

Kirk Melnikoff and Roslyn L. Knutson (eds), *Christopher Marlowe, Theatrical Commerce, and the Book Trade*
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Marlowe died on 30 May 1593, the result of a blow from a dagger, according to the coroner's inquest, 'over his right eye of the depth of two inches & of the width of one inch.' On his death, 'poor deceased Kit Marlowe' (as Thomas Nashe styled him) had no works in print carrying his name: the construction of Marlowe as a printed author was a posthumous affair, the work of the book trade which transformed the figure formerly known as 'Marley', or 'Morley', or 'Marlin', or 'Marlow' into (as Adam G. Hooks notes) the writer Christopher Marlowe.

Much critical work on early modern drama has operated around, and has been inhibited by, a stark and sometimes antagonistic binary of page versus stage, with conferences, syllabi, and indeed entire careers separating off down one fork in the road. Happily, Kirk Melnikoff and Roslyn Knutson's excellent collection aims to examine connections between Marlowe in the literary marketplace, and Marlowe in the theatres. What emerges is a rich sense of the currents of influence running between the two.

If the volume has a hero, it isn't Marlowe, or Tamburlaine with his 'high astounding terms', but bookseller and printer Richard Jones (fl. 1564-1613), who emerges as a crucial agent in the creation of Marlowe as a literary author. Taking their collective cue from D.F. McKenzie's notion of the 'sociology of print', by which McKenzie meant the community of human agents that brings into being a printed text, chapters by Tara L. Lyons and Claire Bourne, in particular, put Jones at the heart of the action. Marlowe's drama was known for its 'iterative and accumulative qualities' – a succession of events hurtling past – and Bourne argues that Jones organised *Tamburlaine* (1590) into numbered scenes to create on the page this effect of accumulating pieces of action. Jones thus encouraged, in Bourne's words, 'reading with the effects of performance in mind': producing a printed text that is simultaneously literary and theatrical. Lucy Munro finds a similar flickering between worlds in her smart chapter on the visual signs used to denote sound: Joe Hill-Gibbins' 2014 National Theatre production of *Edward II* featured a large video screen flashing up the word 'ALARUMS' (used in play texts to signify a loud disturbance or conflict), bringing the textual on stage, and making a cue for sound a written word even as it suggested sound.

Working with a notion of books as products of communities, András Kiséry argues that all of Marlowe's literary publications likely emerged from the same bookshop at the sign of the Black Bear, in Paul's Churchyard, and that the publication of Marlowe's brilliant, unfinished erotic mini-epic, *Hero and Leander*, served to offer the prospect of access to that coterie culture of publishers, binders, literary agents, and distributors. '[L]iterary publication,' here, in Kiséry's sharp formulation, serves 'as the disclosure of privileged discourse', and the literary text is not property but 'a token of belonging.'

Perhaps the most suggestive refrain running throughout the volume concerns the ways in which critics and editors respond to the supposed print-shop 'badness' of Marlowe's texts. We see this vividly in Genevieve Love's superb chapter on 'the powerful figurative role of disability' in the early modern theatre and the subsequent transmission of texts: Love traces links between the play's action, the state of the text, and the ideological positions of later editors. She does this by exploring the language of truncation and prosthesis in the A

(1604) and B (1616) versions of *Doctor Faustus*: just as, in the B text, three scholars discover Faustus' 'limbs / All torne asunder', so New Bibliographical editors passed judgement over 'a mangled and torn *Faustus*', using a discourse of damaged parts to condemn a 'maimed', 'mutilated', or 'disjointed' text.

Evelyn Tribble considers the supposed 'badness' of the text of *The Massacre at Paris*, Marlowe's dramatisation of the slaughter of Huguenots on the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of August 1572. In *Terrorism Before the Letter* (2015), Robert Appelbaum studied the challenge these horrific events presented to literary representation. Building on Appelbaum's work, Tribble connects the trauma of 1572 with the disorientating contrast between 'flat dialogue' and the 'rapid and brutal' speed of staging, a strange but affecting blend of compression and protraction that has often frustrated critics. Rather than condemning a shortened or 'bad' text in which there 'is no room to breath', Tribble convincingly shows how the gaps and lurches stage the struggle for traumatic representation.

The 17 short chapters cut quickly to the chase, and Melnikoff and Knutson have deftly edited the whole into an unusually coherent collection. The book is particularly helpful as a means to think again about models of literary influence which so dominate Marlowe studies, but which often operate through cloudy reference to mighty lines and overreaching heroes. This volume presents more rigorous alternatives, as when Knutson trawls through what we might call the deep documentary archive (lawsuits, provincial performance records) to establish Marlowe's box-office presence. Knutson finds a fresh version of theatrical influence that takes the form of 'the retail value of Marlowe's plays', and uses this to frame Tamburlainean imitators like Robert Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587).

'daring God out of heauen' (in Robert Greene's words),

Marlowe emerges as a literary and theatrical figure, a posthumous invention of book-trade publishers, and a powerful stage presence whose influence persists – as the final section of the book, on the history of Marlowe's reception from to late-nineteenth-century America, makes clear.

The text corrupted, compressed to the point that there 'is no room to breath' (67), perhaps filtered through the memory of one of the actors, the 'rapid and brutal' representation of the massacre, critical blur between bad text and brutal massacre, considered bad in a way that pools the text, the lurid spectacle, failure of Marlowe's imagination, mechanical deaths, piling up of corpses,

The contrast (64)

Reads its 'brutal effectiveness' as a representation of the horrors of

Tribble in particular thinks about the frantic pace of the play, the 'representational logic' of mass, unexpected slaughter,

Fascinating on the ways in which these acts are 'harrowingly protracted on stage and bafflingly short on the page' (58).

Tribble draws connections between *The Massacre at Paris*'s structure and recent ideas of trauma and representation: the text's 'compressed moments', its preference for physical action over language, a play that does little to explain the events but presents a 'breathtaking rapidity and brutality'. (59) Modern editions which organise the play into discreet scenes fail to capture this headlong rush,

and sees this as a key in explaining why,

So when the box-office *Tamburlaine* Part One, with a [striding] Edward Alleyn in the lead role, led to imitators with similarly 'Tamburlainean vaunting heroes', like Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587)

1587-93, and finds his 'the retail value of Marlowe's plays' (26): a different kind of influence, a box-office appeal that led to imitators, what Knutson calls 'Marlowe's theatrical progeny' (29). (28)

Could start with McKenzie, as quoted on 148, on both sociology of print, and also book as an expressive means.

XX refrains run across the whole.

Eoin Price on the theatrical success of Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, his only play for a children's company, the Children of the Chapel repertory; relatively scant records compared to Marlowe's adult plays. Again arguing *Dido* was 'influential', while also noting it imitating certain 1580s trends.

Several of the chapters attend very productively to the ways in which printed books attempted to create theatrical effects for the reader. Claire Bourne argues that the printed play text of *Tamburlaine* was an attempt to capture, in print, the theatrical dynamism of performance, the numbered scenes creating that particularly Marlovian effect of iteration and accumulation, of discrete events hurtling past.

Peter Kirwman sustains this idea shows the ways in which Marlowe in print attempted to convey staged drama through page layout and typography. The quarto 'textualises performance for the reader' (94). The 'typographical evocation of performance'

, discrete units of action, that create an ultimately 'equivocal' picture of the hero, seen from multiple points of view.

Tara Lyons shows how Jones took *Tamburlaine* parts 1 and 2 and, in part through the addition of his own shaping paratexts, created a unified whole that emphasised the greatness of Tamburlaine.

The text as a disfigured or deformed body – and more broadly shows ‘the powerful figurative role of disability in both the early modern theatrical event and the transmission of early modern theatrical texts,’ (82) and the ways editors reanimate this tradition in editorial work that is premised on ...

The scene in which Faustus’ leg appears to be (but is not) pulled from his body.

The ways in which the play’s thematic concerns are mirrored (in often unacknowledged way) by later scholars and editors who persist with a Faustian.

Another strand: the transmission of Marlowe’s texts, via MS, print or performance.

Richard Dutton on the role of Thomas Heywood in the publication of Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* in 1633, 40 years after its author’s death, and in a period of renewed interest (as Zachary Lesser and Alan Farmer have argued elsewhere) in Elizabethan literature. By being involved in the publication of *Jew of Malta*, Heywood, Dutton suggests, wanted ‘to claim his due’ as a catalyst in that revival. Heywood was one of those generation-spanning figures, old enough to have known Marlowe, and a writer who famously claimed: ‘two hundred and twenty [plays], in which I have had either an entire hand, or at least a maine finger.’ (183)

Adam G. Hooks approach is bio-bibliography, the archive of Marlowe in print, Marlowe as constructed through his printed books (which means in effect merely tracking across all the editions and reprints etc of M’s texts, which an eye on the way M was constructed as an author, the changing scope of the Marlovian canon, what is attributed to him and what is not, Marlowe’s relations with Shakespeare: this is not M’s life, but the life of his corpus (not his corpse); notion that works could be read for an author’s life not possible until the textual corpus stabilised), not in terms of his life chronology or geography, this bio-bibliographical Marlowe may have little to do with the actual Marlowe; based on Robert Allott’s *England’s Parnassus* (1600), Edmond Malone, George Robinson’s edition of 1826. It took Marlowe’s death for his name to start to appear in print on his works. The figure known variously as ‘Marley’, or ‘Morley’, or ‘Marlin’, or Marlow’, became, posthumously, in print, the more filled-out Christopher Marlowe. (97)

[think about the problem that is lurking in this method, or at least the tension; bio-bibliography of the hooks variety is explicitly contrasted with naïve biographical readings of plays; but is it the case that this kind of tracking across the shifting identity of ‘Marlowe’ in print is prone to similar problems? Am I reacting against the scornful and self-regarding tone? Or is there a more significant problem? Think more on this.]

One way of thinking about the relationship between the theatrical and the textual is to track lines from plays than make their way into commonplace books – the kinds of compilations mocked ... ‘Alasse, Sir,’ lamented Sir Politic Would-Be in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone* (1606), ‘I haue none but *notes*, / Drawne out of *Play-bookes* –’ (228)

Here, as so often, the documentary record reveals preferences that may not match our expectations: most popular were not *Tamburlaine's* 'high astounding terms', or *Faustus's* 'the face that lancht a thousand shippes', but excerpts from *Edward II*.

This may mean tracking the presence of lines from Marlowe in commonplace books, as David McInnis shows, finding most common to be *Edward II*, not the more predictable *Tamburlaine* or *Doctor Faustus*.

Argument is also that Marlowe's writing resists commonplacing. (230) Marlovian language too distinctive and context-specific: 'memorable, eloquent, but not typically portable.' (242)

Tom Rutter traces influence of not only Marlowe's mighty rhetoric and visual spectacles, but also his themes and ideas.

Paul Menzer on theatrical standing of *Doctor Faustus*, noting how the play continued to be invoked in moments of theatrical crisis, arguing for a theatrically traumatic *Faustus*.

J.A. Downie on overview of early reception of Marlowe and his work.

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