsive. The barons, in business suits with daggers strapped to their thighs, were earnestly contemptuous of the king and his minions. There was little pomp and ceremony (an armchair sufficed for the throne), but some effective exploitation of visual ironies. The bath-dungeon remained uncovered during the young king's coronation, and Edward's body lay in its soiled rags on stage during Mortimer's speech of triumph.

David Berthold sees *Edward* as a young persons' play, and the young actors achieved a convincing portrayal of intense desire and suffering, of personal conflicts and confrontations. They were less successful in suggesting the political dimensions to Edward's story, with Mortimer (Hugo Bowne-Anderson) in his neat suit perhaps needing more menace and authority. There was little sense too of the intergenerational conflict between king and peers, with the young barons, male and female, lacking a sense of worldly wisdom and experience.

The Massacre at Paris was "reimagined" for the *atyp* production by 21-year old playwright, Tommy Murphy. The resulting mix of black comedy, farce, stage musical, Monty Python, satire on suburbia, lavish ceremony, and lavish gore (one reviewer warned against sitting in the front row) gave full scope to the irreverent, youthful energies of the ensemble. The material was more Murphy than Marlowe, and yet Marlowe's poetry was still there amidst the colloquial prose. Significant aspects of the older play were illuminated, including the theatrical impact of switching between ceremony and violence. There were solemn processions and elaborate rituals and pauses for musical numbers

with choruses of monks or butchers or minions (the "Marsellaise" proved grimly appropriate to celebrate the massacre).

Murphy's *Massacre* was unashamedly transgressive, an exuberant excursion through social taboos and political and theatrical cliches. The play offered court politics at its most Machiavellian and cynical with claims of "peace in our time." The resolute Queen Margaret (Zoe Ella) is the ultimate victor, having rejected her "true" love, Guise's Duchess. Jeremy Waters was a manic, narcissistic Guise along with Lucy Wirth, a voluptuously evil Queen Mother, chiding her "little Charlie" before offering him her poisoned breast. This unfortunate Charles IX (Phillip McMahon) indulges in sadomasochism. His successor (Anjou, Michael Pontin) plays with his minions (there is memorable business with feather dusters and little silver scooters).

At the same time Murphy develops the *Massacre's* glimpses of ordinary people. As he comments, "Marlowe loves the people at the top who reap the rewards for administering the greatest massacre in French history. I have asked what the local butchers, singing nuns, Auntie Joans, slice makers and Deborahs were doing that night.." Some of these additional characters are farcical or extravagant, but in the midst of the absurdity and chaos, some images approach pathos: innocents set upon by Butchers, intimate domestic scenes disrupted, a dead baby, bloody night attire, a woman lost and searching for her home.

For those who like their comedy black, *atyp's* production of *The Massacre at Paris* was immensely entertaining. The satire may have been less than subtle, the perversions overdone at times, and the thread of the story occasionally lost in tortuous political machinations, but the brisk pace of Berthold's direction kept the disparate elements under control. This was exuberant, rewarding theatre, a showcase with *Edward II* for the talents of this youthful ensemble. Marlowe, I suspect, would have approved.

Ruth Lunney
University of Newcastle, Australia

RECENT STUDIES IN MARLOWE

- Brown, Eric C. "Violence, Ritual, and the Execution of Time in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*." *Cahiers Elisabethains* 58 (Oct 2000): 15-29.
- Burton, Jonathan. "Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30 (Winter 2000): 125-56.
- Cheney, Patrick. "Recent Studies in Marlowe (1987-1998)." *English Literary Renaissance* 31 (Spring 2001): 288-328.
- Hester, M. Thomas. "Like a spied Spie': Donne's Baiting of Marlowe." *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*. Ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2000. 24-43.
- Hutchings, Mark. "In Thrace; brought up in Arabia': *The Jew of Malta*, II.iii.131." *Notes and Queries* 47 (Dec. 2000): 428-30.
- Lunney, Ruth. *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama Before 1595*. Manchester UP. Forthcoming 2002.
- Merriam, Thomas. "Marlowe and Nashe in *Dido Queen of Carthage*." *Notes and Queries* 47 (Dec. 2000): 425-28.

ROMA GILL: IN MEMORIAM

It was with great sadness that the Marlowe Society learned of the death of a beloved friend and fellow Marlovian, Roma Gill. According to her friend Sandra Stork, who was in attendance at the time, Roma "died very peacefully in her sleep on Friday, August 3, at 3:40 a.m."

As everyone who encountered Roma knows, she was an exceptional human being, one who never allowed her struggle with multiple sclerosis (she wryly called it her "condition") dampen her spirits or prevent her from becoming a justly renowned scholar. I shall miss her keen intelligence, her wit, her

naughty sense of humor, her fearlessness, her courage, and her generous, loving nature.

Roma was always forthright in her opinions, whether about *Hero and Leander* as a completed poem or the superiority of the *Faustus* A-Text over the B-Text, often because it brought forth the kind of lively scholarly discussions she relished. In all her scholarship, she was painstakingly precise, thoughtful, persnickity, and sensitive. Not only did she have an enormous influence in the editing of Marlowe and Shakespeare for younger students, but she was also one of the most widely read editors of Marlowe of her generation.

Sara Deats and I dedicated the latest collection of Marlowe essays (*Marlowe's Empery*) to her, but, because we intended it as a surprise, she never knew it. She did know, however, that the Marlowe Society created a biennial award in her honor for the best piece of writing on Marlowe, and it pleased her very much.

For those who knew Roma only from her remarkable work as a scholar and editor, I want to quote a spirited and humorous snippet from her last email to me:

I'm busy otherwise revising my *Hamlet* notes so that they fit better on the page, and assuring the idiots who read the popular newspapers that the pipes on view in Shakespeare's birthplace were almost certainly not his (he probably left there when he was about 15 anyway). Somebody--some crazy scientist--thinks he has found traces of some drug, and claims that Shakespeare must have known and used it. And he's got evidence from sonnet 76 (I think) about clothing his invention in some "noted weed". I could also offer the fat weed that rots itself at ease on Lethe wharf from *Hamlet*--which has never been properly identified.

Roma was a great lady. And fun. We shall miss her deeply.

Robert A. Logan
President, MSA