and the effect of those portrayals on the audience. In reasserting the often disregarded importance of geohumoralism in the early modern era, Wilson is able to bring her readers closer to the mindset of a typical Renaissance audience. On the other hand, since Wilson never clearly defines the early modern audience in terms of social factors such as class, readers may ask to what degree geohumoral theories were known by common playgoers. Were members of the lower orders even able to access the works of Aristotle, Jean Bodin, and Albertus Magnus? And, finally, were they aware of the efforts of their contemporaries systematically to compensate for the northern peoples' classical marginalization? The likelihood that such knowledge was restricted to the highly educated may undermine somewhat the persuasiveness of Wilson's assertions.

Despite the under-emphasis on class-related matters, Wilson's research is quite convincing in its acknowledgment of a theory often discounted as an "erroneous explanation of blackness" (p. 5). Although her reading of the historical development of racist theory may be overly linear in its organization, readers for years to come will benefit from the provocative and important ideas charted in that history. In this book, Wilson reveals not only the anxieties that plagued the early modern mind in regard to geohumoralist theories but also the influence of those trepidations, which have been passed down for centuries under the guise of racialism. Indeed, in attempting to compensate for their marginalization by discrediting climate theory, northern Europeans established the foundation for what would eventually become widely held beliefs regarding race and ethnicity in the modern world.

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

Alan Shepard addresses an important topic in this book, the relation between early modern masculinity and the military profession. It will therefore be of interest not only to Marlowe scholars but to anyone engaged in exploring the construction of masculinity and gender in the Renaissance; it makes a further contribution to a specific area of investigation recently treated by Nick de Somogyi in *Shakespeare's Theatre of War* (1998). That said, I must also admit that I often find myself in disagreement with Shepard's arguments, due to a profound ideological difference, which I will address directly in order not to mislead readers whose position may well be closer to Shepard's than to mine.

Debora Shuger has interestingly claimed that in "northern Europe during the sixteenth century, Erasmian humanism and Protestantism conjointly discredited the two principal medieval types of Christian manhood: the monk and the knight"—that is, the two "idealized social roles based on the renunciation or mystification of violence" (*The Renaissance Bible* [Berkeley: University of Cali-

fornia Press, 1994], p. 120). This transformation contributes to the increasing significance of the early modern (Protestant) soldier, who, if we can credit the historical generalization of the “rising middle class,” becomes a kind of later Renaissance, proto-bourgeois version of the medieval knight and perhaps even of the earlier idealized Renaissance figure of Castiglione’s *The Courtier* (as apparently occurs in the anonymous military pamphlet, *A Myrrour for English Souldiers* [1595]). This vexed and conflicted inheritance of a “mystification of violence” within a revolutionary but still intensely religious conception of selfhood results in complex psychological and political dilemmas for early modern men, which do not appear to me to be treated with adequate sympathy or understanding by Shepard. Rather, the figure of the soldier in this study becomes a kind of fall guy, a mere brute, an insensitive, unthinking clod who functions as a repository of all of the most negative aspects of masculinity as conceived by the current critical agenda. We are offered the by-now familiar “epiphany” that “masculinity is a fiction, a performance, not an essence that can be counted on to shield a man from incursions into his psyche, nor to steel the nation’s borders from enemy fleets or Jesuit priests, or whatnot” (p. 3). The point that so often seems to be elided in current discourse is the *cost* of various kinds of “performances,” which may have been risk-filled and dangerous, as opposed to simply “theatrical” or self-indulgent; the recognition of masculinity as not an *essence* but a construction should in no way be construed, as it now so often is, as simply an invitation to endless postmodern “play.” This tendency arises most frustratingly (for me) during the discussion of *Edward II*, where Shepard cites a 1596 tract, *A Watch-Word for Warre*, by Charles Gibbon, who complains that the public’s “cavalier disregard for soldiers . . . follows from their mistaking the performances of battles on stage for the real thing.” Gibbon bitterly observes, “warre is sweete to such as never taste it. . . . Alas, it is an easie matter to play *Hercules* in our houses, or *Alexander* upon the stages: but it is [something else] to follow them in the field, where every bullet doth threaten death” (cited p. 90). But for Shepard the significance of this reference is that Gibbon “denies the possibility that soldiers in battle are performing a role no less than are players on stage,” and that he implicitly and mistakenly (according to the postmodern critic) suggests that “martial identity is possessed, not performed” (p. 91). Can I be the only reader far more moved by *Gibbon’s* argument, finding it more significant to the frightening experience of soldiers at any historical moment, than by the mania with which Shepard attempts to reduce all human actions to mere “performances”? Shepard raises many interesting and important historical questions, including the attitudes of the anti-theatrical writers; but often more careful marshaling of historical evidence, and more generous and extensive quotation from archival sources, would be required to confirm key claims, such as the following (doubtful) one, that “[f]or all the bombast of late sixteenth-century theater, to put some strutting ‘soldier’ on the boards in London seems to have been understood by veterans and other commentators as an unpatriotic act of sabotage” (p. 5). When one reads that “the Marlowe plays suggest it is soldiers, not players, who most threaten the security of the state by daring to prescribe an England where

all kinds of difference ought to be quashed by martial law” (p. 4), one wonders how many, and what *class* of soldiers, actually enjoys the power of “prescription” Shepard ascribes to them; he fails to imagine them as marked by significant “differences” themselves. We arrive at quite deep and troubling philosophical and political questions when Shepard asserts that civilian dissenters in the plays “call spectators to scrutinize the assumptions enjoined by stage ‘soldiers’ and the veterans and others in London’s streets that human life deserves to be regulated principally in martial terms and that militarism makes the world safer” (p. 4). Such a broad generalization could be, perhaps should be, instantly complicated by some recognition of the inescapable concomitance of the natural repugnance of the civilized mind to violence with the extremely painful irony of our apparently transhistorical dependence on force as a way of policing not only national security and interests but criminal activity within our own communities.

In Shepard’s defense, he does not adopt a consciously simplistic approach but recognizes instead that Marlowe’s plays “engage in deeply ambiguous, sometimes subtle acts of resistance to . . . explicit endorsements of martial law” (p. 3). He is also prepared to admit that he does “not pretend that [Marlowe] is a misunderstood pacifist” (p. 14). A problem of focus does, however, thereby arise, since the exact nature of the book’s thesis remains uncertain, with the end result being a repetition in the conclusion of the same critical ambiguity: “In writing about the rhetoric of absolutism and the impulse toward martial law in the plays, I have not intended to make over Christopher Marlowe into some twenty-first-century human rights activist.” Shepard feels it would be “anachronistic” to see in the plays “explicit endorsements of a slate of human rights that were in fact introduced into western culture centuries later” (p. 218). Yet the alternative he offers here is a vague appeal to Katharine Eisaman Maus’s description in *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) of Marlowe’s obsession with “heretical conscience and theatrical rhetoric,” which to my mind does very little to illuminate Shepard’s own thesis that “state security may in fact actually be endangered by soldiers. When they buy into the rhetoric of ‘epic masculinity,’ . . . soldiers ‘protect’ the state in ways that may be fatal — to the civilians who cross them and to the state they are aiming to protect” (p. 219). The reader must decide whether this conclusion reinvokes the “anachronism” that Shepard has consciously eschewed. I personally detect here, again, the same monolithic and unsympathetic description of early modern soldiers, with little or no recognition of their own ideological and political constraints. “Civilians,” one imagines, not only “cross” soldiers but are often (as in other ages) extremely happy to endorse the brutal sacrifice of their lives in order to protect mercantile, political, and other interests. Even the term “epic masculinity” emerges as a questionable generalization. Although Shepard uses the phrase in the title of the chapter treating *Dido Queen of Carthage*, it presumably applies elsewhere, undeniably to *Tamburlaine*, since the critic interestingly observes that, “Like the *Iliad*, *Tamburlaine* captures the human cost of the heroic ethos” (p. 25). But how far can the character of Tamburlaine, a dramatic study of pathology if ever there was one, be construed

as an example of “normative” masculinity? Calling attention to the “insanity” of Tamburlaine’s “genocidal fantasies,” Shepard concludes that “This arch-dream illustrates the soldier-male’s need to decimate all reality” (p. 34). But in what sense is Tamburlaine a typical “soldier-male”? At times the treatments of both *Tamburlaine* and *Dido* involve assumptions of “typical” masculinity and realistic conditions of warfare that sit oddly with the dream-like and often nightmarish atmosphere of these plays.

Moreover, Shepard is driven by his agenda consistently to vilify military skill, valor, and courage in *Dido*: “This vignette [of Ulysses encouraging the Greeks to renew the siege of Troy] allows Marlowe to contest a principal claim of epic masculinity, that valor in battle is a matter of solitary gut fortitude rather than a socially constructed commitment to die. . . . fortitude is indistinguishable from catatonia, physical signs of which would include muscular rigidity and mental stupor” (p. 70). Thus the only constraints on soldiers Shepard cares finally to acknowledge is their own stupid internalization of the war rhetoric of crafty propagandists, not (if we can take the liberty of dismissing the Virgilian context in favor of a realistic assessment of Elizabethan society) the lack of opportunity, extreme poverty, or enforced impressment that has landed them in the military in the first place. One soldier uncharacteristically receives more favorable press: Marlowe seizes upon the murder of the Protestant Admiral Coligny in *The Massacre at Paris* “as a quintessential illustration of what may happen to soldiers who refuse to collaborate further with warmongers, and who suffer expulsion for their dissent” (p. 149). This brief interlude in an uncertainly developed chapter is quickly subsumed, however, by more typical descriptions of soldiers who engage in xenophobic genocide as “a defense against the disintegration of ego boundaries,” men “whose violence seems motivated by a fear of life’s complexities” (p. 154), thus returning us to an implicit and highly disturbing equation of “masculinity” with pathological narcissistic aggression.

Nevertheless, several chapters of *Marlowe’s Soldiers* offer provocative observations and interesting historical parallels. The discussion of *The Jew of Malta* fruitfully treats the “rich links between war and commerce in early modern London” (p. 113) and offers a compelling and original explanation for Barabas’s “otherwise puzzling decision to resign the governorship of Malta in Act 5” (p. 122). Most significantly, the concluding chapter on *Doctor Faustus* offers a very helpful historicization of the play’s middle scenes, which are becoming more and more difficult for Marlovian scholars to dismiss or ignore.

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