

# mjan

## Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

Vol. XXVII, No. 1, Fall 2007



*Dr. Faustus: The Lost Quarto*



### **Barabas Goes Broadway** by **Professor Maryann Feola** CUNY/The College of Staten Island

Theatre for a New Audience's 2007 season explored Jews as outsiders in pre-modern England with three of literature's most stunning stereotypes: Christopher Marlowe's Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Dickens' Fagin in Neill Bartlett's adaptation *Oliver Twist*. *The Jew of Malta*, directed by David Herskovits, and *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Darko Tresnjak, were performed in repertory with F. Murray Abraham in the leading roles.

Given the fact Herskovits has brought Marlowe's infrequently performed play to the Duke Theater, located on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street just west of Broadway, the chance to see *The Jew of Malta* was a rare treat indeed. In 2001 Herskovits, the Artistic Director of the Target Margin Theater, directed an adventurous version of Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. But Herskovits' adventurous spirit results in a theatrical experience that, in *the Jew of Malta*, gives Marlowe's artistry a quirky, partial viewing at best.

John Lee Beatty's scenic design effectively explores an early modern Malta where sleight of hand (in this case stage hands) can transform a Jewish home into a Christian nunnery by changing the symbols of religious affiliation. Replacing a Star of David with a cross on Barabas' seized property defines the political and economic nature of the stereotype. The elaborate costumes designed by David Zinn are simultaneously in and out of period with improvisations

such as doublets sporting modern lettering reminiscent of the TV sitcom "Laverne and Shirley."

What haunts the production of a difficult play with numerous staging difficulties is that under Herskovits' direction, Marlowe's Barabas, Abigail (Nicole Lowrance), and most minor characters are rendered as caricatures who fill the house with too much laughter. The production bravely aims to provide a post-modern audience with user-friendly access to the complex early modern situation in which invading Turks have besieged Malta, where a money-lending Jew becomes the wronged villain and common enemy of those competing for control. F. Murray Abraham's portrayal of Barabas raises questions regarding the character's motivation and comportment. What the text presents as cunning and revenge by an alien outsider who has been cheated out of extensive wealth so the Governor of Malta can pay tribute to the Turks is, unfortunately, played for laughs. Marlowe's text contains numerous asides, many of which contain humor, but their purpose is to emphasize rather than dilute the horrific effects of the murder and mayhem we see before us. In this production, however, Barabas' boastfulness over acts of murder and "poisoning wells," as well of his desire for "infinite riches in a little room," come across as self-ridicule which yields a sharper anti-semitism than already exists in the play.

(continued on page 3)

## Marlowe at the MLA in Chicago

**Saturday, December 29, 12:00 noon–1:15 p.m.**

*Sensational Effects and Cultural  
Anxieties on the Early Modern Stage*

Burnham, Hyatt Regency

Presiding: Bruce E. Brandt

1. “Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*: Serial Killing and the Fantasy of Agency,” Mathew Martin, Brock Univ.
2. “‘Remember[ing] the Sins of the Cellar’ in John Marston’s *The Dutch Courtesan*,” Sarah Kathleen Scott, Mount Saint Mary’s Univ.
3. “Sensationalism and the Limits of Postmodernism: Dealing with Disgust in John Marston,” Georgia Elizabeth Brown, London, England

**Sunday, December 30, 1:45–3:00 p.m.**

*Rethinking Perceptions of Marlowe’s Drama*

Atlanta, Hyatt Regency

Presiding: Roslyn L. Knutson

1. “Marlowe, Alexander, and the Turks,” Su Fang Ng, Univ. of Oklahoma
2. “‘The Critical Aspect of My Terrible Countenance’: Christopher Marlowe’s Reputation with the ‘Critical Mass,’” Laura Grace Godwin, New Mexico State Univ., Las Cruces
3. “‘Jigging Veins of Rhyming Mother-Wits,/And Such Conceits as Clownage Keeps in Pay’: Marlowe, Clowing, and Dramatic Authorship,” Kirk Melnikoff, Univ. of North Carolina, Charlotte.

## Marlowe in D.C.

It’s not too late to see the productions of *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II* at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. Both are in rep until the first week of January. There will also be a staged reading of *The Jew of Malta* on December 10. For details go to: [www.shakespearedc.org](http://www.shakespearedc.org).

## International Marlowe Conference

The next international Marlowe conference will be held from June 30 to July 3, 2008, at the University of Kent, Canterbury, England. Register now!

See the MSA website for details:

[www.mightyline.org](http://www.mightyline.org)

## 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 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.

Any and all inquiries, announcements, or submissions regarding the website, listerv, or Newsletter should be wrapped around a 1604 quarto of *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* and sent 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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The portrayal of Barabas would have possessed greater dimension had Herskovits not cut the prologue by “Machevill” which sets the tone for the Machiavellian politics that pervade a Malta in which Christians, Muslims, and Jews vie for various forms of power. After all, Marlowe has Machevill take credit in his prologue for presenting “the tragedy of a Jew” whose “money was not got without my means.” Cutting this speech helped render a more villainous stereotype since it erased what serves, at least in part, as an alternative explanation for Barabas’ self-interest; indeed, his self-interest is no different from the self-interest of the Christians and Muslims, and he has more cause than they in Marlowe’s biting study of religious hypocrisy.

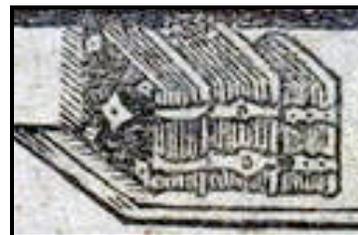
Marlowe’s dark humor and verbal inventiveness, discussed by Judith Weil and others, have been explained as language that obscures issues such as identity and expected audience response. Here the language has been steered in the direction of slapstick comedy. We know Elizabethan audiences bantered with the company, but in this production it is the cast members who take the initiative with the audience, queering further any sustained sense of the characters. This

raises questions about the play’s inherent staging difficulties and calls for further commentary on the linguistic, generic, and epistemological components of Marlovian humor, as well as the expectations and responses of audiences who came with the entrenched biases of their society and had them reinforced by staged evil.

The production remains faithful to The Theater for a New Audience’s mission of “explor[ing] the classics with an adventurous spirit.” But Herskovits’ aim to provide his audience with a view of how Marlowe’s mind and approach imagined a Jew as an outsider in a predominately Christian world has been obstructed by the props that keep Marlowe in the background. Sadly, while much of the beautiful verse is used in the performance, its music is lost in the din of laughter.

We do get a glimpse of Marlowe’s artistry in Arnie Burton’s rendition of Ithamore. His performance of the Turkish slave with thwarted ambitions is played with the edgy liminality of a soulless picaresco. Barabas reminds him “we are villains both./Both circumcised. We hate Christians both./Be true and secret; thou shalt want no gold.” Burton’s Ithamore makes it clear he needs no reminding. His double-dealing with Bellamira (Kate Forbes) and Pilia-Borza (Saxon Palmer), and his tragic confession to Ferneze (Marc Vietor) emblemize the pervasive nature of danger in a contact zone where hypocrisy rules above the law.

In lieu of Marlowe’s poetry and dramatic complexity, this production presented revenge tragedy and dark humor à la “Saturday Night Live.” Nevertheless, it afforded the opportunity to laugh at the foibles of an Elizabethan stereotype who is both victim and victimizer in an early modern culture clash.



## MSA BOOK REVIEWS Charles Whitney, Editor University of Nevada at Las Vegas

*Shakespeare’s Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare’s Artistry.* Robert A. Logan. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Vii + 251pages.

As scholars and critics have long acknowledged, Shakespeare’s business sense and aesthetic concerns as a playwright blended harmoniously. Less frequently realized is Marlowe’s role in providing his fellow dramatist with the inspiration for promoting those dual interests. (118)

Logan’s study of Marlowe’s influence on Shakespeare’s plays is firmly grounded in the pragmatics of the early modern theatre – the discovery and analysis of the dramaturgical techniques that make for commercially successful plays. The result, *Shakespeare’s Marlowe*, is an astounding study of influence that not only provides fresh information about the relationship between the two poets but also deepens our understanding of the development of both their careers, and of the work they produced.

Let me justify my use of “astounding” before I continue, and with a confession. Source studies and studies of influence generally leave me cold: I expect lists of verbal resemblances and direct quotes, and reductive readings sometimes based more on impressions rather than evidence. In general, when focused on Marlowe and Shakespeare, these studies tend to argue an antagonistic rivalry between the two poets. Therefore, although I approached Logan’s book with some trepidation, *Shakespeare’s Marlowe* is nothing like what I expected. In a study characterized by scope and depth, Logan demonstrates a sensitivity to Marlowe’s and Shakespeare’s aesthetics as well as to practical concerns. *Shakespeare’s Marlowe* traces Shakespeare’s journey as both dramatist and businessman, a journey informed by what was behind the commercial success of Marlowe’s plays, and one that continued after Marlowe’s death. This approach infuses a palpable vitality into their works, their relationship, and indeed, into the critical genre we use to pin down and measure such things. Enabling this vitality are a shift in perspective that allows us to approach influence not in terms of its results but as a process (2), and an understanding of what “rival” meant to Shakespeare rather than what it means to us. For as Logan points out, Shakespeare uses that word throughout his works “without a connotation of hostility to mean either a competitor or an associate, a companion” (4).

The word “companion” alerts us to the fact that this study is not an argument about whether Marlowe or Shakespeare was the better poet. Nor is it about the slavish imitation of one poet by the other, or about detecting a clear and unmistakable relationship of cause and effect, as Logan uses the phrase to show a certain logical sequencing rather than temporal priority. Logan reveals not only what in

*The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlowe  
The Theater for a New Audience  
The Duke Theater, New York, NY  
February, 2007

David Herskovits, Director; John Lee Beatty, Sets;  
David Zinn, Costumes; David Weiner, Lighting.

The cast included: F. Murray Abraham (Barabas),  
Arnie Burton (Ithamore), Nichole Lowrance  
(Abigail), Kate Forbes (Bellamira/Abbess), and Ezra  
Knight (Selim Calymath/Friar Jacomo)

Marlowe's practice Shakespeare "appropriated and, through refinement, made his own, but also what he rejected, especially in the realm of Marlovian values" (2). Logan does so over seven main chapters that cover the entire Marlovian dramatic canon and *Hero and Leander*, and the Shakespearean plays and poems that, according to Logan, Marlowe's work influenced – or did not influence, as Logan finds in his examination of *Hero and Leander* and *Venus and Adonis*. This apparent lack of influence, and instances where cause and effect are not clear, are important aspects of this study because they shed new light on other areas of concern to critics of the early modern period, such as "the operations of commercial theater, the mechanics of composition, the artistic aims, and the substance of the paired works, as well as the psychological and cultural forces that shape them" (14). For example, that *Hero and Leander* does not influence *Venus and Adonis*, nor the other way around, "reveals specifically how the writers draw from a single stockpile of Ovidian ideas and literary devices and yet fulfil their own aesthetic aims, affirming their individuality as poets" (57). In other chapters, the muddy waters of cause and effect reveal what Shakespeare rejected, such as Marlowe's "rhetorically engaging but psychologically unrealistic characterizations" in *The Jew of Malta* (136), or Marlowe's cynicism, about love for example, evident in the depersonalised dramatic verse of *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (175). Marlowe, Logan claims, speaks to the head, Shakespeare to the heart (160).

When cause and effect is more discernible, it reveals that Marlowe's legacy to Shakespeare is about what to do, and what not to do, in order to produce commercially successful plays. In the "to do" list are Marlowe's "verbal dexterity, his flexibility in reconfiguring standard notions of genre," and his modes of characterization (231, 233). But most important, in Logan's view, is Shakespeare's adoption of Marlowe's use of ambivalence and ambiguity, what Logan calls in Chapter 4's title, an "aesthetic of ambiguity." Logan suggests we regard ambiguity in Marlowe's plays as "an especially effective artistic device" instead of "trying to resolve the ambiguities to establish links" between his and Shakespeare's works (84). Logan argues that Shakespeare perceived Marlowe's use of ambiguity as the chief reason for his companion's successful plays (84). In Chapter 4, and in chapters 6 and 8 in particular, Logan reveals the ways in which Shakespeare subsequently developed the Marlovian aesthetic of ambiguity for himself. The point is that such an aesthetic is thoroughly practical for it shows that "not playing to audiences' complacent expectations and desires is the best way to gain attention and keep them engaged", and thereby, to deploy the terms of economic rationalism, keep the cash registers busy (151).

This quotation is from Logan's chapter on the *Tamburlaine* plays and *Henry V*, and as one might expect, the discussion includes and in part comes to rely on the famous Prologue to Part 1, with its invitation to audiences and critics alike to "applaud [Tamburlaine's] fortunes as you please". Logan's analysis of *1 Tamburlaine's* Prologue in comparison to *Henry V's* Prologue is illuminating but it is also the source of my sole criticism of *Shakespeare's Marlowe*, for I think that our reliance on the Prologue to *1 Tamburlaine* has, for some time, over-determined our interpretations of the play and its influence. It is important, I suggest, to remember that Part 1's Prologue does not even determine the action that follows it, with the silly Mycetes in Act 1 as evidence of neither the "stately tent of war" nor the "high astounding terms" the Prologue promises. Why, then, should the Prologue determine to the extent it has our criticism of *1 Tamburlaine* and its influence?

This objection is a minor pothole in the road we follow as we read Logan's book, one that did not spoil my journey or the sense of enjoyment I experienced at the sights along the way. For *Shakespeare's Marlowe* is more than just a defining moment in the study of Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare, one that gives us new

insights into their relationship and the development of their careers. It is also a study of the works of the two poets, and contains many fine examples of close reading that enhance our knowledge of the texts. In addition, Logan's methodology refreshes as it refashions the genre of the source/influence study, and the ways in which we understand and use intertextuality in our criticism. In the final analysis, Logan achieves his aim of "arriving at a clearer and richer understanding of the creative distinctiveness of both Marlowe and Shakespeare" (2). I would add that he does in a style that bespeaks genuine tenderness and generosity born of a great admiration for and sensitive reflection upon the artistic achievements of both poets. When you order *Shakespeare's Marlowe*, make sure that it arrives with the dust jacket, for in the drawing by John J. Wright that adorns it, you will see what I am talking about.

Lucy Potter  
The University of Adelaide

**Ellis, Jim. *Sexuality and Citizenship: Metamorphosis in Elizabethan Erotic Verse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Viii. + 292 pages.**

*Sexuality and Citizenship* is a welcome study of the Elizabethan epyllion. As the title of the book suggests, Ellis's primary concern is to place the epyllion at the intersections of politics and sex. Rather than opposing the epyllion to epic, Ellis argues that the epyllion was a particularly ironic, Ovidian version of the epic concerned not with the consolidation of national memory but with a moment of transition in which feudal ideology was giving way under the pressure of late Elizabethan juridical and legal innovation. Written against Petrarchan submission, the epyllion responds to this innovation by imaging a new masculine citizen defined by erotic possessiveness. Central to Ellis's argument are the Inns of Court. Produced largely by and for members of the Inns of Court, Ellis argues, Elizabethan epyllia reflect on and fantasize about this moment of transition through the figure of the adolescent boy who must overcome the dangers of being an object of attraction for both women and older men in order to achieve maturity and social status. Ellis reads this central narrative of the epyllion as one fundamental project of the Inns of Court, where adolescent boys went to achieve status and find a career. Regardless of whatever sexual practices went on at the Inns of Court, an issue that Ellis does not take up, Elizabethan epyllia develop a version of masculine citizenship for the Inns of Court, one based on the rejection of pederastic, sodomitical, and Italian sexualities associated with humanism in favor of a heterosexualized English masculinity rooted in rhetorical force.

A large part of this book's appeal is the detailed attention that Ellis gives to a wide array of well-known and lesser-studied works, from Marston's *Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image*, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, to works like Peend's *Hermaphroditus*, R.B.'s *Orpheus His Journey to Hell*, and Heywood's *Oenone and Paris*. Although the book is loosely organized as a history of the genre, individual chapters cluster poems to explore central themes and poetic strategies such as the epyllion's relation to Petrarchanism, the role of the beautiful young man, ekphrasis and the "political economy of vision" (144), figures of women and the problem of sexual violence, and the representation of international trade. This range can give the book a digressive feel (which Ellis notes). At the same time, Ellis demonstrates the richness of this relatively little studied genre. His analyses are fascinating, provocative, and often deeply insightful. Throughout, Ellis's claims for the cultural work of the epyllion are persuasive, but some readers might want a more rigorous account of genre. It is probably most accurate to say that Ellis understands genre to be fundamentally

responsive. In his analysis, the epyllion is defined as a poem written with an “Ovidian sensibility” that addresses political issues of nationhood through sexuality (8). This open-ended definition allows Ellis to exclude some clearly Ovidian poems, like Drayton’s *Endimion and Phoebe*, and include some poems that are arguably but not obviously Ovidian, like John Beaumont’s *Metamorphosis of Tobacco*. He also includes *The Rape of Lucrece*, which some readers might find surprising.

Aside from its wide-ranging arguments and points of reference, *Sexuality and Citizenship* will be of interest to Marlovians for two main reasons. The first is Ellis’s fascinating reading of *Hero and Leander*. Following Leonard Barkan’s readings of humanism and homoeroticism, Ellis connects the Neptune digression with the Mercury digression, arguing quite persuasively that *Hero and Leander* is split between a desire for humanist homoeroticism and the realization that this world has been violently overcome as new forms of masculinity emerge. In the process, Ellis gives a sophisticated and insightful reading of Marlowe’s heightened sense of artifice, which he implicitly poses against Leander’s violent and imposing rhetoric. Throughout the poem, Marlowe distinguishes and emphasizes word over thing, which leads to idolatry and fetishism in Sestos, as words become things, and in Abydos it leads to evasion, as things seem to hide behind words. While Leander literally evades homoeroticism, Marlowe shows how this evasion is part of an emergent masculinity which leaves humanist homoeroticism behind. The second reason Ellis’s book will be of interest to Marlovians is that he subtly places Marlowe as a singularly significant figure within the history of the epyllion. Marlowe (who was not to our knowledge associated with the Inns of Court) exposes the “fantasy at the heart of the genre” (15), which subsequent writers aggressively avoid. Writers like Thomas Edwards in *Narcissus*, John Weever in *Faunus and Melliflora*, and Francis Beaumont in *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* explicitly take Marlowe as a model. But they celebrate emergent forms of masculinity and at the same time reject the humanist forms of homoeroticism whose passing Marlowe mourns. More than just a history of misreading or misappropriation, Ellis elaborates a literary history in which subsequent writers’ discomfort with Marlovian eroticism becomes symptomatic of broader cultural formations.

Graham Hammill  
University of Notre Dame

**Perry, Curtis. *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. X + 285 pages.**

Curtis Perry’s new book defines and explores a discourse of corrupt favoritism through a broad range of early modern English writing, from anonymous libels to court masques. Perry contends that the figure of the royal favorite permits writers to raise theoretical questions about constitutional monarchy, the limits of prerogative, and the nature of the public sphere. Tracing an uneven but discernible shift in the way favoritism is perceived, Perry reads texts from the late 1580s, when writers labor to “dissociate the queen from the guilt of her favorite,” to the Caroline period, when depictions of favoritism are more overtly critical of Stuart use of instrumental favorites to effect a general “erosion of liberty and law” (31, 265). While urging us to recognize the vital cultural work done by discursive conventions of the favorite as “comparative frameworks,” Perry also warns that continuity is not inevitability—that there is “no direct or inevitable path from the ideological dissonance of the late Elizabethan state to the outbreak of civil war” (284). A similarly responsible approach guides his inclusion of a generous amount of under-examined texts;

this book makes a considerable contribution to current efforts to expand the scope of literary studies. By focusing on the way these texts attempt to negotiate the contradictions intrinsic to their core ideologies, Perry reveals a surprising level of sophistication in work hitherto marginalized if not dismissed outright.

Of special interest to Marlowe studies are chapters 3, 5 and 6 of this 7-chapter book. Together they locate Marlowe’s *Edward II* as an early but far-from-lone statement in two overlapping, politically-charged conversations of the day: one concerning royal erotic incontinence figured as “sodomitical favoritism,” the other about the “political fable” of England’s Edward II (145, 185). This fresh approach renders Marlowe’s play, if no less disturbing, then more stringently and topically political than some recent readings suggest. That these chapters also feature some of the study’s most lively writing is a bonus; in the rare moment when Perry’s prose is less engaging, it is forgivable and eminently preferable to what the “proto-Republican sentiments” of some of the works he covers might have elicited from a less sober scholar (43).

Chapter three is the necessary entry point for the final section of the book since it establishes an intellectual history of virtuous favoritism against which Perry’s striking readings gain coherence. At stake is the question of the nature and limits of monarchy within a traditionally balanced English constitution—a structural tension pushed to a crisis with late Elizabethan and early Stuart innovations in the crown’s patronage, from an increase in royal monopolies, licensing, and manufacturing, to the sale of offices. Suspicion of court corruption, articulated through the trope of poison (chapter 4), is outstripped by an even more “ubiquitous” deployment of tropes of erotic favoritism as the “unofficial language of corruption” in the political fictions of chapter 5 (135).

More surprising is Perry’s finding that sodomy is “the predominant figuration for corrupt erotic favoritism” (138). Perry traces this trope from the anonymous 1592 *A Knack to Know a Knave*, which stages the “effeminate” affections of king Edgar in order to articulate deep cultural concerns about royal favoritism, to the 1627 play, *The Cruel Brother*, into which an unexpectedly radical, pre-laureate Davenant slips a “structural critique” of personal monarchy (141-5, 172). These plays often conclude in a manner that avoids “having to grapple with complex questions concerning the political validity of royal affection,” but Perry maintains that the very discourse of sodomitical affection tends to undermine royalist pieties about bad counsel by moving blame from the ambitious favorite to the monarch incapable of governing his own passions (153). Reading Marlowe’s *Edward II* against *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (an earlier libel) and Jesuit Robert Parson’s treatise *A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crown of England*, Perry shows how Marlowe dramatizes the politic pieties of a disgruntled Catholic aristocracy who ostensibly crave a return to natural, “impersonal modes of government” which would, in effect, “reduce the king to a puppet or a cipher” (197-9). In context with other fictional treatments of Edward, Perry identifies Marlowe’s innovation in his “forc[ing] the audience into an uneasy recognition” of the symmetry between tyrannical passion and unruly rebellion (202, 207). Perry astutely finds this move not evasively apolitical, but quintessentially Marlovian in its aggressive demystification, capped by a slick, problematic ending (201). Yet, Marlowe’s political fiction is not the most radical in Perry’s history. Through compelling, carefully supported analysis, Elizabeth Cary’s *History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II* (1627) emerges as the most overtly topical reading of Edward II: the most hostile toward monarchy itself.

Acknowledging with Perry that currently obscure texts are potentially “deeply topical without being slavishly or reductively allegorical” allows us to envision Marlowe participating in a discursive community that is perhaps larger than commonly imagined (87). Perry’s solid, historicist approach permits a graceful

juxtaposition of texts like Cary's *History* with Jonson's tragedy, *Sejanus*, on one hand, and a pamphlet like *The Second Part of Crafty Crumwell* (1648) on the other. He is perhaps less comfortable with the "literary-critical methodologies" touted in the book's catalogue entry. Perry's arguments demonstrate theoretical sophistication throughout, yet the direct engagement with Habermas or Williams feels somewhat compulsory, relegated as it is to short prefatory and concluding remarks. At one point, this results in Perry wrapping up a rather suggestive reading of favoritism in *Paradise Lost* by questioning a new historicist subversion/containment model no longer espoused by its best known American proponent (for Stephen Greenblatt's significant modification see "Culture," *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, University of Chicago Press, 1995). Perry's book is extremely impressive as a "cultural history of the Elizabethan and early Stuart discourse of favoritism" and it is on those terms that it adds significantly to the field (21).

Ineke Murakami  
University at Albany, S.U.N.Y.

**Burton, Jonathan. *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005. 319 pages.**

Jonathan Burton's *Traffic and Turning* is part of a recent renaissance in the study of Islam, and in particular, of Anglo-Ottoman relations, in early modern literary studies. Contesting Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Burton suggests that early modern Europe did not have the power to construct the East discursively and so to dominate it. Unlike other scholars, however, he argues that English discourse was not wholly consistent in compensating for Ottoman power. Rather, contradictory representations of Muslims vary according to domestic concerns and the need to construct English identities. In re-orienting the Renaissance eastwards, Burton numbers among scholars challenging the New Historicist focus on the Americas to bring a renewed attention to Old World relations prominent in the early modern dramatic corpus. Shifting the discussion to multi-directional cultural exchanges, Burton proposes the term "trafficking" to account for both differences and shared values. As the center for Euro-Asian economies, the Ottoman Empire's trading and cultural exchanges with Europe produced the European "Renaissance."

The first chapter treats Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays, setting up the argument for later chapters on Turk plays inspired by Marlowe's original example. Reading *Tamburlaine, Part I* in the context of Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy, in which both sides underplayed religious differences to legitimize their arms trade, Burton argues that, depending on whether he is needed as protector of Europe, Tamburlaine is either distanced or linked to Islam in "rhetorics of legitimation" (62) aimed at promoting English mercantile interests. Burton explains the differences between the two plays by positing a deliberate rewriting of *Tamburlaine* in the sequel. While not allowing him to be easily categorized, *Tamburlaine, Part II* emphasizes Tamburlaine's religious difference that had previously been muted. Forcing his audience to choose among demonized Turks, corrupt Christians, and a Tamburlaine who out-Turks them all, Marlowe denies them simple dichotomies, leaving us with a sequel more unsettling than its original. Burton's strength is in moving the discussion of the *Tamburlaine* plays away from an undue emphasis on Tamburlaine's utter strangeness.

The next two chapters analyze the problem of conversion in lesser-known plays with Turkish themes. Stagings of potential Christian conversion to Islam in plays like Philip Massinger's *Renegado*, Thomas Kyd's *Solyman and Perseda*, Thomas Goffe's

*The Courageous Turk*, and John Mason's *The Turk* oppose a hostile Muslim masculinity against subversive (Christian) femininity. Chapter 2 suggests that the subordination of gender to religion serves to shore up an anxious Christian masculinity. While two types of Christian women appear in the plays—the one valiantly resisting the appeals of Muslim men while the second fatally attracted to them to the point of betraying their co-religionists—Christian men are never depicted as genuine converts to Islam. Instead male protagonists alone are able to convert Muslims. Chapter 3 considers Muslim conversion to Christianity, showing how the plays, including again Massinger's *Renegado* and John Fletcher's *The Island Princess*, stage a fantasy of Muslim women's submission to Christian patriarchy, which, however, seems embedded in the overwhelming fear of men's conversion to Islam. Tellingly, this chapter discusses Christian conversion to Islam as much as it discusses Muslim conversion—beginning with Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*—perhaps speaking to early modern obsessions about the Islamic threat.

Chapter 4 examines other dramatic forms, namely the Lord Mayor's Day Pageants and closet dramas, with more positive representations of Islam. The Lord Mayor's Day Pageants combine medieval religious drama with early modern travelers' tales to present domesticated, beneficent Eastern figures to support a mercantilist ideology. Fulke Greville's closet drama, *Mustafa*, on the other hand, uses Ottoman history to ponder issues of English dynastic succession. Although "good" Muslims are not realistic characters either, Burton argues, "in the age of trafficking, English culture came to accept the possibility of exemplary and even run of the mill Muslims" (195). The underlying assumption of progress from medieval to early modern is evident also in the distinction Burton makes between the "textual-historical" (22) inventory of Muslim stereotypes inherited from a history of medieval crusades *versus* the "experiential" (22) record arising from contemporary trading relations with the Ottomans. That assumption, is belied, however, by the medieval archive itself. Instead of the morality plays, whose extant texts are dated in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, putting them closer to the early modern period, the comparison between medieval and early modern representations of Muslims perhaps should be made, despite the focus on drama, with medieval Arthurian romances with their share of both exemplary and converted Muslims as well as evil ones.

Chapter 5 considers representations of Jews, arguing that England's increased trade with the Ottomans led to greater contact with Jewish middlemen. While Muslim roles expand to include more noble ones, Jews are scapegoated. In Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, when the Ottoman overlords announce a visit to collect an overdue tribute, Malta's Christian governors put the burden of paying the tribute on their Jewish residents. Burton argues that Barabas's villainy is a "function of the suspect and shifting nature of Christian-Muslim relations" (222). Through representations of Jewish villainy the English displace anxieties about their own compromised Christian ideals in their dealings with the Turk. Finally, Chapter 6 examines *The Geographical History of Africa* by Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan, better known as Leo Africanus. It argues that Leo is engaged in an act of textual mimicry and autoethnography—Mary Louise Pratt's term for the tangled mix of assimilation and resistance in colonized subjects' writings. Burton suggests that unlike Shakespeare's *Othello*, which is finally a "troubling fantasy of containment" (254), Leo's text ultimately destabilizes European discourses that are anti-Islamic and anti-African.

In his introduction, Burton distinguishes his project from others and answers Ania Loomba's challenge to take "seriously cultural exchanges that accompanied commercial and diplomatic exchange" and to listen "for the Eastern voices drowned out by a more accessible and consequently more audible European archive" (14). Thus, unlike other scholars who neglect Muslim sources, Burton says

he will include “whenever possible, translated accounts of Ottoman and North African Muslim writers” (14). While a worthy goal, Burton’s book is finally not fully comparative. He includes only a handful of Islamic sources, reading them in translation. Islamic voices remain very much in the periphery. The one Muslim text Burton focuses on at greater length is Leo Africanus’ *Geographical History*, that complicated case of hybridized identity written when Leo was a Christian convert at the court of Pope Leo X, and a work much-commented on within English literary studies because of its connection to *Othello*. By the end, however, Burton seems to have shifted his goals, reframing his project as fundamentally about English drama rather than “a full examination of Muslim discursive practices” and acknowledging that he is not “qualified to undertake such a project” (233). Ultimately, Burton’s well-written and interesting book reveals both the opportunities and the problems of interdisciplinary work. Disciplinary training ill-equips us to address fully the cross-cultural nature of the past, and the desire to incorporate Muslim texts out of sound theoretical reasons collides with the lack of linguistic training. Nonetheless, Burton shows the English archive is still a rich mine to be excavated, and he does this very well. A worthy and well-conceived project, this book should be a welcome addition to the growing list of Ottoman-centered studies of English literature.

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**Whitney, Charles. *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Xi + 341 pages.**

The historical study of early modern audiences, epitomized by Andrew Gurr’s essential *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, has focused on the responses of playgoers to plays seen in performance. In *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama*, Charles Whitney suggests that a broader perspective is required for an understanding of how plays were perceived and how their reception contributed to the subsequent evolution of the early modern drama. His historical survey of reception from the late sixteenth century to the Restoration reflects the premise

that experience of drama, created by authors, players, and audiences together through dramatic transactions, is rarely confined to the moments and places of performance. Playgoers carry their theatrical experiences with them from the theatre and continue to absorb, assimilate, and apply them” (5).

In addition to the playgoing audience, Whitney argues that play readers constitute a secondary dramatic audience, and he suggests that a tertiary level of reception can be seen in the responses of people who allude specifically to plays that they know of, but have neither seen or read. Whitney’s study is not concerned with the blanket condemnations of drama found in antitheatrical tracts nor with the overall reputation of given playwrights. His survey focuses on specific responses to drama by people who were not professionally engaged in the theater (although he does refer to professional reception as a way of elucidating nonprofessional reception).

The book’s first two chapters focus respectively on Tamburlaine and, as Whitney labels him, Sir John Oldcastle-Falstaff, the two characters who figure most prominently in extant response. He argues that audiences did indeed accept the invitation of the play’s Prologue to applaud Tamburlaine’s fortunes “as you please” and that this diversity of response collaboratively moved drama away from

didacticism: it “marked a decisive turning point in freeing the theatre to represent and to experience both deeper feeling and more complex meaning” and “helped validate processes of response that were not limited to the time and place of performance, but reverberated beyond theatre and innyard” (20). Whitney also sees the strong and conflicting responses engendered by Sir John as contributing to this “liberated” aesthetic, and he uses his discussion of Sir John as a way of more deeply exploring the characteristics of early modern response. This chapter begins with a discussion of Shakespeare’s changing of “Oldcastle” to “Falstaff,” and Whitney insightfully remarks that the pressure to change the name is in itself one aspect of the play’s reception. Interestingly, his survey reveals that many of the most important early responses to these plays continued knowingly to allude to “Oldcastle” or to allude to “Falstaff” in a way that pointed to “Oldcastle.” Overall, the survey highlights Falstaff’s growing association with festive traditions even as it demonstrates that early modern reception is characterized by an aesthetic that pragmatically emphasizes utility and benefit.

The remaining four chapters focus on particular segments of the early audience. Chapter three looks specifically at known playgoers up to 1617, with particular attention to John Davies of Hereford, the Inns of Court, Edmund Spenser, Robert Tofte, and Simon Forman. Chapter four centers on the responses of commoners, and Whitney’s discussion confirms what we have come to understand: that while the early modern theatre may be less democratic than it was once thought to be, it did in fact serve a diverse audience. Moreover, as Whitney makes clear, the reactions of this multi-segmented audience were not homogenous. Chapter five discusses playgoing and/or play-reading gentlewomen. It includes Whitney’s argument that Amelia Lanyer’s depiction of Cleopatra in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* is indebted to dramatic representation (either seen or read). He also looks at responses to drama by Joan Drake, Anne Murray Halkett, and Dorothy Osborne. The final chapter examines the responses to Jonson and Shakespeare from the Caroline period onward and ends with a discussion of the way in which Milton’s reception of Shakespeare assimilates him to a republican vision.

One of the goals set by Whitney in his introduction was to show that the study of early modern reception is both feasible and important for understanding Renaissance drama. He has succeeded admirably, and students of Renaissance drama will find that this insightful study opens new vistas onto the ways in which these plays spoke to contemporary audiences. A survey such as this is necessarily selective, but as Marlovians, readers of this review will appreciate that a good fifth of the book centers on Marlowe.

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**Nelson, Alan H. *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003. Xix + 527 pages.**

Did Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford, write Shakespeare’s plays? This issue may be far afield for Marlovians who are not promoters of Marlowe in that role, but the value of *Monstrous Adversary* outstrips authorship controversies. Alan H. Nelson provides a view from the top of networks of power in early modern English society, and, while he invites that life to be read with the biography of Shakespeare in mind, Marlowe, who courted such networks of power more evidently than Shakespeare, seems to wait just beyond the next page to enter in the company of Anthony Munday, perhaps, or Thomas Watson, men who were servants of the earl but companions of Marlowe in his profession by day and his recreations by night. Though Nelson refers to Marlowe in several

contexts, the dramatist does not appear in person in the biography. However, issues that define him in scholarship do (heresy, sodomy, poetical skill), and as a result readers will be absorbed by paradigms in de Vere's life that provide context for Marlowe's, even if at some class remove.

Nelson provides a traditional biography in that he begins with the parents of Oxford and ends with the disposition at his death of the earldom, the widow, and the unmarried daughter. The events of Oxford's life, which began on 12 April 1550 and ended on 24 June 1604, are told through the surviving documents, with modest narrative stitching. Because these documents are voluminous in number and length, Nelson is able to provide an astonishingly full portrait rich with the voices not only of the earl himself but also of his mentor, relatives, allies, adversaries, and disinterested record-keepers. In fact, for students of Marlowe, a fascinating aspect of *Monstrous Adversary* is how much can be known about an Elizabethan life when records survive. We are so used to piecing together scraps—parish and buttery records here, rumor and dodgy documents there—that it is a shock to see the earl in such lucid detail. For some readers, Nelson may provide more than they want to know. For example, one might question the lengthy analysis of Oxford's spelling, but when his peculiar habits are combined with the fact of his excellent penmanship, readers familiar with arguments of Shakespeare's hand behind various printed texts will get the point. Another might quibble that too many limbs are provided on the family trees of everyone encountered, but then (of course) kinship networks were also power networks. Few will object, however, to the sordid details of the 16th earl's marriage to the 17th's mother not only because the events make such a good story but also because they are a reminder that unruly courtships were not peculiar to romantically minded glovers' sons in the provinces.

Of the many aspects of the life of Edward de Vere that invite comparison with scholars' stories about Marlowe, two are especially salient: rough company and transgressive behavior. Oxford probably should not be answerable for the murder of George Saunders and John Bean by George Brown, even though Brown was Oxford's servant, because Brown's motive seems unrelated to Oxford personally (the murder is dramatized in *A Warning for Fair Women*, 1599), but the same shrugging of responsibility cannot be applied to Oxford's dealings with Rowland York. York, also one of Oxford's men, was apparently more buddy than servant, and he had a reputation as a fencer who brandished an unguarded foil. Oxford must have copied this technique, for he killed an undercook in the household of William Cecil, his ward and father-in-law to-be, with a York-style naked rapier. Oxford was not held accountable. Aided by a jury heavily weighted in Oxford's favor, the coroner's inquest declared the death a suicide, claiming that the undercook ran upon the point of Oxford's weapon of his own accord. In another episode of mayhem, Oxford escaped with impunity from a charge of murder-for-hire in Middlesex involving York and other ruffians. In still another, all the more unsavory because it concerned a man of position, Oxford nursed a year-long feud with Thomas Knyvet that putatively began with Knyvet's father; by its end, the feud had caused four men including Oxford and Knyvet to be wounded and three killed.

In addition to this penchant for thuggery, Oxford courted ostracism for mistreating his wife and indulging in necromancy, sodomy, and heresy. Shortly after his twenty-first birthday in 1571, Oxford married Anne Cecil, favorite daughter of his ward, William Cecil. But for over ten years, except for a brief period in the fall of 1574 when his daughter Elizabeth was conceived, the earl was "a Stranger to his Wiff" (141). He was not, however, a stranger to sexual activities. He had brought a youth back with him from his Italian travels; and there were other bedmates, including a boy cook at Hampton Court and a mistress, Anne Vavasour (unaccountably, Cecil remained his son-in-law's apologist). A triumvirate of aristocratic

former friends accused Oxford not only of sodomy but also of atheism and treason in Catholic plots against the queen. The interesting point here for Marlovians is that the charges were similar enough to those made against Marlowe himself to suggest that a "template" of charges was being applied as needed by enemies rather than that actual behavior specific to either man was being described. There is one crime by Oxford with no Marlovian counterpart: squandering the family fortune. As Nelson points out, the earl's father at his death had a list of properties more than a dozen pages long; after thirty-three years of selling off this legacy, the earl could list his properties on a single page.

Nelson's biography of the earl of Oxford is a virtuoso exemplar of the craft. Though its inclusions in full of the documentary record will test the patience of many readers, it is scrupulous in distinguishing fact from fiction and painstaking in keeping the reader from drowning in detail (dates of years in the running titles would have been nice). Nelson has a complicated story to tell, sometimes spicy and sometimes dull, but his own writing is fresh, succinct, and witty. He is critical of but not unfair to the earl. The zeal of Oxford apologists may not be dampened by this biography, but everyone else will be disgusted by the man and convinced that he lacked the intellect and the sensibility to write much of anything worth reading.

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**Editor's Note.** *MSA Book Reviews* provides 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 in achieving its purpose. The editor reserves the right to ask for revision and to make stylistic changes thought appropriate. The substance of the review and its judgments remain those of the review's author (and do not necessarily express the opinions of the MSA). Reviewers should be members of the MSA. Contact information for the editor can be found on page 3.

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