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The Influence of Marlowe on Shakespeare

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This essay interprets the prescribed terms of reference as follows. First, "the plays and poems commonly attributed to Shakespeare" is taken to denote the contents of the *Complete Works* edited by C.J. Sisson in 1953. That tally is supplemented in respects and for reasons to be expounded.

Marlowe "made some inspirational, creative or compositional contribution towards the authorship" of those works in the sense that (for example) Wagner's leitmotivic expression of ideas and emotions made just such a contribution to the song-writing of Hugo Wolf,¹ namely by influencing the developing style of an artistically consanguineous genius at its most receptive and formative stage.

As Coleridge says,² "the writings of a contemporary, perhaps not many years older than himself, surrounded by the same circumstances...possess a reality for [the young artist] and inspire an actual friendship..." Now, Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Marlowe (1564-1593) were born contemporaries; and there is strong (though inexplicably neglected) evidence that the former was first on the London theatre scene and hence on the world stage. As John Aubrey recorded,³ after due enquiry in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare came to London at about eighteen (that is, c.1582) and "was an Actor at one of the Playhouses, and did acte exceedingly well...He began early to make essays at Dramatique Poetry, which at that time was very lowe; and his Playes tooke well".

His first detailed biographer, Nicholas Rowe,⁴ again after due enquiry in Stratford, independently corroborates Aubrey's information. "It is at this time, and upon this Accident" (that is, in consequence of a youthful deer-stealing escapade which is itself well attested, from four separate sources⁵) "that he is said to have made his first Acquaintance with the Playhouse. He was receiv'd into the Company then in being, at first in a very mean Rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the Stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as extraordinary Actor, yet as an excellent writer" "Soon" here again plainly implies the early 1580s, as Aubrey says, long before the first performances of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587).

The lay Shakespeare-lover can only marvel at the easy freedom with which these explicit and mutually supportive historical affidavits have been set aside in favour of baseless literary fantasies about a playwright who though highly educated⁶ was nevertheless a late developer who wrote no known play until his twenty-sixth year. To the contrary; on massive and unanimous contemporary testimony, Shakespeare was an educationally and socially disadvantaged country boy; and these facts are duly set forth, in the plainest possible terms, by Nicholas Rowe:⁴ "His Father... could give him no better Education than his own Employment. He had bred him, 'tis true, for some time at a Free-school, where 'tis probable that he acquired that little Latin he was master of: But the narrowness of his Circumstances, and the want of assistance at Home, forc'd his Father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further Proficiency in that Language..."

This is further confirmed by Aubrey,³ who also refers to his "little Latine", and says: "His father was a Butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's Trade, but when he kill'd a Calfe he would doe it in a high style, and make a Speech. There was at this time another Butcher's son in this Towne that was held not at all inferior to him for a natural witt..." There is added testimony from a Stratford parish clerk who at the age of eighty told a visitor to the church, in 1693, "that this Shakespeare was formerly in this town bound apprentice to a butcher; but that he Run from his master to London, & there was Rec^d Into the play house as a serviture, and by this meanes had the oppertunity to be w^t he afterwards proved".⁷ Little Latin, twice; left school early, twice; a butcher's son, twice; a butcher's apprentice, twice; from Stratford to London, twice; to the play-house there, thrice; menial work, twice; then an actor, twice;

soon a playwright, thrice; all this in his youth, thrice. If so clear and well-attested an account needs further corroboration, it is surely self-evident that a sixteenth-century yeoman dealer in hides and skins, as Shakespeare's father was, would undertake his own slaughtering.⁸ Earlier scholarship has identified, and recent research⁹ has confirmed, the date at which he fell on hard times, and would hence need assistance on the home farm – namely in 1576, when William was twelve years of age.

This too conforms closely with what Aubrey³ tells us; the young Shakespeare was given the calves to kill, not the grown cattle. The deer- and rabbit-stealing stories perfectly fit the same simple pattern; meat and skins were needed for life and livelihood. Like many an English country lad before and since, Shakespeare as the eldest son had to help at home. In the same long tradition, already a husband and father himself at eighteen, he left for London and better fortune just as soon as he could, some five years before Marlowe came down from Cambridge.

Yet Marlowe had sprung from much the same background. His father was a Canterbury shoemaker, as Shakespeare's was a Stratford glover. Each had other trades and skills, as necessary in a society which was not yet extensively labour-dividing. Each was a local worthy of some substance and repute. Their two milieux offered similar facilities and amenities. Both were visited by troupes of London actors; mystery and morality plays were performed in both. In Canterbury, there was "provision for the public education of citizens' children";¹⁰ the same was true of Stratford. Each had its own grammar-school. But Marlowe is known to have entered his at fourteen, whereas there is no extant evidence that Shakespeare ever attended his at all. There was a further crucial difference, namely the judicious benefaction of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had died in 1575. He bequeathed his great library to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and he sponsored scholarships there for promising Canterbury students. Marlowe was awarded one at fifteen, in 1579. It was tenable for three years, or six if the candidate took holy orders. Marlowe graduated Master of Arts eight years later, in 1587. Even if he had aimed at the priesthood, this still represented a long delay, which has an interesting explanation. On excellent evidence, he had been employed, while still at Cambridge, as a secret agent of the Privy Council. In that service, it appears, he had travelled as far afield as Rheims. The English Jesuit seminary there was regarded with intense suspicion by Queen Elizabeth's advisers and kept under surveillance as a fertile breeding-ground of Catholic insurrection. Marlowe later made King Henry the Third of France apostrophize the corpse of his hated enemy, the villainous Duke of Guise, thus:

This is the traitor that hath spent my gold
in making foreign wars and civil broils.
Did he not draw a sort of English priests
from Douai to the seminary at Rheims
to hatch forth treason 'gainst their natural queen?
(*The Massacre at Paris* V.ii.106-110)¹¹

Such charges were not unfounded; sedition was rife. Thus Marlowe was introduced early to the power game, the struggle for national and religious ascendancy. It is fitting that his first play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, should wave global conquest as its resounding theme. It was performed in London, a dominant centre of world trade and power, in 1587. Later, Marlowe would associate with avant-garde thought and thinkers in science, philosophy and religion, especially within the Walter Raleigh circle. He was also accused of anti-theism and homosexuality, at a time when those persuasions were anathematised; they are among the main motifs of *Dr. Faustus* and *Edward II* respectively. His later life was brief and turbulent. He was arrested after a street sword-fight in 1589, bound over to keep the peace in 1592, and killed by a dagger-thrust in a brawl in 1593.

His dramatic art is notable for the fiery passion and grandiloquence of its poetic inspiration. But by far the most salient fact about him, as man and artist, is that he was reared from early boyhood to culture and privilege, as surely as Shakespeare was born to husbandry and handicap, including actual hardship. Marlowe studied Latin for much of his life; his translations of Ovid and Lucan were among the major poetic achievements of the 1590s¹² Shakespeare had to struggle, with all the force of his linguistic genius, to regain that lost ground. Marlowe had been personally concerned with secrets of state; Shakespeare was most familiar with the affairs of a country town. So far as is known, Marlowe had never done a hand's turn; all the sources say that Shakespeare had earned his living in lowly labour, whether in Stratford or London.

Their early dramatic subjects, style and diction could not have failed to reflect their respective backgrounds and temperaments, which stand in startling contrast. Shakespeare's easy intimacy with country life plainly shapes his thought and language, as Caroline Spurgeon¹³ has demonstrated by the objective methodology of counting and classification. In his range of images, as she verifiably claims,

nature, animals and everyday life come first, by a wide margin, whereas Marlowe "seems more familiar with the starry courts of heaven than the green fields of earth, and loves rather to watch the movements of meteors and planets than to study the faces of men". Shakespeare, as has often been noted, was a keen observer and detailed recorder of his father's various trades, in each of their several aspects, including butchery as well as wool-dealing and glover's tools. No comparable evocations are found anywhere in Marlowe. On the contrary; his known playwriting actually begins with an explicit and contemptuous rejection of the stage works written by country bumpkins for the entertainment of their own coarse kind. Such popular plays of the period are dismissed thus:

From jiggling¹⁴ veins of rhyming mother-wits
and such conceits as clownage keeps in pay
we'll lead you to the stately tent of war
where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
threaten the world in high astounding terms...
(1 *Tamburlaine*, Prologue 1-5)

Here is a personal manifesto of elitism, as well as a declaration of aesthetic intent. The new theatrical themes of the later 1580s are to be superior, grander, with diction to match; custom-designed to appeal to the higher class of spectator thus apostrophised. But who were the despised plebeian playwrights who catered for the common groundlings? Which of his few contemporary dramatists is Marlowe deliberately deriding here? Not, surely, his own kindred spirits, the other University wits such as John Lyly, George Peele, Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe; not Thomas Kyd, the schoolfellow of Edmund Spenser at Merchant Taylor's, who would elaborate his own high-flown stage style. There is only one identifiable writer of popular plays in or before 1587 to whom Marlowe could credibly have referred in terms of "mother-wit" and "clownage", namely the unschooled rustic rhymester Shakespeare, who as Aubrey³ and Rowe⁴ explicitly affirm had left his school and homestead early (in about 1576 and 1582 respectively) and soon began to act and write successfully for the London stage.

Coleridge² has wise words to offer on this topic also. "I am convinced that for the soul to prosper in rustic life a certain vantage-ground is prerequisite. It is not every man that is likely to be improved by a country life or by country labours. Education, or original sensibility, or both, must pre-exist". Shakespeare's well-attested want of education, independently evidenced by Ben Jonson¹⁵ among many others as well as Aubrey and Rowe, in an age when education and Latin were synonymous (thus grammar schools were so called because they taught Latin grammar) would have left him eager to learn all he could from the Cambridge M.A. who had emerged as a master-playwright distinguished by an unprecedented power of poetic diction which every aspiring practitioner would strive to emulate.

Marlowe had much else to offer, of vital importance to an apprentice historical dramatist. He knew something of statecraft; and if only its fringes, then at least from inside. He had some personal knowledge of great men and great causes. In all such matters as travel, society, adventure and unconventionality Marlowe was early elevated above the common throng, both as a man and as an artist. On such grounds we can confidently predict the nature of his probable influence on his polar opposite, the disadvantaged provincial Shakespeare. It would act above all as a powerful force for sophistication. Any rhyming mother-wit would ruefully and indeed resentfully acknowledge his own aesthetic defects and strive to remedy them by developing, after a phase of naive imitation, his own individual high style. Next, Marlowe would be the ideal model and mentor for the treatment of exalted themes.

Such an influence will be at its most beneficial whenever it can be adapted to subserve such purposes as extending dramatic horizons, creating effects of grandeur and conveying cosmic significance. It can readily be illustrated by a textual study of *Tamburlaine*, the first fount of a new and invigorating spring of such inspirations, immediately absorbed and relished by an Elizabethan audience steeped in an expansionist ethos of exploration and conquest. As we have seen, its original hero was vauntingly advertised as expressing himself "in high astounding terms." The same may be said of most Marlowe characters. They naturally adopt their creator's own poetic voice, his own personal turns of speech and phrase. *Tamburlaine* is his first known play, written in his early twenties. It has hardly begun before Cosroe traverses three continents in five lines, from Persia by way of Africa to Europe, with a commensurately far-flung conspectus of sun and moon, meteors and planets. This already prodigious sweep and scope is further enhanced by the long list of vast territories over which Cosroe is to be crowned king (1 *Tamburlaine* 1.1.161-8). As additional icons of power and opulence, the lines are encrusted with references to "gold and precious stones" (121). Even disaffected subjects are notable for their "coats of gold... costly jewels.. and shining stones" (141-3). All this is designed to highlight the dazzling refulgence of Cosroe. Yet he is a mere tallow rushlight compared to the blinding

brilliance of his conqueror Tamburlaine, whose first words are about "jewels and treasure" (I.ii.2) and who is soon heard planning to terrorise the world and subdue an empire on which the sun would hardly dare to set (37-40). Nothing less than all known or imaginable riches and lands, symbolised by the whole arching span of the heavens, are the avowed aim and ambition of conquest. These titanic concepts are presented on the stage and brought vividly home to an actual audience by sheer power of poetic diction. The mighty line is itself an image of mightiness.

Such effects have been closely analysed and documented by Caroline Spurgeon,¹³ who draws attention to the "celestial and magnificent qualify" of Marlowe's imagery, electively expressed in terms of "radiant light" and invested with "terrific upward force". "With Shakespeare", she explains, "it is far otherwise". His feet are firmly set upon "this goodly frame, the earth"; his eyes are focussed on the daily life around him... Thus by examining their imagery alone, we can see how entirely different were those two men in mind, temperament and outlook." So demonstrable and startling a disparity between fellow-artists, playwrights and poets born in similar surroundings in the same year must surely be explained by reference to nurture as well as nature, formative environment as well as genetic endowment. This immense chasm had to be crossed by the young Shakespeare on his own way to the same heights of style and theme.

He needed the bridge-builder Marlowe, who would prove by far the more dominating and dynamic of the two in the 1580s. At that early stage, furthermore, Marlowe was in fact the more forceful orator and stylist, and the greater acknowledged success as a playwright. He might thus be expected to make an immediate impact on the malleable and receptive mind of the young Shakespeare. The resulting impression, because of its predictable contrast, should stand out in identifiable relief. The search should therefore begin with the earliest accredited¹⁶ play *Titus Andronicus*. Its dating as an integral entity presents difficulties, because of Shakespeare's well-documented propensity for revision. But there is evidence both internal¹⁷ and external¹⁸ that it was begun no later than 1589. It is consequently the earliest datable canonical play in which any Marlovian influence could be traced.

We are looking for signs of the new personal approach already exemplified and defined, a vast panorama of celestial bodies and terrestrial empires, all adorned with gold and gems. Nothing even remotely matching that description occurs throughout the long first act. Then suddenly, in the ensuing soliloquy (II.i. 1-20).¹⁹ Aaron the Moor impulsively transplants his innamorata, the Queen of the Goths, to the abode of the gods: "now climbeth Zamora Olympus' top". It is true that she has just made a good marriage, to Saturninus, emperor-elect of Rome; and her villainous paramour will turn her exalted state to his own evil advantage. Still, Olympus seems decidedly above her station; and the reader or playgoer is unprepared for the vividly Marlovian photo-montage of the earthy Tamara displayed as a divine goddess throned far above the thunder, amid a dazzling display of golden sunlight and glittering zodiac overarching all earthly kingdoms. All this is further embellished by the subsidiary images of a towering falcon at its highest pitch and the demigod Prometheus tied to the vast remote mountain Caucasus.

The predictable references to precious metals and stones are at first unobtrusive. The sun's "glistening coach" subtly evokes the gold, silver, chrysolites and jewels in Ovid's description.²⁰ Then the allusions become more specific. "I will be bright and shine in pearls and gold." The whole passage repays a close study of its quasi-ventriloquial Marlovian effects. Shakespeare, while recognisably retaining his own identity (e.g. in the countryman's characteristic falconry image, drawn from a stock of personal experience¹³) is heard speaking in an assumed voice. Even the odd idea of mountaineering on "Olympus' top" is found in *Dr Faustus* (III.1.4). He too has climbed it and sits there enskied like Tamora; and we watch the same resplendent coach-trip through the empyrean.

These same three characteristics, namely (a) height of heaven (b) breadth of conquest and (c) brightness of treasure, reappear in the opening speeches of Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*¹⁶ (I.i. 1-27, 46, 60-1). The topics and diction are alike tripartite: (a) "heavens...comets...sky...stars...sun...planets" (b) "conquered", i.e. the whole of France, including the eight named towns whose recapture is announced (c) "crystal...gold". The music is markedly Marlovian in tone and timbre. "Hung be the heavens with black" recalls "set black streamers in the firmament" (*2 Tamburlaine* V.111.39), while "brandish your crystal tresses in the sky" is set to the same memorable melody as "shaking her silver tresses in the air" (*1 Tamburlaine* V.1.78). By now however (that is, the 1590s) Shakespeare's influences are so well integrated into his own developing style that these resemblances might be dismissed as mere coincidence - were it not for the manifest allusion that immediately follows: "like captives bound to a triumphant car" (*1 Henry VI* I.1.22). This phrase too has been absorbed into Shakespeare's creative mind, where it germinates as a subordinate metaphor illustrating the plight of the English noblemen figuratively taken prisoner at Death's allegorical victory over the late monarch. Yet its subconscious source is surely unmistakable; the writer of *1 Henry VI* has sat among the Tudor audience and watched agog as Tamburlaine enters (2, IV.iii) "drawn in his chariot by the Kings of

Trebizond and Syria, with bits in their mouths, reins in his left hand, and in his right hand a whip with which he scourgeth them". The cadence of Shakespeare's line further confirms his awareness of Marlowe's own later allusion to the same striking tableau: "with captive kings at his triumphant car" (*Edward II* I.i.174).

This direction of demonstrable indebtedness also implies that Shakespeare is again the sounding-board not the source of the Marlovian voice in other such echoes. Thus in *2 Henry VI* the Queen, enamoured of Suffolk, tells him that he reminded her of the great King Henry "when in the city Tours/ thou rannest a tilt in honour of my love/ and stolest away the ladies' hearts of France" (I.iii.48-50); cf *Edward II* "Tell Isobel the queen I looked not thus/ when for her sake I ran at tilt in France" (V.v.67-8). Again, in *2 Henry VI* a hated rival "bears a duke's revenues on her back" and in *Edward II* "wears a lord's revenues on his back" (II.1.40). Similarly Shakespeare is also heard humming Marlowe's tunes in *3 Henry VI*, e.g. V.vii.14 "and made our footstool of security" (cf *Massacre at Paris* IV.ii.41, "and makes his footstool on security") and II.v.115 "my heart shall be thy sepulcher" (cf *The Jew of Malta* III.11,12, "these arms of mine shall be thy sepulchre", also said by a father to his dead son) All this is partly just the response of any receptive mind to memorable music, with plentiful parallels throughout the history of any art. But the basic pattern is far too consistent for mere coincidence. These salient examples all derive from one main motif, namely the contrast between life and death and hence between their respective dramatic equivalents, power and subservience. With increasing experience the apprentice excels his exemplar in announcing and developing such themes, not only in their verbal melody but also in their intellectual structure. Thus when Richard Duke of York muses on "how sweet it is to wear a crown/ within whose circuit is Elysium/ and all that poets feign of bliss and joy" (*3 Henry VI* I.ii.29-31) the thought profits from the process of refinement and polish patently applied to "'tis sweet...wear a crown—kingly joys" (*1 Tamburlaine* II.v.55, 59-60). That passage was perhaps imprinted on Shakespeare's mind by Marlowe's famous preceding fanfare "is it not passing brave to be a king/ and ride in triumph through Persepolis?". Those lines, though arbitrarily inserted into the text of Laurence Olivier's film version of *Henry V*, do not sound in the least misplaced or incongruous there.

The two great voices are heard duetting in close and concordant harmony in their processional arias of pomp and power. Indeed, the whole *Henry VI* trilogy¹⁶ and other canonical plays usually assigned to the early 1590s or before are filled with gentle unobtrusive acknowledgements to Marlowe which though difficult to define are readily recognisable to diligent readers. One especially rewarding example is the speech of the very literary-minded Lieutenant (*2 Henry VI* IV.i.11) beginning "The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day/ is crept into the bosom of the sea". Here too the main themes are victory and defeat, power and impotence, life and death, complete with the typical tripartite panorama of height ("wings...air"), breadth (the long horizon of sunset at sea) and treasure ("prize...ransom"). These are the channels that Marlowe's influence finds and fills.

In general, such secondary Shakespearean usages are subtler and more refined than their primary source; consciously or not, he profits by example. Thus if *Tamburlaine* could "make whole cities caper in the air" (2, III.ii.61) it is by brute force of undermining and explosion, whereas Suffolk "made ...whole towns to fly" (*2 Henry VI* II.i.159) by bargaining them away in treaties. Even in such brief glimpses, elements of the basic pattern emerge; regions sail skyward. Similarly the literal realities of "wars...lute....lady...caper" in *2 Tamburlaine* (I.iv.28-31) are far removed from the poetic personification of the "war...capers....lady's....lute" passage in *Richard III* (I.i.9-13); yet the deep kinship of thought and language is manifest. *Tamburlaine's* sons are pacific in wartime; Richard is belligerent in peacetime. Again, the shared motif is a hero's passionate commitment to power, whether in love or war.

During the 1590s it is Shakespeare who is poetically and dramatically the more inventive in his treatment of such topics. In the next *Richard III* scene, a hearse appears on the stage, as in *2 Tamburlaine* III.ii. There, the dead Zenocrate is fiercely and movingly mourned; yet all is static rhetoric and spectacle. Shakespeare's coffins have a far livelier function; they animate the action. The first scene of *1 Henry VI*, already cited, is as indebted to the death of Zenocrate (*2 Tamburlaine* II.iv. 1-5) for its vocabulary ("heavens.. black...day" at the beginning of each, soon followed by "sun...fire... beams" and so forth) as to her burial for her tableau. But Marlowe's ends are Shakespeare's means; the latter's ceremonial themes are as deliberately designed to develop plot and action as to provide their impressive prelude.

Shakespeare adds not only dramatic intensity to his Marlovian strains but also new dimensions of characterisation. Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* (e.g. V.i.98-120, 124-55) has inherited the ideas and diction of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* (e.g. II.iii.175-202, V.v.77-89). But Aaron is a far more colourful character, with an added sparkle of dry and chilling hilarity in his self-confessed wickedness. There is the same degree of contrast between Shakespeare's Machiavellian Richard the Third and Marlowe's Duke of Guise (*The Massacre at Paris*), or their weak kings Richard the Second and Edward

the Second, or their soldier heroes Titus and Tamburlaine. That last pair exemplifies a further development. Their respective acts of filicide illustrate Marlowe's personification of blind power and Shakespeare's personalisation of human passion. Tamburlaine kills his son (2, IV.i.123) in a fit of murderous rage, Titus his (I.i.292) in fair fight over a point of principle. One hero exults, the other suffers.

There is of course reason to suppose that the inspirational processes thus far described were not solely unilateral. But their main direction of flow is manifest, and so is its causation. When one source is placed higher (i.e. socially) than the other, and filled fuller (educationally) and is further ostentatiously tilted (no Tudor play was ever more generous with its outpourings of influence than *Tamburlaine*) common sense nominates that source as the donor, especially when the other is so conspicuously receptive and so analysably redolent of Marlovian essences. But although the communicating channels run deep, they were always comparatively narrow. So far as textual evidence goes, Shakespeare owes none of his broad human sympathies to anything he heard or read in any Marlowe play. Yet it is evident that Marlowe's presence and personality must have made their own special contribution to Shakespeare's creative mind. These two great artists, as we have seen, were strongly contrasted, and therefore potentially complementary, in their temperaments and early lifestyles. A sense of common purpose and destiny may also have bonded those disparate elements together, as in the better-documented parallel pairings of Mozart and Haydn, Goethe and Schiller, Coleridge and Wordsworth. Indeed, Coleridge² speaks from personal experience when he compares such artistic relationships to 'actual friendship, as of a man for a man'.

There are, furthermore, strong reasons for supposing that Marlowe and Shakespeare were at least acquainted. Thus *Edward II* and *Titus Andronicus* were both acted by the Earl of Pembroke's company, as their title-pages proclaim. Both playwrights must have known their great actor Edward Alleyn, among many other members of the theatrical profession, no doubt as closed and charmed a circle then as now. Indeed, both may well have belonged to it themselves; Marlowe too, according to seventeenth-century sources,²¹ "rose from an actor to be a maker of plays".

The marriage of true minds may well have proved fertile in ways still unsuspected. It is rewarding to survey the terrain where the two frontiers are most closely contiguous, to the extent of blurring the borderlines, so that not only words but feelings and impulses are shared. This is the world of poetry, not drama. It is best exemplified by the two great lyric narratives *Hero and Leander*, which first appeared posthumously in 1598, after manuscript circulation, and *Venus and Adonis*, already published in 1593. Their close-woven textual affinities of source, topic and imagery could serve as the subject of a long separate study. So could the biographical backgrounds and their much-discussed connections with the Earl of Southampton. On any assessment, A.L. Rowse is surely correct in claiming that "the two poems are full of echoes of each other, theme, argument, turns of thought and phrase; one has the impression that...each poet at least knew what the other was writing. Not only that, but there are echoes which reverberate between Shakespeare's sonnets and Marlowe's poem".²²

The definitive analysis remains to be written. In the present context only a sketch can be attempted. Its starting-point must be the influence of Ovid on both poets, which inspires the new Tudor style of vivid and immediate lyrical communication, just as Seneca had inspired its earlier dramatic equivalent. These starkly contrasting components of Ovidian love and tenderness read on the page, and Senecan hatred and murder seen on the stage, each element unified by their shared obsession with cruelty and mutilation, made an explosive mix. All its elements are found mingled together from the first, in *Titus Andronicus* as in *Tamburlaine*. But the discovery that poetry can be added as an effectively flavourful ingredient to be poured and stirred in at will was surely a lesson that Shakespeare learned from Marlowe, just as Schubert learned melody from such mentors as Mozart. This may sound surprising in both those parallels. But the fact is that Schubert's earliest songs, like Shakespeare's earliest iambic pentameters (e.g. in *Titus* and *Henry II*) are rarely distinguished or indeed even notable for the sheer lyric impulse with which their names have come to be synonymous. The compelling evidence for this gradual development lies in the works themselves. *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare's first known poem (which he himself called, in its preamble, "the first heir of my invention", i.e. his first published attempt at this genre of pure poetic imagination) appeared in 1593, when he was twenty-seven years old. There is no valid reason to suppose that it had been written any earlier than 1592. Its subject-matter and style both famously derive from Ovid's love-poetry; and it is preceded, as if to reinforce that point, by a Latin quotation from the *Amores*²³ (I,xv.35-6) Those same works had already been translated by the trained Latinist Marlowe, perhaps as early as 1586.²⁴ He was a born poet who wrote poetic plays. Shakespeare however was a born dramatist who had to learn about poetry by experiment and practice, including the study of the best-accredited sources, namely (in Tudor aesthetics) the Latin classics; and he was delayed and late with his Latin, as he and the world at large unanimously testified for the next two centuries.²⁵

The question requires continued scrutiny, because it is so crucial. In the present context, it provides one plain reason for the deep disparity between Shakespeare's artistic development and Marlowe's. The former would have approached Ovid via English in the first instance, as confirmed by his well-documented familiarity²⁶ with Golding's version of the *Metamorphoses*. He seems also to have known Marlowe's *Englised Amores*, which contains the invented phrase "the moon sleeps with Endymion" (I.xiii.43), better known from its verbatim reappearance in *The Merchant of Venice* (V.1.109), there made even more memorable by the added phrase "and would not be awaked".

With help from such sources, and spurred by the desire to quote classical lore and literature in the latest Marlovian dramatic vein, Shakespeare seriously applied himself to such studies. Again, the evidence is in the texts. Virgil is cited verbatim in *2 Henry VI*, Ovid in *2 Henry VI*, and so on. In addition, the patrician element of style absorbed by the plebeian Shakespeare from the Marlovian lyric mode is the Ovidian strain of exalted tenderness, the Latin equivalent (and hence perhaps also the original inspiration) of mediaeval courtly love. Thus both the long narrative poems resemble Ovid, or illuminated manuscripts, or Minnesang, or Tudor portraits, in their frank delight in the details of rich dress and adornment. Indeed, the whole of *Venus and Adonis* may well have derived from just such a detail in *Hero and Leander* (I.21-2):

Her wide sleeves green, and bordered with a grove
where Venus in her naked glory strove
to please the careless and disdainful eyes of proud Adonis...

This motif of disdain, separately adopted and elaborated by Shakespeare, is also apparently Marlowe's own, if he is the innovator here as in so many other such contexts; there is no hint in the Ovidian source (*Metamorphoses* X.524-739) that Adonis was in any respect reluctant. Then both poems proceed to paint further sensuous portraits of physical features and their effects. Both have "rose-cheeked Adonis" (*Hero* I.93; *Venus* 3). Both are redolent of the sweetness of breath (I.21-2; 443) and its power to restore life (II.3; 473-4). Both deplore the ravages wrought by weather on delicate skin (I.27-8; 1081-2) which nature itself will strive to kiss (waves in *Hero* II.172-3, bushes in *Venus* 871-2, as well as sun and wind). Both discuss, in similar detail, the downcast aspects of weeping eyes (I.158,295; 955f). Both insist on the need for beauty to be propagated (I.265-6; 130f); here Marlowe apparently coins the metal-stamping metaphor later so memorably applied in *Measure for Measure* (II.iv.46f). Similarly Leander's denunciation of cloistered virtue (I.317f) is beautifully elaborated in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1.1.70-3) from the same vocabulary ("nun...cold...fruitless"). More robustly still, the device of describing animal behaviour in the context of human love is introduced by Marlowe (II.141f) and daringly exploited by Shakespeare (259-326, 380-408).

This consistent pattern of Marlovian idea and Shakespearean development, already noted in the dramatic parallels above, can be further traced in *The Rape of Lucrece* and the *Sonnets*. Thus the latter (e.g. the first seventeen) are famously replete with attempted persuasions about the need for procreation, while *Lucrece* (386-7) continues the motif of stolen kisses and adds Marlovian allusions to breasts as globes or worlds (II.275-6; 407-8) or as besieged mounts or turrets (II.274; 473,481) or to the assailed maiden as a trembling bird (II.290f; 457).

At first sight, these shared lyric themes are entirely distinct from the dramatic repertory. Some of the former may be explicable on the grounds of elective affinity; thus Shakespeare's "interest in the play of emotions in the human face" and his "intense sympathy with the snared bird" have been objectively demonstrated by Caroline Spurgeon.¹³ But there are far deeper links between Shakespeare's lyric response to Marlowe (essentially about love, expressed by images of human look and touch) and his dramatic response (essentially about power, expressed by superhuman images of heaven and earth), indeed, the two are again equated, as aspects of a universal will to power. This identity is already as explicit in Marlowe's poems as his plays. A woman's encounters with her first lover are called "wars" (II.296); the comparison is offered more as a strict analogy than as a mere metaphor. Shakespeare typically extends that analogy, through the mouthpiece of Love personified, throughout three stanzas about War personified (97-114). The love-war relationship may be further characterised by the two poets themselves. Their readers will be regularly reminded of the popular and persuasive identification of Marlowe with the rival poet of the *Sonnets*. There too the comparison is couched in terms of combat. The stately galleon "of tall building and of goodly pride" (80.11-12) is matched against a "worthless boat". And there is certainly much justification for describing the dramatic style of Marlowe as "the proud full sail of his great verse", itself a mighty line (86.1). Even his gentler lyric inspirations sufficed to set Shakespeare venturing into previously unexplored lyric territory, with results still enjoyed and celebrated today. The erotic diction and imagery of *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* in turn suffuse and colour many a song and dialogue in Shakespeare's

later plays.

The affinities with Marlowe are seen at their most intimate in the attribution of his famous love-lyric *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love* to Shakespeare, together with other poems either not known to be his or known not to be, in the collection *The Passionate Pilgrim* published by William Jaggard in 1599. Despite frequent claims to the contrary, there is no a priori justification for impugning Jaggard's motives or probity.¹⁷

The simplest unitary explanation will (and therefore should) suffice, namely that the poems were printed from a *prima facie* authentically Shakespearean source, such as a collection of lyrics written out in his own hand,²⁸ at a time when manuscript anthologies were commonly compiled for a variety of legitimate purposes.

Here is a central and pivotal point of the relationship under review. Those two titles were evocatively chosen. The passionate pilgrim was shown the way by the equally passionate shepherd. In about 1597 Shakespeare had publicly cited the latter's poem, with evident affection and good humour. Sir Hugh Evans sings it to show that, like Bottom, he is not afraid (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* III.1.16-28). Perhaps it was the previous talk of weapons and duels that put him in mind of the turbulent Marlowe, whose bird-song and roses are called upon to provide lyric relief. The lines warbled, with lingering repetitions, are 5-8, from the shallow rivers to the fragrant posies; and they elicit the heartfelt comment "Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry". Even within the dramatic context, this pays a considerable compliment. Shakespeare himself wrote no comparable lyric poem. Pure pastoral was not his field. But he composed an entire dramatic masterpiece of ironic variations on the theme, namely *As You Like It*, complete with passionate shepherds passim. Part of that play responds to Marlowe directly, like a long elaboration of the "Nymph's Reply", attributed to Walter Raleigh.²⁹ Arcadia could turn cold, like its young poet. He is personally invoked as a "dead shepherd", perhaps in explicit allusion to his pastoral lyric as well as his *Hero and Leander* in the exalted genre of pastoral narrative. The latter story is often mentioned by Shakespeare in other plays; its source is quoted verbatim in *As You Like It* (III.v.81-2): "Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?" For this purpose, Phoebe the shepherdess is implausibly feigned to know her Marlowe.

No such deliberate tributes were ever paid by Shakespeare to any other contemporary. They help (and were perhaps designed) to discharge his debt. Especially noteworthy is the responsive minor chord of mourning and obituary briefly struck by the epithet in "dead shepherd". Marlowe was murdered in 1593, and *As You Like It* is usually dated 1599; that tragedy is still audibly alive in Shakespeare's mind. So it was when he wrote in an earlier scene of the same play (III.iii,12) "It strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room". The phrase is allotted to Touchstone, who is allowed to act out of character for this purpose, slyly showing that a clown may also be a literary commentator, and conversely. The reference to Marlowe's famous line from *The Jew of Malta*³⁰ (already well known on the stage though not published until 1633) seems clear enough: "Infinite riches in a little room" (I.i.34). The parallel becomes even more persuasive when considered in conjunction with the contemporary reports of Marlowe's murder. Four men "met together in a room", and talked and dined and supped there; but then "could not be at one nor agree about the payment of the sum of pence, that is, *le recknyng* there".¹⁰ A great reckoning indeed; Marlowe had been sent to his own account with all his imperfections on his head, like the Ghost³¹ in *Hamlet*. Conceivably, Shakespeare had studied the coroner's findings; he certainly had access to other legal and forensic manuscript documents.³²

With all this reminiscence of Marlowe, Touchstone's immediately preceding words must assume an added resonance. He has just referred to "Ovid among the Goths"; and he then says that "when a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child Understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room". The repeated "man" in this context is surely Marlowe himself. The better-instructed members of the audience are being informed or reminded, in a presumably topical allusion, that Marlowe has again been seriously maltreated, like Ovid among the barbarians.³³ All this suggests a cautiously covert yet spirited protest about the fact that Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores* had been banned and burned by archiepiscopal edict in 1599. It appears that another debt is being repaid.

On any assessment, however, the evidence strongly suggests that by the late 1590s Shakespeare had come to feel a close affinity with his late colleague, as if despite their disparate backgrounds they had moved in literary and social circles that often touched and indeed intersected.³⁴ The *Merry Wives* and *As You Like* allusions amount to a grateful public recognition of artistic obligation, still currently effective 400 years later. The initial impact must have been very powerful indeed. It may therefore also have proved painful, when first experienced. If Marlowe was indeed the rival poet of the *Sonnets*, compared to whose tall ship Shakespeare rated his own poetic skills as a mere "saucy bark, inferior far to his" (80.7), then that metaphor was well chosen in its ironic ambiguity. At the very moment of their

confrontation, as the whole world knew, the stately Spanish galleons had fled or foundered, while the English bark bobbed up triumphantly, because of its superior mobility. The latter's lowness was its advantage. Between poets, the strong sense of rivalry, and the equally keen awareness of real inferiority in certain respects, must have rankled sourly, not to say festered. As already suggested, admiration could easily have become modified by resentment.

In the literary mode, resentment can be most effectively expressed in terms of parody. It is not surprising therefore that when Shakespeare wished to adopt a fustian and bombastic stage style, his own Ancient Pistol is audibly aimed at Marlowe, with direct and deliberate mocking allusion to *Tamburlaine*. We have already noted some of the evidence for Shakespeare's long-standing familiarity with that pioneering play, and for the powerful impact it must have made on his own poetic and dramatic imagination. The *Henry VI* allusions sound comparatively serious and respectful. But the audience is meant to be actively amused by the reference to "pack-horses and hollow [sic] pampered jades of Asia, which cannot go but thirty [sic] miles a day" (2. St-C, 4 *Henry IV* II.iv.159-60). Admittedly Pistol's mild misquotations or misremembrances of Marlowe's "Rolla, ye pampered jades of Asia! What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?" (2 *Tamburlaine* IV. iii.1-2) may be meant to suggest that he has typically garbled the original text. But the mockery of the lines themselves, in their grandiose context, is equally unmistakable. Times and tastes had changed; but *Tamburlaine* was still a performed and admired play in the 1590s,³⁵ and Marlowe could not have been publicly offered as a suitable model for the Braggadochio diction of a *miles gloriosus* unless his style had already contained its own elements of exaggeration.

The same message was already implicit in 1 *Henry VI* (IV.vii.61f), where the long list of Talbot's impressive titles is surely meant to remind theatregoers of the similar incantation in 2 *Tamburlaine* (III.i.1-7), as Orcanus recites the titles of Callapinus, King of Turkey. Shakespeare's Joan of Arc, like his later shepherdess Phoebe, is also feigned to know her Marlowe. Her immediate reaction to all those honorifics is "Here is a silly-stately style indeed./ The Turk that two and fifty kingdoms hath/ writes not so tedious a style as this". In the surviving text of *Tamburlaine*, the Turk is credited with a mere "hundred and thirty kingdoms"; but the ironic intention is already clear enough. The audience is invited to laugh with the French country lass at the portentous solemnity of Sir William Lucy, and by implication (as the word "writes" also suggests) at his Marlovian antecedents. The humour of class resentment and deflation transcends national barriers. It seems that the countryman Shakespeare was just as unimpressed as his rustic Joan.

There is a further element of quasi-parody in his allusion to the famous evocation of Helen of Troy: "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?" (*Dr. Faustus* V.ii.97). The comment of Troilus is anything but awestruck: "The Grecians keep our aunt [i.e. Helen]./ Is she worth keeping? why, she is a pearl/ whose price hath launched above thousand ships" (*Troilus and Cressida* III.ii.80-2). The enquiry of King Richard the Second sounds similarly ironical: "Was this face the face/ that every day under his household roof/ did keep ten thousand men?" (Richard II IV.i. 281-3). Other references to *Dr. Faustus* are unambiguously jocular, not to say derisive. Thus "how now, Mephostophilus?" and 'set spurs and away, like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses" (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* I.1.123, IV.v.64-5) are again aimed at the audience. This treatment suggests no special reverence for Marlowe's grand themes of God-forsaken damnation; the cosmic is made to sound comic. By the end of the 1590s, the once mighty line had fallen so low in Shakespeare's estimation that when he strove to find a suitable model for the absurd ideas and antiquated diction of the Player King, he turned instinctively to Marlowe's description of how Pyrrhus "'whisked his sword about/ and with the wind³⁶ thereof the king fell down"; cf "with the wind and whiff of his fell sword the unnerved father falls" (*Hamlet* II.ii. 494-5, describing the same fierce scene from the sack of Troy).

The evidence thus far exhibited in this essay has confirmed that Shakespeare quoted, imitated and even parodied Marlowe, to whom he was nevertheless deeply and gratefully indebted for his own artistic development. Pupils have always treated their masters thus. The textual testimony is powerfully corroborated by Robert Greene, who in 1592 or earlier³⁷ accused Shakespeare of plagiarising Marlowe among others. These data create a further strong presumption, also hewn to by Ockham's Razor, the basic principle of economy in reasoning. If any other pre-1592 plays openly quote, imitate and parody Marlowe, and specially if the parallels occur in a context of power, and display the features already delineated, then their author is *prima facie* Shakespeare, because he is the only writer of the period known to have adopted such procedures at all, let alone suffered public censure for them. These are after all decidedly idiosyncratic activities, with unprecedented consequences. There were only a few practising playwrights before 1592, and there is no reason to imagine that more than one of them thus made free with Marlowe in the brief period between the first performance of *Tamburlaine* c.1587 and the time when Greene penned his attack. Shakespeare's observed and definable usages, furthermore, are quite different in kind from Greene's own obeisances

in the direction of Marlowe (e. g. in *Alphonsus, King of Arragon*, c.1588, written in emulation of *Tamburlaine*). They are equally distinguishable from George Peele's drama on the theme of conquest, *The Battle of Alcazar*, from the same period.

It is Shakespeare's Marlowisms, and no others in the history of Tudor drama, that might be construed as deserving of reproof, because of their transpicuous openness. He alone could think of Marlowe as an equal, a brother, a friend in art, by whose great example he is therefore naturally permitted to profit; and whose work, by the same token, he will feel free to criticise, whenever and however he pleases, for its "mental bombast" (to use the term devised by Coleridge when adopting exactly the same stance vis-à-vis Wordsworth). If then Shakespeare is an identifiable culprit, his *modus operandi* and fingerprints will in turn identify his presence in other plays.

That plain inference creates a mild contretemps, because not all the plays most clearly concerned are commonly attributed to Shakespeare. However, it is surely justifiable to interpret "commonly" as denoting the broad majority of informed Shakespeareans, and not just the tiny coterie of text-editors. Further, "attributed" must relate to the conscious application of verifiable criteria and procedures of attribution, not just arbitrary fiat, or a supine acceptance of some supposed consensus. By those definitions, as well as by the ordinary operations of reasoning and common sense, the early texts of *3 Henry VI*, usually short-titled *The Contention* (published in quarto, 1594) and *True Tragedy* (in octavo, 1595) are Shakespeare's own first versions,³⁰ written c. 1590, of plays which he later revised into their 1623 Folio form.

Their youthful Marlowisms alone would be sufficient reason for later revision. They are so copious that these early versions were once fashionably attributed to Marlowe on those grounds alone. That notion was never validated, and is now discountenanced. The apparent echoes have to be explained by a second voice. We have already heard it, from *Titus Andronicus* onward, and we have defined its essential characteristics. Most notable among them are its wide compass, its long-flighted span, and its insistent ornamentation. In conformity with its Marlovian models, it moves freely between heights and depths, or across countries. En route, it seeks to impress by ostentatious embellishment, whether drawn from actual wealth or from gems of classical allusion (for example "pearl and gold" or "Olympus' top" and "Prometheus" in the *Titus Andronicus* passage quoted above, where Ovid's "glistening coach" combines both). This trait too is intensely Marlovian, comprising a massive 20% of all his images, but only sporadically Shakespearean, totalling less than 4% all told.¹³ In the latter's formative period, these touches sometimes seem uncertain, even maladroit; Marlowe is predictably more deft and sophisticated in such displays.

Now, *Tamburlaine* contains traces of the notion that the Eumenides or Furies, the dread emissaries or daughters of Night or Pluto, may on occasion wear masks that render them invisible, thus: "Ye Furies that can mask invisible/ dive to the bottom of Avernus' pool" (1,IV.iv, 17-18). They are also "Furies from the black Cocytus' lake" (1,V,11.155). Later, *Tamburlaine* proposes to scorch hostile terrain 'as black/ as is the island where the Furies mask" (2, III.11.12). All this is overtly offered as rhetoric, rather than dramaturgy. It lingered in the young Shakespeare's mind. There its components fused together and became:

Dark night, dread night, the silence of the night
wherein the Furies mask in hellish troops
send up, I charge you, from Sosetus' lake the spirit Askalon...

who is later dismissed with "down, I say, unto the damned pool" (*Contention*, 508-11,528). All this is deliberately designed as dramaturgy, rather than rhetoric. Yet it also exploits the "terrific upward force" identified in Marlowe by Caroline Spurgeon.¹³ Hell hurtles up from the bowels of the earth, through a trap-door; its purpose is to assist in the seizure of power. Its creator seems to lack classical erudition, just as Shakespeare's contemporaries and first biographers insistently tell us about him. To the University-trained classicist Marlowe, the Furies would constitute a trio or quartet, not "troops"; the unlearned spelling "Sosetus" suggests a spoken rather than a written source. Yet these references are clearly intended to impress the audience and instil a suitably solemn frame of mind. The benighted lake was to be imagined as the Christian Hell, and its Furies as devils. The *Contention* scene, with its stage direction "It thunders and lightnings, and then the Spirit riseth up" is far more immediately ominous than anything in *Tamburlaine*; it aims to induce the Faustian frisson (cf V.1 "Thunder and lightning. Enter devils.."). No doubt it made its own powerful impact on Tudor audiences.

The equally clear relationship between *The Contention* and *Edward II* is admittedly more conjectural. The textual intertwining is often reminiscent (in ways too detailed for definition here) of the links between the two masters' narrative poems, as if there had already been some exchange of ideas and perhaps even of manuscripts c.1590. The two authors had very probably seen, and quite

possibly acted in, each other's plays as well as their own. The two voices sometimes sound in unison. Thus in *Edward II* (II.11.163-4) the desperate plight of England is exemplified by the distressing news that "the wild O'Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns/ lives uncontrolled within the English pale", while in *The Contention* (1162-3) a messenger announces that "the wild O'Neil, my lord, is up in arms/ with troops of Irish kerns that uncontrolled/ do plant themselves within the English pale." There must be some causal connection here; and it would be conformable with the thesis thus far advanced if, at this early stage of Shakespeare's development, the more sophisticated version came first. "Up in arms" and "troops" are otiose; "plant themselves" is incongruously static (and incidentally a favourite Shakespeare metaphor). The reason why the essential phrases, about will and uncontrolled invasion, became especially imprinted on a receptive mind would be, as before, that they stamp an image of power; they compellingly depict dynamic action or force within a confined space (cf also "the haughty Dane commands the narrow seas" in *Edward II* loc.cit.16 and "stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas" in *True Tragedy* 240-1). What the developing Shakespeare learned from his more advanced contemporary was thus again, *ex hypothesi*, how concepts of spaciousness, grandeur and power, the forces of evil or enmity in action, can most effectively be channelled and communicated through the corresponding power of language.

Here is a further selection among the many typical parallels between Marlowe and the early Henry VI plays. Each contains a graphic description of success or failure, victory or defeat, power or impotence. On the evidence, such formulae were invented by Marlowe and eagerly exploited by Shakespeare. The Duke of Guise aims at "the diadem of France"; "for this I wake while others sleep" (*The Massacre at Paris* I, ii. d7); the Duke of York, who aims at "the diadem of England" admonishes himself "watch thou and wake, when others be asleep" (*Contention*, 191). Their characterisation, and those two soliloquies, will repay closer comparison. Again, the shared line "and we are graced with wreaths of victory" (*Massacre* IV.iv.2, *True Tragedy* 1101) crowns a crucial battle-scene in each. A symbol of kingship in *Edward II* (II.11.16-17) is "a lofty cedar-tree, fair flourishing/ on whose top branches kingly eagles perch"; its bark is eaten away by the canker of treachery, which "gets unto the highest bough"; later (V.11.11-12) a regent compares himself to "Jove's huge tree." In *True Tragedy* (1993, 1996) a regent is fatally wounded and to/ the axe's edge/ whose arms gave shelter cries "thus yields the cedar to the princely eagle/... whose top branch overpeered Jove's spreading tree". Next, Marlowe's petulant Edward, when thwarted, bursts out "Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?! The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows" (I.1.93-4) and he later (V.1.13-14) compares his own maltreated majesty to a lion that "highly scorning that the lowly earth/ should drink his blood, mounts up into the air"; cf the rebel's head with "deep-trenched furrows in his frowning brow" (*Contention* 2102) and the regicide's outcry "what, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster/ sink to the ground? I thought it would have mounted" (*True Tragedy* 2248-50). Similarly the enemy army, though dauntingly like a "thorny wood" with its raised swords and spears, can be scattered like autumn leaves (1 *Tamburlaine* IV.ii.28,33); just so, the enemy army in *True Tragedy* (2096) is a "thorny wood" which can be cut down. A queen arrested and committed to the Tower cries "Nay, to my death, for I have lived too long (i.e. when treated thus), but the only reply is "away with her" (*Edward II* V.vi.83,85); in answer to the command "away with her" a noble lady cries "even to my death, for I have lived too long" (*Contention*, 836-7). The barons behave "as though your highness were a schoolboy still/ and must be awed and governed like a child" (*Edward II* III.11.30-31); King Henry the Sixth "still must be protected like a child/ and governed..." (*Contention* 352-3).

In such early examples, the master Marlowe is not improved upon by his apprentice. But they all exemplify a process of learning to write about power and its concomitants, for which special ideas and diction are required. In just the same way, later composers¹ learned from Wagner's *Ring* cycle how to write the music of power, with its special motifs and instrumentation. We hear that music again, much better integrated, in *Edward III*, a later play than either *Contention* or *True Tragedy*. It has long been "commonly attributed to Shakespeare", whether wholly or in part, in the sense already defined; all commentators who have seriously investigated its authorship have reached that conclusion, unanimously reaffirmed in every published study for the last century.³⁹ The poetic perceptions of Swinburne had already unwittingly pointed in that same direction; his intuitive insights identified the author of *Edward III* as "a devout student and humble follower of Marlowe, not yet wholly disengaged by that august and beneficent influence from all attraction towards the 'jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits'".

The textual affinities, though less specific, still embody the quasi-pictorial power-structure already described – a high look up at the sky and a long look across the earth, duly decorated with classical allusion or references to treasure. For example,⁴¹ the English army, a mighty host spread out like a field or a forest, is seen from the hills as flashes of reflected sunlight, like gleaming silver or gold plate (226-231). The approach of the English navy affords a panoramic spectacle which is again compared

to a grove or a meadow, in the horizontal plane, and then to the horned moon or a flight of ravens, in the vertical (1110-35). The French navy is "as puissant, as the force of Agamemnon", i.e. with a thousand ships, and they fly like one huge eagle; their army is comparable to the host of Xerxes, which drank up whole rivers (cf *1 Tamburlaine* II.iii.15-16). Those extravagant comparisons are interspersed with equally Marlovian roll-calls of the countries and armies present and prepared to fight for France (1076,1085-92). Those forces at Poitiers have multitudes of millions, filling a valley and covering two mountains, reinforced by references to the sun, a half-moon, air, winds and "a silver quarry or an orb" (1920-52). Within such a context, the ominous line "on the hill behind stands certain death" cannot fail to recall Tamburlaine's chilling observation "there sits death; there sits imperious death" (1, V.ii.48).

These dazzlingly vivid pictures are no less Marlovian for being assimilated into a developing Shakespeare style; indeed, they offer equally graphic evidence for the source of that style in such contexts. To attain its final degree of integration, however, the process had to pass through successive stages which, as we have seen, included overt parody of Marlowe as well as imitation and quotation. By the principle of economy in hypothesis, and the cumulative force of successive similar examples, the early play which notoriously includes all those features, namely *The Taming of A Shrew*, is also the work of the young Shakespeare, c.1589. It is not yet commonly attributed to him; but it is worth a mention here because it may well be so regarded before long. Indeed, the Oxford editors⁴² have recently sounded the signal for its reappraisal.

The comparable case for adding *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (also c.1589) to the canon has also recently been reopened;⁴³ and a current detailed edition⁴⁴ has advanced the same claim for *Edmund Ironside*. An ancillary argument applies to all three candidates; they all, in varying degree, offer direct rejoinders to Marlowe. *A Shrew* is a robust counterbuff to the elitist graduate who despised "clownage" and "rhyming mother-wits". *Ironside* defiantly introduces un-historical low-life clowning, and also includes the riposte "trust a mother-wit" (1148) within a rhymed couplet, among some 200 rhyming lines. The prologue to *Troublesome Reign* (a play published in two parts, in frank imitation of *Tamburlaine*) explicitly enjoins Marlowe's audiences to turn their attention away from that heathen hero, and welcome instead "a warlike Christian and your countryman", namely the anti-Papal King John, instead of giving "applause unto an infidel". Marlowe was much accused of atheism, and had also been suspected of Catholic leanings; the implication that he was himself the applauded infidel may have been just as intentional as the more obvious appeal to Protestant patriotism in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish Armada.

As the entire history of art abundantly testifies, the channels of influence brim and foam with criticism and resentment as well as admiration and gratitude. They often flow *de haut en bas*. The new dynamic concepts and matching diction of the privileged man of the world Marlowe found a ready acceptance in the gentler-natured disadvantaged provincial Shakespeare, whose own stream of style and subject was thereby much strengthened and enlarged, at both the lyric and the dramatic level. Its course has yet to be charted at the length and depth it deserves. Meanwhile this essay may help to identify some of its sources of power.

NOTES

¹ E. Sams, *The Songs of Hugo Wolf*, second and enlarged edition (1983).

² S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* 1817, ed. Symons (1906), 6 (influence), 182 (country background), 244 (Wordsworth).

³ J. Aubrey, "William Shakespeare" c.1680 in *Brief Lives* ed. Dick (1949), 334-5.

⁴ N. Rowe, "Some Account of the Life etc of Mr. William Shakespeare" in *Works* ed. Rowe (1709), I.ii-iii.

⁵ conveniently recorded in S. Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (1975), 75-83, though there disparaged passim, for no ascertainable reason, as "all presumably deriving from Stratford gossip of the late seventeenth century".

⁶ e.g. "more thoroughly trained in classical rhetorical and Roman (if not Greek) literature than most present-day holders of a university degree in classics", as claimed in the Oxford *Complete Works*, ed. Wells and Taylor (1986), xiv.

⁷ letter endorsed "from Mr. Dowdall", dated 10 April 1693: Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. V.a.74.

⁸ see also E. Sams, "Shakespeare's 'Lost Years'", *Times Literary Supplement* (17 May 1985), 549. Protracted research and enquiry have failed to elicit any factual foundation for the repeated claim that "stringent regulations" kept glove-making apart from slaughtering: cf S. Schoenbaum op. cit., 14, 60.

⁹ D. Thomas, *Shakespeare in the Public Records* (1985), 2-3. The dates of 1576 for the beginning of

John Shakespeare's financial difficulties, and 1578 and 1580 for their continuance, are also given by S. Schoenbaum op. cit., 36-7.

¹⁰ J. Bakeless, *The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* (1942), 1.43: also 83 (Catholicism), 107-140 (atheism, etc), 127 (the Raleigh circle), 153-5 (inquest).

¹¹ All Marlowe quotations are cited from *The Complete Plays* ed. Steane (1969) or *The Complete Poems and Translations* ed. Orgel (1971).

¹² "Their rhetoric...brings a new tone and a new range of possibilities into English verse" (Orgel, op. cit., 233).

¹³ C. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1935) 13-15, 31-3 (falconry, bird-snaring). Charts II and V (comparisons between Marlowe and Shakespeare)

¹⁴ This epithet may refer to the mimes and dances that sometimes formed part of Tudor dramatic entertainments; but Marlowe's attack is plainly directed at popular plays featuring rhymed couplets and low-life comedy.

¹⁵ B. Jonson, "To the memory of my beloved, The Author Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us", in *Works* (1623), "thou hadst small Latine and lesse Greeke; for the same view expressed by modern classical scholars, see A. E. Housman, "Introductory Lecture" 1892 in *Selected Prose* ed. Carter (1961), 10 and J. A. K. Thomson, *Shakespeare and the Classics* (1952), passim. Gary Taylor's assertion, in his "General Introduction" (66, n. 101) to *A Textual Companion* (1988) to the Oxford *Complete Works*, that this 300-year consensus was "finally overturned by T. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latin and Less Greek* (1944) overlooks the specific refutation in Thomson op. cit., 33-4, 153-4.

¹⁶ i.e. commonly attributed to Shakespeare, as the terms of reference prescribe, *pace* the Oxford editors Taylor and Wells, who state their disintegrations theories as facts (e.g. *Companion* op. cit., 137, "Shakespeare only wrote about 20%" [of *1 Henry VI*]. Their theories derive from mathematical "tests" (ibid., 80-9), which suffer from their "not being mathematicians" (81). Their procedures and results have been exposed as incompetent and worthless by the professional mathematician Dr. M. W. A. Smith, in "Statistical Inference in *A Textual Companion* to the Oxford Shakespeare", *Notes and Queries*, ccxxxvi (March 1991), 73-78.

¹⁷ R. Hill, "The composition of *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957), 77-89.

¹⁸ B. Jonson, Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614): "Hee that will sweare *Ieronimo* or *Andronicus* the best playes yet shall pass unexcepted at, here, as a man whose Iudgement shewes it is constant, and hath stood still, these five and twentie or thirty years..", i.e. those plays were staged by 1589.

¹⁹ *Titus Andronicus* is cited from the Oxford edition 1982, *Henry VI* from New Penguin 1981, other canonical plays from Sisson 1953.

²⁰ *Metamorphoses* II 107-110; this work was Shakespeare's favourite classical source-book, not only quoted and alluded to in *Titus Andronicus* but also brought on stage as a property and mentioned by name (IV. i.41f).

²¹ such as Edward Philips, *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675).

²² A. L. Rowse, *Shakespeare's Southampton* (1965), 79.

²³ *Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flavus Apollo/ pocula Castalia ministret aqua*: "let the vulgar admire common things; to me may golden-haired Apollo serve cups full of Castalian water", i.e. from the inspiring fountain of Parnassus. It is worth noting, since the point seems not to have been made elsewhere, that this epigraph may be not merely a boast but a further tribute to the poem's dedicatee the Earl of Southampton, who had auburn or tawny hair (one sense of "flavus") and who is often said to have inspired many of the *Sonnets*.

²⁴ The Ovid and Lucan translations are of uncertain date, but it seems reasonable to assign them to the Cambridge years.

²⁵ as summarised in e.g. J. A. K. Thomson, op. cit. (n. 15 supra); see also E. Sams, "Where there's a Will... The Oxford or the Stratford Shakespeare", *Encounter* (June 1987), 54-7.

²⁶ see e.g. H. Anders, *Shakespeare's Books* (1904), 22-24, and Thomson op. cit., 154. As the latter points out, this is further evidence for Shakespeare's lack of freedom in Latinity: "how could a man who read Ovid's Latin with ease and pleasure turn to Golding instead?".

²⁷ He surely deserves better of posterity. The 1623 First Folio colophon acknowledges his financial contribution; his energy and enterprise helped to publish the most important book in the history of English literature.

²⁸ as a composer's manuscript arrangements or copies are sometimes misattributed, e.g. Matiegka's *Notturmo* Op. 21 to Schubert.

²⁹ first published in *England's Helicon* (1600).

³⁰ which also quotes "live with me and be my love" in a speech that mentions Venus, and Adonis (IV.11.112-116).

³¹ who had himself been murdered in a Marlovian manner, by poison in the ears; cf *Hamlet* I.v.63-4, *Edward II* V.iv.34.

³² such as the reported murder of the Duke of Urbino in 1538, the inquest on Katharine Hamlett's death by drowning in the Avon near Stratford, 1579, and the arguments about suicide in the case of Hales v. Pettit, Canterbury 1560, as set forth in *Hamlet* ed. Jenkins (1982), 507, 544 and 547 respectively.

³³ The "Goths" reference is to Ovid's banishment among the savage Scythians, countrymen of Tamburlaine, at Tomos on the shore of the Black Sea, where he died in exile.

³⁴ Shakespeare was certainly associated with Henry Wriothesley in Southampton and London; Marlowe possibly with Walter Falegh at Cerne Abbas (v. note 10); for a suggested intersection of those two circles see *Willobie his Avis* 1594 ed. Harrison (1966), 181f.

³⁵ as detailed in the *Henslowe Papers*, ed. Greg (1907) 116-7, 119-20.

³⁶ the usual reading, although Steane (note 11) prefers the Quarto "wound".

³⁷ R. Greene, *A Groatworth of Wit* (1592) sigs F1-2, in the famous words "there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers", i.e. those of Marlowe, Peele and Nashe as well as Greene himself. The tone and text of this attack are so closely akin to those of Nashe's Preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) as to suggest an earlier date. Greene died (of syphilis, as his own description of his illness and its cause amply verifies) on 3 September 1592, and he must have been mortally ill for most of that year. The fact that the charge was one of plagiarism as a playwright, not of merely speaking someone else's lines as all actors do, is confirmed by contemporary reaction, including Shakespeare's as recorded by Chettle (*Kind-heart's Dream* 1592). See also J. D. Wilson, "Malone and the Upstart Crow", *Shakespeare Survey* 4 (1951), 56-68 and J. Thomson op. cit. 157-162.

³⁸ Peter Alexander's fantastic theory (*Shakespeare's Henry VI*, 1929) that these early plays are "memorial reconstructions" made by "actors" has been consistently rejected by all the specialists who have ever investigated the problem over the last fifty years, from C. A. Greer onward; see his conclusive rebuttal "The York and Lancaster Quarto-Folio Sequence", *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, 48 (1933), 655-705. Of their hundreds of objections and counter-arguments, not even one is so much as mentioned, let alone controverted, by modern editors such as Taylor and Wells, who avowedly build the entire Oxford canon and chronology on this baseless theory. For its most recent refutations, see e.g. S. Urkowitz, "Good News about 'Bad' Quartos", *"Bad" Shakespeare*, ed. Charney (1988), 189-206; *ibid.*, "If I mistake in Those Foundations which I Build Upon": Peter Alexander's Textual Analysis of *Henry VI Parts 2 and 3*", *English Literary Renaissance* vol. 18 no. 2 (Spring 1988), 230-256; E. Sams, "Taboo or not Taboo: The Text, Dating and Authorship of *Hamlet*, 1589-1623", *Hamlet Studies* vol. 10 nos 1 & 2 (1988), 1246; *ibid.*, "Shakespeare or Bottom? The Myth of 'Memorial Reconstruction'", *Encounter* (January 1989), 41-45; *ibid.* "Fatal Fallacy", *Encounter* January/ February 1990), 62-64; P. Werstine, "'Narratives about Printed Shakespeare Texts'", *Shakespeare Quarterly* (Spring 1990), 65-86; Y. Bains, "The Bad Quarto of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the Theory of Memorial Reconstruction", *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* cxxvi (1990), 164173; E. Sams, "Mistaken Methodology", *London Review of Books* (14 June 1990); *ibid.*, "Assays of Bias", *Notes and Queries* ccxxxvi (March 1991), 60-63; *ibid.* review of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Oxford, ed. Craik, 1990).

³⁹ The latest is E. Slater, *The Problem of The Reign of King Edward the Third* (1988). A new edition, ed. Sams, is in preparation. See also the Oxford *Textual Companion*, ed. Taylor and Wells (1988), 78: "Such [image] clusters confirm Shakespeare's authorship of...all of...*Edward III*". The Oxford editors have expressed regret at their decision not to print the text of *Edward III* as part of the canon; see *The Shakespeare Newsletter* 42 (1990), 193.

⁴⁰ A. C. Swinburne, "Note on the historical play of Edward III, A Study of Shakespeare (1880), 220-9.

⁴¹ lineation as in the first edition, 1596.

⁴² *A Textual Companion* (1988), 169: "A *Shrew* may be... Shakespeare's own earlier play, later completely reworked as *The Shrew*"; see also E. Sams, "The Timing of the Shrews", *Notes and Queries* (March 1985), 33-45.

⁴³ E. Sams, "The Troublesome Wrangle over *King John*", *Notes and Queries* (March 1988), 41-44.

⁴⁴ *Edmund Ironside: Shakespeare's Lost Play* ed. Sams (1985, 2/1986); that case is to be further presented in a paper by Professor W. Nicholas Knight of Missouri-Rolla before the World Congress of the International Shakespeare Association in Tokyo in August 1991.