

consider the construction of Hamlets in a range of discourses and narrative traditions. The book interrogates what it is to perform Hamlet, to perform gender, to perform human.

In his introduction, Howard makes clear that his intention is not to develop a unified theory of female Hamlets; to do so would indeed be reductive. Shakespearean scholars might ask for further exploration of what these female Hamlets have to tell us about the play's early textual and theatrical productions; this field of enquiry is held out as something of a promise in chapter one's references to Q1's female characters but is not developed. Readers of a more theoretical turn might expect an engagement with psychoanalytic or performance theory. Very occasionally, Howard's determination not to theorize threatens to lead to the potentially reductive alternative of the universalizing flourish: 'Hamlet is a consciousness facing everyone's dilemmas — to try to confront the status quo or withdraw from it, to work with words or violence, to blame the world's malaise on others or face a sickness in oneself, to understand death — and these actresses add new layers of meaning to them all' (311). However, he deals with the theatrical, historical, and political contexts of these 'layers' so rigorously that his book will surely serve the performance historian, the Shakespearean scholar, and the performance theoretician equally well. The lively but never gratuitous anecdotal moments in Howard's histories and the sense that one is being offered access to a wealth of long-hidden Hamlets and neglected female creativity make for a consistently rewarding read. This is a fascinating, lucid, meticulously researched, and thoroughly enjoyable contribution to work on *Hamlet*.

BRIDGET ESCOLME

Robert A. Logan. *Shakespeare's Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp viii, 252.

Robert Logan's *Shakespeare's Marlowe* is obviously the product of a mature and extended reflection on the question of Marlowe's possible or probable influence on the works of Shakespeare. Logan's style is measured and circumspect, but his judiciousness does not limit the penetrating and illuminating

nature of many of his critical observations. The study comprehensively treats the influence (especially in terms of characterization) of *The Massacre at Paris* on *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III*; the artistic and ideological relationship between *Hero and Leander* and *Venus and Adonis*; and the possible influence of *Edward II* on *Richard II*, of *The Jew of Malta* on *The Merchant of Venice*, of the *Tamburlaine* plays on *Henry V*, of *Dido Queen of Carthage* on *Antony and Cleopatra*, and of *Doctor Faustus* on *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. Logan is notably honest not only about the inherent difficulties of the critical task of tracing influences and the complexities of influence in this particular case, but also in eschewing any opportunistic attempts to force parallels or correspondences which might be accounted for simply through the shared cultural context of the two playwrights. His humaneness and skill as a critic are also evident in one recurring feature that has perhaps become less common in current critical approaches than once it was: a detailed and extremely sensitive analysis of the actual poetic effects in the verse of both Marlowe and Shakespeare.

Logan quickly contests the applicability in this case of the Bloomian paradigm of the anxiety of influence and the myth of 'rivalry' or vigorous antagonism between the two playwrights. He argues instead that while Marlowe was alive 'the awareness the two dramatists had of each other's work probably had the beneficial effect of heightening the desire of each to promote his creative individuality' (7). But while Shakespeare's influence on Marlowe seems limited to the effect of the *Henry VI* plays on the composition of *Edward II*, Logan traces a significant influence on Shakespeare by Marlowe that remained powerful long after the latter's premature death. In general, therefore, this critical approach is a very welcome challenge to the not uncommon view expressed in Bloom's suggestion that 'Marlowe was swallowed up by Shakespeare, as a minnow by a whale'.¹ Methodologically, Logan asserts that 'the study of influences is not simply a matter of examining similar content but a process that leads to new questions and more encompassing issues'; the 'process' and the 'issues' in this case centre on Shakespeare's 'need to appeal to audiences for both aesthetic and commercial reasons' (10). Thus the core of Logan's thesis, helpfully reiterated midway through the discussion, is that 'Shakespeare shows himself primarily interested in the theatrical and literary techniques of Marlowe that made him a successful commercial playwright, and not in Marlowe, the Cambridge intellectual reflecting and moralizing on serious issues' (120). This assertion accounts for the highly convincing nature of much of Logan's argument since it explains why the two writers, even when attempting similar genres (for example, the epyllion in *Hero and Leander* and

Venus and Adonis) or exploring similar or parallel sociopolitical contexts (as in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*), end up producing such radically different works due to the striking contrast in their artistic, intellectual, and emotional temperaments.

Through the course of the study, Logan delineates three powerful influences of Marlowe upon Shakespeare's artistry: Marlowe's verbal and poetic dexterity, his radical revision or transformation of traditional dramatic genres, and his striking use of moral ambivalence and ambiguity in his characterizations and plots. Regarding the poetic innovations, Logan forthrightly emphasizes the originality and power of Marlowe's grandiloquence as well as the ways in which Shakespeare eventually improves on or moves past such Marlovian style through both subtle, good-natured (never harsh or scornful) parody and a more psychologically realistic, humanized, and character-specific expression. Marlowe's reconfiguration of dramatic genres constitutes another significant facet of his influence on Shakespeare, although this claim is articulated more clearly and convincingly in the later stages of the study than at the outset. Early Shakespearean creations such as Aaron and Richard III are certainly based on Marlovian 'villain-heroes' such as Tamburlaine, Barabas, Faustus, and the Guise, with their dramatic contexts presumably suggesting a mingling of morality and tragedy; Logan somewhat tentatively suggests that 'pressures for novelty' and innovation underlie the (perhaps mutual) influence. The intriguing conflation of comedy, tragedy, and epic history in Shakespeare's later history plays, especially *Henry V*, is more clearly inspired by a similar conflation of genres in the *Tamburlaine* plays, so that the connection between these plays is not at all 'far-fetched' (143).

The intentional artistic use of ambiguity may be the most significant form of influence of Marlowe upon Shakespeare. This facet is perhaps most clearly expressed during Logan's discussion of *Edward II* and *Richard II*: 'Both writers knew that ambiguity generates a desire for clarification in an audience; it challenges the audience to be attentive to a resolution of a mystery even if the resolution never materializes. It also stimulates the audience's imagination and reflective powers, securing their engagement with the drama as they become willing participants in fathoming the ambiguities' (106). This particular influence significantly overlaps with a major 'thematic' concern which preoccupies Logan repeatedly in the study: the uses and abuses of the imagination. The critic does not in fact limit his focus to the purely 'dramaturgical' connections between the two playwrights. Indeed, he clearly anticipates this methodological extension in his introduction, where he argues that

even when a study of influences ‘does not detect a clear and unmistakable relationship of cause and effect, it can tell something distinctive about 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).

It may appear unfair to question moments when the study, so clearly and effectively focused on discernible artistic or dramaturgical influence, does not consider further the ‘psychological and cultural forces’ at play. Nevertheless, in my mind Logan’s analysis repeatedly and excitingly brings the reader to the edge of some important cultural reflections. For example, his analysis hints at a possible parallel or homology between imaginatively engaged spectators encouraged to act as ‘willing participants in fathoming ... ambiguities’ and a Protestant reading of the eucharist, in which a purely symbolic ritual must be actively and imaginatively internalized and spiritualized. The question of deliberate artistic ambiguity might be productively related, at least with respect to the tragedies, to the Aristotelian insistence on ambiguity in the moral make-up of the tragic hero as described in the *Poetics*. Joel Altman’s argument in *The Tudor Play of Mind*, a study with which Logan is certainly familiar, about the significance of a deliberate cultivation of rhetorical ambivalence as a pedagogic device could perhaps also be put to more use here. In fact, Marlowe’s university training and his religious concerns, apparently deeper than those of the more ‘secular’ Shakespeare, might render it possible to construe at least some of these cultural reflections as aspects of Marlowe’s influence on Shakespeare (though it might be risky to underestimate direct theological impact on the latter).

I also wonder about broader cultural influences at moments where Logan’s readings of particular plays or particular aspects of plays seem questionable. My greatest uneasiness occurs in response to his treatment of *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Logan is not convinced that ‘Shylock’s criticism of “the hypocrisy of a Christian society” necessarily descended from Barabas’s’ (129). His doubt here may be partly related to what strikes me as an excessively idealized reading of the Christians in Shakespeare’s play, supported by an insistence on the necessarily comic and romantic resolution of the plot. I would object that *The Merchant of Venice* certainly constitutes — more radically than Logan is here willing to argue — another of Shakespeare’s reconfigurations of genre, perhaps his most ironic one. While Logan does recognize that in both plays ‘the playwrights have relied on literary conventions to achieve a superficial social harmony’ (134), successful elucidation of the

ideological and psychological connections between these two texts requires a more careful consideration of constructions of manliness in a Reformation context as well as of concomitant anxieties concerning Jewishness and homoeroticism.

Such reservations arise not only from my own deep critical interest in the subject of Logan's study, but also from a (perhaps self-interested) desire that the topic not be exhausted. Nevertheless, the soundness of Logan's approach and the convincing nature of the majority of his critical conclusions — even at moments where he speculates on the possible private motives and personal reflections of the two playwrights as they reacted to each other's works — renders this study an authoritative and inescapable context or reference point for any further consideration of the artistic influence of Marlowe on Shakespeare's dramatic and poetic productions.

IAN MCADAM

Notes

- 1 Harold Bloom, *Ruin the Sacred Truths* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 53.

Robert Mills. *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure and Punishment in Medieval Culture*. London: Reaktion Books, 2005. Pp 248.

In *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure and Punishment in Medieval England*, Robert Mills looks straight on at images of violence — from representations of penal practice and depictions of the torments of hell to the graphic mutilations of hagiographic dramas — in order to view them askance. The book asks us to 'queer' our view of the representational economy of medieval pain and punishment, not only in the sense of sexuality but in the more general sense of opening up our understanding of such representation's hegemonic functions in order to admit alternative, sometimes subversive, identifications