

Early Modern Drama in Performance

Essays in Honor of Lois Potter

Edited by Darlene Farabee, Mark Netzloff,
and Bradley D. Ryner

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE PRESS
Newark

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Introduction

Darlene Farabee, Mark Netzloff,
and Bradley D. Ryner

Early Modern Drama in Performance is a collection of essays in honor of Lois Potter, who retired from teaching at the University of Delaware in 2008. Lois's areas of expertise are amazingly eclectic. Her oeuvre includes essays on representations of Robin Hood in various media and two edited collections on the topic: *Playing Robin Hood: The Legend as Performance in Five Centuries* and *Images of Robin Hood: Medieval to Modern* (the latter co-edited with Joshua Calhoun). Her scholarship on royalist writing, particularly her book *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660*, has been very important for how scholars have approached the containment and representation of information during the British Civil War period. These interests in the civil war and restoration periods also connect to her work on Milton: her book *A Preface to Milton* and her edition of Book III of *Paradise Lost* for *The Cambridge Milton*. Additionally, she served as general editor for the invaluable *Revels History of Drama in English, Volume IV, 1613–1660* and authored the section on "The Plays and the Playwrights, 1642–1660." Her publication (with John Pitcher) of *The True Tragicomedy Formerly Acted at Court* makes available an edition of the British Library manuscript copy of Francis Osborne's 1650 play.

This collection's emphasis on Shakespearean and early modern drama reflects the area for which Lois Potter is most widely known, as a performance critic, editor, and literary scholar. Her most recent book, *The Life of William Shakespeare*, brilliantly illuminates Shakespeare's life and work within the context of his own historical and literary period. Truly it is the biography of Shakespeare that only Lois could have written. As Russ McDonald put it in his *Times Literary Supplement* review of the book:

Her achievement lies in her catholicity, her simultaneous commitment to matters personal, historical, theatrical, literary, cultural. She exhibits an absolute command of the available facts, a lifetime's acquaintance with the works gained in teaching and playgoing, an unparalleled familiarity with theatrical history from 1567 to the present, and a talent for connecting the fictional and the actual.¹

Lois's two books specifically on Shakespeare in performance, *Twelfth Night: Text and Performance* and *Shakespeare in Performance: Othello*, reveal the breadth and depth of her understanding of performance and textual issues. Many readers of this collection will also know Lois's exemplary edition of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in the Arden Shakespeare series and her essay "Editing Desdemona" for *In Arden: Editing Shakespeare*. Readers may be less aware of her introduction and notes to the French translation of *Hamlet* for the Gallimard edition. An avid and ceaseless theater-goer, Lois has authored nearly uncountable theater reviews, including reviewing the London Shakespeare's Globe season for many years for *Shakespeare Quarterly* and several years of writing the annual review for *Shakespeare Survey*, "Shakespeare's Life, Times and Stage." Her many production reviews for the *Times Literary Supplement* often provide the only major reviews of non-Shakespearean dramatic productions, an area in which she has published on Marlowe, Webster, Fletcher, Jonson, Heywood and others.

Lois Potter is able to write so illuminatingly on theater because she seems to catch more of the details of any given production than anyone sitting around her, and she is open to the ways that these fleeting instances of movement, voice, costume, etc. coalesce into something meaningful. She comes to a performance, a historical archive, a literary text with fresh eyes each time and excels at seeing patterns, catching allusions, and finding analogies that illuminate the subject at hand. This is aided, in part, by her remarkable memory. Able to quote verbatim from poems, plays, and other documents, even ones she happened across by chance many years earlier and never intentionally committed to memory, Lois is a person for whom paraphrase or approximation will never quite do. Her eye for details is most evident in her approach to theater reviewing. In this way, one of the great accomplishments of Lois's work is that it recovers or preserves the theatrical experience. She is both a meticulous comber of the stage historical archive and a generator of that archive. In Lois's work, one not only finds the evidentiary traces of productions but one also experiences something of the effect of these performances through her sensitive narratives. Perhaps one strength of her work comes from her understanding that live theater can never be fully preserved, and that its effect can never be fully appreciated in another medium. In such ways as these, Lois's attendance at performances continually refreshes her thinking about the plays because of her willingness to believe

that directors, performers, performances, and the experience of theater all have something to show us—every time. Her comments to actors and directors about changes in the text (which have given rise to more than one eyebrow as she quotes the lines cut from or rearranged within a performance) serve as a preface, not to a commentary on how the text ought not to be cut, but to frame a question about the effect achieved. Lois's clear understanding that directors and actors are making well thought-out points shows her respect for their craft and allows her to comment on that craft in ways that preserve the ephemeral effect of theater. She shows that theatrical meaning comes not simply from words, or from actions, or from context, but from the conjunction of all these in a unique moment.

This approach to theater matches Lois Potter's approach to the playreadings that she has hosted throughout her teaching career. In her discussion of playreadings for *Shakespeare Bulletin*, she notes that the occasion of a playreading creates a unique social opportunity where "A group ranging from senior faculty to undergraduates, Renaissance specialists to post-modernists, people from outside the department and even visitors to campus, can meet on equal terms in the common undertaking of bringing an old play to life."² The playreadings in her home breathed life into many old plays and made participants aware of the dramatic possibilities of (mostly) non-Shakespearean drama. When Lois claims, "To me, what's most exciting about the readings is precisely the extent to which the participants can learn—and it's long-term learning—without being taught," she is certainly right about the extent of learning that took place.³ All three of the editors of this volume were privileged to attend many of those playreadings. We saw ourselves improve enormously, realizing comic potential in phrases, learning to catch unmarked asides, and imagining the staged movements as the dialogue set out frames of action. However, we might quibble with her assertion that the learning at the playreadings was happening "without being taught." Although she remarks in the preface to her biography of Shakespeare that at the end of her teaching career, she perhaps "had come to feel that simply reading a play aloud was more valuable than any amount of talking *about* it," we would suggest that the playreadings were made particularly valuable by "simply reading a play aloud" *with Lois*.⁴ We were being taught: we were taught by her intuitions about timing, her awareness of meter, her crisp diction, her thoughtful phrasing, and her clear, unfettered delight in the sounds of words.

The essays in this collection address recurring themes in Lois Potter's work: Shakespeare and non-Shakespearean early modern drama, performance history and theater practice, theatrical performance across cultures, play reviewing, and playreading. What unifies them most, though, is that they carry on the spirit of Lois's work outlined above: her ability to meet a text, a performance, or a historical period on its own terms, to give scrupulous attention to specific details and elegantly show how these details gener-

ate larger meaning, and to recover and preserve the fleeting and the ephemeral. Because each essay embodies aspects of this spirit to varying degrees, we have decided not to divide them thematically but to arrange them in a roughly chronological order of their chief topics.

Lois Potter's version of stage history has always been attentive to the historical aesthetics that inform the theatrical viability of plays. In this spirit, the first three essays of this collection each recover the aesthetic milieu of non-Shakespearean plays. In "Dramatic Verse and Early Modern Playgoers in Marlowe's Time," Roslyn Knutson reexamines what has traditionally been viewed as an inaugural moment in early modern dramatic history: Marlowe's innovative introduction of the "mighty line" of blank verse stylistics with part one of *Tamburlaine*. Contesting this traditional account, which elevates Marlowe at the expense of his predecessors and contemporaries, Knutson explores how "dramatic verse not by Marlowe had a viable commercial presence on the early modern stage" (1.6). Examining the long theatrical afterlife of plays by Greene and Peele such as *Lochrine*, *Selimus*, and *Battle of Alcazar*, Knutson points out that these plays were performed and revived alongside Marlowe's, showing that "dramatists and playing companies knew Elizabethan playgoers to have an omnivorous appetite that relished old favorites in dramatic verse even as it welcomed real and imitation Marlovian mighty lines" (1.17). In addition, the fact that these now noncanonical texts could continue to influence and be cited by playwrights of succeeding generations, including Shakespeare, reveals the need to evaluate theatrical popularity "by some measure other than a debt to Marlowe" (1.9).

One playwright whose work has been overshadowed by his debt to Marlowe is taken up in Bradley D. Ryner's "The Usurer's Theatrical Body: Refiguring Profit in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*." Ryner traces the ways that both Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* self-consciously play against Elizabethan conventions for representing the usurer. He argues that, in the early days of mercantile capitalism, customary representations of usurers as malnourished and raggedly clothed—derived from traditional personifications of Avarice—became obviously unsatisfactory for representing profit. In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe draws attention to Barabas as the antithesis of the avaricious hoarder. Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* goes beyond *The Jew of Malta* in staging how profit is generated not by the miser but by the investor. The play's eponymous character takes on multiple disguises, including the miserly usurer Leon and the extravagant Count Hermes. "The title character profits," Ryner argues, "by shifting between the two disguises just as the capitalist investor profits by oscillating between accumulation and expenditure" (2.10). Thus, the theatrical virtuosity that Lois Potter has identified as key to the quick-change play not only makes the play highly enjoyable in performance—a point that Ryner substantiates with reference to the play's

modern revival by the American Shakespeare Company—but also becomes "a correlative for the capitalist generation of profit" (2.2).

Continuing this project of recovery, Peter Hyland's "Theater of Anatomy: *The Tragedy of Hoffman*" turns attention to another popular Elizabethan playwright neglected in subsequent criticism: the journeyman playwright, printer, and pamphleteer Henry Chettle, whose *Hoffman* play bears the notoriety of being termed "one of the worst plays ever scraped together" (3.0). Yet Chettle's play attests to how the characteristics of revenge tragedy were not as rigidly defined; far from being an inferior example of a settled genre, Chettle's play offers a more dynamic response to popular tastes. Although the play's emphasis on spectacle over characterization and literary form distinguishes it from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, those aspects of the play that are often dismissed as crass commercialism instead provide a coded critique of social values. Chettle's revision of Shakespeare's precedent operates most strikingly through his innovative use of the stage property of the skull. Yorick's skull is reworked in the form of the skeleton of Hoffman's father, a property appearing on stage that might have derived from human remains, a fascinating example of the complex ontological status of stage properties. Along with the burning crown, the object used to kill Hoffman's father, his murderer's son, and ultimately the revenger himself, these properties demonstrate how the text is "concerned not only with the vulnerability and inevitable end of the living body, but also its subjection to authoritarian—or arbitrary power" (3.34).

One of the things that distinguishes Lois Potter as an editor is her attention to the reciprocal relationship between text and embodied stage practice. Each of the next three essays finds a different entree into an examination of this relationship. Ann and John Thompson track the use of a stage property—a physical object—while Alan Dessen shows how editorial choices become physically embodied on stage, and Darlene Farabee proposes that a play's insistence on the physical attributes of producing a name orally on stage might influence the textual representations in and reader responses to later editions.

Ann and John Thompson's "'Know you this ring?': Metonymic Functions of a Prop" extends Hyland's analysis of the implications of stage properties. Their essay examines the correlation of the stage property of rings with the linguistic phenomenon of metonymy. If metonymy serves as the figure of contiguity, rings similarly function as a kind of cipher in which to chart the elusive course of meaning and the fluidity of social relations. Rings performed a range of social functions in the early modern period: one of the most common items of gift exchange, they also served as tokens of value, as marker and proof of identity, as sign of mourning, and as token of personal and financial bonds. Given the metonymic range of this object, it is appropriate that they figure prominently in as many as fifteen Shakespearean plays. In

their discussion of the significance of ring exchange in Shakespeare's comedies, the Thompsons observe, "the very nature of metonymy, as the figure of contiguity, has led us to consider the physical things that are rings, especially in a stage context, and their relationships to those characters who wear them or exchange them" (4.89).

Alan Dessen's essay, "Editing and Staging *The Revenger's Tragedy*: Three Problems," focuses on a textual property—the stage direction—in order to examine the effects that contemporary editorial emendations can have on early modern plays in performance. Dessen queries not only the function and audience of these directions, but also the "alternative answers that have been diminished or screened out by such an intervention" (5.1). Analyzing three textual cruxes in the text, Dessen explores how the differing directions offered in six editions of the play are reworked in performances by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the National Theatre. The interpretive diversity of these approaches reflects a level of indeterminacy, showing that while "The work of scholars continues to fill in various blanks, . . . any attempt to reconstruct what happened on stage in those first performances is a crapshoot" (5.28).

Darlene Farabee's essay, "The 'Most Unsavoury Similes' and *Henry IV*, Part One" approaches editorial emendations from a different direction; Farabee examines the ways naming, calling, and particularly verbalized evocations function in *Henry the Fourth, Part 1*. Farabee takes this framework of the particularities of the characters' namings to examine what happens when later editions allow for the rearrangement and alteration of the text. The essay posits that we might be able to read the alterations of these later editions reciprocally with the production history of the plays, and that the reciprocal relationship is rooted in the ways the plays themselves depend on naming. The essay finally suggests a connection between those methods of naming and a reader's written response to the text, as he claimed ownership, in relation to his own historical moment, on the title page of a nineteenth-century edition of the plays.

As a stage historian and reviewer, Lois Potter continually highlights that playgoing is a complex experience that is simultaneously physical, intellectual, and aesthetic. The next two essays engage with Shakespeare's orchestration of this complex experience. Arthur F. Kinney's "Shakespeare and Cognitive Vision" argues that a "sense of the deep alliance of perception and cognition" akin to the understanding of a modern neuroscientist was already available in Shakespeare's England. Kinney reads diverse early documents (from early modern antitheatrical tracts to treatises on optics and painting) alongside the work of neuroscience to reveal a shared understanding that vision is not simply the direct transmission of the images of real-world objects to human brains, but a phenomenon shaped by the viewer's thoughts, expectations, and beliefs. By examining some of the most powerful images

in Shakespeare, both staged and imagined, such as Hermione's touching of Polixenes's hand, Coriolanus's appearance in the Roman forum, Cleopatra's illustrious barge, the violent spectacles of *Titus Andronicus*, and the amorous ones of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Kinney shows that "Vision in Shakespeare is likewise always cognitive: it demonstrates how vision is a matter not merely of perception but of conception" (7.176).

Jay Halio's essay, "Shakespeare's Conception of Tragedy: The Middle Tragedies," emphasizes the blurred generic boundaries of Shakespearean tragedy. Returning to Aristotle's concept of recognition from the *Poetics*, Halio focuses on textual moments of suspense, in which alternative courses of action and different generic registers are briefly considered. A "major constituent of tragedy's effect," Halio argues, is this "sense of what might have been" (8.3). In a tense theatrical moment such as the negotiation of peace between England and France in act 3 of *King John*, a treaty ultimately dissolved through the intervention of the papal emissary Pandolph, comedy and tragedy coexist as viable alternatives, a duality that emphasizes the possibilities of ethical action. Halio locates similar moments in the major tragedies, from the complex logic of Brutus's soliloquy justifying Caesar's assassination, and Hamlet's ultimate refusal to murder Claudius while seemingly at prayer, to other moments of decision in *Othello* and *King Lear*. Even before Shakespeare embraces tragicomedy in his late Romances, the tragedies of this middle period show "that tragedy is not inevitable, that alternatives to disaster exist" (8.52).

The remaining five essays of this collection take up Lois Potter's signature project of writing and interrogating the histories of modern performances and interpretations of early modern texts, and several of these essays additionally engage with another of Lois's interests: the circulation of drama across national, cultural, and linguistic borders. The first pair of essays specifically addresses performance questions in the two plays—*Othello* and *Twelfth Night*—whose stage histories Lois has worked with most extensively.

Michèle Willems's "Shakespeare or not Shakespeare? The Propagation of the Plays in Europe through J. F. Ducis's 'Imitations'" links together issues of performance and cross-cultural transmissions. Jean-François Ducis, one of the earliest translators of Shakespeare into French, created versions of texts such as *Hamlet* and *Othello* that in fact became far better known than Shakespeare's originals, as they served as the basis for translations into other European languages and remained the canonical version of the plays well into the nineteenth century: as Willems observes, "it was via translations of Ducis's plays, then used as source-texts themselves, that Shakespeare's great tragedies were first discovered outside the English-speaking world" (9.4). Part of this influence might have stemmed from the fact that Ducis never actually attributed the plays as originally Shakespeare's. Because Shake-

speare began to be translated only in the mid-eighteenth century, but in earlier versions intended to be read rather than performed, "Ducis's imitations offered the only possible contact with Shakespeare-on-the-stage" in the period (9.3). Ducis's *Hamlet* therefore serves as an important document in the history of European reception of Shakespeare, showing "the ways in which a European Shakespeare has been constructed through translation, adaptation and performance" (9.7). Ducis adapted *Hamlet* to suit the neoclassical tastes of his age, not only by pruning the play of subplots, but also by cutting moments violating decorum, such as Ophelia's mad scene and the Gravediggers, effectively excising the play's comic elements. Ducis's adaptation of *Othello*, first performed during the French Revolution, not only reconstitutes its title character into "a militant for liberty and equality" (9.22) but also stresses the rebellion of Hédelmone, the Desdemona counterpart, from patriarchal authority. His *Othello* is additionally a unique, performance-based text due to the level of collaboration between Ducis and his *Othello*, the actor François-Joseph Talma.

Virginia Mason Vaughan's "Un/natural Perspectives: Viola on the Late Nineteenth-Century Stage" provides a wide-ranging survey of Victorian theatrical representations of Shakespeare's heroine from *Twelfth Night*. Whereas contemporary sexologists such as Havelock Ellis had begun to theorize the implications of forms of "sexual inversion," what typifies productions throughout the period is a concerted effort to stress the underlying femininity of the character beneath her male disguise. Part of these efforts can be seen as a conservative response to the forms of gender mobility that increasingly challenged restrictive models of gender in the period. But the feminization of Viola also served to restrict the forms of same-sex desire that permeate the play. As productions minimized the homoeroticism of Viola's scenes with Olivia, they also pared down the Antonio and Sebastian plot and limited the gender ambiguity between the fraternal twins.

The next two essays explore public uses of Shakespeare's plays. While one addresses a New Zealand playreading group from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century and the other performances of *Hamlet* in Prague in the 1960s–1980s, both of these essays examine the localized uses of Shakespeare at crucial historical moments. Connecting closely with Lois Potter's interest in playreading, Evelyn Tribble's "Reading, Recitation, and Entertainments: The Dunedin Shakespeare Club, 1877–1956" analyzes the distinctiveness of the group reading as a mode of reception for Shakespearean texts, looking at the example of the Shakespeare club that flourished for nearly a century in the New Zealand city of Dunedin. The Dunedin club served to cultivate elocution and social performance among the elite of a booming gold-rush city, while also using Shakespeare as a means for inculcating ideas of Englishness in a distant settler colony. Shakespeare provided a vehicle for propagating a "correct" English pronunciation, and efforts to purge colonial

accents showed the intersection of class and national identity. The club's activities focused on amateur public performances of individual scenes, gaining sufficient popularity for readings to be staged in the largest hall in the city. The club ultimately waned in the post-war era, undermined by efforts to adapt itself to a more theatrical style of performance and additionally challenged by the rise of competing media of mass entertainment.

Lois Potter shares her interest in modern performative reworkings of Shakespeare with Zdeněk Stříbrný, a selection of whose essays she brought out in English translation. Stříbrný's contribution to the present volume, "The Power of Shakespeare's Word in Twentieth-Century Prague," brings the collection's study of Shakespearean performance history up to the contemporary period in analyzing three productions of *Hamlet* staged in Prague in the consecutive decades of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. These productions, bridging the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution, offer a fascinating insight into the political applications of Shakespeare across cultures. *Hamlet* was received as a political play in Czechoslovakia throughout the post-war era. Tolerated by Communist authorities as a relic of traditional culture by one of Marx's favorite authors, productions nonetheless correlated the regime with Claudius and viewed Hamlet as "a young intellectual of placid courage and firm determination" (12.3). Radovan Lukavský's production, which had an exceptional run from 1959–1966, brought out unexpected political meanings, including the audience's delight at Hamlet's reference to "a certain convocation of politic worms" (4.3.20) eating Polonius's corpse, which evoked for them a meeting of party apparatchiks. A 1978 production used the first quarto as its text in order to present a bare-bones and at times irreverent production, one influenced as much by Beckett as the more action-based bad quarto. Miroslav Macháček's 1982 production, while "endeavouring to respond to the play in its own terms instead of reshaping it to the director's will" (12.24), nonetheless offered a veiled commentary through the staging of the production itself, which featured a prominent fire safety curtain draping the stage, a visualization of Denmark as a prison that also evoked a pun in Czech, of the stage device as an "iron curtain." As Stříbrný memorably argues, the interventions of government censors ironically gave political charge to the performance and reception of these texts: "the enforced objectivity of the production contributed to the tension and excitement of each performance, of each scene and word. Czech audiences enjoyed immensely their creative participation in the production by applying Shakespeare's words to their own situation. They knew that something was rotten not only in medieval Denmark but also in their own present state. They realized that the time was out of joint not only for Hamlet but also for themselves" (12.35).

In "Showtime: Temporality and the Video Archive of *Julius Caesar* at the RSC," Andrew James Hartley analyzes the effects of watching videotaped

productions rather than live performances of Shakespeare. The experience, he argues, is one that changes the viewer's sense of time: live theater is rooted in the present, in the unique, varying qualities of the performance as well as the immediate, individual responses of audience members. The archive of videotaped performance, by contrast, freezes the production in a single version that is rooted in the past; it thereby "enacts the pastness of the production, and the very ability to rewind strips the theatrical moment of its vibrant and exhilarating presentness" (13.53). A discussion of temporality is particularly appropriate for *Julius Caesar*, a play featuring a distinctive approach to the question of time, from its anachronistic marking of time with a clock, and metatheatrical awareness of its future stagings, to its sense of time's unpredictable passage. Hartley juxtaposes his textual reading of the play with an analysis of several videotaped productions of the Royal Shakespeare Company from the 1980s and 1990s. Ironically, many of these productions are unique in their own right: the tape of David Thacker's 1993 production preserves a performance in which an actor's illness forced the other members of the cast to assume the roles he played, while the recording of Peter Hall's 1995 production is interrupted by scenic malfunction that prompted a clearing of the stage and delay to the show. A taped version, like live theater itself, is never a constant, reproducible object.

This is a fitting essay with which to close this collection because, by emphasizing ephemerality, it clarifies the stakes of Lois's work, which remains committed to preserving and making sense of theater experience. The essays in this collection contribute to this larger project and open avenues for future scholarly endeavors.

NOTES

1. Russ McDonald, "A Re-fitted Stage," *Times Literary Supplement* (August 2012): 11.
2. Lois Potter, "Armchair Acting: Some Guidelines for Shakespearean Playreadings," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 22.1 (2004): 15–22, p. 21.
3. *Ibid.*, 21.
4. Lois Potter, *The Life of William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), viii.

Chapter One

Dramatic Verse and Early Modern Playgoers in Marlowe's Time

Roslyn L. Knutson

Scholars generally assume that the gold standard for English dramatic verse in the early modern period was set by the mighty line of Christopher Marlowe, until William Shakespeare developed a more supple version. This opinion is essentially an aesthetic one defined more by modern literary taste than evidence from the Elizabethan theatrical marketplace. Ian Munro characterizes the scholarly preference for proto-Shakespearean aesthetics as a "critical handicap [under which] all pre-Marlovian drama labours."¹ In fact, except for Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, the drama contemporary with Marlowe's plays is similarly handicapped. The prevailing belief is that the debut of *Tamburlaine the Great* so electrified audiences that other dramatic poets scrambled to copy Marlowe's subject matter and blank verse. These lesser sort, forever marked by Peter Berek as the weak sons of *Tamburlaine*, necessarily produced imitations inferior in style, characterization, and moral orientation.² In this essay, I address one aspect of this collective truism: the tastes of early modern playgoers in dramatic poetry. Evidence illuminating those preferences, however, is hard to come by. John Bakeless offers none in his confident assertion that "*Tamburlaine* worked an instant revolution in the tastes of the theater-going public. . . . The old-fashioned plays seemed stodgy; their rhymed and stanzaic verse ridiculous."³ Elizabethan poets, theatrical critics, and satirists offered negative opinions, but run-of-the-mill playgoers in the yard and gallery were silent. Yet they did have a voice as customer. Notwithstanding the complaints against blank verse by Elizabethan *literati* and the efforts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars to promote Marlowe's poetical superiority, playgoers demonstrated a continuing affection for familiar rhetorical devices and verse forms, even as they