

# *The Shakespearean Interplay with Marlowe*

Reviewed by Gary Goldstein

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*The Shakespearean Interplay with Marlowe. By Tony Hosking. The Shogi Foundation, 2024, 197 pages (\$37.00 includes shipping, available directly from <http://www.shogifoundation.co.uk/>. The international payment method is Paypal).*

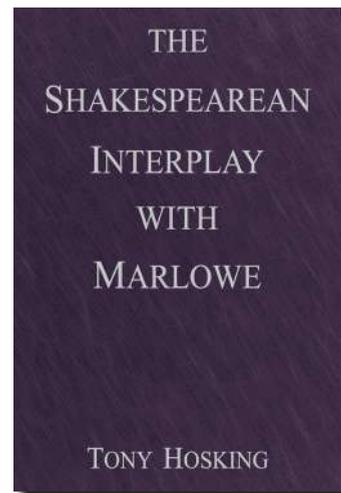
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**T**ony Hosking is an Oxfordian scholar who joins the ongoing debate about the nature of the literary relationship between the Earl of Oxford and Christopher Marlowe, though he is at odds with other scholars. Did Christopher Marlowe’s works influence Shakespeare or was it the other way around? Was it a mutual engagement between the two dramatists during the years 1585–1593, when Marlowe’s seven plays and two poems were produced on stage or circulating in manuscript?

Hosking posits that it was reciprocal in that both authors borrowed from each other throughout their careers. Hosking is categorical in stating that “Every play or poem by Shakespeare or Marlowe has parallels in each other’s work.” He also claims that Marlowe is the Rival Poet in Shakespeare’s Sonnets rather than Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, who Peter Moore proposed in his *The Lame Storyteller, Poor and Despised* (2009).

See [https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/TOX18\\_Peter\\_Moore\\_Essex.pdf](https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/TOX18_Peter_Moore_Essex.pdf).

According to Richard Malim, author of *Shakespeare’s Revolution* (2022), the influence more likely flowed from Shakespeare to Marlowe since the Earl of



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Oxford had been writing poetry and plays since the mid-1570s. Thus, when Marlowe began to write in the mid-1580s, there was only one predecessor of any note: Oxford. In that relationship, Malim asserts, Oxford was a “witty parodist of Marlowe.”

Hosking delineates the intimate interplay in the plays and poems between the two poets.

Marlowe in *The Jew of Malta*:

But stay! What star shines yonder in the East?  
The lodestar of my life, if Abigail. (2.1)

Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*:

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun! (2.1)



Marlowe in *2 Tamburlaine*:

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!  
What, but ye can draw but twenty miles a day,  
And have so proud a chariot at your heels... (4.3)

Shakespeare in *2 Henry IV*:

Shall packhorses,  
And hollow pampered jades of Asia,  
Which cannot go but thirty miles a day... (2.4)



Marlowe in *Doctor Faustus*:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? (5.1)

Shakespeare in *Richard II*:

Was this face the face  
That every day under his household roof  
Did keep ten thousand men? (4.1)



Hosking goes on to outline seven parallels between *1* and *2 Tamburlaine* and *Titus Andronicus*, but also a horde of other textual allusions between the two dramatists in what is clearly an ongoing dialogue of parody and celebration.

Finally, Hosking presents abundant evidence from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* that he admired Marlowe enough to quote liberally from the latter's works while delivering a series of eulogies for him in the pastoral comedy (3.3): "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," a reference to Marlowe's murder in a tavern during an argument with colleagues over the bill. It also refers to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, where Barabas says in the opening scene: "inclose infinite riches in a little room." Thus Shakespeare here makes both a literal and literary echo of Marlowe and his works.

That admiration in *AYLI* was deep enough for Shakespeare to also quote from Marlowe's poetry. In Act 3, scene 5, Phoebe says: "Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, 'Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?'" (from *Hero and Leander* line 171).

In a final flourish of admiration for Marlowe, when Touchstone is flirting with Audrey, the clown mentions that "most capricious poet, honest Ovid" (3.3), since Marlowe had translated Ovid's *Love Elegies*. And while Shakespeare lifts a storyline or two from the Roman poet, he is only mentioned by name twice in all of Shakespeare's plays—here and in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

There is a last point about Shakespeare's tributes to Marlowe in *AYLI*—we exclaim upon a man's death when it happens; six years later, we simply refer to him in the past tense. Since experts believe *AYLI* was written in 1599, the topical allusions to 1593 clearly demonstrate an earlier date of composition than the current scholarly consensus.

