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**ECCENTRICITY AND FREEDOM IN THE PLAYS OF
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ABSTRACT:

In recent years, concerns about racial, religious and gender inequalities in classical literature have led many educators and students to question whether the western canon was sufficient to represent the diverse ethnic groups that existed at the time. As the important works of examining overlooked writings of the marginalized, the following essay aims to shine a light on one already accepted author within the canon of western literature.

Christopher Marlowe's plays have had many influences on the development of literature since the late 16th century. Marlowe's own sexual identity has long been thought to have been alienated, so his work features a protagonist who may have been given the role of a villain by the hands of another writer.

From Barnabas' machinations in *The Jew of Malta* to Dido's aggressive use of power as Queen of Carthage, Marlowe's marginalized men and women literally take center stage to create their own stories. They are examples of characters whose narrative is strengthened by alienation rather than hindered by it.

KEYWORDS: Marlowe, Shakespeare, English literature, British literature.

Few writers or playwrights have been able to inspire a character as interesting as Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe was born in Canterbury in the middle of the 16th century, and his extraordinary plays have earned him a prominent place in the London theatrical world. Much of his work explored taboo subjects without regard for political correctness, and used characters who explored those subjects from a unique, never-before-seen perspective. Marlowe's own life was filled with rumors of espionage and social deviance. These rumors met their final fate in the tavern where Marlowe met a bloody end (Myers, 2). Ultimately, his murder becomes a new gossip in his memory, the motive for which is unknown. The characters he created throughout his career often shared the same traits, most notably his disregard for authority and his disobedience to rules. Marlowe's characters may deviate from modern norms, but somehow, we as spectators are still expected to be impressed by them. In the case of Tambourine, we are courted by them. This is most evident in his alien heroes, especially Tambourine, Dido and Barabas. In the narrative structure of these three characters, Marlowe did not use their status as foreigners to England to show humanity within the narrative framework of the 'other'.



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The term "otherness" needs an associated definition. For our purposes, we base it on the definition of the French geographer Jean-François Staszak. "Otherness is the process by which the dominant in-group ("we," the self) becomes one by condemning the differences that are presented as being, real or imaginary. Or are the result of a discursive process of constructing multiple dominant outgroups ("them," others). Denial of identity and, in turn, potential motivation for discrimination. Naively, "difference belongs to the realm of facts, and otherness belongs to the realm of discourse" (2). In order to further analyze this definition, here we explore the queerness that falls under the category of "other" and how this particular kind of otherness is used both as a means of suppressing characters and as a weapon that empowers them.

For this working definition, it is important to understand what constitutes an ingroup in this period. We can sit for days and think about characters in different plays, but actors don't speak into empty space. Behind all these characters and their stories is the environment in which they were born: Elizabethan England. "Theatre becomes something else when you remove the performer and the audience, and the identity of this something else depends on the emotional forces at work in it" (Bianco, 124). Since we are discussing the restricted topic of queerness, both ingroups and outgroups can be identified by location. What is European is equality, what is not European is otherness. Many societies have a strong desire for equality, and Elizabethan England was no exception. In this role, the actors were still under pressure to represent class and gender, which are characteristic of British culture. "Dramatic portrayal of man and act under Elizabethan stage conditions. Even under the strange contours of fictional characters, the performers have not abandoned all visible signs of social and sexual identity." (Wyman and Brester, 142). From this we can conclude that sameness is culturally ingrained and socially meaningful, making all sorts of differences more apparent to the viewer.

Our profession is limited to a select few because we value alienation from other types of otherness. Tambourine, Barabas, Abigail and Dido. Our focus is entirely on them. But to understand why the differences between the two have benefited Marlowe's writings, we must first understand the author himself.

Christopher Marlowe

Marlovian critical research can be sparse in scope and imagination. Most of the time he is mentioned only for his connection and influence to Shakespeare's more famous works. The Precursors of Shakespeare lists Christopher Marlowe as the first chapter and is widely believed to be one of the greatest influences on



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Shakespeare's writing. Still, it's not hard to see that there's something else about Marlowe's work—a kind of carefree storytelling that fits seamlessly into his tightly controlled and regulated iambic pentameter. Lawrence Danson best expresses it in his rhetorical analysis of Marlowe's work. “In good times we welcome controversy about Shakespeare because we trust Shakespeare in good times. I believe it proves Shakespeare's ability.” Marlowe's case is different. Marlowe failed to inspire confidence from the beginning” (3). This gap in critical theory between Marlowe's and Shakespeare's works may be due to Marlowe being a wild card in his work, as Danson puts it. It could also be explained by the career gap he and Shakespeare shared. Marlowe died at the age of 29, long before he was truly immortalized by the fame his colleagues enjoyed.

Marlowe never experienced conflict in his short life. He was frequently in trouble for homosexuality, atheism, fights, and other allegations of crime (Meyers, 9). In this sense, the literature of Marlowe's life seems to rejoice in sharing the legend of the writer's close relationship with the court. However, much of his childhood and his actions are based on critical speculation rather than primary sources. “We know nothing of his family life,” writes Malloff biographer Jeffrey Myers. “There are no surviving letters, only one signature of him as a witness to a will. There are no intelligence reports, and his background as an intelligence officer remains a mystery. It is known that he spied for Reims. We don't know if there is, or if, if so, whether he was a covert Catholic and a double agent.” In other words, Marlowe's life was a mystery. A blank canvas on which anyone can draw anything. Marlowe himself did just that, crafting a life as scandalous and compelling as any of his characters. Scholars and critics since his time have also taken up this accusation.

But this philosophical blank canvas still existed within the often-rigid boundaries of English Renaissance society. Despite the fact that some came to enjoy social mobility, especially during Elizabeth's (Suzuki) reign, until religious piety came with the expectation of atonement, human was limited in what they could say and do. On stage, however, the characters were given a degree of liberation from their actions. Audiences may feel uncomfortable dealing with norms. “The perceivable danger of Marlowe's plays lies in the magnitude of their emotional potential. They are characterized by boldness and recklessness rather than measured compulsion. As Smith suggests, the impact of Marlowe's plays on audiences says more about them than the plays themselves.” (Bianco, 1). The further away her character is from the viewer, the more freedom she has in what she says and does. Marlowe was the creator of these plays, but once they were



performed, she was no longer in control. He could not force his audience to receive his work in any particular way.

An overview of Marlowe's life reveals how his characters exhibit a unique otherness through their alien identities. This was particularly evident in the characters of Tambour Rayne, Barabas and Dido, whose differences created safe boundaries within which Marlowe could explore taboo subject matter.

Tambarren, part 1 and 2

Of all the literature on Marlowe's life, most critics seem to agree that Marlowe wrote what he knew. His characters reflect social movements that Marlowe wanted in his life but may not have achieved. A man in this position might dream of becoming as big as Tamberlaine. This character is based on the lame Timur, a 14th-century conqueror. "This young man was lame and was known as Timur Lang, but the Europeans turned him into Timur. Within a few years he embarked on a glorious career as a world conqueror" (Sanders, 173). But for many Westerners, the image of the Conqueror usually reminds us of another person, Alexander the Great. Alexander was also an alien character in Marlowe's country, but probably became legendary and well-known over time, and Marlowe no longer possessed the human skeleton that such a character would need. But the lame Timur was a real person from a far-off region whose life and reign were little known. For writers who needed a blank canvas, Timur was an excellent candidate.

For the second straight play, Tambour Reign is our central figure. His race prevents him from being seen as a full human being, but he readily conveys that to audiences. He tells Xenocrates: "I am a lord, for my deeds prove/and also a shepherd through my lineage" (1.2.35-36). Although he noticed her strangeness, he was not conscious of her. His confidence and will to win are never undermined by what sets him apart. "But now I see that these letters and orders are being revoked by the great...but I love to live free, so you can take all the booty out of my jurisdiction." You can get the sultan's crown as easily as you put it in the throne" (1.2.21-28). Far from his hometown, he has the ability to "live freely". He is not bound by local customs and does not follow the rules of his homeland. His moral code is his own and he lives by it.

Despite Tamburlaine's arrogance, the other characters in the play (and perhaps the audience as well) tend to view him positively. This is evident in the words other characters in the play use about him, describing him as having a godlike nature. "Above it the gentle breath of heaven / Makes him dance with languid majesty / His arms and fingers are long and muscular / Declare courage and excess strength / Like a man in every



proportion. / The world should conquer Tamburlaine" (2.1.25 - 30). Even those he has oppressed recognize his strength, as the once-confident Myses completely questions the nature of war after his defeat. "Truly, it was he who invented war in the first place! / They didn't know, alas, humble people / Didn't know / How the roaring artillery bombardment hit them / Standing staggering like a quivering poplar leaf / A stormy shot of Boreas who feared power!" (2.4.1-5). Danson points out that this godlike behavior is not necessarily due to Marlowe's theological perspective. "But there is a coherent moral vision, however indirect it may be, in Tamburlaine., the vision of the play does not depend on last-minute retribution" (11, 12). Based on this description, we can speculate that in Marlowe's vision, being less than human leads to being more than human rather than being human. Being different has the power to cross boundaries without retaliation.

Some object to this, pointing out that Tamburlaine Part II is a sort of reckoning, describing the advent of a king who rises too early and falls too hard. But a closer look at the story of the Tamburlaine sequel reveals another interpretation. Inspired by a return to classical and Roman thought in the Renaissance, Marlowe's characterization of a man conquering nations and expanding his estates led him to draw only one conclusion. "What daring god would thus torment my body/And would conquer the mighty Tamburlaine/Now would disease prove me mortal/Who would fear the world? is it called?" (5.3.42-44). Like the once great Roman Empire, everything that rises must fall again. For Tamburlaine's final act, the hero does not necessarily attribute her fall as a result of her poetic punishment. Rather, he simply joins the ranks of all other prominent leaders and nations by losing his fortune and returning to Earth. Even Alexander the Great, who throughout history was believed by many to be a supernatural being, eventually had to meet his own creator.

Jews of Malta

Many critics have mentioned a comparable shape inside The Jew of Malta. Barabas, the titular character, has a story freedom that many heroes do now no longer experience genuinely due to his decrease station in life. For instance, early on within the play he provides this scathing monologue towards his Christian neighbors: "Who hateth me however for my happiness? /Or who's honour'd now however for his wealth? /Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus/Than pitied in a Christian poverty/For I can see no culmination in all their faith/But malice, falsehood, and immoderate pride/Which methinks suits now no longer their profession" (1.1.110-116). According to Hunter's take at the play, Barabas can say something surprising like this without worry of repercussion because, to an Elizabethan audience, he become genuinely behaving as a stereotypical Jewish guy would. "The common important mindset to Marlowe's Jew is that the author



(himself an `outsider`) has sympathetically diagnosed himself with the effective and magnetic alien discern withinside the commencing scenes of the play...The herbal cutting-edge tendency is to peer this as a chunk of right racial piety, with Barabas as a sympathetic, alevn though alien, discern honoring his personal patriarch” (216).

Rothstein parrots this sentiment with respect to Barabas. "Most of the parodies refer directly to Barabas and establish his position. He is then used by Marlowe to direct and expose the remaining characters., Machiavellianism, physical grotesqueness, and the stigma of his name.”(261) In essence, Barabas is so different that he becomes invisible, and this transparency allows him to do what he desires. You can gamble and plan until you get the What Rothstein calls his Judaism "stigmata" means that he grew up hearing that Jews were nothing more than greedy demons. So, if Barabas wants to be a greedy demon, there is nothing in his actions that would make Christians in the area think he was doing anything other than his true nature. A man of another religion who takes Barabbas' position may be criticized for loving money more than his daughter. "My gold, my riches, my happiness/Strength to my soul, death to my enemies! /Welcome, first novice to my happiness! /Oh, Abigail, Abigail, you were here too. It is!" (2.1.47-50)). However, when Barabas escapes this moral condemnation and finally regains his fortune despite his daughter's treatment, he is instead considered a hero. Rothstein wrote that Abigail was another property for Barabas, another means to an end. "However, Abigail pays a capped bounty. Like the Abigail of the Bible, she eventually transitions from her relationship with Belial's son to the actual service of the Lord, thereby stripping her of her property." and become a substitute victim (by Itamoor)” (263). Barabas doesn't feel the need to humanize her daughter because she doesn't feel the need to humanize anyone. If flesh and blood is his possession, Barabas has nothing to lose but his fortune, which is a salvageable commodity. Marlowe appears to revel in Barabas' Machiavellianism and his ability to act unrestrained.

In one such unrestrained act, Barabas persuades Abigail to pose as a convert and gain access to the monastery, now at home. "Who is this? Will the beautiful Abigail become the daughter of a wealthy Jewish nun? Her father's sudden fall has left her humiliated" (1.3.1-3). In this scene, Barabas uses her own weirdness to evade the pursuing Christian radar and set a (literal) trap. The reverse that a Christian person, whatever class he belongs to, converts to Judaism as a cover-up, simply because it is out of character and too attention-grabbing for European Christians to convert to another faith. could never have dreamed of a scenario of However, Abigail's conversion to Christianity and his father's supposed renunciation of



paganism do not receive much attention, as they cater to the demands of society. This allows her and her father to carry out her plans in secret, aided by their differences rather than hindered by them.

Although Barabas doesn't appear as a character who can receive redemption (or who, if he did receive redemption, would care much anyway), Marlowe's final act in *The Jew of Malta* gives the audience a choice when Barabas is caught in himself. Trap. "And, wicked one, know that now you cannot help me / So Barabas, breathe your last breath / And in the fury of your torments, strive / Determined to end my life" (5.5.75-78). Barabas died with an unusual grace reserved for the noblest of men. He accepts his fate and takes responsibility for the actions that led him here, while remaining true to his previous beliefs and morals. "The play that I am going to read is skillfully and effectively constructed, if not to stimulate our emotions, at least to put before us the image of a paralyzed world of moral aspect, a complex symbol of non-Christian action. This world is not England, for Marlowe is neither cynical nor nihilistic, but his wasteland is part England and part English. Marlowe asks us to laugh at it and let it be despised" (Rothstein, 273). Barabas, in the end, is not the villain. Instead, he's just a villain among many other characters, a self-centered character in a room filled with characters who only care about themselves. And yet, we support Barabas. He's an alien stuck in a place that hates him, despises him for his religion and traits, and that's enough to inspire audiences to follow him as he We fight to get back what's important to us.

If all these examples are not convincing enough of Barabas' liberties, further evidence can be found in the form of Barabas' speech. Unlike other Marlowe plays, Barabas speaks to a tic: he speaks to himself more often than any other Marlovian character in the scene's "extras". "(apart from) Now I will prove that I have more snakes than doves - that is, more scoundrels than fools" (2.3.34-36). The context here is clear; Barabas could talk alone because who in the room would waste time listening to a Jew? Literally, he could say whatever he wanted out loud, assuming no one would be interested enough to hear him say it. Barabas' difference, alienation, and freedom all stem from the form of the work itself.

Dido, Queen of Carthage

Dido, Queen of Carthage tells the story of a Carthaginian queen who was hit by Cupid's arrow. She fell in love with Aeneas, who came to his country's port after the fall of Troy. In Act 1, Scene 1, his mother, Venus, guided him here safely. It is this situation that immediately creates a change to the traditional gender dynamics in the work; Aeneas, a man, is placed at the mercy of a goddess and Dido, two women with the



power to make or break him. As soon as they met, Dido was in a position of obvious power. "What stranger looks at me like that?" she asked Aeneas, who replied, "Sometimes I am a Trojan horse, a mighty queen / But Troy is not." What am I going to say? (2.1.74-76). Aeneas then promptly informed her of his lower position without inviting her: "For though my background is excellent, my fortune is mediocre / Too mediocre to be become the queen's mate" (2.1.88-89). This reversal of power stories sets a sustaining tone for the rest of the play, even as Dido is violently beaten by Aeneas and behaves out of character. She may be in love, but she refrains from losing her sovereignty.

After being touched by Cupid's arrow, Dido's personality became increasingly abrasive, especially in her behavior towards Aeneas. She openly lusted after him during Acts 3 and 4, "But tell them that no one will look at him but me/ lest their crude eyes stain my lover's cheeks/ Anna, good sister Anna, walk towards him / lest I have these sweet thoughts I completely melt" (3.1.71-75) She became more and more reckless, even going so far sabotage Aeneas's return home in Act 4. And yet, she's still the sympathetic puppet character of the story, her power never ceding to Aeneas." The script asserts a central role. Dido's heart is both dramatic and linguistic: she's on stage more than any other character and has more good lines than Aeneas" (Gamel, 618). Because Dido was influenced by gods interfering with her affairs, audiences can see much of her behavior as an unfortunate consequence of Cupid's arrow.

This effect can only be the result of the gods acting as characters and participating in the story; Without them, Dido's play is only the sad descent of a woman who has forgotten her place. However, Dido's nationality allowed Marlowe to draw inspiration from a wide range of Greek and Roman mythological figures, none of which appear in physical form in his European-centered works. Venus, Juno, Ganymede and Jupiter are personified in Dido, and this glimpse behind the divine veil allows the audience to understand Dido's misfortunes and ultimately see her as a heroic figure, regardless despite her humiliation. In a similar way, Dido's legacy and her divine cast of characters paved the way for Marlowe to include explicit representations of gay characters, a feat almost impossible in a story. Christianity.

In the opening scene, Ganymede is lying with Jupiter. "What is it, my sweet clown, that I have the heart to refuse your youth/ His face reflects such joy in my eye. Sit on my knees and ask your satisfaction" (1.1.23-24, 28). Dido's weirdness not only opens up the pantheon of gods to call upon the characters, but also opens up the different genders and gender identities of these characters to mimic that Western gods don't can never do. Of the strange offer to Dido, Queen of Carthage, Bianco writes, "What Marlowe imitates in his plays is



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what would traditionally be dismissed or considered immoral, uncivilized and that is not worthy of imitation" (30). In this space of alien difference, Marlowe not only freely imitates strange behaviors, but also makes them brazen and fearless in her opening act.

Final act

Although there is a lot of important information about Marlowe's works, it is clear that he is seen by many scholars as an asterisk for Shakespeare rather than as a person himself. Almost all of the articles cited refer to Shakespeare, usually in a comparative and contrasting style in which he is opposed to Marlowe. At times when Marlowe has her own important space, speculation often centers on her lifestyle and excesses. The general census is that Marlowe is a different person, writing about other people, trying to focus on telling her own story. As a result, we have received some of the most powerful and majestic characters in literature. A Jew is trying to maintain his influence in the only way he knows how. A conqueror trying to maintain his empire through his children. A man makes a pact with the devil. These works stand on their own, regardless of their relationship to or influence on separate literary histories. Scholarships should reflect this, but unfortunately this area is currently lacking.



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