

The summaries of previous scholarship on the history, composition, and performance of the plays discussed here are thorough and accurate. Dr. Rastall sets out conflicting views and matters of scholarly debate judicially but does not hesitate to draw his own conclusions from the evidence he provides. There may be a regrettable tendency to anachronism (see, for example, the parallel drawn between P.G. Wodehouse and the Norwich dramatist in their use of Latin tags) and to drift from cautious suggestion to assertion (the tentative 'may be' becomes 'is' in the space of five pages during the discussion of a stage direction in the Norwich play), but Dr. Rastall's concern for comprehensiveness in the scope of and approach to his project could indeed lead to such lapses.

The two volumes of this monumental work are a noteworthy achievement, broaching and solving historical, theoretical and practical problems in the fields of early drama and music.

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Alan Shepard. *Marlowe's Soldiers: Rhetorics of Masculinity in the Age of the Armada*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. Pp viii, 248.

One characteristic of societies at war is a heightening of conflict among those who advocate restricting liberties in the name of national security and those who resist the repression of dissidence imposed by militaristic agendas. In this original and compelling study of Christopher Marlowe's plays, Alan Shepard argues that just such a conflict took place in England following the failed Spanish Armada invasion of 1588. As the privy council invoked martial law for certain crimes and national security became a topic of popular discussion, writers of stage plays, pamphlets, poems, and military handbooks espoused the benefits of a militarized society. Positioning Marlowe within this public discourse, Shepard aims to understand how his plays 'make entertainment of a wealth of historically and geopolitically divergent fantasies about martial law and its discontents' (2).

To varying degrees, all of Marlowe's plays, Shepard argues, question the overt promotion of martial law and warfare circulating in the culture, particularly during those 'heteroglossic moments' (3) when minor civilian characters resist the masculinist rhetoric spouted by military leaders. Whereas pro-mili-

tary voices in England associated any kind of ‘performativity’ or ‘theatricalized identity’ with subversion, Marlowe instead suggests that ‘it is soldiers, not players, who most threaten the security of the state by daring to prescribe an England where all kinds of difference ought to be quashed by martial law’ (4). His plays thus offered a challenge to those soldiers, veterans, anti-theatricalists, and government officials who wished to erase the kinds of difference represented by ‘effeminate’ men (generally speaking, those who preferred loving to fighting), women, players, and civilians who demystified ideological justifications of bloodshed and domination.

Devoting a separate chapter to each of Marlowe’s plays, Shepard organizes his material in order to convey the varying degrees of Marlowe’s ‘critique of hypermilitarism’ – from ‘apparent endorsement’ of it in *Tamburlaine* to ‘apparent repudiation’ of it in *Dr. Faustus* – with *The Tragedy of Dido*, *Edward II*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *The Massacre at Paris* falling between these poles (15). The ordering of chapters from *Tamburlaine* to *Dr. Faustus* does not reflect the plays’ chronology, because Shepard does not mean to argue that Marlowe became progressively disenchanted with military rhetoric the more the events of 1588 faded into the past. Although one might well ask what factors would account for the different stances towards militarism evinced by these plays, Shepard is less interested in addressing this question than in examining each play on its own terms, exploring how its language, spectacle, and characterization engage with specific issues treated by contemporary military handbooks, and demonstrating how it provides a more sceptical and complex account of the ‘rhetorics of masculinity’ than we find in those prose tracts. Carefully situating Marlowe’s representations of warfare among those of military apologists such as Barnabe Rich, John Smythe, and Geoffrey Gates (among many others), Shepard not only provides insightful and rewarding new readings of central scenes and celebrated passages from the plays but also reveals the importance of less familiar episodes.

A flaw in this admirable study is Shepard’s reluctance to reflect seriously upon his own methodology. His overall approach is historicist, and he briefly acknowledges his indebtedness to historicist critics of Marlowe and Elizabethan political culture such as Emily Bartels, Simon Shepherd, Nick de Somogyi, and Curtis Bright. Yet he also makes local use, sometimes in a rather general or superficial way, of concepts borrowed from queer theory, magical realism, and Klaus Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies*, a study of the psychology of the mid-twentieth century German Freicorps. This approach contributes a refreshing element of the unexpected – this is the first account of *Dr. Faustus* I have seen to refer to space-travel and ‘transcendental parrots’ (179) – but I am left

wanting a more sustained engagement with the complex theoretical and hermeneutic issues brought into play by this methodological pastiche. For instance, Shepard refers to *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler's notoriously difficult, densely theorized, account of gender formation, only to borrow a few quotations that allow him to describe masculinity in Marlowe's plays as a 'performance' and an 'on-going discursive practice' (3, 60). Shepard's avoidance of a fuller engagement with the intricacies of queer theory is perhaps more understandable, however, than his reluctance to address the questions about anachronism and the applicability of psychological criticism that are inevitably raised by his use of Theweleit to explain the mindset of Marlowe's soldiers. He only acknowledges such concerns once, in a parenthetical aside: '(If using Theweleit here is not outrageously anachronistic, it is purposefully essentialist: to a great extent, I would argue, western soldiers often think remarkably alike – that's the point)' [98]. Positing a transhistorical military psychology may or may not be 'outrageously anachronistic', but Shepard does not pause to justify his application to Marlovian drama of this purposeful essentialism, or to explain its compatibility with his commitment to an overtly anti-essentialist understanding of gender as performance throughout the study. It's telling that the chapter on *Tamburlaine*, which is the most reliant upon the theories of Theweleit, is the least reliant upon the sixteenth-century military pamphlets that Shepard elsewhere uses so effectively to establish the parameters of the Elizabethan debates about militarism in which Marlowe participated.

Even though this seemingly casual application of theoretical models detracts somewhat from the overall coherence of the study, Shepard's detailed, insightful readings of the plays and his intelligent contextualization of them within various Elizabethan social and political discourses establish him as an astute critic of Marlovian drama. His account of *Edward II* powerfully casts the relationship between Mortimer and Edward as a clash between a soldier who voices the Elizabethan anxiety about the 'link between pleasure, performance, and impending national disgrace' (94) and a relatively sympathetic monarch who 'lives almost entirely inside his fictions' yet by embodying those fictions 'manages to be both a commander and a poet' (101). Each chapter displays Shepard's fine sensitivity to Marlowe's characteristic rhetorical turns, and I was continually impressed with his ability to shed new light on familiar characters: Shepard's Barabas is less the Machiavellian villain, anti-Semitic stereotype, or Marlovian overreacher of past criticism than he is the representative of an emerging internationalist commercial ethos actively displacing a chivalric code that had once lent ideological support to military plunder. Shepard's shrewd positioning of minor characters adds dimension to his arguments about the

plays' political implications. For instance, he demonstrates that as both agents and victims of the pervasive ethos of conquest and profit in *The Jew of Malta*, Abigail, Ithamore, and Bellamira experience the deleterious effects of martial law in ways specifically informed by their gender, social, and economic disadvantages.

Marlowe's critique of militarism, Shepard argues, receives its strongest expression in *Dr. Faustus*. Yet whereas Marlowe's other plays set theatrical performativity in opposition to militaristic agendas, *Dr. Faustus* reverses this strategy, revealing through its protagonist's magical acts of terrorism against the Pope and Charles V's court that 'theatrical playing itself [is] an aggressive act' that can serve the interests of national security (175). Rightly noting that critical accounts of the play's theological conundrums have tended to slight its depiction of sixteenth-century political and religious conflicts, Shepard uses the concept of magical realism – namely, its positing of 'the plasticity of space, time, and human identity' (179) – to account for Faustus' fantastic triumphs over soldiers and prelates whose 'epistemic privileges and material resources' in the real world well exceed his own (181). Passing over some of the most famous scenes in the play (such as Faustus' early discussions with Mephistophilis), Shepard shifts its centre of gravity to fantastic scenes of magical realism, as when Faustus summons the figures of Helen of Troy and Alexander the Great, or when he uses his supernatural arts to subject knights and priests to physical and emotional torments that undermine their claims to social and epistemological authority. This shift insists that we regard *Dr. Faustus* not simply as a drama of 'private' theological introspection but also as an intervention into political matters of the utmost public concern in post-Reformation England. The provocative claim that through Faustus' self-damning use of black magic the play advocates a 'measure of respectability and nationalistic utility' (16) for theatrical playing should throw another welcome kink into the on-going critical discussion about Marlowe's relationship to social and political authority.

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