

**“‘Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that hath
ravished me”
– Christopher Marlowe’s Fictional
Afterlives**

Inaugural-Dissertation
zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophie
an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität
München

vorgelegt von

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aus
Freising
2023

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Datum der mündlichen Prüfung. 24. Juli 2020

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1. 1993 – The Start of a Trend	5
1.2. Marlowe’s Writing – Writing Marlowe	13
1.3. Who/What is an Author? Historical Overview and Creative Representations of Authorship in Popular Culture	45
2. Christopher Marlowe’s Fictional Afterlives	53
2.1. “And live and die in Marlowe (‘s works)”: Paving the Way – the Author as Original Collaborator	53
2.1.1. Introduction	53
2.1.2. Rivals, Substitutes	55
2.1.3. Substituting Shakespeare for Marlowe	63
2.1.4. Substituting Marlowe for Shakespeare	76
2.1.5. The Original Collaborator	83
2.2. “[A]ll live to die, and rise to fall”: Creating the Overreacher – Creating the Author as Character	85
2.2.1. Introduction	85
2.2.2. Marlowe as an Amalgam of the Playwright and his Characters	90
2.2.3. Gaveston as Marlowe	108
2.3. “You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute”: Marlowe and the Theatre of Espionage – the Author as (Secret) Agent	116
2.3.1. Introduction	116
2.3.2. In Search of Identity	120
2.3.3. Creating Identity <i>post mortem</i>	130
2.4. “[M]ake me immortal”: Supernatural Marlowe – the Death of the Author and his Afterlife	138
2.4.1. Introduction	138
2.4.2. The Vampire Christopher Marlowe	140
2.4.3. The Daemon Christopher Marlowe	152
3. Conclusion	163
Appendix: Fictional Marlowe – an Overview	166
Works Cited	167
Summary (German)	177

Abbreviations

<i>AP</i>	<i>The Aspern Papers</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Dark Entry</i>
<i>DMD</i>	<i>A Dead Man in Deptford</i>
<i>DW</i>	<i>A Discovery of Witches</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>Geheimagent Marlowe</i>
<i>HC</i>	<i>The Hot Country</i>
<i>MGF</i>	<i>Men of Good Fortune</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream (Sandman)</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>The Marlowe Papers</i>
<i>NLS</i>	<i>Nothing Like the Sun</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>OLLA</i>	<i>Only Lovers Left Alive</i>
<i>SED</i>	<i>The Slicing Edge of Death</i>
<i>SL</i>	<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>
<i>SN</i>	<i>Shadow of Night</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>Winter's Tale</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 1993 – The Start of a Trend

“Four hundred years after he was stabbed to death in Deptford, South London, Christopher Marlowe is still going strong.”
Ian McKellen

1593 and 1993 – the year Christopher Marlowe died and the year of the 400th anniversary of his death. 1993 can be seen as a trigger: Exactly four hundred years after he was stabbed to death in Deptford at the age of 29 (allegedly in a tavern brawl about the bill) Christopher Marlowe was resurrected as a fictional character in popular culture and has wandered in different shapes through its fictions ever since.

As early as 1895, Wilbur G. Zeigler, an US-American lawyer and a great admirer of Marlowe’s works, laid the foundation when he decided to present his answer to the question to the actual authorship of Shakespeare’s works in his novel *It was Marlowe. A Story of the Secret of Three Centuries*: “Upon these conjectural answers to the questions of who was the author, and why did he conceal his identity, I have built the story of ‘It was Marlowe,’ and I trust that in its narration I have made my theory plausible.” (circa 1895: xi) Over the course of the next 100 years, the Elizabethan playwright and poet appeared as a fictional character in around ten literary publications, a movie, several TV-series and plays, and a musical.¹ Some of them are rather well-known, like Virginia Woolf’s fictional biography *Orlando* (1928) and *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964), a novel by Anthony Burgess – which both include only references to Marlowe – or the 1981 Broadway musical *Marlowe*, and Peter Whelan’s play *The School of Night* (1992), where Marlowe appears as a character. However, these publications only seemed to be sporadic cases. From 1993 onwards this trend intensified and is still continuing today. I suggest interpreting this fact with caution: As popular as Christopher Marlowe was in the Elizabethan theatre, as quickly was he forgotten by posterity, only to be resurrected in the Romantic period as the prototype of the ingenious author.² Like every author and every piece of work, Marlowe has to be

¹ For an overview of fictionalizations of the historical Christopher Marlowe, see Appendix.

² For a detailed account of Christopher Marlowe’s reception during his lifetime and in the four centuries after his death, see chapter 1.2.

seen in context of his own time, the sixteenth century, but, at the same time, interpretations of him and his work reflect the respective age. The twentieth century had yet to decide how to turn Christopher Marlowe into ‘its’ Marlowe and this approach is demonstrated rather well in the works of two famous British authors: Virginia Woolf and Anthony Burgess.

Although Christopher Marlowe does not appear directly as a fictional character in *Orlando*, it is worthwhile to have a closer look at the references to him in this novel. It is interesting to consider the boy Orlando’s first encounter with a poet in the sixteenth century, when he is about to head to the banqueting-hall to meet the Queen:

But halfway there, in the back quarters where the servants lived, he stopped. The door of Mrs. Stewkley’s sitting-room stood open – she was gone, doubtless, with all her keys to wait upon her mistress. But there, sitting at the servant’s dinner table with a tankard beside him and paper in front of him, sat a rather fat, rather shabby man, whose ruff was a thought dirty, and whose clothes were of hodden brown. He held a pen in his hand, but he was not writing. He seemed in the act of rolling one thought up and down, to and fro in his mind till it gathered shape or momentum to his liking. His eyes, globed and clouded like some green stone of curious texture, were fixed. He did not see Orlando. For all his hurry, Orlando stopped dead. Was this a poet? Was he writing poetry? ‘Tell me’, he wanted to say, ‘everything in the whole world’ – for he had the wildest, most absurd, extravagant ideas about poets and poetry – but how speak to a man who does not see you? Who sees ogres, satyrs, perhaps the depths of the sea instead? So Orlando stood gazing while the man turned his pen in his fingers, this way and that way; and gazed and mused; and then, very quickly, wrote half-a-dozen lines and looked up. Whereupon Orlando, overcome with shyness, darted off and reached the banqueting-hall only just in time to sink upon his knees and, hanging his head in confusion, to offer a bowl of rose water to the great Queen herself. (*Orlando* 16)

The note to this episode says that the stranger is William Shakespeare whose portrait hung in the Poets’ Parlour at Knole, the childhood home of Vita Sackville-West to whom the novel is dedicated (235). So, on this encounter, Orlando is watching one of the most famous poets and playwrights of his time and of the following centuries in the process of creative imagination. Through the frame of the open door, Shakespeare is presented like in a picture. The colours might be rather dark, rather muddy, as he is sitting in rather dark, rather shabby surroundings, “in the back quarters where the servants lived” and “at the servant’s dinner table”. He does not seem to care or to be able to care much about his plain clothes which are tattered and dirty. Nevertheless, there are two facts which speak for a kind of wealth: He is “rather fat” and he is about to write with a pen in his hand which either means that he can afford food as well as paper – or that he has a generous patron. His eyes might be “globed and clouded”; however, the spark of a

green jewel shines through this veil, pointing the way to a richer inner world which stands in direct contrast to his outer appearance and the environment. When somebody familiar with Elizabethan England reads this passage now and evokes this picture of William Shakespeare in the mind's eye, there is another one which places itself almost inevitably next to it and quite in contrast to it: The portrait of the young, richly dressed Christopher Marlowe who stands with his arms crossed and with both feet slightly apart on reality's ground, his body turned to the viewer. Who seems to look directly into your eyes and to not only see your outer appearance very well, but also what is going on in your mind. Of course, writing in the 1920s, Virginia Woolf was not familiar with this portrait which was discovered during renovation in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1953 and which Calvin Hoffman claimed to depict Marlowe two years later.³ However, readers of later generations could very well notice this coincidental contrast, because the novel, which deals with hundreds of years of its protagonist's life, presents a few rather important glimpses at Christopher Marlowe in the course of its two hundred pages. He stands in a line with the great English poets, above all of the Elizabethan age, but the order changes. When Orlando enumerates those poets to Nicholas Greene during one of the evenings they spend together in the sixteenth century, he names Shakespeare first, then Marlowe (cf. 61f) and Greene tells him some details about Marlowe's life and death with "a power of mimicry that brought the dead back to life" (63). After this episode, the list Marlowe, Shakespeare and another poet – in this order – is mentioned two further times. When the Lady Orlando, after her time as Ambassador in Constantinople, returns to England on a ship, the marble dome of St. Paul's Cathedral – rebuilt by Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of 1666 – reminds her of Shakespeare's prominent forehead (which is not mentioned in the description on page 16). She remembers her first encounter with him and then thinks about England's most prominent poets: "[S]he thought now only of the glory of poetry, and the great lines of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton began booming and reverberating" (117). In the twentieth century, Greene remembers the "giants" of the Elizabethan age, "Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson" (193), when he and the Lady Orlando meet again and this meeting evokes memories of the time they spent together some

³ For a detailed description of the portrait, see chapter 1.2.

hundred years ago, when the poet was Orlando's guest. Among her memories, the Lady Orlando mentions "merry stories of Marlowe and the rest" (ibid.). Marlowe seemed to have a special impact on both; on Greene who knew him and on Orlando who was told about him by Greene. Therefore, Marlowe is not only a poet representing the art of his time; Marlowe also becomes a human being, made graspable by Greene's anecdotes and his recurring presence in Orlando's mind. As his putative portrait might evoke a contrast to that of William Shakespeare's described in the novel, Christopher Marlowe himself, who died before his time, could be seen to stand in contrast to the novel's protagonist who is given a centuries-long life. He could be the negative of the slide which has yet to be filled.

Like Virginia Woolf in her fictional biography *Orlando*, Anthony Burgess does not tell us much about Christopher Marlowe in his novel *Nothing Like the Sun* which features William Shakespeare as its protagonist – at least at first glance. Marlowe only appears in references and in retrospection. However, this makes him even more powerful. As a ghostly presence he hovers above Shakespeare's head, as a genius he may reach out to, but never touch, he occupies his thoughts and prevents, it seems, the development of his peer's own great talent. Shakespeare is doomed to his role as admirer and envier:

But, more than anything, *Faustus*. A play, yes, a mere, play, but the smell of truth in it [...] the bigger truth that lay behind this painted curtain. [...] Marlowe would embrace hell itself, if hell were all (and he seemed to believe it was all) that the curtain hid. If *Tamburlaine* had been one big empty boastful shout, yet *Faustus* was a true voice crying for damnation as though damnation were a mother. [...] No mean quibbles in Marlowe. [...] He had been once, along with Marlowe, to a meeting of the School of Night. [...] Marlowe had raged against Christ [...]. Well, both Greene and Marlowe called on a dark goddess and expected some answer. They had no doubts. They marched, all or nothing, towards an all-consuming vision. That was true nobility of the soul, despite the filthy lodgings of Greene, the bloodshot eyes of Marlowe. (NLS 85)

Greene resembles Marlowe in devoting himself, body and soul, to his art. However, neither he nor anyone else has the other's unearthly talent. Nonetheless, Shakespeare envies Greene because he "was no Marlowe, but he was closer to Marlowe than he, WS, would ever be." (84f) While working on his *Richard III*, Shakespeare realizes that, although he may be able to imitate Marlowe's contents, he may never be able to equal him as for the art of his writing: "Marlowe's Machevil but none of his poetry", (88) he resigns. It is only after the playwright's death that Shakespeare is able to free himself from his role as Marlowe's apprentice, to develop his own ingenious talent as a writer. As WH puts it: "You

may exult now, friend or no friend [...] that you are without peer. Now my poet is my only poet. [...] You may gladly loose a friend to know that.” (106) And Shakespeare goes so far as to divide his life into a pre- and a post-Marlovian era: “This was a new life, *post-Marlovian* (a pretty coinage), dedicated to love and advancement and poetry.” (ibid.; italics mine) It is only through Shakespeare’s eyes that the reader can get a notion about Christopher Marlowe in the novel. In studying the other’s plays, Shakespeare imagines himself standing next to him, while Marlowe sits at his desk and writes, jealously following the progress of how thoughts become text. As he tries to imitate Marlowe’s works, he imagines the playwright standing beside his own desk and Shakespeare meeting his amused, maybe quizzical or even contemptuous gaze. As Shakespeare writes about the meeting of the School of Night, which he accompanied Marlowe to, we can see the two there together: Shakespeare stays in the background and observes the other like spellbound. Only after Marlowe’s death, the man from Stratford-upon-Avon can become equal to his great predecessor in the following years, maybe more than equal. He incorporates the other’s talent, adds his own, develops it further and thus multiplies it. He becomes part of the holy trinity of playwrights, a metaphor John Wilson uses when he baptizes the new *Globe* theatre “*in nomine Kyddi et Marlovii et Shakespearii*” (215).

Anthony Burgess lived in a post-Marlovian age and although he chose to write a novel about Shakespeare’s love-life in 1964, Christopher Marlowe fascinated him since his student years. In the *Author’s Note to A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993), he describes how he wrote his doctoral thesis about the visions of hell in *Doctor Faustus* in 1940. The thesis got destroyed during an air raid by the *Luftwaffe* and when the natal quatercentenary of both Shakespeare and Marlowe drew nearer, “the lesser had to yield to the greater” (*DMD* 271). So his Marlowe-novel had to wait another 30 years to be written: “Now, with the commemoration of Marlowe’s murder in 1593, I am able to pay such homage as is possible to an ageing writer.” (ibid.)⁴ In 1993, Burgess was not the only one who paid homage to Marlowe – in the world of fiction as well as in the real world. It seems that it was finally time for Christopher Marlowe to enter the stage of popular culture. In the 400th year after his death he became the fictional character

⁴ Anthony Burgess died on 22 November 1993, at the age of 77.

in six novels as well as a short story: Anthony Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford*, Robin Chapman, *Christoferus or Tom Kyd's Revenge*, Judith Cook, *The Slicing Edge of Death. Who Killed Christopher Marlowe?*, Stephanie Cowell, *Nicholas Cooke: Actor, Soldier, Physician, Priest*, Lisa Goldstein, *Strange Devices of the Sun and Moon*, Liam Maguire, *Icarus Flying. The Tragical Story of Christopher Marlowe*, and Connie Willis, "Winter's tale", published in the collection *Impossible Things*. Furthermore, BBC Radio 4 broadcast for the first time Ged Parsons's *The Christopher Marlowe Mysteries*, a historical comedy mystery series in four episodes each thirty minutes long, about the playwright and spy. Peter Whelan, author of the Marlowe-play *The School of Night*, which had been first performed in November 1992 by the *Royal Shakespeare Company* at *The Other Place* in Stratford-upon-Avon, published an essay in the weekly London newspaper *The New Statesman and Society* on 7 May titled "A Whiff of Sulphur". In it, Whelan, who thinks Marlowe met his end because of his free-thinking attitudes, reflects about "what form his [Marlowe's] dissidence would take were he alive today" (1993: 23) and draws a parallel between Marlowe and the author Salman Rushdie who has been persecuted under the 'fatwa' since 1989. Various festivities contributed to increase public awareness. The British actor Ian McKellen wrote an article, "Passionate Spy who Rivalled Shakespeare", which was published in the *Sunday Express* on 23 May.⁵ He announced that he would unveil a memorial outside the *Marlowe Theatre*, Canterbury, on 30 May, exactly 400 years after Marlowe met his untimely end. The Marlowe memorial, a statue representing the Muse of Poetry – locals nicknamed her 'Kitty' – was designed in the late nineteenth century. She stands on a pedestal with the bronze figures of famous actors dressed as Tamburlaine, Barabas, Faustus and Edward II on each side. 'Kitty' had to change locations a number of times and has stood in front of the *Marlowe Theatre*, Canterbury, since 1993.⁶ Throughout the year, under the slogan 'Marlowe 400', the theatre remembered him with plays, art competitions, music, films, lectures, conferences and poetry readings. Ian McKellen's article opens as follows: "Four hundred years after he was stabbed to death in Deptford,

⁵ The article can now be found on Ian McKellen's website:

<http://www.mckellen.com/writings/930523marlowe.htm> (accessed 26 September 2019).

⁶ The Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society's website provides detailed information: <http://www.canterbury-archaeology.org.uk/marlowe/4590809504> (accessed 26 September 2019).

South London, Christopher Marlowe is still going strong.” This feeling was shared by the filmmaker and artist Richard Miller who attended a celebration of Marlowe’s works in St. Nicholas Church, Deptford, on 30 May. Among the guests were Peter Whelan, Charles Nicholl and actors such as Sam Wanamaker; individual contributors presented extracts from Marlowe’s work, Peter Whelan hung a wreath over the church’s indoor memorial plaque and the Bishop of Woolwich blessed the new outdoor plaque commemorating Marlowe. Miller published an account of the events quite late on his website:

Writing this in 2015, 22 years after the celebration is perhaps a little late. I certainly remember thinking that afternoon how remarkable it was for so many of Britain’s great actors to be present, commemorating someone they had never personally known. Yet 400 years after Marlowe had departed this earth, his own dramas were still alive, and his words still being spoken, just as they had been by the great actors of his day.⁷

“Marlowe is still going strong”, his work is “still alive”; these acts of reminiscence on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his death show that, after four centuries the Elizabethan poet and playwright was still present in and considered to be an important part of cultural memory. In the twentieth century, this presence has expanded and found new haunts as the stack of fiction published in 1993 shows. Looking at this stack, which has grown ever since, I argue that 1993 saw the start of a trend. To fictionalize Christopher Marlowe – in contrast to usually short-lived fashion trends, for example – has been “in” ever since. Over the course of almost three decades we have met him in a number of fictional works, among them novels, films and series. He appears in a variety of shapes. We have gotten to know Christopher Marlowe as a pioneer who paves the way for other authors, as an overreacher who, like Icarus, flies too high and falls deep, as a spy and as a supernatural being, vampire or daemon. Above all, in all those fictions he appears as a character who negotiates popular imaginations of authorship.

When Leah S. Marcus discusses the chronological relationship between the A- and B-text of *Doctor Faustus* in her study *Unediting the Renaissance. Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton*, she introduces the term ‘Marlowe effect’ and defines it as the “effect of adjusting Marlowe to fit different audiences”, thus “insuring the highest possible pitch of ‘ravishment’ and horror in terms of

⁷ “A Celebration of Christopher Marlowe, Deptford 1993”. <https://richardqmilller.com/christopher-marlowe/> (accessed 26 September 2019).

audience response” (1996: 54f). In order to keep it sounding like Marlowe, his play had to be revised by other playwrights in the years and decades following his death to obtain the same response by other audiences as the ‘original’ had done. When she writes about audience response, Marcus uses the word “ravishment” in the sense of “rapture”, “ecstasy”, “delight” (*OED* s.v. *ravishment*, n.), like Faustus, when he speaks about magic: “‘Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me.” (*Doctor Faustus*, scene 1.112) This inspired the title of the PhD thesis: “‘Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that hath ravished me.” *Christopher Marlowe’s Fictional Afterlives*. Rodney Bolt also uses the term ‘Afterlife’ in his *History Play. The Lives and Afterlife of Christopher Marlowe* (2004) which could evoke similar expectations at first glance. However, Bolt’s starting point is the theory that Christopher Marlowe did not die in Deptford, but staged his own death, fled to the Continent and wrote the works which are now attributed to William Shakespeare. The author mixes up alleged facts with fiction in order to write a creative biographical version of Marlowe’s life and alleged afterlife after 1593. Marcus, in the definition of the ‘Marlowe effect’ as the “effect of adjusting Marlowe to fit different audiences”, uses ‘Marlowe’ as a metonymy, but I would like to take this literally for my project and to include the works as well as the person: Contemporary authors attempt to create a fictional Christopher Marlowe who generates the ‘Marlowe effect’ for a twentieth and twenty-first century audience, because he, as a fictional character, negotiates popular imaginations of authorship. Before taking a closer look at Christopher Marlowe’s fictional afterlives, firstly, an account of the Elizabethan poet and playwright and the reception of his person and his works from his lifetime to his death and throughout the centuries until the present shall be provided. Secondly, the first part of this book will be concluded by a short overview of the history of authorship and the introduction and definition of important terms.

1.2 Marlowe's Writing – Writing Marlowe

“[T]he Muses' darling”
– “intemperate & of a cruel hart”
George Peele / Thomas Kyd

Who is Christopher Marlowe? What do we know about him? In fact, we do not know much about the Renaissance playwright, not even his name. It is “Christopher. The other name is unsure. Marlin, Merlin, Marley, Morley. Marlowe will do.” (*DMD* 9) His identity is elusive, different spellings of his name were conveyed and posterity has agreed on referring to him as ‘Christopher Marlowe’. When we hear the name Christopher Marlowe, we think about William Shakespeare’s contemporary, the poet and playwright, whose tragedies, among them *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta*, were great successes on the Elizabethan stage with the famous actor Edward Alleyn playing the title roles. Some might even think about Marlowe as the ‘true’ Shakespeare, as the actual author of Shakespeare’s works. Again and again, his putative portrait occurs in our mind’s eye. We see a strikingly handsome young man, twenty-one years old, his long, wild, dark hair brushed out of his face to accentuate his big, vivid brown eyes, it seems. He watches us closely over the bridge of the centuries – confident, challenging, perhaps slightly amused. His face is well-shaved, with a small moustache and traces of a beard along his chin. His dark, velvet doublet has a pattern of zigzag slashes which show the peach-coloured linen underneath – fashionable and expensive. He wears no ruff, but a light-coloured shirt with its large collar falling over the top of the doublet. Although we cannot see the lower part of his body, he seems to stand self-confidently with his legs apart; his right arm is folded over his left and shows the golden buttons which are sewn down the sleeves. We can see the white back of his right hand and we wish he would reach out, pull us into the picture frame next to him and tell us his secrets. The Latin motto *Quod me nutrit, me destruit* (‘That which nourishes me destroys me’) is painted on the upper left edge directly under the date, a motto which fits his daring plays as well as his work as a government spy in the service of Queen Elizabeth I. So, we might think about Marlowe the spy, about Marlowe the homosexual or about Marlowe the atheist who was from time to time entrapped in legal affairs. However, this is just gossip, these are just elusive ideas and thoughts: “We know next to nothing about Christopher Marlowe”, writes J. A. Downie in

his essay “Marlowe: Fact and Fictions” for the collection *Constructing Christopher Marlowe* (2000). “When we speak or write about him, we are really referring to a construct called ‘Marlowe’.” (2000: 13) Our century has constructed our ‘Christopher Marlowe’ as the preceding centuries have constructed theirs.

In order to see what we really do know about Christopher Marlowe, let us take a look at the bare facts:⁸ As a newborn, probably only a few days old, Christopher Marlowe is christened in the church of St George the Martyr, Canterbury, on Saturday, 26 February 1564. The Parish register entry reads: “The 26th day of February was christened Christofer the sonne of John Marlow.” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 177) He is the second child and first son of John Marlowe and Katherine Arthur who were married in the same church on 22 May 1561. The freeman John Marlowe is from Ospringe, Kent, relatively new to Canterbury, the mother-city of the Church of England, and he becomes the owner of a shoemaker’s shop in the spring of 1564. His wife is originally from Dover. They have nine children, five girls and four boys; three of them die in childhood. At the unusually late age of 14 Christopher enrolls as a scholar at King’s School, Canterbury, in December 1578. Being the most ancient school in England, the grammar school descended from the scholastic institution which was founded by St. Augustine in the sixth century. Queen Elizabeth’s father Henry VIII re-endowed it as the King’s School. In a charter from 1541, the King granted, among other things, provision for the education of “fifty poor boys, both destitute of the help of friends, and endowed with minds apt for learning, who shall be called scholars of the grammar school, and shall be sustained out of the funds of our Church” (quoted from Wraight and Stern 1965: 38f). The age of the scholars should be between nine and fifteen years and they should be paid four pounds per annum for five years. However, the places went first to the sons of gentlemen and children of poor families could only go there if there were vacant places (cf. *ibid.*). The first official recording is from 14 January 1579 and on 25 March 1579 he receives his first scholarship payment of four pounds. As Elizabethan boys started

⁸ The following titles provide important source material: Lisa Hopkins, *A Christopher Marlowe Chronology* (2005); Constance Brown Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe. A Renaissance Life* (2002); Millar MacLure, *Marlowe. The Critical Heritage 1588–1896* (1979); A.D. Wraight, Virginia F. Stern, *In Search of Christopher Marlowe. A Pictorial Biography* (1965). Constance Brown Kuriyama was the first who assembled the most important Marlowe documents; they can be found in the Appendix of her biography, in chronological order, freshly transcribed, translated and commented. The following quotations from the sources are mostly taken from her.

grammar school about the age of nine, Christopher may have already been a student at King's School or elsewhere for the past five years.

After King's School, Marlowe goes on to Corpus Christi College, one of the oldest colleges of Cambridge, to study divinity as a Parker scholar which means that he is expected to take Holy Orders after graduation. Dr. Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1558 to 1575, had been Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, from 1544 to 1553. In his will, made on 5 April 1575, three scholarships of 3 pounds, 6s, 8d per annum each, are included. The first scholarship should go to a native of Canterbury and scholar of King's School and the nomination was reserved to Parker's son John. Matthew Parker died in 1575 (cf. Wraight and Stern 1965: 43). Christopher Marlowe matriculates at Corpus Christi on 17 March 1581, the day Lent term ends. By this time he is 17 years old and therefore three years older than the average university freshman in the Elizabethan age. The formal election to his scholarship takes place between 7 and 11 May 1581: "*Marlin electus et admissus in locum domini Pashly*" – 'Marlin elected and admitted in the place of Master [Christopher] Pashley' (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 53). He is absent from College twice, although Cambridge has strict residence requirements and students are expected to stay on campus during the term as well as the holidays and they are only allowed to leave for one month a year if they are ill or away on college business. Marlowe's first recorded absence dates from July and August 1582 and he is away once more – from April till June 1583 – until he takes his BA as 199th of 231 graduates on Palm Sunday, 12 April 1584.⁹ During his MA years, the number of absences expands as well as their duration. He is away from July to December 1584, mid-April to mid-June 1585, and mid-July to mid-September 1585. The date of Katherine Benchkin's will, which bears his only surviving signature, 'Christofer Marley', reads 19 August 1585. At the beginning of November 1585, he is away for two weeks and also at the end of February/ beginning of March 1586 for the same period of time. The last absence dates from June 1586, but other students are also away, including his roommates (cf. Hopkins 2005: 68, 71–73, 76). They can be traced back through the accounts in the buttery book. It is interesting that during his MA years, Marlowe spends significantly more money when he is at Cambridge – as a

⁹ His roommates were also away at that time.

scholar who receives one shilling per week and that only if he is in college. The mysteriously rich student is granted ‘grace’ to proceed to the MA on 31 March 1587. However, there seem to be difficulties as the surviving draft of the Privy Council’s letter, dating 29 May 1587, to the Corpus Christi authorities, shows:

Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley was determined to have gone beyond the seas to Reames and there to remaine their Lordships thought good to certefie that he had no such intent, but that in all his acions he had behaved him selfe orderlie and discretelie wherebie he had done her Majestie good service, and deserved to be rewarded for his faithfull dealinge: Their Lordships request was that the rumor thereof should be allaied by all possible meanes, and that he should be furthered in the degree he was to take this next commencement: Because it was not her Majesties pleasure that anie one employed as he had been in matters touching the benefitt of his countrie should be defamed by those that are ignorant in th'affaires he went about/ (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 202f)

“Reames” is the French town of Rheims. Since 1578 it served as the home of the seminary where English Catholics could go to in secret to train for priesthood. However, the only sure fact concerning the Privy Council’s letter is that Marlowe is granted his MA. On 10 November 1587, the Corpus Christi *Registrum Parvum* (‘Little Register’) notes the election of Jacob Bridgeman as Parker Scholar at Corpus Christi “*in locum domini Marley*” – ‘in the place of Master Marley’ (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 87). Over five months later, on 27 April 1588, the Corpus Christi Order Book lists the election of Jacob Bridgeman as Marlowe’s successor as Parker Scholar at Corpus Christi – an unusual delay which might relate to the difficulties in granting Marlowe’s MA.

During his London years, the young man is involved in a number of legal affairs. In a street fight, later to be referred to as Hog Lane Fight, Christopher Marlowe is present as his friend Thomas Watson kills William Bradley, an innkeeper’s son; both are sent to Newgate Prison on 18 September 1589. The authorities describe Marlowe as a “yeoman” who lives in the Liberty of Norton Folgate (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 203). Marlowe raises a bail of 40 pounds with the gentleman Richard Kytchin of Clifford’s Inn and the horner Humphrey Rowland as his sureties on 1 October 1589 and is discharged on 3 December 1589 (cf. 204).¹⁰ Two years later, Marlowe is arrested in Flushing, a town in the Netherlands, for counterfeiting money. He and Richard Baines apparently forged one Dutch shilling and now each man blames the other one for being the criminal.

¹⁰ In this document, Marlowe is referred to as “Christopher Marley of London, gentleman” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 204).

The “scholer” Marlowe “sais himself to be very wel known both to the Earle of Northumberland and my Lord Strang” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 210), meaning he has influential friends like Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, and Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, writes Sir Robert Sidney, Sir Philip’s younger brother and governor of Flushing, in a letter to Lord Treasurer Burghley, dating from 26 January 1592. The coiner is arrested and sent to London; however, he is spared to boil in oil, the usual penalty for counterfeiting. Only a few months later, on 9 May 1592, Marlowe is accused of uttering threats against Allen Nicholls and Nicholas Helliott, the constables of Holywell Street in the players’ quarter of Shoreditch, and is arraigned for disorderly conduct. He is bound over to keep the peace on promise of payment of twenty pounds (cf. Kuriyama 2002: 211). In the middle of the autumn of the same year, quarrels go on as he is involved in a street fight with the tailor William Corkine whom he apparently attacks with “staff and dagger” (quoted from 213) in his hometown. His father John pays 4d 4d [sic] to get him out of jail and Marlowe and Corkine sue each other in the following weeks, but the case is dropped eventually (cf. 211–214). After this incident, there is no more known evidence of Christopher Marlowe in Canterbury.

The events which finally lead to Marlowe’s death begin on 5 May 1593: On this day, a message – later to be known under the name Dutch Church Libel – is discovered on the wall of the Dutch Churchyard on London’s Broad Street. It is a threat against strangers, containing allusions to *The Jew of Malta* and *The Massacre at Paris* and signed ‘Tamburlaine’. Scholars now agree that it is not Marlowe’s work; however, he is drawn into the controversy. Almost one week later the Privy Council orders that

for the discoverie of the author and publisher thereof hir Maiesties pleasure is that some extraordinarie paines and care be taken by you commissioners appointed by the Lord Mayor for th’ examining such persons as maie be in this case anie way suspected. This shalbe therefore to require and aauthorize you to make search and apprehend euerie person so to be suspected, and for that purpoze to enter into al houses and places where anie such maie be remayning. And, uppon their apprehencion, to make like search in anie the chambers, studies, chestes, or other like places for al manner of writings or papers that may geue you light for discoverie of the libellers. And after you shall haue examined the persons, if you shal finde them dulle to be suspected, and they shal refuze to confesse the truth, you shal by authoritie hereof put them to the Torture in Bridewel, and by the extremitie thereof, to be used at such times as often as you shal think fit, draw them to discover their knowledge concerning the said libells. (quoted from Wraight and Stern 1965: 235)

Thomas Kyd is arrested, because “[v]ile hereticall conceiptes denyinge the deity of Jhesus Christ our Saviour” are found in his lodgings “[w]hich he affirmeth that he had ffrom Marlowe” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 218). The document was probably copied from John Proctour’s *The Fal of the Late Arrian* (1549) which attacked anti-trinitarianism. Kyd accuses Marlowe of being the owner of the papers, having shared a chamber with him two years ago. As a result, the Privy Council sends for Master Henry Maunder, messenger of Her Majesty’s, Chamber, on 18 May 1593

to repaire to the house of Mr. Tho. Walsingham in Kent, or to anie other place where he shall understand xpofer Marlow to be remaying, and by vertue hereof to apprehend and bring him to the court in his companie. And in case of need to require ayd. (quoted from 219)

Two days later, Marlowe is arrested at Scadbury. He is given bail by the Privy Council “and is commanded to give his daily attendance on their lordships, untill he shalbe lycensed to the contrary.” (quoted from *ibid.*) Christopher Marlowe dies at the house of the widow Eleanor Bull in Deptford on Wednesday, 30 May 1593. What is known for sure, is that he spent the day in the company of “Ingram Frysar, late of London, gentleman”, “Nicholas Skeres, late of London, gentleman, and Robert Poley of London aforesaid, gentleman” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 224) as the document recording the inquest reads. There is a quarrel and in the course of it, Marlowe is fatally stabbed by Ingram Frizer. The report of the Queen’s Coroner William Danby describes the events of the day in detail and the fight between the two men in the following way:

[A]fter dinner the aforesaid Ingram and the said Christopher Morley were in speech and publicly exchanged divers malicious words because they could not concur nor agree on the payment of the sum of pence, that is to say, le recknynge, there; and the aforesaid Christopher Morley then lying on a bed in the room where they dined and moved by ire towards the aforesaid Ingram Frysar because of the aforesaid words that had passed between them, and the aforesaid Ingram then and there sitting in the aforesaid room with his back towards the bed where the aforesaid Christopher Morley then lay, near the bed, that is sitting nere the bed and with the front part of his body towards the table and the aforesaid Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley sitting on either side of the same Ingram so that the same Ingram Frysar could in no way flee, thus it befell that the aforesaid Christopher Morley suddenly and of malice aforethought towards the aforesaid Ingram then and there maliciously unsheathed the dagger of the aforesaid Ingram which was visible at his back and with the same aforesaid dagger then and there maliciously gave the aforesaid Ingram two wounds on his head of the length of two inches and of the depth of a quarter of an inch; whereupon the aforesaid Ingram, in fear of being slain and sitting on the aforesaid bench between the aforesaid Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, so that he was not able to withdraw in any way, in his own defense and to save his life then and there struggled with the aforesaid Christopher Morley to take back from him his aforesaid dagger, in which same affray the same Ingram could not withdraw further from the

aforesaid Christopher Morley. And thus it befell in that affray that the said Ingram, in defense of his life and with the aforesaid dagger of the value of 12 pence, gave the aforesaid Christopher then and there a mortal wound above his right eye of the depth of two inches and of the breadth of one inch, of which same mortal wound the aforesaid Christopher Morley then and there instantly died. (quoted from 225)

The body is examined and then buried in an unmarked grave at St. Nicholas' Churchyard in Deptford on 1 June 1593. The entry in the burial register of St. Nicholas, Deptford, reads: "Anno Domini 1593 Christopher Marlowe slaine by Francis Frezer; the ·1· of June" (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 226). In the nineteenth century, another mistake concerning the name of the murderer was made, as his last name was turned into 'Archer' (cf. *ibid.*; the Coroner's Report and with it the identity of Marlowe's true murderer was rediscovered by Leslie Hotson in 1925). At the end of the month, the Queen pardons Ingram Frizer on grounds of self-defence.

Well after his death, Christopher Marlowe's plays – most of them were performed in Philip Henslowe's *The Rose*, which had been built in 1587 – were frequently put on stage. In her essay "Marlowe Reruns: Repertorial Commerce and Marlowe's Plays in Revival", Roslyn L. Knutson consults Henslowe's *Diary* and the five Marlowe plays mentioned in there, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Massacre at Paris*, the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great*, and *Doctor Faustus*: "[W]ith the exception of a month or two here and there, one Marlowe play or another was on stage at the Rose for five straight years, from February 1592 through January 1597" (2002: 28). His overreaching characters and his bold topics, written in new blank verse-style, which Ben Jonson later called "Marlowe's mighty line" in his elegy on Shakespeare printed in the *First Folio* (1623), continued to attract the audiences. Marlowe's ongoing presence can also be seen in the influence his plays had on other dramatists' work, for example the "sons of Tamburlaine" (Hunter 1997: 49), such as George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* (1594) and Robert Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1599). Among them was also William Shakespeare whose *The Merchant of Venice* was obviously inspired by *The Jew of Malta* and his *Richard II* by *Edward II*.¹¹ However, most of Marlowe's works

¹¹ For literature on Marlowe's ongoing influence on the Elizabethan stage, see, for example: Peter Berek, "Tamburlaine's Weak Sons: Imitation as Interpretation Before 1593". *Renaissance Drama* 13 (1982): 55–82; Tom Rutter, "Marlovian Echos in the Admiral's Men Repertory". *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27,1 (2009): 27–38; Tom Rutter, *Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men. Reading across Repertories on the London Stage, 1594–1600* (2017); Paul Menzer, "Shades of Marlowe". *Marlowe Studies: An Annual*, 1 (2011): 181–192.

were only published after 30 May 1593. Modern scholarship assigns seven surviving plays to him as well as translations of Ovid and Lucan, two poems, furthermore a Latin dedicatory epistle and an epitaph in the same language. The love-tragedy *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, written probably in 1585 or 1586, was first published in a quarto edition in 1594. The title page tells us that it had been co-written by Thomas Nashe and that it was performed by the boys' company the Children of the Chapel at Norwich and Ipswich in 1587. The two part-tragedy *Tamburlaine the Great* consolidated Marlowe's fame as a playwright in London. *The Conquests of Tamburlaine the Scythian Shepherd* was first performed by Lord Admiral's Men in 1587; *The Second Part of the Bloody Conquests of Mighty Tamburlaine* followed the coming year. In his diary, which he kept from 1592 until 1604 and infrequently until 1609, Philip Henslowe mentions a performance of "tamberlen" (Foakes and Rickert 1961: 23) for the first time on 28 August 1594 and "the 2 pte of tamberlen" (26) was put again on stage in the same year on 19 December.¹² The tragedy was published in an anonymous octavo edition in 1590 and its ongoing popularity is testified by further quarto editions (1592, 1605), a reprint in 1597 and it was as well staged at Alleyn's and Henslowe's *Fortune* until it closed in 1642. The most successful play of Marlowe's oeuvre during and after his lifetime and until the beginning of the Civil War in 1642 was *The Jew of Malta* (1590?). On 26 February 1592, Henslowe recorded a performance of "the Jewe of malltuse" (Foakes and Rickert 1961: 16) by Lord Strange's Men and his lists of performances show thirty-six more until 21 June 1596. In February 1593, the *Jew* was the last play that could be seen on stage before the closing of the playhouses due to the plague, therefore this was possibly the last of Marlowe's plays performed during his lifetime (cf. 20).¹³ It reappeared on stage in 1601; in the 1630s, it was staged by Queen Henrietta's Men at the Palace of Whitehall and at *The Cockpit Theatre*. The earliest surviving edition is a quarto of 1633 dedicated to Thomas Hammon, a barrister at Gray's Inn, to which Thomas Heywood added the prologue and epilogue. Although, in the prologue spoken at

¹² Christopher Marlowe is mentioned by name only one time in the *Diary*, in a forged entry which says that a "Thomas dickers" was paid "for adcyons to ffostus twentie shellings and five / shellinges more for a prolog to *Marloes tembelan*" (Foakes and Rickert 1961: 44; italics mine) on 20 December 1597. This entry also testifies for the ongoing popularity of Marlowe's plays, as further money was spent on them.

¹³ The takings were 35s which also speak for the *Jew*'s success as the average takings ranged from about 20 to 30s (Foakes and Rickert 1961: xxx).

Court, Heywood writes of a play “writ many years ago, / And in that age thought second unto none” (*The Jew of Malta*, The Prologue Spoken at Court, 3f), the *Jew* remained popular with Caroline audiences.¹⁴ They were addressed in the prologue for the *Cockpit* in which Heywood praised Marlowe and Edward Alleyn: “We know not how our play may pass this stage, / But by the best of poets in that age / The *Malta Jew* had being, and was made, / And he then by the best of actors played.” (*The Jew of Malta*, The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cock-Pit, 1–4)

Alleyn was also seen in the title role of *Doctor Faustus* (1588/1589 or 1591/1592), another of Marlowe’s very successful plays, which was first noted in Henslowe’s diary as “doctor ffostus” on 30 September 1594 (Foakes and Rickert 1961: 24) and performed in London’s theatres until after the Reformation period. With the A- and the B-texts two early versions survived, but scholars agree that none of them represents the original play. The former was entered in the Stationers’ Register in 1601 and first printed in a black-letter quarto in 1604; subsequent editions date from 1609 and 1611. The B-text has survived in a quarto published in 1616, thirty-six lines from the A-text are missing and 676 lines were added; it was reprinted six times between 1619 and 1663. *Edward II* (1592) was licensed for publication about a month after Marlowe’s death, on 6 July 1593, and first published in a quarto-size octavo in 1594. Later quartos of 1598, 1612 and 1622 speak for its ongoing popularity. While the play was first performed by Pembroke’s Men, the 1622 edition refers on its title-page to a performance by Queen Anne’s Men at the *Red Bull Theatre*.

It is also not sure when Marlowe composed *The Massacre at Paris*. “[T]hetragedy of the gvyes” (Foakes and Rickert 1961: 20), performed by Lord Strange’s Men on 30 January 1593 and noted in Henslowe’s diary as „ne“ (ibid.) – new, probably refers to it. The play was entered in the Stationers’ Register on 17 May 1594; apparently no ensuing edition was published. An undated octavo edition, probably from 1602, is the only early publication and just a single manuscript page survived, its authenticity is controversial.¹⁵

¹⁴ Lucy Munro focuses on *The Jew of Malta* as one of the best examples for representing Christopher Marlowe in the Caroline theatre in her essay in Bartels’ and Smith’s *Christopher Marlowe in Context* (2013).

¹⁵ Today, it can be found in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.: a speech of the Guise in the opening of scene 19 which is two and a half times as long as that given in the octavo. It was ‘discovered’ in 1825 by the notorious forger John Payne Collier.

Christopher Marlowe also remained popular as a non-dramatic author. He might have begun his literary career as a student in Cambridge with the translation of classical authors. Ovid's *Amores*, a collection of poems, was the first translation from Latin into any modern language. The Huntington library owns a copy published "At Middleburgh" as *All Ovid's Elegies: 3 Bookes written by 'C.M.'* Lucan's epic *Pharsalia* was the first translation into English; it was entered in the Stationers' Register on 28 September 1593 and published as *Lucan's First Booke Translated Line for Line, by Chr. Marlow* in 1600 with a dedication by Thomas Thorpe to the stationer Edward Blount. Thorpe calls Marlowe "a pure elemental wit" and writes that his "ghost or genius is to be seen walk the churchyard in (at the least) three or four sheets" (quoted from Orgel 2007: 181). He turns Marlowe's shroud into the sheets of paper of his works which after his death remained popular with the booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard and therefore keep their author alive, who "becomes a textual specter, wrapped in manuscript, resurrected through the medium of print" (Menzer 2011: 181). Edward Blount himself wrote a dedication for one of Marlowe's works, the erotic narrative poem *Hero and Leander* (1592/1593?) to Sir Thomas Walsingham, on whose estate in Scadbury, Kent, Marlowe probably lived at the time he composed the poem.¹⁶ On 28 September 1593, *Hero and Leander* was

¹⁶ When Thomas Watson died in 1592 and was buried on 26 September, Marlowe fulfilled one of his friend's last wishes and saw his Latin work *Amyntae Gaudia* through the press. Watson wanted it to be dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney's sister, Lady Mary, Countess of Pembroke. Since none of Marlowe's works was published during his lifetime and plays were usually not dedicated to a patron, it is the only known dedication Marlowe wrote – and he did not forget to direct the attention of the reader to himself at the end: So shall I, whose slender wealth is but the seashore myrtle of Venus, and Daphne's evergreen laurel, on the foremost page of every poem invoke thee as Mistress of the Muses to my aid: to sum up all, thy virtue, which shall overcome virtue herself, shall likewise overcome even eternity. / Most desirous to do thee honour / C.M. (quoted from Wraight and Stern 1965: 128). The full dedication, translated into English, reads as follows: "To the Most Illustrious Noble Lady, adorned with all gifts both of mind and body, Mary Countess of Pembroke. Delia born of a laurel-crowned race, true sister of Sidney the bard of Apollo; fostering parent of letters, to whose immaculate embrace virtue, outraged by the assault of barbarism and ignorance, flieth for refuge, as once Philomela from the Thracian tyrant; Muse of the Poets of our time, and of all most happily burgeoning wits; descendant of the gods, who impartest now to my rude pen breathings of a lofty rage, whereby my poor self hath, methinks, power to surpass what my unripe talent is wont to bring forth: Deign to be patron to this posthumous Amyntas, as to thine adoptive son: the rather that his dying father had most humbly bequeathed to thee his keeping. And though thy glorious name is spread abroad not only among us but even among foreign nations, too far ever to be destroyed by the rusty antiquity of Time, or added to by the praise of mortals (for how can anything be greater than what is infinite?), yet, crowned as thou art by the songs of many as by starry diadem Ariadne, scorn not this pure priest of Phoebus bestowing another star upon thy crown: but with that sincerity of mind which Jove the father of men and of gods hath linked as hereditary to thy noble family, receive and watch over him. So shall I, whose slender wealth is but the seashore myrtle of Venus, and Daphne's evergreen laurel, on the foremost

entered in the Stationers' Register and published in 1598 as *Hero and Leander: Begun by Christopher Marloe; and finished by George Chapman*, with the said dedication, signed 'E.B.'. Henry Petowe's continuation *The Second Part of Hero and Leander. Conteyning their further Fortunes* was also printed in 1598. While Chapman's version, dividing Marlowe's 818 lines into two sestiams and adding four more, focuses on morality, Petowe turned it into a romance. Furthermore, a parody of *Hero and Leander* can be found in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). The poem was reprinted in 1629 and 1637.¹⁷ The poem *The Passionate Shepherd* must have been circulating around 1589, because of Robert Greene's reference in his *Menaphon* (1589). The earliest extant printed version of the first three stanzas appeared anonymously and untitled in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), a collection of poems. One year later, in an edition of *England's Helicon*, an anthology of pastoral poems, the poem was printed as a six-stanza-version under the title *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, composed by Christopher Marlowe. The *Helicon* also included Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd*. In his *Second Book of Ayres* (1612), William Corkine published a musical setting of the poem and it was ascribed to Marlowe in Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653).

Marlowe lived on in his writings as well as in the memory of his contemporaries and men of the following decades (and later centuries) who can roughly be divided into two different fractions; on the one hand, he was remembered as a playwright and poet, on the other hand, as a notorious

page of every poem invoke thee as Mistress of the Muses to my aid: to sum up all, thy virtue, which shall overcome virtue herself, shall likewise overcome even eternity. / Most desirous to do thee honour / C.M." (quoted from *ibid.*)

¹⁷ In a 1629 edition of *Hero and Leander*, the epitaph for Sir Roger Manwood, the only known epitaph Christopher Marlowe wrote was found on the back of the title-page. Manwood was a Kentish nobleman and Lord Chief Baron of the Queen's Exchequer who lived just outside the West Gate of Canterbury at Hackington. Marlowe probably was the philanthropist's protégé and got his scholarship to the King's School on his behalf. In 1590, after his arrest following the Hog Lane Fight, Marlowe faced Manwood as one of his judges. Maybe, the epitaph could be seen as Marlowe's reciprocation towards his benefactor. The epitaph's English translation reads as follows: "Upon the death of a most honoured man, Roger Manwood, Knight, Lord Chief Baron of the Queen's Exchequer. The terror of the night prowler, the stern scourge of the profligate, / Jove's Hercules and a destroyer of the obdurate brigand, / Is buried within the funeral urn. Rejoice ye sons of iniquity! / Weep, O Innocent One, with hair dishevelled on your sorrowful shoulder! / The light of the courts, the glory of the respected law is dead: / Alas, much virtue departed with him toward the worn-out shores / Of the nether world. / O envy, in the face of so much fortitude, / Spare this man; be not too harsh upon his remains, / On him who struck awe into the countenance of so many thousands / Of mortals: thus, although the bloodless messenger of Death shall wound you, / May your bones rest contentedly in peace, and may / The fame of your statue transcend the monuments of the tomb!" (quoted from Wraight and Stern 1965: 127)

Elizabethan character. His friends and admirers considered him to stand in the tradition of the great ancient poets and to even surpass them in his talent and genius. On 23 June 1593, George Peele was paid three pounds by the Earl of Northumberland for the poem *The Honour of the Garter*. In the prologue, Peele praises Marlowe, among others:

And after thee / Why hie they not, unhappy in thine end, / Marley, *the Muses' darling* for thy verse; / Fitt to write passions for the soules below, / If any wretched soules in passion speake? (quoted from MacLure 1979: 39; italics mine)

His friend Thomas Nashe seems to have written a now lost elegy (cf. Wells 2006: 102) and in his *Lenten Stuff* (1599) he compared Marlowe to Musaeus, the Greek poet of the fifth and sixth century, who also composed a poem on the story of Hero and Leander. For Nashe, both were not only inspired by the muses, he considered them to be gods themselves. However, Marlowe's work excelled that of the ancient poet. *Lenten Stuff* contains a parody of *Hero and Leander* with the question: "Let me see, hath anybody in Yarmouth heard of Leander and Hero, of whom divine Musaeus sung, and *a diviner muse than him, Kit Marlowe?*" (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 157; italics mine) Chapman, who finished *Hero and Leander*, dedicated his part to Marlowe's "deathless memory" (quoted from Wells 2006: 102), and Petowe, the other writer who worked on the poem, addressed him as "Marlowe, late Marlowe, now framed all divine" and wrote "Marlowe, still-admired Marlowe's gone / To live with Beauty in Elysium" (quoted from *ibid.*). Michael Drayton also picked up an image from the world of the Ancient Greeks and the muse-kissed poet when he writes in *Of Poets and Poetry* (1627): "Neat Marlowe, *bathed in the Thespian Springs*" (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 174; italics mine). Although there is no surviving comment by William Shakespeare on Christopher Marlowe, he is the only contemporary writer Shakespeare refers to in his plays.¹⁸ In the comedy *As You Like It*, for example, some of Touchstone's lines can be seen as references to Marlowe's death:

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.* (*As You Like It* 3.3.7–9; italics mine)

¹⁸ For a discussion about Marlowe and his oeuvre paving the way for Shakespeare's and other writers' work, see chapter 2.1.

The last words also let the reader think of Barabas' famous lines in *The Jew of Malta*: "Infinite riches in a little room" (*The Jew of Malta* 1.1.37). Two scenes later in *As You Like It*, Marlowe could again be referred to, when Phoebe quotes from his *Hero and Leander*: "Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might. / 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?'" (*As You Like It* 3.5.80f; italics mine)

These lines also refer to *The Passionate Shepherd* – another hint that Marlowe could be meant by the "Dead Shepherd".¹⁹ These references to his death and his work could be read as Shakespeare's tribute to his dead fellow poet and playwright. They point to the probability that the circumstances of Marlowe's death were more or less popular knowledge and that some members of the audience might have recognized him in those verses.

Robert Greene's position towards his rival playwright was ambivalent (cf. Rutter 2012: 122): On the one hand, he acknowledged Marlowe's extraordinary talent, his engaging and compelling personality that even brought Greene himself to blaspheming – at least he tells us so. In *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592) he writes:

Wonder not, for with thee I will first begin, thou *famous gracer of tragedians*, that Greene, who hath said with thee (like the fool in his heart) there is no God, should now give glory unto His greatness, for penetrating is his power. ... Why should thy excellent wit, His gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the Giver? Is it pestilent Machiavellian policy that thou hast studied? O peevish folly! What are his rules but mere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankind. *For if Sic volo, sic iubeo* ["As I will, so I command"] hold in those that are able to command: and if it be lawful *Fas et nefas* ["Right and wrong"] to do anything that is beneficial, only tyrants should possess the earth. ... Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremity: *for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.*" (quoted from Cole 1995: 10; italics mine, except from Latin words)

On the other hand, Greene despised the atheist on whom God has seemingly wasted the gift of writing, because he would not acknowledge that his talent was sent from heaven. He did not live long enough to witness how prophetic his last sentence turned out to be, as he died in the autumn of 1592. In *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588), Greene writes that Marlowe is "daring God out of heauen with that *Atheist Tamburlan*, or blaspheming with the mad priest of the sonne" (quoted from McLure 1979: 29; italics mine) and adds him to the "*mad and scoffing poets*" (quoted from 30; italics mine). For Robert Greene, Marlowe stood in a line

¹⁹ In his short contribution in *Notes and Queries*, Azar Hussain points to two more references to Marlowe's death in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and *I Henry IV*.

with atheist figures like the “mad priest of the sonne” Giordano Bruno, who was burnt as a heretic, as well as Niccolò Machiavelli, and used his god-given talent of writing only to create more atheists.

Some praised Marlowe’s work, others despised his character, and together they laid the foundation for the ‘construct’ of the man Christopher Marlowe was to become in the centuries after his death. In his article “Shakespeare and Marlowe. Censorship and Construction” for *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Richard Dutton’s focus lies on contemporary views on Marlowe. He writes that they “are radically unreliable, ‘constructions’ liable to deconstruction. Indeed, in so far as they continue (however subtly) to inform our current reading of Marlowe’s works, they require deconstruction.” (1993: 5f) Dutton considers contemporary judgments to be constructions which need to be deconstructed and he stresses the necessity to differentiate between the man and his work. Henry Chettle responded to Greene’s *A Groatworth of Wit* in “To the Gentlemen Readers” from *Kind-Harts Dreame*, published in the same year: “With neither of them that take offence [the playmakers Marlowe and Shakespeare who were offended in Greene’s *A Groatworth of Wit*] was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I neuer be” (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 126). With these last words, Chettle could mean Marlowe. Soon after his death, the reason for it became a topic for literary comment. It was above all ascribed to his homosexuality and his religious views and often thought to be God’s just punishment. Parallels between his and his dramatic characters’ fates were drawn. The true circumstances of Marlowe’s death were not known publicly, therefore speculations circulated. Gabriel Harvey seems to have thought that Marlowe died of the plague, as his *A New Letter of Notable Contents*, published in October 1593, shows (cf. MacLure 1979: 40). In his *Theatre of God’s Judgements* (1597), Thomas Beard gives a more detailed account, closer to the truth, at least the truth we claim to know today:

It so fell out that in London streets, as he purposed to stab one whom he ought a grudge unto with his dagger, the other party perceiving, so avoided the stroke that withal catching hold of his wrist, he stabbed his own dagger into his own head, in such sort that notwithstanding all the means of surgery that could be wrought, he shortly died thereof. (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 152f)²⁰

²⁰ According to Hopkins, “London streets” could be a mistranscription as Deptford did have a London Street (cf. 2004: 152f). Kuriyama points to the fact that Beard’s “was the primary source

One year later, Francis Meres claimed to know Marlowe's murderer as he writes in *Wit's Treasury*:

As the poet Lycophron was shot to death by a certain rival of his, so *Christopher Marlowe was stabbed to death by a bawdy serving-man, a rival of his in his lewd love.* (quoted from page 155; italics mine)

In the same year, Meres praised his work in *Palladis Tamia*:

The English tongue is mightily enriched and gorgeously inuested in rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments by Sir Philip Sydney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Chapman. (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 156)

These contradictory opinions by some are perfectly put together in the line "Wit lent from heauen, but vices sent from hell" (quoted from *ibid.*) by the anonymous author of *The Return from Parnassus* (1601). Whereas the Puritan William Vaughan obviously chose his side: For him, Marlowe's death followed directly as God's just punishment for the playwright's blasphemous writing. In *The Golden Groue* (1600), Vaughan gives a more detailed account of the circumstances and he was the first to write down the correct place and even the first name of the murderer:

Not inferior to these was one Christopher Marlow, by profession a playmaker, who, as it is reported, about 7 years ago wrote a book against the Trinity. But see the effects of God's justice: so it happened, that at Deptford, a little village about three miles distant from London, as he meant to stab with his poignard one named Ingram, that had invited him thither to a feast, and was then playing at tables, he quickly perceiving it, so avoided the thrust, that withall drawing out his own dagger for his defence, he stabbed this Marlowe into the eye, in such sort that his brains coming out at the dagger's point, he shortly after died. *Thus did God, the true executioner of divine justice, work the end of impious atheists.* (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 158; italics mine)

Edmunde Rudierde picks up the "playmaker" for his account in *The Thunderbolt of Gods Wrath against Hard-Hearted and stiffe-necked sinners* (1618):

We read of one *Marlin*, a *Cambridge* Scholler, who was a Poet, and a filthy Play-Maker, this wretch accounted that meeke seruant of God *Moses* to be but a Coniurer, and our sweete Sauour but a seducer and a decieuer of the people." (quoted from Friedenreich 1988: ix)

Some decades later, John Milton's nephew Edward Phillips offers a more positive view, as he calls him "a kind of *second Shakespear*" (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 165) in his *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675); however, he then judges Marlowe –

for information for decades (2015: 327). Baines's and Kyd's accusations were no public documents.

whom he believes to have been a former actor who died early and violently – to be “inferior both in Fame and Merit” (ibid.). Near the end of the century, Oxford historian Anthony à Wood based his *Athenea Oxonienses* (1691) on these speculations, above all Beard’s *Theatre*. Although Wood also believed Marlowe to have been an actor, he was right about identifying him as the author of *Tamburlaine*, a Cambridge student and Shakespeare’s contemporary (cf. Hopkins 2005: 179).

While noting some gossip he had heard from his neighbour Simon Aldrich in his private commonplace book, Canterbury native Henry Oxinden also put down some praise for Marlowe. On 10 February 1641 he writes:

Marlo who wrot Hero & Leander was an Atheist: & had writ a booke against the Scripture; how that it was al one man’s making, & would haue printed it but could not be suffered. He was the son of a shoemaker in Cant. *He said hee was an excellent scoller & made excellent verses in Lattin* & died aged about 30; he was stabd in the head with a dagger & dyed swearing. (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 176; italics mine)

Two days later, Oxinden notes some sentences about Marlowe’s dangerous influence:

Mr Ald. sayd that mr Fineux of Douer was an Atheist & that hee would go out at midnight into a wood, & fall down uppon [sic] his knees & pray heartily that that Deuil would come, that he might see him (for hee did not beleiue that there was a Deuil) Mr Ald: sayd that hee was a verie good scholler, but would never haue aboute one booke at a time, & when he was perfect in it, hee would sell it away & buy another: he learnd all *Marlo* by heart & diuers other bookes: *Marlo* made him an *Atheist*. This Fineaux was faine to make a speech uppon [sic] *The foole hath said in his heart there is no God*, to get his degree. Fineaux would say as Galen sayd that *man* [sic] was of more excellent composition then a beast, & thereby could speake; but affirmed that his soule dyed with his body, & as we remember nothing before wee were borne, so we shall remember nothing after wee are dead. (quoted from ibid.)²¹

Gossip about Marlowe’s death and his atheism remained popular until well into the eighteenth century. William Rufus Chetwode writes in *British Theatre* (1752) that he was stabbed to death in 1592 by a man who disturbed Marlowe in the bedchamber of a loose woman with whom he was having an affair (cf. Hopkins 2005: 180). One year later, the actor and writer Colley Cibber spoke of him as blaspheming the Trinity (cf. ibid.).

²¹ Mr. Fineux was identified as either Thomas Fineux, who matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in the Easter Term of 1587, the year Marlowe got his M.A., or his younger brother John who, according to Constance Brown Kuriyama, was a contemporary of Simon Aldrich (cf. 176f).

Today, the most famous documents accusing Christopher Marlowe of atheism are those by Richard Baines and Thomas Kyd, however, they were not published during the Elizabethan period. On 26 May or 2 June 1593, the Privy Council received Baines' letter "A note contayninge the opinon of one Christofer Marlye concernynge his damnable opinion and Judgment of Relygion and scorne of Gods worde. who since Whitsundy dyed a soden & vyolent deathe." (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 227). A revised copy is headed: "A note delived on Whitsun eve last of the most horrible blasphemes and damnable opinions uttered by Xpofer Marly who wthin iii dyes after came to a soden & fearfull end of his life." (quoted from *ibid.*) The document, which is now known as the Baines Note, is a detailed account of Marlowe's alleged atheism and contributed to shaping his reputation after its publication at the end of the eighteenth century. Therefore, it is worthwhile to have a look at the whole document:

That the Indians and many Authors of Antiquitei <have> have assuredly written of above 16 thowsande yeeres agone, wher Adam is proved to have lyved within 6 thowsande yeeres.

<He affirmeth> That Moyses was but a Juggler and that one Heriotes can do more then hee.

That Moyses made the Jewes to travell fortie yeeres in the wildernes (which jorny might have ben don in lesse then one year) er they came to the promised lande, to the intente that those whoe wer privei to most of his subtileteis myght perish, and so an everlasting supersticion remayne in the harts of the people.

That the firste beginnyng of Religion was only to keep men in awe.

That it was an easye matter for Moyses beinge brought up in all the artes of the Egiptians, to abuse the Jewes beinge a rude and grosse people.

That Christ was a Bastard and his mother dishonest.

That he was the sone of a carpenter and that yf the Jewes among whome he was borne did crucifye him, thei best knew him and whence he came.

That Christ deserved better to dye then Barrabas, and that the lewes made a good choyce, though Barrabas were both a theife and a murtherer.

That if ther be any God or good Religion, then it is in the Papists because the service of God is performed with more ceremonyes, as elevation of the masse, organs, singinge men <shaven crownes>, &c.

That all protestantes ar hipocriticall asses.

That, if he were put to write a new religion, he wolde undertake both a more excellent, and more admirable methode and that all the new testament is filthily written.

That the woman of Samaria were whores and that Christ knew them dishonestlye.

That St John the Evangelist was bedfellow to Christe, that he leaned alwayes in his bosom, that he used him as the synners of Sodoma.

<That all thei that love not tobacco and boyes ar fooles.>

That all the Appostles were fishermen and base fellowes, nether of witt nor worth, that Pawle only had witt, that he was a tимерous fellow in biddinge men to be subject to magistrates against his conscience.

<That he had as good right to coyne as the Queen of England, and that he was acquainted with one Poole a prisoner in Newgate whoe hath great skill in mixture of mettalls, and havinge learned some things of him he ment through help of a connynge stampe maker to coyne french crownes, pystolettes and englishe shillinges.>

That if Christ had instituted the Sacraments with more ceremony all reverence, it wold have been had in more admiration, that it wolde have been much better beinge administered in a Tobacco pype.
 That the Angell Gabriell was bawde to the holy Ghoste because he brought the salutation to Marie.
 That one Richard Cholmelei hath confessed that he was perswaded by Marloes reason to become an Atheiste.
 <Theis things with many other shall by good and honest men be proved to be his opinions and comen speeches, and that this Marloe doth not only holde them himself, but almost in every company he cometh, perswadeth men to Atheisme, willinge them not to be afrayed of bugbeares and hobgoblins, and utterly scorning both God and his ministers as I Richard Borne will Justify both by my othe and the testimony of many honest men, and almost all men with whome he hath conversed any tyme will testefy the same. And as I thinke all men in christianitei ought to endeavor that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped.
 he sayeth moreover that he hath coated a number of contrarieties out of the scriptures, which he hath geeven to some great men whoe in convenient tyme shalbe named. When theis things shalbe called in question, the witnesses shalbe produced.
 Richard Baines> (quoted from 227f; the lines in brackets were deleted)

Two of Thomas Kyd's letters are still extant which he wrote – apparently in fear – after he was released from prison, perhaps in June 1593. The addressee was Sir John Puckering, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. The letters are not dated and only the first is signed “Th. Kydde”. Kyd wrote this rather long letter “to cleeremy self of being thought an *Atheist*, which some will sweare he [Marlowe] was” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 229). Instead, he accused Marlowe, whom he describes as “irreligious” and “intemperate & of a cruel hart” (quoted from *ibid.*):

When I was first suspected for that Libell that concern'd the state, amongst those waste and idle papers (which I carde not for) & which unaskt I did deliver up, were founde some fragmentes of a disputation toching that opinion, affirmed by Marlowe to be his, and shuffled with some of myne (unknown to me) by some occasion of our wrytinge in one chamber twoe yeares synce. (quoted from *ibid.*)

In his second letter, Kyd speaks of “Marlowes monstrous opinions” (quoted from 231) and his accusations interestingly resemble Baines', although he could not have known the pamphlet:

1 He wold report St John to be our Savior Christes *Alexis* I cover it with reverence and trembling that is that Christ did love him with an extraordinary love/
 2 That for me towryte a poem of St *Paules* conversion as I was determined he said wold be as if I shold go wryte a book of fast & loose, esteming *Paul* a Jugler.
 3 That the prodigall childes portion was but fower nobles, he held his purse so neere the bottom in all pictures and that it either was a jest or els fower nobles then was thought a great patrimony not thinking it a parable.
 4 That things esteemed to be donn by devine power might have aswell been don by observation of men all which he wold so sodenlie take slight occasion to slyp out as I & many others in regard of his other rashnes in attempting soden pryvie injuries to men did overslypp though often reprehend him for it & for which god is my witnes aswell by my lords comaundment as in hatred of his life & thoughts I left & did refraine his companie/
 He wold perswade with men of qualitie to goe unto the K[ing] of *Scotts* whether I heare

Royden is gon and where if he had livd he told me when I sawe him last he meant to be.
(quoted from *ibid.*)

Bits and pieces about Christopher Marlowe and his work continued to be published throughout the centuries after his death; however, he appears to have been mostly forgotten by the literary world. As regards to the reasons, one can only speculate. Millar MacLure, for example, lists some of his theories which were also taken up and analysed in more detail by other critics: He points to the re-establishment of the London theatres under different managerial arrangements and for different audiences, brings to mind theatrical traditions, which have changed partly and the influence of Puritan calumnies, and mentions the scarcity of Marlowe's texts on the one hand and the pre-dominant figure of William Shakespeare and his oeuvre on the other hand (cf. 1979: 8). The two essays by John T. Shawcross and Lois Potter in the collection "*A Poet and Filthy Play Maker*". *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (1988), for example, also focus on Marlowe's afterlife and decline. For Shawcross, "the decline which for Marlowe had set in before the closing of the theaters in 1642 is a sign of the shift in the world of literature" (1988: 63) and for "a dominance of comedic and indeed farcical works" (*ibid.*). In his opinion, the high estimation of the world of the Elizabethan theatre had declined after 1660 (cf. 70). Lois Potter points to the ongoing existence of Marlowe's protagonists, however, cut off, from their original dramatic environment and author (cf. 1988: 73–82). The non-availability of Marlowe's works surely is an important factor: Ben Jonson himself saw a collection of his plays through the press in 1616, William Shakespeare's plays were published in 1623, and Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's plays in 1647. Consequently, they "became the best known and most highly regarded of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights after the restoration of Charles II" (Kuriyama 2002: 163), while Marlowe drifted into oblivion. In 1681, Charles Saunders's play *Tamerlane the Great* was staged and censured as a transcription of an old play. As a reaction, the author claimed never to have heard of such a play by a playwright called Christopher Marlowe or to have found anyone else who had either (cf. Hopkins 2005: 178). Marlowe was also neglected in the historian's Thomas Fuller's *Worthies of England* (1662) and for the scholar Samuel Johnson there could not have been any influential playwright before

William Shakespeare, as he states in his “Preface to his Edition of Shakespear’s Plays” (1765):

This however is certain, that [Shakespeare] is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed. (quoted from MacLure 1979: 10)

It was not until the turn of the nineteenth century – two hundred years after his death – that the name of Christopher Marlowe slowly recommenced to evoke more than just blurred thoughts about atheism, an untimely death and the occasional line of drama or poetry. The republishing of Marlowe’s texts already started in the middle of the eighteenth century, in 1744. Playwright and publisher Robert Dodsley’s influential *Old Plays*, a twelve-volume history of English drama, included *Edward II* and, in later editions, *The Jew of Malta* (1780), and *Faustus* (1816).²² In the 1810s and 1820s, several editors chose one or two of Marlowe’s plays for their dramatic anthologies²³ and his *Hero and Leander* could be found in three collections of poetry.²⁴ These publications also speak for a growing interest in the Renaissance in general. William Oxberry began publishing Marlowe’s plays in 1818, and in 1827, he brought them all together in *The Dramatic Works of Christopher Marlowe, with Prefatory Remarks, Notes, Critical and Explanatory*, by W. Oxberry, Comedian.²⁵ One year before Oxberry, George Robinson saw the first collected edition of Marlowe’s works – the so-called Pickering edition – through the press. In the course of the nineteenth century, three more followed, including *Works of Christopher Marlowe, with Notes and Some Account of His Life and Writings* (1850), with which Alexander Dyce set a new standard in Marlowe scholarship and which “secured Marlowe’s place as a major author in the canon of English literature” (Kuriyama 2002:

²² “[T]he series was a mammoth accomplishment”, writes Thomas Dabbs, “and it greatly influenced editors of old drama for nearly 150 years after its appearance.” (1991: 26).

²³ *Edward II*, *The Jew of Malta* were published in Sir Walter Scott’s three-volume *The Ancient British Drama* (1810), *Doctor Faustus* and *Edward II* in C.W. Dilke’s *Old English Plays* (1814), and *Dido, Queen of Carthage* in the second volume of Hurst and Robinson’s *The Old English Drama* (1825).

²⁴ Sir Egerton Brydges’s *Restituta* (1814–1816), C. Chapple’s *Old English Poets* (1820), and S.W. Singer’s *Select Early English Poets* (1821).

²⁵ Oxberry also published *Lust’s Dominion* which was then ascribed to Marlowe and which is now believed to be a collaborative work by Thomas Dekker and others.

169).²⁶ The translation of his works into German, French and Italian also speak for the Renaissance playwright's increasing popularity.²⁷

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for example, commented *Doctor Faustus* with the exclamation: "How greatly is it all planned!" (quoted from Hopkins 2006: 288) Thus, Marlowe's work became more and more accessible; scholars could study it closely and engage critically with it. There was even an opportunity to see one of the plays performed – the first time since the staging of *Doctor Faustus* in 1633 (cf. *ibid.*) – as on 24 April 1818 *The Jew of Malta* was put on stage with Edmund Kean (1787–1833) in the title role of Barabas. As the literacy rate increased in the course of the century and the republishing of his texts allowed a broader audience to get acquainted with Marlowe's works and to engage critically with them, they were no longer limited to a few antiquarians and bibliophiles with a predilection for Renaissance literature. Oxford professor Thomas Wharton was the first one to discuss Marlowe's poems in his *History of English Poetry* (1774–1781), wherein he judges him to have been "one of the most distinguished tragic poets of his age" (quoted from Dabbs 1991: 28). Discussion and praise by various scholars and literati can be found throughout the nineteenth century: Charles Lamb, for example, praises the death scene of *Edward II* in his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (1808). When he discusses Shakespeare's contemporaries in his lectures *Chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1820), William Hazlitt names Marlowe as one who "stands high, and almost first" among them (quoted from Dabbs 1991: 24). Other praise followed by Henry Hallam (*Introduction to the Literature of Europe*; 1837–1839), Leigh Hunt (*Imagination and Fancy*; 1844), and Hippolyte Taine (*History of English Literature*; 1865), among others. People also started to engage with Christopher Marlowe's alleged life, the most popular case was probably the publication of the Baines Note by antiquarian Joseph Ritson in his *Observations on Wharton* (1782). Ritson writes:

²⁶ Constance Brown Kuriyama stresses the fact that Dyce also wrote down the results of his biographical research: "Dyce was the first to publish records of the Marlowe family in St. George's parish in Canterbury, as well as evidence of Marlowe's attendance at the King's School." (2002: 169).

²⁷ The first German translation of *Doctor Faustus* was published in 1818, the first ones of *The Jew of Malta* and *Edward II* in 1831 and *Tamburlaine I* could be read in German for the first time in 1893. A French translation of *Doctor Faustus* was published in 1858 and in 1889 a French edition of Marlowe's collected works followed. *Doctor Faustus* was also the first of his plays translated into Italian (1898).

I have great respect for Marlow as an ingenious poet, but I have a much higher regard for truth and justice; and will therefore take the liberty to produce the strongest (if not the whole) proof that now remains of his diabolical tenets, and debauched morals.” (quoted from Dabbs 1991: 28)

While others seemed to have neglected the known information about the historical figure Christopher Marlowe in favour of his literary accomplishments, Ritson was convinced that a man’s work has always to be valued in context with his person (cf. 29) and with his publication he contributed the shaping of Marlowe’s image as a notorious poet and playwright. His works and what has been known about his life so far – the notions of individualism, ingenious authorship, rebellion, and passion – also seemed to have influenced Romantic authors such as Lord Byron and Mary Shelley, and also comparisons between him and Percy Shelley, who drowned in Italy in 1822, shortly before his 30th birthday, have been drawn (cf. Hopkins 2006: 288). The term ‘genius’ for Marlowe was probably used for the first time in an anonymous article published as part of a series of ‘The Early English Drama’ in *Retrospective Review, and Historical and Antiquarian Magazine* in 1821: “To the genius of Marlowe, the English Drama is considerably indebted” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 168). Scholars and literati wanted to share this genius. J.P. Collier poses a good example: He discusses Marlowe in his series of articles “On the Early English Dramatists”, published in the *Edinburgh Magazine* and in his *Poetical Decameron* (1820). However, he probably was not content with Marlowe’s heresy, so he seems to have forged some sources: In 1825, Collier announced his ‘discovery’ of a further leaf from the *Massacre at Paris*, now known as the ‘Collier leaf’, its origin at least doubtful. He also added some notes to Henslowe’s diary in order to prove that Marlowe wrote *Tamburlaine* (cf. Dabbs 1991: 62). Furthermore, he altered Marlowe’s biography and turned him into an actor (cf. 64f) and also wrote lyric under Marlowe’s name (cf. 67).

According to Thomas Dabbs, who wrote the monograph *Reforming Marlowe. The Nineteenth Century Canonization of a Renaissance Dramatist* (1991) about Marlowe’s rediscovery in the nineteenth century, alterations to his life seemed to have been common: “Often critics even made up their own scenarios for Marlowe’s life on no authority at all.” (1991: 21) And with regard to Collier, Dabbs concludes: “In effect, he manipulated Marlowe for his own purposes, an effort that was not distinct from actually re-creating the playwright in

his own image.” (68) Throughout the nineteenth century scholars and literati began to shape their image of the playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe. It was not only based on his texts, but also on the sparse and often unreliable sources of his life, the nineteenth century’s image of the Renaissance as well as its discursive and cultural foundations, and not at least the writer’s own creative minds. For Lisa Hopkins, both Marlowe’s “life and works were comprehensively rediscovered by the Romantics, for whom Marlowe becomes an avatar of poetic rebellion” (2006: 287). However, Dabbs’ central thesis is that the Elizabethan playwright and poet was fashioned into a Romantic only after this period: “Marlowe was originally invented by Victorian scholars, critics, and educators and then handed on to us” (1991: 14) I agree with Dabbs; of course, there could already have been a notion of kinship, of a ‘romantic’ Marlowe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the whole image of the ingenious Romantic author could only have been formed in retrospect, with the possibility of an overview of what has happened referring to Marlowe during this period. This notion of the ‘romantic genius’ persisted. Algernon Charles Swinburne, for example, called him “[s]on first-born of the morning, sovereign star” (quoted from Dabbs 1991: 119) and passionately praised his verses:

The radiance of his desire, the light and the flame of his aspiration, diffused and shed through all the forms of his thought and all the colours of his verse, gave them such shapeliness and strength of life as is given to the spirits of the greatest poets alone (quoted from *ibid.*)

Beginning two hundred years after his death, Elizabethan poet and playwright Christopher Marlowe rose from total eclipse to a position next to William Shakespeare, to whom he began being juxtaposed to, and the two were often placed in direct opposition to each other. The republication of his works made it possible for people to engage critically with him and the range of publications, editions, and translations also speaks for a demand for Marlowe. There surely was an awareness of the rediscovery of his putative life and his oeuvre. It either was condemned or it evoked the allure of something foreign, something from the past, yet something familiar which struck a chord. Hence the vivid discussion of Marlowe and his plays and poems, his influence, the will to imitation which even led to forgery.

In the nineteenth century, the first fictionalizations of his life – and his death – appeared, although they have been mostly forgotten by posterity. Zeigler’s 1895 novel was already mentioned in the introduction and it is probably still known today for the Marlowe-Shakespeare authorship controversy it initiated. Besides, there seemed to have been a need to negotiate Marlowe’s death, to create an individual version, and tragedy was probably deemed most appropriate: Richard H. Horne’s *The Death of Marlowe. A Tragedy in One Act* was published in *Monthly Repository* in August 1837, *Kit Marlowe’s Death*, by W.L. Courtney appeared in *The Universal Review* in March 1890, James Hosken wrote *Christopher Marlowe, a tragedy* in 1896, and a woman’s play, Josephine Peabody’s *Marlowe, a drama in five acts*, was published at the turn of the century, in 1901.²⁸ It was the will to shape the man and his works in the image of the time and the individual living in it and it was this time, the nineteenth century, which developed this range of possible ‘Marlowes’ and the impact of these ‘Marlowes’ proceeded until the twentieth century.

So the twentieth century inherited the ‘Marlowes’ of the preceding one and developed them further and into the twenty-first century. The works of the Elizabethan poet and playwright were available in print,²⁹ his plays were staged again regularly at theatres and were appealing to a (post-) modern audience, for example the tragic fate of the gay king Edward II or the anti-Semitism in *The Jew of Malta*.³⁰ Marlowe societies were founded in England and the United States in 1955 and 1974, respectively. The Marlowe Society of America started to organize international conferences every five years and on the occasion of the quatercentenary of its namesake’s death in 1993, it held its third International Conference at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Marlowe’s alma mater.³¹

²⁸ For more information, see, for example, Dabbs 1991: 156f and Lois Potter’s essay “Marlowe Onstage: The Deaths of the Author” in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe* (2000).

²⁹ The Cambridge edition of *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, edited by Fredson Bowers, was published in two volumes in 1973; in 1987, Roma Gill began to edit the Oxford edition in several volumes. Penguin Classics published a paperback edition of *The Complete Plays*, edited by Frank Romany and Robert Lindsey, in 2003 and *The Complete Poems and Translations*, edited by Stephen Orgel, four years later.

³⁰ Cf. David Bevington’s essay “Marlowe’s Plays in Performance: A Brief History” in *Christopher Marlowe at 450* (2015). Bevington speaks of Marlowe as “our contemporary” (2015: 275).

³¹ The British Marlowe Society’s policy speaks of “serious doubts about the record of Marlowe’s death at Deptford in 1593”. These doubts were also expressed, when a memorial window was unveiled in the *Poets’ Corner* of Westminster Abbey on 11 July 2002, with a question mark after the year 1593. <http://www.marlowe-society.org/about-the-society/our-policy> (accessed 26 September 2019).

Marlowe criticism also developed and intensified. Until the 1950s, the focus mainly lay on the dramas (cf. Cheney 2006: 10). Clifford Leech edited *Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays*, notably the first collection of essays focusing on Christopher Marlowe, in 1964, his 400th birthday (cf. Hopkins 2004: 193). Patrick Cheney identifies five main topics for Marlowe criticism from the 1960s until the 1990s:

(1) subjectivity (matters of the mind: inwardness, interiority, psychology); (2) sexuality (matters of the body: desire, gender, homoeroticism/heterosexuality); (3) politics (matters of the state: culture, ideology, sociology, family); (4) religion (matters of the Church: theology, belief, the Reformation); and (5) poetics (matters of art, or literariness: authorship, language/rhetoric, genre, influence/intertextuality, theatricality/film/performance) (2004: 9f)³²

Harry Levin's monograph *The Overreacher* (1952) about Marlowe's poetics and Stephen Greenblatt's portrait of the artist in "Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play" in his landmark New Historicism study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) were probably the two most influential titles (cf. Cheney 2004: 10). Levin's book will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.2. They also show a strong tendency in the academic community: the interlocking of the poet and playwright with his work for biographical interpretation. Just like early reports about his death and nineteenth century critics had done before. This notorious, rebellious, and ingenious man, inherited from the nineteenth century, attracted and fascinated scholars more and more: he was cast in the role of the fellow intellectual, the atheist, homosexual, and secret agent who worked against law and authority, the rebel who stretched boundaries and conquered new worlds; and the tragic victim, whose death will never be resolved (cf. Kuriyama 2002: 170). The number of important discoveries, which were made over the course of the last 100 years, surely contributed to this notion. Among them is the Coroner's Report, revealing

³² The following titles provide a helpful overview about and collection of Marlowe scholarship in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: Sara Munson Deats, Robert A. Logan, eds., *Christopher Marlowe at 450* (2015); the Marlowe edition of *Early Modern Studies: Christopher Marlowe: Identities, Traditions, Afterlives* (2014); Emily C. Bartels, Emma Smith, eds., *Christopher Marlowe in Context* (2013); Tom Rutter, ed., *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe* (2012); Sara Munson Deats, Robert A. Logan, eds., *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe: Fresh Cultural Contexts* (2008); Patrick Cheney, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe* (2004); Sara Munson Deats, Robert A. Logan, eds., *Marlowe's Empery: Expanding his Critical Contexts* (2002); J.A. Downie, J.T. Parnell, eds., *Constructing Christopher Marlowe* (2000); Paul Whitfield White, ed., *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality. New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (1998); Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, Constance Brown Kuriyama, eds., "A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker". *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (1988).

the true circumstances of his death and the name of his murderer Ingram Frizer, by Leslie Hotson in 1925, which was mentioned before. Furthermore historical sources relating to the Hog Lane Fight were rediscovered by Marc Eccles in 1934, as were the only known signature on Katherine Benchkin's will by Frank W. Tyler in 1939, the Corpus Christi portrait in 1953, the full text of the Dutch Church Libel in 1971, and the Flushing coining episode by R.B. Wernham in 1976 (cf. Hopkins 2004: 189–193).³³ This list of discoveries may be impressive, however, there is still much left unknown about Marlowe's life and death.

These question marks called for answers and their call was heard by several scholars who tried to answer them in a number of biographies. Indeed, over the decades, Christopher Marlowe biographies became more and more popular and developed into an important part of Marlowe criticism, as Bruce Brandt shows in his bibliographical studies. When he compares his bibliography from 2000–2009 with that covering the years from 1978–1989, he notices an ongoing trend: In *Christopher Marlowe in the Eighties: An Annotated Bibliography of Marlowe Criticism from 1978 through 1989* (1992), he states that in this twelve year span, 151 of the total of 542 studies – 28.9 percent – that were published were biographical accounts. Only *Doctor Faustus* apparently interested scholars more, with 165 studies in that period (cf. 2011: 194). According to Brandt, the trend to write biographical studies continued and even increased through the years 2000–2009: 146 out of 522 studies – 32 percent – were biographical works (cf. *ibid.*). The last book-length study, Lisa Hopkins's *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist*, dates from 2008. In his essay "Marlowe's Lives" Jeffrey Meyers presents a helpful overview of – according to him – the nineteen biographies that were written between 1904 and 1993. In fact, this number is not correct. On the one hand, Meyers does not mention all biographies that were published during these almost 100 years.³⁴ On the other hand, he also includes fictional biographies, however, there are also some fictionalizations missing.³⁵ I would see the need to differentiate between

³³ Marc Eccles discovered the papers; however, forty years earlier, Sidney Lee already stated that Marlowe played a part in the Hog Lane Fight (cf. Hopkins 2004: 187).

³⁴ Meyers, for example, does not include Una Mary Ellis-Fermor's *Christopher Marlowe* (1927), "one of the initial stand-alone biographies of the playwright ever published (Sawyer 2017: 274), or Paul H. Kocher's *Christopher Marlowe. A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character* (1946).

³⁵ Cf. Appendix.

biographies written by scholarly biographers and biographies as works of fiction; nevertheless, I find Meyers' approach interesting, because it shows that there is only a small step from one to the other. Every author has a different approach to Marlowe's life, with different focuses, and every hypothesis is more than just a logical deduction; it also depends on more or less creative imagination.

As early as 1904, John Ingram published the first biography *Christopher Marlowe and his Associates*, dedicated to the master, fellows and scholars of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. "My purpose", writes Ingram in the Preface, is "to cleanse a noble character from the slime with which libelers and forgers have besmirched it" (1904/2006: ix). Therefore, he chose to deduce his 'Marlowe' from information available about his contemporaries and his time. Most of the early biographers were more interested in Marlowe's life than his work; they searched the archives and based their biographies on rediscovered documents. Among them, Leslie Hotson surely made the most important discoveries, the Privy Council's order to the authorities of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, to grant Marlowe's M.A. degree, and the Coroner's Report referring to the circumstances of his death. In his short monograph *The Death of Christopher Marlowe*, published in 1925, he claims that "this paper provides the authoritative answer to the riddle of Marlowe's death" (1925/1965: 65).³⁶ Kenneth Friedenreich, in his essay "Marlowe's Endings", claims that Hotson's discovery was only the starting point for interpretations by future scholars – and he also mentions some literati: "Once the veracity of the inquest document itself was imputed, inquiry could accelerate into wild surmise. Marlowe could have all sorts of endings." (1988: 362) This is surely true, given that the document leaves open so many questions, like: Why did Robert Poley and Nicholas Skeres apparently do nothing to intervene when Marlowe and Frizer fought for their lives? This is not only true for Hotson; when the archival work was done, it seems that speculation started to prosper. With his study *Christopher Marlowe in London* (1934), Mark Eccles published discoveries relating to Marlowe's London years, the Hog Lane Fight on 18 September 1589 and his threat to two constables in 1592. A.D. Wraight's and Virginia F. Stern's *In Search of Christopher Marlowe. A Pictorial*

³⁶ In 1820, a Reverend Jones of St. Nicholas' Church, Deptford must have had problems to decipher the entries in the old burial register and named Marlowe's murderer 'Francis Archer' (cf. Hopkins 2004: 183).

Biography (1965) provides source material together with photographs. In *Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury* (1988) Canterbury Archivist William Urry put together the material he could find relating to Marlowe and the place of his birth, like his attack on William Corkine in 1592 and information about the troublesome nature of his family. The two most active Marlowe biographers in the first half of the century were Frederick S. Boas and John Bakeless. Each published several studies: Boas not only published documentary material (*Marlowe and his Circle* [1929]); *Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and Critical Survey* (1940, reprinted in 1945, 1952, and 1960) but incorporates the first book and also includes Marlowe's work and its sources. John Bakeless's biography *Christopher Marlowe. The Man in His Time* was published eight years after Boas' first biography and developed further in the two volumes and more than eight hundred pages of *The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* (1942). Bakeless's discoveries include, among others, the Matthew Parker scholarship, the Buttery Book of Corpus Christi College which reveals what Marlowe consummated during his six years in Cambridge, probable source material for his plays, and a check list of extant copies of his oeuvre. Calvin Hoffman is the author of the most speculative and controversial biography: In *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare* (1955), he claimed that Marlowe staged his death, fled to the Continent and wrote the works of William Shakespeare.³⁷ Of course, a new biography had to be written for Marlowe's 400th birthday in 1964 and this was A.L. Rowse's *Christopher Marlowe. A Biography*. When Jeffrey Meyers decided to present an overview over Marlowe biographies in the twentieth century, he chose to write in a rather colloquial language and his subjective judgments show something interesting: For example, he compares William Urry to a "mole" who "spent a lifetime burrowing through the records" (2003: 11). This example shows that a biography, a life of the author, always tells us something about its author, about his time, his approach, his focus, his opinion of what defines a good biography and how an author is represented best, be it, as in Urry's case, on the basis of thorough archival work, or, as Bakeless's two volumes show, out of the claim to write *the* definite biography in "an effort to bring together everything that can be known about Christopher Marlowe"

³⁷ I will come back to Calvin Hoffman and the Marlowe Shakespeare authorship controversy, which inspired a number of fictional works, in chapter 2.1.

(1942/1964: vii), or, as in Calvin Hoffmann's book, apparently out of a preference for conspiracy theories. Charles Nicholl's book *The Reckoning. The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (1992, revised and reprinted in 2002) surely had the greatest impact on future biographers, although he himself claims that it is neither a biography, nor about Christopher Marlowe the poet, but an investigation of the espionage system, the underworld of Elizabethan England in order to shed some light on his mysterious murder (cf. 2002: 5).³⁸ Nicholl collected the discoveries about Marlowe's life and death made so far and presented the murder as part of the conflict between the Earl of Essex and Sir Walter Raleigh. Published one year before the 400th anniversary of Marlowe's death and the start of the trend of Marlowe fictionalizations described in chapter 1.1, Nicholl's book shows a great talent for writing and reads like a crime story, although it is non-fiction.³⁹ Thus it builds a bridge between scholarly and fictional work and paves the way not only for future biographies but also works of fiction. Self-consciously about himself as author of the life of another author, Charles Nicholl defines his role in the first paragraph of his introduction. The very first sentence is a question: "Is this a true story?" and Nicholl's answer a few lines later is: "It is as true as I can make it", because "these true things are only part of the story" (2002: 3). As murder is not time-barred, it should be posterity's task to try to fill the blank spaces with new arguments, so he writes that he is "not telling a story but presenting an argument" (ibid.). However, for Nicholl it is not sufficient to write down his argumentation; it needs to be embellished with creative lines which evoke the world of the past in an effort to bridge the distance between then and now:

A man is walking in a garden in Deptford on a summer afternoon. The smell of the garden is sweet, but a breath of river-breeze takes the sweetness away, and there is the familiar stink; fish, pitch and sewage, the dung-boats and the dog-kennels, the slaughter-yards bury for some stately banquet, the blood running down the Bow Ditch and into the river. (2002: 17)

From passages like these, it is only a small step to fictionalizations.

His "ghost or genius is to be seen walk the churchyard in (at the least) three or four sheets" Thomas Thorpe wrote about the poet and playwright in 1600.

³⁸ For example, Roy Kendall's PhD thesis *Christopher Marlowe and Richard Baines. Journeys through the Elizabethan Underground* (2003) or Park Honan's *Christopher Marlowe. Poet and Spy* (2005).

³⁹ It was also the winner of the Crime Writers' Association 'Gold Dagger' Award for non-fiction in 1992.

400 years later, Christopher Marlowe's oeuvre has consolidated its status in the literary canon. Its originator also has lived a fascinating afterlife in (post-) modern society, as "an irretrievably textual being" (2005: 4) for David Riggs who wrote the highly acclaimed biography *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (2005), in which he placed his protagonist in the context of the institutions of his time. He lived on as "a construct called 'Marlowe'" (Downie 2000: 13), and with "a strange immortality, continually shifting with time and with the perceiver" (Kuriyama 2002: 171). In her biography, Constance Brown Kuriyama notes: "Marlowe is a name to conjure with in select circles. Literate people recognize and respond to it." (ibid.) These "select circles" have expanded over the course of the last twenty-five years and they are still expanding. Another focus developed: Christopher Marlowe as fictional character in popular culture. Meanwhile, even a Wikipedia entry, "Christopher Marlowe in fiction" was written. This trend surely is indebted to a large part to the focus on biographical interpretation and biographical work, which presents a threshold between scholarly and fictional work. The first sentences of Kuriyama's book read as follows:

Although biography is technically nonfiction, all life-writing is an amalgam of fact and interpretation, logical inference and speculation, truth and myth. Biographers, like all writers, inevitably bring cultural and personal biases to their work, and, consequently, what they write often reveals more about the author than about the subject. (2002: 1)

A scholarly approach with its hypothesizing always has to remain unsatisfactory to a part, because four centuries after the events happened, the claim to present the ultimate theory has to fail in the end. The life of the author always has to remain incomplete. Fictionalizations show another way, they offer another approach: the freedom of creative writing, the freedom of imagination. Each presents a life of the author which does not claim to be the definite one, but creatively plays with possibilities. So, different lives of the author, different 'Marlowes' are constructed.

It is far from unusual to turn a historical author into a fictional character. Virgil appears in Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1307–1321), Thomas Mann wrote Johann Wolfgang von Goethe into his novel *The Beloved Returns* (1939), and J.M. Coetzee portrays Fjodor Dostojewski in *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), to name just a few examples. "The author as character is not a recent phenomenon, but we certainly seem to be living in its heyday" (1999: 18), Paul Franssen and

Ton Hoenselaars write in the introduction to their study *The Author as Character. Representing Historical Writers in Western Literature* (1999). Paradoxically, “the very postmodernism that proclaimed the death of the author and the demise of character delights in resurrecting historical authors as characters” (11). They seem to respond to a cultural need: “They are the flesh and bones, so to speak, of postmodernism, embodying its major themes: concern with writing, origin and loss, the question of representation” (1999: 41). Aleid Fokkema writes in the essay “The Author: Postmodernism’s Stock Character” which is part of Franssen’s and Hoenselaars’s collection. However, only a few scholarly approaches to this topic were published so far. Eric H. Kadler’s *Literary Figures in French Drama (1784–1834)* (1969) was the first book-length study. It was followed thirty years later by *The Author as Character*. The essays in this book focus on authors from different countries and centuries, but Christopher Marlowe as a fictional character is not included.

A perusal of Marlowe criticism over the last decades shows that scholars were at least aware of those fictionalizations, but they had to wait for the turn of the millennium to be gradually included and discussed in some articles and collections. In the introduction of the collection of essays *Marlowe’s Empery* (2002), Robert A. Logan writes of a renewed interest, both fictional and academic, in Marlowe biography (cf. 2002: 14). This was picked up by Jeffrey Meyers, who, as was mentioned before, included fictional biographies in his 2003 article, among them Anthony Burgess’ *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993). This novel also features in Paul Whitfield White’s and Tom Rutter’s introductions to the essay collection *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality* (1998) and *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe* (2012), respectively. Rutter also mentions new creative negotiations of *Edward II*, as does Pascal Aebischer in his article “Marlowe in the Movies” for the 2013 publication *Christopher Marlowe in Context*. In the same book, Lisa Hopkins focuses on new adaptations of the Faust story in “Marlowe’s Literary Influence”. Hopkins chose *A Literary Life* as the subtitle for her first biography, published in 2000. The last five pages of the final chapter give an overview of Marlowe’s fictional afterlife, as does her essay “Marlowe’s Reception and Influence” for the *Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe* (2006). The last two essays of the 2014 Marlowe edition of *Early Modern Studies* are devoted to his literary afterlife and finally present more detailed analysis: Chris

Orchard focuses on Marlowe's death in Iain Sinclair's collection of stories *Slow Chocolate Autopsy Slow Chocolate Autopsy: Incidents from the Notorious Career of Norton, Prisoner of London* (1997) and *A Dead Man in Deptford*. Lindsay Ann Reid's focus lies on the School of Night and she discusses Deborah Harkness's *Shadow of Night* (2012), among others.⁴⁰ In his contribution for *Christopher Marlowe at 450* (2015), "Spectres of Marlowe: The State of the Debt and the Work of mourning", Richard Wilson claims that the popular perception of Marlowe in our century was above all influenced by conspiracy theories about the authorship of Shakespeare's works and resulted in fiction like Ros Barber's verse novel *The Marlowe Papers* (2012; cf. 2015: 239).

Paul Franssen published his book-length study *Shakespeare's Literary Lives. The Author as Character in Fiction and Film* in 2016. The book includes works from different countries and centuries.

Shakespeare has become an international icon on which we project our views of man: our greatest aspirations and our worst fears about ourselves. Studying representations of Shakespeare, therefore, may help us to chart the ways in which individual writers have seen Western man in general, *the role of the artist in particular*, and the ways such images of the Bard have been shaped by and themselves have helped to shape the societies they originated in. (2016: 9; italics mine)

Christopher Marlowe is not an "international icon" like William Shakespeare. We may not project our views of "Western man in general" on him, like on Shakespeare. The author as fictional character, Paul Franssen and Ton Hoenselaars write, is always an "element of self-reflection" (1999: 18); the author creates him in his own image. I would go one step further and argue that fictionalizations of Marlowe can tell us something about "the role of the artist" in general, about society's views of the author and authorship. No monograph about Christopher Marlowe's fictional afterlives has been published so far. This is a gap this project wants to fill.

Some may judge books, films or series of popular culture to be inferior to the so-called classics and therefore not worth to be treated on a scholarly basis. In her contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, Lisa Hopkins writes that many of the works of fiction "are of poor literary quality" (2006: 289). When, for example, a journalist writes a book review, she or he may follow a check list which includes points such as language and style, the content

⁴⁰*A Dead Man in Deptford* will be discussed in chapter 2.2, *Shadow of Night* in chapter 2.4.

and development of the plot, the drawing of the characters, and comparisons to other books by the same author or on the same topic. It is her or his task to classify this book and to make it clear why she or he has come to liking or disliking it in the end. The journalist has always to keep in mind that the article is sort of a service for various readers with different interests and predilections. It should answer different questions different people may ask of a book, different claims they may make. The quality of literature always depends on what you ask of it. And the questions this PhD thesis aims to answer is: As what kinds of fictional characters has Christopher Marlowe been constructed over the last about twenty-five years? What are the creative representations of authorship in popular culture these different 'Marlowes' point to?

1.3 Who/What is an Author? Historical Overview and Creative Representations of Authorship in Popular Culture

“What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though.”
J.D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye*

A terrific friend of his: this is what Holden Caulfield, the protagonist and first-person narrator of J.D. Salinger's coming-of-age novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) wants the authors of his favourite books to be. At that moment, he is reading *Out of Africa*, a novel which he took out of the library by mistake, because he did not notice at first that he was given the wrong book. However, he likes it. Imagine the author Isak Denisen/Karen Blixen sitting with Holden Caulfield in his room at Pencey, looking amused at the boy wearing the ridiculous red hunting hat with the very long peaks he just bought for a buck that morning in New York City. They would be talking about the reader's favourite passages from the book. Imagine your favourite author being a “terrific friend” (1951/1972: 18) of yours. He is somebody you look up to, who is always there when you need him, an authority who gives the best advice. The two of you sit in your living-room at night, sharing a bottle of red wine, and talking hour after hour. You want to know everything about him. Who is this person, the author? And what does authorship mean?

In order to answer these questions with regard to contemporary culture, it is surely helpful, on the one hand, to have a closer look at the terms, and on the other hand, to give a very short historical overview of the development of the literary author and authorship, concepts which always focus on the creation of literature; however their value has been estimated quite differently.⁴¹ The concept of the author is never carved in stone; it is ever-changing, with time, place and people. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “author” in the first place as a “writer, and senses relating to literature”, as the “writer of a book or other work; a person whose occupation is writing books” (*OED* s.v. *author*, n.) and “authorship” as his “career or occupation”, as well as the “fact of being the author of a piece of writing; the fact of being written by a particular person, literary origin” (*OED* s.v. *authorship*, n.). *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* lists more general synonyms: The “author” is the “originator, inventor, composer of a book, etc.” (Onions 1992: 63). More specific terms can be found for the individual who writes: Referring to the genre, he can be a dramatist, playwright, novelist, script writer, or poet, whereby “poet”, in a now obsolete sense of the word, used to refer to “a person who composes works of literature; a writer” (*OED* s.v. *poet*, n.). Andrew Bennett points out that “poet was probably the most common, general term for the literary author before the beginning of the 19th century” (2005: 130). Stressing incompetence or greed, he may be called a scribbler or a hack, and the implied or artificial author can be found in twentieth century literary theory.

The term author is both a general category to cover all these terms and at the same time an ideological construct which is held to be most fully expressed in the Romantic period: this latter sense of the author (sometimes called the post-medieval or Romantic or modern author) is an autonomous individual who expresses his or her individual thoughts, desires, wishes, ideas, in a text.” (Bennett 2005: 130)

In the introduction of *The Cambridge Handbook of Literary Authorship* (2019), Ingo Berensmeyer, Gert Buelens, and Marysa Demoor give four examples of what literary authorship could be or has been referred to. They list “the practice or activity of (literary) writing”, “a creative activity shaping not only words but also turning the author’s life into an artistic experiment that (re-)shapes both life and

⁴¹ This chapter is greatly indebted to the essays in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literary Authorship* (2019) which presents the state of the art in authorship studies, thereby focusing on authorship in the literary field.

work, style and man”, “a form of textual control that involves cutting and taking away as well as adding”, and “a complex of values and moral rights associated with individual creative acts in literature” (2019: 2). In a wider historical context, literary authorship could be viewed “under at least two different aspects: as an *activity* (something that writers do) and as an *ascription* (something that writers are thought to do or to be)”. (6) For this project, the notion of the author as an “autonomous individual”, as an *active* creator, originator of literature, certainly forms the basis. This individual author writes about another author, Christopher Marlowe, creatively reshaping the other’s life and death, thereby taking control over the literary heritage of both the Elizabethan poet and playwright and later recipients of the man and his works. The author establishes a dialogue with ‘his’ Marlowe and develops more general ideas about authorship out of this creative play, creative representations of authorship and thereby a poetics of authorship in popular culture.

Contemporary ideas are part of a millennia-old tradition. Ancient cultures, like the Ancient Egyptians, the Ancient Greeks or the Ancient Romans, have already dealt with authors and authorship. The Latin etymon *auctor* also describes a “writer regarded as an authority” (*OED* s.v. *author*, n.). Centuries later, however, this estimation decreased. Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy* (1583) states: “Poetry, which, from almost the highest estimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children.” (1583/1752: 5) On the background of his classical education, Sidney wants to put the poet back on his legitimate throne, or rather wants to build a greater one because in his opinion a poet does much more than just imitate reality: “Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as diverse poets have done [...] Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden” (15).⁴² The sixteenth century distinguished between “high” literature, like poetry, and “low” literature, like plays for the theatre. It was

a time when popular plays were considered neither the cultural equivalent of poetry nor the property of their authors, who sold them (along with their rights) to theatre managers or acting companies.” (Cole 1995: 4)

⁴² Sidney also points to the turn the eighteenth century will take: “It was a divine, and no human skill, since all other knowleges [sic] lie ready for any that have strength of wit: a *Poet* no industry can make if his own *genius* be not carried into it” (1583/1752: 83f).

Ben Jonson was assailed, when he published his collected *Works* in 1616, because the folio included his plays (cf. Cole 1995: 32). However, Christopher Marlowe who already displayed “a majestic gesture of authorial finality” (Marcus 1996: 39) at the very end of his *Doctor Faustus: Terminat hora diem; terminat author opus*. – ‘The hour ends the day, the author ends his work.’ (*Doctor Faustus*, epilogue, 9) In parallel and contrast to the inevitable end of a day at midnight, the author, in a God-like gesture, ends the world of the play with a last strike of his quill.

It was in the following two hundred years that the man of letters became more and more important and the starting-point of this development can be traced back to the Renaissance period. Philip Sidney’s contemporary Thomas Speght was the first to write a life-narrative of an English poet – Geoffrey Chaucer – which was annexed to the poet’s own works: *The Workes of our Antient and Learned English Poet Geffrey Chaucer* (1598, 1602; cf. Pask 1996: 39). Over the following two centuries, the life of the author became more and more popular, especially during the eighteenth century life-narratives became more and more important and more and more numerous. Interest in the work began to include interest in its creator (cf. Pask 1996: 39) and the creator started to transfer the modes of creation to his own life. John Milton saw his life as a life-narrative and declared in *An Apology Against a Pamphlet*: The author “ought him selfe to bee a true Poem, that is, a composition, and patterne of the best and honourablest things” (quoted from Pask 1996: 141).⁴³ Samuel Johnson’s *Lives of the English Poets* (1779–1781) may be named as a highlighting example. It started as a preface planned for a single volume of works by approximately fifty poets living and writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, then became a multi-volume edition, and in the end, it was published independently as multi-volume work (cf. *ibid.*). During the eighteenth century, the concept of the ‘original genius’ was developed and spread. It was the individual, sitting alone in his room, pouring words across the pages which came from a muse’s kiss, from a flash of inspiration alone. Edward Young in *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) compares imitators with originals: “An Imitator shares his crown, if he has one, with the chosen object of his Imitation; an Original enjoys undivided applause” (1759: 8).

⁴³ In *The Emergence of the English Author* (1996), Kevin Pask states: “Milton himself is important to this development because of his own sense of a poetic career as a narratable vocation” (1996: 141).

The fascination with the original, the subject, culminated in the nineteenth century, when the concept of ‘original genius’ became the centre of Romantic aesthetics. William Wordsworth in his revised “Preface” (1802) to *Lyrical Ballads* asks: “What is a Poet?”, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) gives the following answer to the question: “What is poetry?” It

[i]s so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet’s own mind (1817/2014: 213).

According to Coleridge, unless we do not understand who and what a poet is, we cannot understand poetry. For Jonathan Bate, the term ‘genius’ was given its new meanings to define William Shakespeare in the first place: “Shakespeare was the cardinal exemplar of ‘original genius’ since it was above all because of his supposed ‘artlessness’ that the concept was developed and became so widely accepted.” (2008: 163) This “artlessness” cannot be applied to Cambridge educated Christopher Marlowe, but the term “genius” surely can, as he was put next to Shakespeare in the nineteenth century, equal in his talent, contrasted in his alleged life and character. The idea of the ingenious individual was infiltrated at the turn of the twentieth century; in the course of the modernist period, writing became “an ever more ubiquitous aspect of modernity” (2019: 167), as Sean Latham writes in his essay “Industrialized Print. Modernism and Authorship”. Preceding developments over the last few centuries were the invention of the printing press, the enhancement, facilitation, price reduction of printing processes, and the establishment of a printing culture with new forms of print. The availability of books, periodicals, newspapers, etc. increased and they met the demands of a more and more literate society. Of course, the blank spaces those multi-numerous pieces of paper provided needed to be filled. So, the professional author entered the stage and the idea of ownership of one’s words developed – keyword: copyright. Surely, the concept of the ‘original genius’ also contributed to this development. The “notion of the author as a transformational genius played a foundational role in the development of modern copyright, which defined the author as an individual who deserved special recognition and protection under the law.” (Easley 2019: 147) Sean Latham speaks of a downright “explosion of print culture” (2019: 180) which emerged from the industrialization and

professionalization of writing and which has developed well into the digital age. There was a tendency in modernism to build up a wall and to distinguish between modernist authorship, the idea of the autonomous individual who creates original texts and those pulp writers who produce texts suitable for mass culture. At the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault presented their anti-authorial views in two very influential essays, Barthes in “The Death of the Author” (1967) and Foucault in “What is an Author?” (1969). For Barthes, the author does not create an original text, he is solely a “scriptor” (1967/1977: 145). The “writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any of them.” (146) As a result, a book “is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred” (147). A text is necessarily an intertextual product, artistic creativity disappears and the author with it. Following Foucault’s idea of “author-function” (1969/1979: 160), the author is “[t]he principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning” (159), the reader’s projection upon a text. His essay points to a culture which can do without the “author-function”. However, the very essays that proclaimed the disappearance, even the death of the author, contributed to a more intense examination of authorship. Authors, for example, started to cross the boundary between the real and the fictional world in their works of literature: “Metalepsis and autofictions tell us that the death of the author was not necessarily accepted by those it concerned most.” (Bertens 2019: 193) Postmodernism did not succeed in its attempt to kill the author, interest in him never ceased – neither in real nor in fictional authors. Authors are still there, they are still creators, originators, they are an important part of contemporary culture as well as literary studies. Seán Burke, in his study *The Death and Return of the Author. Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (2008³) speaks of a “voice that cannot be kept silent in death. And a voice that, we shall argue, can still be less quieted by literary theory [...] the concept of the author is never more alive when pronounced dead” (2008: 7). The introduction of *The Cambridge Handbook of Literary Authorship* points to the fact that for “decades now, the ‘return of the author’ has been an undeniable phenomenon” (Berensmeyer, Buelens, and Demmor 2019: 3) and that authorship studies are a “burgeoning field” (4) – a development this project is part of.

Holden Caulfield is still sitting in his room at Pencey reading *Out of Africa* and imagining calling the author Isak Denisen/Karen Blixen up on the phone. It does not matter that Karen Blixen and J.D. Salinger died some time ago, it is in the medium of the text, in the memory of their readers, and in the creative work of other authors who either refer to their life and work or who even turn them into fictional characters that they lead their afterlives. With his desire to be friends with his favourite authors, the fictional Holden Caulfield also points to a very real fact, the “public desire to relate the work of a writer to that writer’s identity, age, gender, and his/her life story” (Berensmeyer, Buelens, and Demoor 2019: 3), the desire to ‘know’ the author. An enthusiastic reader of the successful contemporary author John Irving, for example, impatiently waits for the new ‘John Irving’ to be published, follows the posts on the official author’s website and Facebook, joins readings, if possible, and gets sad, when the author refuses to sign his books afterwards. This example shows again the importance of the author for popular culture, the prestige he can gain and enjoy. Although negative connotations of ‘popular’ are now mostly obsolete and the adjective is used to describe “cultural activities or products [...] intended for and directed at a general readership” (*OED* s.v. *popular*, adj.), there are still people who hesitate to consider works of fiction of popular culture as valuable enough to be examined in an academic project about literature. The history of the concept of the author and of authorship, its importance for literary studies as well as non-academics, and the fact that a canonical author like Christopher Marlowe was resurrected as a fictional character in popular culture some time ago speak for the possibility of valuable results a close examination of those works of fiction can gain. Over the last twenty-five years, numerable authors have responded to Christopher Marlowe. They have engaged “in a kind of deliberate intertextuality” (Franssen, Hoenselaars 1999: 28). On the basis of this specific Marlovian intertextuality – including both his works and his reception – they have created a Christopher Marlowe in their works of fiction who, in different roles, can tell us more about creative representations of authorship in popular culture.

And there is also this portrait of the author as the young man he never ceased to be. But is it? It depicts a young man aged twenty-one in 1585 and it was discovered in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and the notorious Calvin Hoffman claimed it to be Marlowe’s in 1955 – a claim that is as speculative as to

introduce him as the true author of Shakespeare's works. Nevertheless, it seems to have become almost inevitable for (non-)academic writers to choose this portrait for their book covers and for authors of fiction to shape 'their' Marlowe's outer appearance according to it, simply because it meets the human need for a pictorial representation, "our need to put faces to names" (2002: 9) as Charles Nicholl put it. The same way, this portrait has also accompanied us throughout these introductory chapters. In the over four hundred years since his death, it seems that the ever-shifting "construct", the "textual being" 'Christopher Marlowe' has gained at least one constant feature. A feature, not only academics but a broader part of society respond to, especially since 1993. This portrait regularly forms the background on which popular imaginations of authorship are developed. The young man in it develops into a pioneer who paves the way for other authors and who turns them into 'original collaborators' (chapter 2.1). He becomes the overreacher who turns his authors into characters (2.2), or the spy who recruits them as fellow secret agents (2.3); and finally, he transforms into a supernatural being who drives the originally Romantic notion of the ingenious author to the next level (2.4). The young man in the portrait will never reach out his right hand to us, but his gaze seems to invite us to reach out for him, to make him 'our' Christopher Marlowe, to show who and what a contemporary author can be and to secure his place in our culture. Let us follow his invitation.

2. Christopher Marlowe's Fictional Afterlives

2.1 "And live and die in Marlowe ('s works)": Paving the Way – The Author as Original Collaborator

"Had Marlowe not existed, Shakespeare would no doubt have written plays,
but those plays would have been decisively different."
Stephen Greenblatt

2.1.1 Introduction

The Marlowe memorial in Canterbury was unveiled in 1891 by actor and producer Henry Irving with the following words:

But of all those illustrious dead, the greatest is Christopher Marlowe. He was the first, the only, herald of Shakespeare. He was the father of the great family of English dramatic poets, and a lyrical poet of the first order among Elizabethans.' (quoted from MacLure 1979: 185)

Marlowe is described as a pioneer, paving the way for his contemporaries, above all, for William Shakespeare, and others to come. The poet-playwright depicts the influence of predecessors in his *Doctor Faustus*. At the beginning, Faustus enters his study and initiates his monologue with the following sentences:

Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin / To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess. /
Having commenced, be a divine in show, / Yet level at the end of every art, / *And live and die in Aristotle's works.* (*Doctor Faustus* 1.1–5; italics mine)

He focuses on his learning and looks back on his academic life: Aristotle, Galen, Justinian, Saint Jerome's Bible; Faustus picks up one book after another and dismisses them all, because they were not able to satisfy his appetite for universal knowledge. It is the book of magic which alone promises limitless knowledge and omnipotent power: "A sound magician is a mighty god" (*Doctor Faustus* 1.64), Faustus concludes. His author Christopher Marlowe has become such a powerful character who works his spell on contemporary culture not only through his oeuvre but also through himself. Although long dead and gone, he has been given more than just the twenty-four years on earth his Faustus had been granted by Mephistopheles. He died, but he was resurrected; he has been living for some time now in different roles in works of fiction and surely will live on for quite some time to come. The contemporary authors, whose works were chosen for this chapter, give him the role of the pioneer and show that his influence emerged out of an atmosphere of rivalry. The works of fiction focus on the relationship

between Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare and push their rivalry to extremes when they substitute one for the other. They either depict Marlowe as Shakespeare, following the Oxfordian authorship theory, or as the Shakespeare of his day who we would remember as the greater poet had he not died at the age of 29. Of course, the parallels in the biographies of the two men make it easy to take the step and substitute one for the other: Both were born in the same year, 1564, in rural England, Canterbury, Kent, and Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. Both were immensely talented and came to London in their twenties to turn the world of the theatre upside down. In the literary works by two writers, Ros Barber's verse novel *The Marlowe Papers* (2012) and Connie Willis's short story "Winter's Tale" (1993), Shakespeare is substituted for Marlowe in two creative negotiations of the 'Marlowe was Shakespeare authorship controversy'. On the one hand, he either dies and Marlowe takes over his person (Willis), or his name becomes a pseudonym, a forged identity, behind which Christopher Marlowe hides (Barber). Neil Gaiman, in his comic series *The Sandman* (1989–1996), with the three episodes "Men of Good Fortune", "A Midsummer Night's Dream", and "The Tempest", and John Madden in his movie *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) follow historical fact in so far, as Marlowe dies on 30 May 1593, apparently for the sake of Shakespeare who can develop his immense talent in the following. It seems that Marlowe is sacrificed for Shakespeare and the latter also experiences feelings of guilt. However, Marlowe's presence seems to hover over Shakespeare, never leaving him, like the ghost of Hamlet's father not calling for revenge, but "remember me" (*Hamlet* 1.5, 96) and Shakespeare, just like the dutiful son his Hamlet wants to be, answering: "Remember thee? / Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat / in this distracted globe." (*Hamlet* 1.5, 100–102)

This chapter first aims to answer the two questions of how Marlowe and Shakespeare came to be *the* two rival playwrights of their time and how the idea of substituting William Shakespeare for Christopher Marlowe and vice versa developed. A close reading of these four works of fiction shall show how a creative representation of the author in contemporary popular culture can be developed through Christopher Marlowe's role as a pioneer. Two notions of the author will emerge: the collaborator and the original genius. The theoretical foundation will be provided by James Shapiro and Robert Sawyer, who explore the concept of rivalry in their monographs. Lucas Erne's theory of editors as

Shakespeare's modern collaborators and Jonathan Bate's study about the development of the genius of Shakespeare will be made fruitful for the creative representation of authorship, as will be Hans Bertens's essay on postmodern authorship in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literary Authorship* (2019). There Bertens develops the argument that a contemporary writer is able to free himself from Roland Barthes's judgment of intertextuality. The preface of Harold Bloom's revised edition of *The Anxiety of Influence* (1997) focusing on Shakespeare's need to overcome Marlowe, will play a role, as well as Marjorie Garber's *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* (1987).

2.1.2 Rivals, Substitutes

With regard to Elizabethan theatres, the focus lay on the performance and the actors and not on the written text, let alone its creator. As for sixteenth and early seventeenth century dramatists, they surely lived in an atmosphere of rivalry, where they frequently imitated another's work, borrowed or quoted from it. This ultimate anonymity, which was characteristic of Elizabethan London, a city where one could easily switch identities and turn into someone else, can also be applied to the surviving plays, whose authors often cannot be named with certainty (cf. Greenblatt 2005: 166).⁴⁴ As mentioned in chapter 1.2, in the eighteenth century, *Lust's Dominion*, for example, was falsely ascribed to Christopher Marlowe and is now believed to be a collaborative work by Thomas Dekker and others. Plays were often the product of collaboration, so this anonymity can also be applied to the works themselves because it is often impossible to determine who wrote which passage. It seems to have been natural for playwrights to collaborate with each other as well as to imitate successful plays. The relative new and flourishing medium of the theatre demanded much fuel in the form of plays to keep it going, which meant "for each company, approximately twenty new plays per year in addition to some twenty plays carried over from the previous season" (Greenblatt 2005: 188). As Christopher Marlowe was one of the most successful playwrights

⁴⁴ In his William Shakespeare biography *Will in the World. How Shakespeare became Shakespeare* (2005) Stephen Greenblatt writes about sixteenth century London: "It was in consequence the preeminent site not only of relative anonymity but also of fantasy: a place where you could dream of escaping your origins and turning into someone else." (2005: 166)

of the time, to imitate his plays was very popular with other playwrights. *Tamburlaine*, for instance, inspired quite a few other playwrights to imitate it, among them Shakespeare in his *Henry VI*-plays. Peter Berek sums them up under his essay's title "*Tamburlaine's Weak Sons*" (1982) and writes that of 38 extant plays of the public theatres first performed in England between 1587 and 1593, "10 show clear debts to *Tamburlaine*" (1982: 58). According to Stanley Wells, Shakespeare seems not to have collaborated with Marlowe, however, with many other Elizabethan playwrights: for *Titus Andronicus* with George Peele; for *Henry VI*, Part 1 with Thomas Nashe; he seems to have written some scenes of *Edward III*, which was published anonymously in 1596; for *Timon of Athens* with Thomas Middleton; for *All is True*, retitled *Henry VIII, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Cardenio* (now lost) with John Fletcher; for *Pericles* with George Wilkins; *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth* were adapted by Thomas Middleton (cf. 2006: 26).⁴⁵ Marlowe's influence did not cease with his death as the Admiral's Men went on to stage his plays. Tom Rutter judges Marlowe's ongoing influence as of such importance that he states: "The presence of Marlowe does [...] represent one factor that arguably gave the Admiral's repertory a distinctive quality" (2017: 197). In her essay "Marlowe Reruns: Repertorial Commerce and Marlowe's Plays in Revival", Roslyn L. Knutson presents a survey of repertory of the Admiral's Men and other theatre groups to demonstrate the frequency with which Marlowe's dramas are revived together with other plays which imitated them. For Knutson, this frequency is "an industry-wide marketing strategy by which theatrical companies sought simultaneously to promote their own offerings and to capitalize on each other's theatrical successes" (2002: 16). According to James Shapiro, Marlowe must have been subject to more contemporary imitations than any English poet before or since (cf. 1991: 15). This atmosphere of collaboration and imitation should not be rated as something that diminished the quality of the plays, but rather as something that inspired and drove playwrights and I agree with Stanley Wells, who writes:

Speed of production seems to have acted as an inspiration rather than a deterrent to ambition and achievement. Collaboration may have evolved as a means of throwing plays together in a hurry, but at its best it could act as an imaginative stimulus, a pooling of

⁴⁵ On this topic see also, for example, Ton Hoenselaars's essay "Shakespeare: Colleagues, Collaborators, Co-authors" in the *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (2012) and Arthur Kinney's *Shakespeare, Computers, and the Mystery of Authorship* (2009).

diverse talents conducive to a wider range of dramatic style than individual authors might have achieved on their own. (2005: 27)

For Lucas Erne, in his study *Shakespeare's Modern Collaborators* (2008), this collaboration can even span a few centuries:

The main argument of this book is that there is a fourth group of Shakespearean collaborators in addition to his co-authors, fellow actors, and composers, namely his editors, the people who prepare the texts we read in modern editions. Whereas the other three groups of collaborators exerted their influence in Shakespeare's own time, editors continue to do so to this day. (2008: 2)

This is surely also true for editors of other Elizabethan playwrights and could be true to contemporary writers, who devote themselves to developing Christopher Marlowe as a fictional character because they partake in this specific Marlovian intertextuality and work together to create 'our' Christopher Marlowe. It seems to have become an academic trend in recent years to not only single out an individual, but to focus on the creative atmosphere in Elizabethan London and on the relationship between playwrights – above all Shakespeare's connection to his theatrical environment, to Ben Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe.⁴⁶ Speaking of a mere "connection" or a "relationship" between Marlowe and Shakespeare would not define it precisely enough. A term like "opponent", "adversary" or "antagonist" stresses a conflict, a disagreement between two persons who stand on opposite sides (cf. *OED* s.v. *opponent*, n.).⁴⁷ The two playwrights are – as they have been termed before – "rivals". Shakespeare himself, in his Sonnets 78–86, created a character, who is now generally termed "rival poet" and one theory about his identity claims that he was indeed Christopher Marlowe. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "rival" in the following ways: A rival is "[a] person or

⁴⁶ Kenneth Muir published *Shakespeare as Collaborator* as early as 1960. Recent studies include, for example: Stanley Wells. *Shakespeare and Co. Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher and the Other Players in His Story* (2006); Andrew Gurr. *Shakespeare's Opposites. The Admiral's Company 1594–1625* (2009); Ton Hoenselaars (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporaries* (2012); Tom Rutter. *Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men. Reading Across Repertories on the London Stage, 1594–1600* (2017). James Shapiro in *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare* (1991) and Takashi Kozuka and J.R. Mulryne in their anthology *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson. New Directions in Biography* (2006) focus on the relationships between the three playwrights. The following two studies compare Shakespeare and Marlowe: Robert A. Logan. *Shakespeare's Marlowe. The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry* (2007); Robert Sawyer. *Marlowe and Shakespeare. The Critical Rivalry* (2017).

⁴⁷ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "opponent" as "[a] person who stands in conflict or disagreement with another, esp. in a fight, argument or legal dispute; an antagonist or adversary. Also (in contest, race, game, etc.): a person who is in competition with another; a member of the opposite side or team".

thing competing with another for the same objective, or for superiority in the same field of activity” or “[a] person who or thing which is arguably equal in quality or distinction to another” (*OED* s.v. *rival*, n.). This term contains a competitive relationship, but also a connection, similarities. The *OED* also offers another definition, which has become obsolete by now, but which Robert Sawyer draws into focus in his Marlowe and Shakespeare-study: “A person having the same objective as another, an associate.” (ibid.) An example for this use can be found in the first scene of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* when Barnardo calls Horatio and Marcellus “[t]he rivals of my watch” (*Hamlet* 1.1.10). Sawyer focuses on “companions”, “associates”, “partners”, but he is cautious about using the term “rivalry” to characterize the relationship between Marlowe and Shakespeare. What interests him is the connection between the two playwrights and their critics and also artists and “the effect produced when writers – including dramatists, critics, novelists, screenwriters, and scholars – re-view the two playwrights and the relation of one to the other” (2017: 7). For Sawyer, the real “rivals” are those who write about it:

I will demonstrate [...] that the views of these critics, ‘the partners of my watch,’ speak as loudly about themselves and their own place in history – present company included – as they do about any alleged associations between Marlowe and Shakespeare. (12)

When we explore the term “rivalry” with regard to the relationship between Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, it may also be fruitful to have a closer look at Shakespeare’s relationship to his other great contemporary dramatist and the terms scholars have been using for it: Ben Jonson. Born in 1572, Ben Jonson started writing at the end of the sixteenth century and he outlived Shakespeare by twenty-one years, so the two of them spent considerably more time together in the world of London’s theatres than Shakespeare and Marlowe did, due to the latter’s early death. Furthermore, the picture of their connection is less obscure. Shakespeare left no explicit extra-dramatic record of any of his contemporaries, but Jonson did: In the 1616 Folio of his *Works*, he claimed that the King’s Men staged six of his plays during Shakespeare’s lifetime and that Shakespeare himself acted in *Every Man in his Humour* and *Sejanus*. With his preface and the poems for the 1623 *First Folio* of Shakespeare’s collected plays, Jonson made an attempt to secure his position next to the great playwright who “was not of an age, but for all time”: This is also stressed by Ian Donaldson in his

essay “Looking Sideways: Jonson, Shakespeare and the Myth of Envy” (2006), when he writes: “The evident design of the 1623 folio is to bring the greatest living English dramatist of 1623, Ben Jonson, to pay tribute to the greatest English dramatist of the recent past, William Shakespeare.” (2006: 244) However, Jonson also referred explicitly and implicitly to the differences between him and Shakespeare, which have been carved in stone – in the latter’s favour – by literary criticism: classical versus natural/ Romantic, slow versus fluent, superficial versus profound, genial versus drudging, etc.. It was not until the end of the twentieth century when some scholars began to look at similarities, for example, Russ McDonald in his book-long study *Shakespeare and Jonson, Jonson and Shakespeare* (1988), wherein he compares their writings, influence on each other and professional interchange, or Mark Robson, who focuses on the conjunction “and” and writes of a “co-dependency” in his essay “Jonson and Shakespeare” (2010). Literary critics have been using terms like “antithesis” (McDonald 1988: 1), they have written about “critical segregation” (McDonald 2000: 103), “marmoreal opposites” (104), or they have described Jonson as “Shakespeare’s defining opposite” (Donaldson 2006: 244). The terms “rival” and “rivalry” are also common: Shakespeare was Jonson’s “famously untutored rival” (McDonald 2000: 117), his “successful rival” (Donaldson 2006: 245) and even his “greatest rival” (Wells 2006: 159); Jonson, on his part, was “both a friend and a rival to Shakespeare” (129) and their relationship has been described as “poetic rivalry” (Shapiro 1991: 163). This short excursus should demonstrate that the terms “rival” and “rivalry” are apparently regularly used in literary criticism in the context of Renaissance drama and dramatists and therefore legitimate to use to describe the relationship between William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. However, I would suggest that they are more appropriate for the latter pair with regard to the works of art I will be looking at in this chapter because therein I see a stronger connection, more similarities and parallels between Marlowe and Shakespeare than Shakespeare and Jonson.

In their respective studies, James Shapiro and Robert Sawyer offer two approaches which have been made fruitful by the contemporary artists in this chapter: In *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare* (1991) James Shapiro states that Marlowe’s influence on other playwrights has been the reason for his downfall because he was absorbed in the others’ works and thus forgotten

until his resurrection in the Romantic period: “Paradoxically, Marlowe’s extensive influence proved his undoing as contemporary writers imitated, contained, and parodied his work, thereby rendering it anachronistic.” (1991: vii) One playwright as being rivalled, overcome and replaced by another – the works of fiction in this chapter develop exactly out of this notion. Robert Sawyer, in his latest study, *Marlowe and Shakespeare. The Critical Rivalry* (2017), aims to show that: “The real ‘rivalry,’ perhaps, comes not between the playwrights, but instead between the various writers who put the ‘rivalry’ in the service of their own ends.” (2017: 327) This sentence is not only appropriate for academic writers, but also for writers of fiction, for whom this rivalry becomes the creative concept behind their work and who, as mentioned before, push this rivalry to extremes, as it leads to substitution.

How did Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare come to be *the* two rival playwrights of their time? The starting point here should be to look at how the relationship between the two men has been developed. It is appropriate to use a passive sentence because this relationship has been shaped for them by posterity. We do not have any historical facts about it only intertextual references, which, of course, are open to interpretation. Probably, their contemporaries did not judge them to be rivals, at least not in the beginning, as Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* had already established itself as one of the most famous plays on the Elizabethan stage when Shakespeare came to London. In 1592, Robert Greene, in his *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, juxtaposes Marlowe (“famous gracer of Tragedians”) and Shakespeare (“an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers”) – and others. The fact that he does not name the two playwrights directly, but only writes down allusions, speaks for their popularity among Elizabethan London’s society. Greene died in September 1592, Marlowe in 1593 and given the fact that other than famous playwrights were also dead after 1593, Shakespeare could go on in his successful career without a rival. Today, the similarities between the two men are often emphasized, but there are also some crucial differences: William Shakespeare did not go to university, he was a poet and playwright as well as an actor and sharer in his theatre company; he was married and the father of three children and after long career in London, he came back to Stratford as a wealthy man, where he died at the age of 52 and was buried in a luxury grave in Holy Trinity Church. His work is clearly influenced by

Marlowe and he apparently is the only contemporary Shakespeare alludes to in his plays (cf. chapter 1.2). Robert A. Logan claims that twenty Shakespearian works exist that were possibly influenced by Marlowe and that eight quote lines form Marlowe's texts: *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *2 Henry IV*, *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Richard III*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, *King John*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Tempest*, *Sonnets* (2007: 8). Their special relationship was then established in the nineteenth century and it was the twentieth century which polarized Marlowe and Shakespeare. The term "rivalry" is not used without controversy among scholars. On the one hand, some studies stress Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare in their titles, for example Paul Menzer in his article "Shades of Marlowe" (2011) or Robert Logan in his study *Shakespeare's Marlowe* (2007). The latter clearly positions himself against the present-day notion of the two writers as rivals: "Shakespeare seized on the uninhibited resourcefulness of his fellow playwright with relative insouciance in order to give legitimacy and stature to his own inventiveness" (2007: 231). On the other hand, James Shapiro used it in the title of his study *Rival Playwrights*. Stephen Greenblatt in his biography of William Shakespeare stresses both, Marlowe's influence – "[h]ad Marlowe not existed, Shakespeare would no doubt have written plays, but those plays would have been decisively different" (2005: 192) – and the rivalry between the two:

Marlowe was the only one of the university wits whose talent Shakespeare might have seriously envied, whose aesthetic judgment he might have feared, whose admiration he might have earnestly wanted to win, and whose achievements he certainly attempted to equal and outdo. (257)

It was also the preceding century which started to fictionalize them and their relationship in print and film. I agree with Robert Sawyer who writes that there is "no other duo of writers [who] seem so tied to one another in the critical and popular mind" (2017: 331).⁴⁸

Their relationship was developed into extremes and the idea of substituting William Shakespeare for Christopher Marlowe emerged. But how could it develop? To answer this question, it is inevitable to refer to the authorship

⁴⁸ In his monograph, Sawyer gives an overview over four centuries of the interpretation of the relationship between the two.

question and the theories about who really wrote the works now attributed to William Shakespeare. I want to stress, however, that I am not a Marlovian. I only mention them for the sake of completeness, but I do not want to dig deeper into this discussion or take part in it and I am well aware of the danger that lies therein. Charles Nicholl put it this way in the last sentence of his *New York Times* review of *The Marlowe Papers* from 25 January 2013:

It is much harder to discover something about Marlowe – even something small and particular – than it is to invent it, and the more the line gets blurred between the two, the less we will know of him.⁴⁹

So, I will treat my primary sources as what they are: works of art. The nineteenth century, which revived Marlowe and turned him into a genius of Elizabethan London, asked the authorship question for the first time. The first known speculation that Marlowe wrote Shakespeare's works and that he used the latter's name only as a pseudonym was published anonymously in the London periodical *The Monthly Review* in 1819 (cf. Hopkins 2005: 183). Further doubt rose in the 1850s, as Francis Bacon was named as a possible author of the Shakespeare oeuvre. In the following years, more candidates came into focus, mostly aristocratic ones, like Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, Roger Manners, 5th Earl of Rutland, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, the 2nd Earl of Essex, Sir Walter Raleigh – and Christopher Marlowe. In 1895, the American lawyer Wilbur G. Zeigler in his novel *It Was Marlowe: a Story of the Secret of Three Centuries* developed the theory that Marlowe faked his own death (cf. chapter 1.1). *The National Review* published an article by Archie Webster in September 1923, wherein he argued that Shakespeare could not have written many of the sonnets now attributed to him. The most influential twentieth century book and the first monograph representing the Marlovian theory is Calvin Hoffman's *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare*, published in 1955. This can be pinpointed as the official starting point for the Marlovian movement, which still persists. To encourage further research on that topic, Calvin Hoffmann founded "The Calvin & Rose G. Hoffman Marlowe Memorial Trust". The Hoffmann Prize, which is administered by the King's School, Canterbury, is awarded annually "for a Distinguished Publication on Christopher Marlowe",

⁴⁹ "Exiting the Stage". <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/books/review/the-marlowe-papers-by-ros-barber.html> (accessed 13 June 2018).

until a winner for the Principal Prize can be announced, a person who “has in the opinion of the King’s School furnished irrefutable and incontrovertible proof and evidence required to satisfy the world of Shakespearian scholarship that all the plays and poems now commonly attributed to William Shakespeare were in fact written by Christopher Marlowe”.⁵⁰ The “Shakespeare Authorship Trust” was founded in London as early as November 1922 under the name of “Shakespeare fellowship”. “The International Marlowe-Shakespeare Society” started its work in August 2009 and, as mentioned in chapter 2.1, “The Marlowe Society’s” panel in the memorial window of Poet’s Corner in Westminster Abbey, which was revealed on 11 July 2002, bears a question mark after the date of the playwright’s death, 1593.

2.1.3 Substituting Shakespeare for Marlowe

Of course, the authorship controversy is a very tempting one for fictions to be modelled upon. The writers of the following two examples present Christopher Marlowe as the true author of William Shakespeare’s works and substitute Shakespeare for Marlowe in their verse novel and short story, respectively. Ros Barber (born in 1964) is both, a scholar and a writer: She wrote her verse novel *The Marlowe Papers* (2012) as the creative part of her PhD (2011), while in the critical part of *Writing Marlowe as Writing Shakespeare: Exploring Biographical Fictions*, she dealt with the Shakespeare authorship theory.⁵¹ The title reminds the reader of Henry James’s novella *The Aspern Papers* (1888), wherein an ardent lover and biographer of the fictional poet Jeffrey Aspern loses himself more and more in Venice, where he came to find some lost letters by Aspern. However, he never gets his hand on them and it is doubtful if they ever existed. Barber presents her novel as a collection of long looked-for papers which prove that Marlowe is the real author of Shakespeare’s oeuvre. Based on Zeigler’s theory, she lets

⁵⁰ Information about the Hoffmann Prize was taken from the homepage of The Marlowe Society, <http://www.marlowe-society.org/the-hoffman-prize/> (accessed 28 June 2018).

⁵¹ However, this PhD thesis seems not to have been published. Goldsmiths, University of London, lists Dr. Ros Barber as a Senior Lecturer in Creative and Life Writing in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. She apparently gained her PhD in English Literature from the University of Sussex, but it cannot be found in the list of publications: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/ecl/staff/barber-ros/> (accessed 23 December 2019).

Christopher Marlowe himself tell his story after 30 May 1593, when, with the help of influential friends, he faked his own death and escaped to the continent, where he continues to write, while his works are published under the name of an actor from the country: William Shakespeare. Barber's novel consists of dozens of chapters to be read as poems, sometimes sonnets, whose verses transport the reader back into the Early Modern period. In a 2012 interview, Barber explains why she wrote her novel in verse: She says she only knew Marlowe's voice from his plays and so it was only natural for her to decide to choose iambic pentameter.⁵² In her verse novel, she picks up what is claimed to be known today and rumoured about the playwright and his work, she imitates Marlowe's verse in order to give him an apparently authentic voice and to give the reader the feeling to hear Marlowe speak through her verses.

It is a dead man who is talking to us and he chose his medium wisely. That he makes clear in his introductory sonnet *To the Wise or Unwise Reader*: "[H]ow else can he save / himself from oblivion, but with poetry?" (*MP xi*) The playwright himself is self-confident about his unearthly talent and presents himself as the genius posterity came to know. It is his hubris which used to let him write everything during his London years, he felt himself like the wonder of the age, his verses dictated by God himself who chose him as his organ: "For it was God – at least, it seemed like God, / who kept me up at night, and scribbling / those thoughts humanity might understand. / Only, I wrote – and signed them – in my hand." (70) "Facts" are included in the novel which are now generally known about Marlowe and often explored with more interest than his writing: Marlowe the heretic and atheist, Marlowe the spy, Marlowe the homosexual. However, he is not only homo- but rather bisexual, he loves Thomas Walsingham, to whom his verses are dedicated, at the same time, he has an affair with Lucille / Ide du Vault and eventually he marries Liz Peter – after he was intimate with her brother William. Bisexuality seems to better become Marlowe the artist who once says: "Beauty is sexless. It's found everywhere." (314) Just like posterity, Marlowe's contemporaries also seem to be more interested in what he is said to have been, especially an atheist. The accusations made in the Baines's Note are very popular – Barber omits the fact that it was not publicly known at the time – and so is the

⁵² Interviewer: Jenni Davidson; shot and edited by Tim Pieraccini; published on YouTube on 27 August 2012: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhE-UCjELP8> (accessed 13 June 2018).

account of Marlowe's death written by Thomas Beard in his *Theatre of God's Judgements* (1597, cf. chapter 1.2). Marlowe's afterlives are shaped by others and it is a cruel characteristic of the novel that he has to stand by helplessly and see what becomes of him. His life has already escaped him and starts to be determined by others while he is still in London. It is his rival Robert Greene who equals him with his characters and spreads the word: "'Faustus!' A stranger hails me in the street. / 'Send my regards to Hell!'" It is generally known, the man says, as Marlowe grabs him by the throat and he makes the sign of the cross, "[t]hat the author of Faustus is an atheist. / That you are he." (MP 176) The public regards him as one with Faustus, Tamburlaine, Barabas, and eventually he does not seem to be able to separate himself from them as well and regards himself as doomed as his Faustus when he quotes some of Mephistopheles's words: "True knowledge of humanity confirms / that this is Hell. Nor are we out of it." (782) As he and his plays have become inextricably intertwined, after his 'death' he fears, and at the same time wishes, that people will know Shakespeare's work to be his:

My fear, at first, was that familiar tropes / would shout my name in each delivered line, / hanging their author from a stylish rope. (...) / How can I snag / some threads of myself to show I passed this tree (...) / I write in fits and starts, a comedy, / between the inns and lodgings of the road – / bizarrely peppered with some scraps of me / too ghostly for the ignorant to see, / disguised, as truths had better be, as jokes. (321)⁵³

Marlowe even dreams of being resurrected by his plays as he starts to write *Richard II*: "Then he returns, still loyal, yet conquering / the rank injustice that set him aside. And just as my Faustus captured my own doom, / perhaps this script could write me back alive." (260) But this remains a dream, as the play explores the last years and the death of a king.

Marlowe's faked death is turned into metamorphoses. The first reference that Christopher Marlowe spends his life in oblivion mostly with writing the works which then will be published under the name of William Shakespeare, can be found pretty early in the novel, in the poem with the title "The Low Countries" (cf. 27f). In the last stanza, he describes how he begins to write: "I take my driest paper, mix the ink, / and open where the daughter stumbles in / with bleeding stumps for hands" (28). She is incapable of speaking and "each word is a victim of her absent tongue" (ibid.). The woman's name is Lavinia and the play is now

⁵³ The "comedy" he refers to is *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in which disguise also is a popular motif.

generally regarded as Shakespeare's first tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, written around 1593. As Lavinia is neither capable to tell nor to write down the name of her mutilator, she points to the story of Philomela in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, who, after being raped, and her tongue cut out by her sister's husband Tereus, wove her story into a dress for Procne. In the end, Philomela is revenged and transformed into a nightingale. Barber's Marlowe refers to this mythical figure as "the silenced woman turned to nightingale / who sings, and in her singing, is avenged" (ibid). Marlowe could speak of himself in these lines: He was also forced into silence; however, with the help of some friends, he plays a more active part. The nightingale, as traditionally the bird of May and spring, can be attributed to him. He was given a new voice which can only be heard by those who listen carefully, that means, who are able to read the clues about his identity he leaves in the works which are now published under another's name. The nightingale also symbolizes love, and love stands for the wish of unity. For Marlowe, this wish is directed to his words, which he must give up, and his ultimate longing is to be reunited with them, to be recognized by other people as their creator. So, in Marlowe's case, the nightingale is a symbol of self-love.

That this identity is hard to grasp and to turn into a unity is also made clear by the returning motif of the play with names. In his introductory sonnet, Marlowe states that he is no longer a human being: "He becomes a name; / a cipher whose identity is plain / to anyone who understands a word." (xi) At the beginning of the novel, he speaks of himself in the third person and says: "I'm no one." (3) As he already adopted different versions of his name while living, the person behind the names has even been more difficult to grasp during his 'official' lifetime. The family name is "Marley", at Cambridge he was also known under the name of "Merlin". Robert Greene called him mockingly "Mar-low" – "the sound points you with either syllable" (37). And it stays with him as a playwright. "Greene's Marlowe has stuck. Now half of me says 'low'." (206) Admittedly, "mar" and "low" do not correspond with his success as an author, but the words point to his fall, the name develops a life of its own and becomes his fate. As the tutor of Arbella Stuart (cf. 73f) and as the spy in Flushing, he goes as "Morley" and when he is arrested for coining he becomes again "Marley": "I gave the family name; / poised as it is between the poet's and spy's." (162) After his 'death' people also refer to him as "Marlin". Due to changing circumstances and

also due to not knowing who he really is, he fluctuates between these different names during his lifetime, while in his 'death' he finally seems to be on his way to discover his identity, an identity, however, which he can no more legally adopt: He is the author Christopher Marlowe. At first, he travels under an alias, because "Christopher is too much cross to bear" (4) – here he refers to the meaning of his given name, as it is Greek for "bearing Christ". He adopts the alias Monsieur Le Doux (cf. 35), contrary as the French word for "gentle", "soft" and "mild" is to his person, fate and circumstances. Later, he chooses the alias Pietro Montanus (cf. 243f), as a hint to his true identity for parliamentarian and fellow spy Anthony Bacon, referring to their common admiration for Montaigne, as he explains. After he has lived for years under aliases, he more and more longs to be "restored to life and name" (229), to be called "Kit" or "Christopher" again (247) and, most importantly, to be recognized and admired as the author of the plays which are known as Shakespeare's (cf. 291), to sign his true name under his plays sometime in the future (cf. 320).

The other man is not a human being for Marlowe, but something he created and now rather wants to destroy, cross out like some badly written sentences. He sees Shakespeare as "my fabricated self, my pseudonym" (48). He says that the name came to him in his dreams, "Will I Am Shakespeare" (213). Coincidentally, the printer Richard Field has a friend with exactly this name who agrees on sharing it with Marlowe: "Will I am Will. I'm Will. And Will is me." (ibid.) However, Marlowe is never able to accept this name as a part of himself and continually dreams of getting rid of it – and the real William Shakespeare. The novel emphasises the speculations about the real author of Shakespeare's works among his contemporaries. "The public are sheep and fall for any lie, / but private rumours circulate amongst / the curious and literate in town" (302), Thomas Walsingham tells Marlowe as they meet again. These people have started to speculate who hides behind the alias and bring in the names of Francis Bacon and the Earl of Oxford. These speculations clearly hurt Marlowe's pride and vanity, but in the end, the clues that he left in his works have also reached the right people, fellow authors and admirers, who realize that he is not dead. They found a secret society, the so-called Mermaid Club, to build a great "myth / around the silent author of these works", to ensure that Shakespeare's "claim is stumped at every turn" and to keep Marlowe "safe, and lift [his] plays so high / no

flames can touch them” (395), as a friend tells him. This promise, made by Ben Jonson, John Marston, Thomas Greene and others, can only be fulfilled in the future.

You may not live to see it, Kit, it's true. / But come it will. We'll leave too many clues
(...) It will not be a hundred years, I swear, / before intelligence will sift the truth / and
you will be restored your every work; / all credit to your name, and every play / and poem
yours again. (399)

Until then, Marlowe has come to terms with his writer's identity as that of William Shakespeare, and he is to go on to write plays.

“Reduced to ink / that magicks up my spirit from the page” (1): After his faked death, the only medium in which Christopher Marlowe can live on is as words on paper. As early as a schoolboy he had learnt that

the dead can be conjured from their words through ink, / that ancient writers rise and sing
through time / as if immortal, the poet's voice preserved / like the ambered insect some
see as a scratch / but I'd imagined flying, brought to life. (17)

Readers can become conjurers; they can become able to speak with the dead. A lesson which his fourteen-year-old pupil Arbella Stuart has yet to learn who thinks that a book is just a “wedge / of a dead man's brain” and that words “are not real life” (131). For Marlowe, they are indeed and for this reason, he writes down his story, in hope of being resurrected, if not in this life, then in the future, and that he will become immortal through his words. In order to be able to conjure up the dead, speak with them, grasp their true identity and decipher the meaning of their words, the reader must be able to crack the code. As his code, Marlowe has chosen his verse, his iambic pentameter: “This poetry you have before your eyes / the greatest code that man has yet devised” (3). As the page on which he writes is just his “featureless companion of the road” (9), Marlowe imagines an addressee: his “almost-love” Thomas Walsingham, “my imagined perfect audience of one” (144). He longs for a word from Walsingham and as a letter eventually arrives, Marlowe himself becomes the conjurer of his love's ghost: “And in this ink, the tenor of your voice. / And in this ink, the movement of your hand.” (133) For him, the words on the page are almost as consoling as if the man who wrote them was really there by his side. However, Marlowe's “almost-love”, who helped him escape death, tries to kill him in the end, metaphorically speaking: In “A Passport to Return”, as the title of the chapter says, Walsingham promises to keep the

manuscript of *Hero and Leander* safe for Marlowe to finish when some time in the future he can be restored as a gentleman and resume the life he lived before he was forced to 'die'. It turns out that Walsingham apparently never believed that this could happen. After five years of oblivion, Marlowe learns that George Chapman has finished his poem: "This poem we agreed I would not finish / until some king brought me to life again, / you have allowed another man to end" (339). Chapman's verses are for Marlowe like a curse, with another man ending his poem he is truly dead and gone, with nothing left to finish in the world of the living. "I am slain" (ibid.), he writes, and accuses Walsingham: "[Y]ou have given up my words, and let / another write my ending" (340). For Marlowe, to write is to live, that is why he bargained for his life and that is what he must always remember, the reason why he still lives is "[t]o write. To write. To write. To write. To write" (122). Like a naughty schoolboy, who has to write a hundred times on the board that he must not annoy his teacher, Marlowe has to repeat it when he starts to bemoan his fate. "My Being", he calls writing in the title of a chapter. To give up writing would be like asking a "man to give up breathing" or "a fish to give up swimming", it is the only thing he can do to stay alive, "words / are all I have to stay this side of Hell" (211). And there is another thing he must do. To cope with his situation, Marlowe must once speak out his name publicly. To get his identity back, he must put his words together with his name. In the last chapter, "Exit Stage Left", he sits in a London tavern nearby the theatre where his *Hamlet* is performed. He is drunk and starts a fight with five playgoers who criticize his work, but as he reveals himself as the author, nobody believes him, not the men and not the wench who takes him outside and whom he tells his name. However, this is not important for him, he just had to utter the words, I am the author! I am Christopher Marlowe, "for a breath I was / entirely me, and honest with the world" (407).

I am the author. The novel follows Christopher Marlowe in his struggle to find his identity as the author Christopher Marlowe, which includes being the author of Shakespeare's plays. In order to gain and to keep this identity, he has to become one with his words, but it is not enough for himself and for some friends and supporters to know this. He must become publicly known as the author. This does not seem likely to happen during his lifetime, but only sometime in the future. The title *The Marlowe Papers* surely was not chosen coincidentally: The

anonymous first-person narrator of *The Aspern Papers* hopes to reconstruct part of the poet Jeffrey Aspern's obscure life with the help of the papers. For him, they are "sacred relics" (AP 73), and Aspern, who lived at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was "one of the most genial men and one of the handsomest" (46), a "divine poet" (ibid.), a "god" (ibid). The narrator calls himself the minister of the poet's "temple" (47), that means his literature. When Jonathan Bate investigates *The Genius of Shakespeare* (2008), he writes that the "Romantic idea of authorship locates the essence of genius in the *scene of writing*" (2008: 82) and that "[t]his conception of what it is to be a genius has the effect of investing talismanic power in *the author's original manuscript*". (ibid.) The letters of *The Aspern Papers*, which are searched for but never found, and the sort of diary *The Marlowe Papers* represents are regarded as containing the genius of their authors. While Aspern's letters would shed more light on this poet, Marlowe's diary would proof that he is the true author of Shakespeare's oeuvre. Juliana terms the narrator "publishing scoundrel" (AP 125), while on the metatextual level of *The Marlowe Papers*, Ros Barber makes use of Marlovian – and Shakespearean – intertextuality, imitates Marlowe's voice from his plays, constructs his afterlife after 1593 for him and substitutes Shakespeare for Marlowe. It took more than "a hundred years" (MP 399), but finally, this verse novel claims that a document has been found which gives him back his identity as the author of William Shakespeare's works.

In her short story, "Winter's Tale", published in the collection *Impossible Things* (1993), US-American award-winning science fiction and fantasy author Connie Willis (born in 1945) takes up this idea. Therefore, it could also be read as "The Hathaway Papers", as the essential contribution by Shakespeare's wife Anne Hathaway to the authorship question.⁵⁴ As Anne is said to have been illiterate, it could have been written down by somebody else and placed, for example, as an introduction into Christopher Marlowe's collected works. As the title of the short story collection and the genre of a winter's tale suggest, this is fantasy, science fiction, a juggling of thoughts between the covers of a book, where the impossible

⁵⁴ In 2018, Katherine West Scheil published her book *Imagining Shakespeare's Wife. The Afterlife of Anne Hathaway*, the first cultural history of Anne Hathaway, in which she investigates the various Annes posterity has developed in the centuries after the historical Anne Hathaway's death. She does not discuss this short story and seems not to be aware of its existence, as it is not included in her list of biographies and works of fiction.

is allowed to become real. In a short introduction, Willis explains her motivations: “I don’t have a lot of patience with Shakespeare conspiracy theories”, because of their “inability to accept the obvious: that Shakespeare was Shakespeare” (*WT* 223). In Connie Willis’s opinion a genius does not necessarily need to emerge from an extraordinary background. For the twenty-eight page-long work of fiction she chooses, among others, the motif of mistaken identities which is popular in Shakespeare’s plays. She tells her story with a very positive and sympathetic Anne Hathaway as first-person narrator. In “Winter’s Tale”, Anne, ironically, as an illiterate woman, uncovers the Shakespeare conspiracy, becomes a powerful woman and a true heroine for the following generations because she does not burn the plays as her ‘husband’ urges her to do. Instead, she sews them in a featherbed and thus keeps his work for the world to come in hope that “after years the papers can be found and his true name set on them” (251).

The story’s frame are William Shakespeare’s / Christopher Marlowe’s last days, which are interrupted by flashbacks to 12 December 1612, the day the man who claimed to be Anne’s husband returned to Stratford. It is Christopher Marlowe, who switched identities with William Shakespeare on 30 May 1593, when the other one was killed – it is the well-known story of the tavern-brawl. His murderer claimed that he acted in self-defence, to which the other two men present at the time testified. Marlowe feared for his life after speaking publicly of some atheist’s opinions and turned to influential friends for help. Instead of helping him escape from England to the Continent, they went in search of a scapegoat, whom they found in William Shakespeare, Marlowe’s doppelgänger: born in the same year, 1564, in the country, as a glover’s son of almost equally humble origins as the shoemaker’s offspring. Additionally, he was also a talented playwright, albeit furnished with less genius – according to the short story, which goes even further by making the two men resemble each other in their outer appearance. Marlowe took over Shakespeare’s lodgings; he learned to sign his name, and his fame as a playwright grew more and more under the name of William Shakespeare. “All believed, till at last so did I” (237), he tells Anne. And Marlowe’s friend, admirer and confidant Michael Drayton says to her: “I saw him on the street afterwards [after Shakespeare’s murder] and knew him not, he was so changed.” (245) The roguish, ambitious youth touched by genius but reckless, over proud and egoistic changed, became a gentle man. He chose to live a private

life in his rented rooms in London. The small fortune he acquired, he invested in property; he bought, for example, the splendid New Place in Stratford, where he established his family. He also sent them a coat of arms and came home at last “to see, if there was ought that I could do for you” (235). When he comes back to Stratford, he has a limp, his hair is half-gone from the crown of his head and many lines are drawn on his sad face. “A winter’s face”, Anne observes, “sad and tired but not unkind” (232). He has been ill for two years and seeks refuge as the rumours about his identity are spreading.

In the short story, Shakespeare suffers the historical Marlowe’s fate. The surviving character, however, does not fare well, either. Who is he now? He is not William Shakespeare, but can he still be Christopher Marlowe? He is never called directly by his name; he is husband, father, brother, grandsire. Marlowe’s name is only mentioned twice by Susanna’s husband John Hall who is on good terms with him. His father-in-law once told him of a play he had written, called *Doctor Faustus*, Hall tells Anne, but the “play he spoke of was Kit Marlowe’s” (246). As Anne informs him that her husband had bade her to burn his plays, John Hall asks: “And Marlowe’s?” (247), which she affirms. The other’s blood and curse stick to Marlowe, he has to sign with another’s name and hand and his outer appearance, which already resembled Shakespeare’s, turned almost uncannily into the dead man’s. For almost twenty years, he has to live with the feeling of being split in two and never able to become a whole person again. What clearly remains Marlowe’s is his handwriting and this could also be a reason why he holds the metal chest so dear – apart from the fear that the contents could bring to light his true identity. In it, Marlowe’s and Marlowe-Shakespeare’s works are kept, so it symbolizes the whole body and soul Marlowe hopes to become again after his death. By involuntarily changing his identity with William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe has become a Faustus-like figure. Admittedly, he has not sold his soul to the devil, but put his life in the hands of the wrong men and thus also lost it: “He took my life as sure as I took his” (238), he tells Anne. The man who was Christopher Marlowe has been allowed to become more than 29 years old, to develop his genius further into middle age and to write the “infinite riches” he brings home with him in a metal chest. “Your husband could not have written words like these” (246), says Michael Drayton. He justifies the murder and claims that Marlowe’s life was worth more than Shakespeare’s because of the treasures

he could give the world. However, just as his Jew Barabas is to lose his gold and jewels, Marlowe cannot keep his “infinite riches” in the little metal chest. Although he learned to copy Shakespeare’s signature, he continued to write his plays in his own hand. He had been granted 20 more years in the world of London’s theatres and then comes home to repent. As he lies dying after three years in Stratford, he seems to feel that the ultimate act of penance is to “burn my books” (*Doctor Faustus* 14.120) as Faustus swears to do before he is dragged into hell. With this intention, he can also be compared to *The Tempest*’s Prospero who swears: “And deeper than did ever plummet sound / I’ll drown my book” (*The Tempest* 5.1.61f). Prospero abjures his “rough magic” (5.1.55) and like magic it must have seemed to Marlowe to be granted another life and a greater work. However, the will to destroy it also means to erase the names – the name of Christopher Marlowe as well as that of William Shakespeare – from the world of the theatre. He is willing to pay a dear price for these few more years on earth to protect those he loves – but Anne also commits a true act of love. As she cannot read or write, she cannot be bought with the plays, as Drayton wants to do; however, she senses their worth and refuses to burn them to keep the man she loves from being forgotten by the world. When Anne tells her husband that she loved him “[t]he very instant that I saw you” (*WT* 233) – that means, the winter’s night in 1612 – another of Marlowe’s works comes to mind, *Hero and Leander*: “Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?”. “But you knew me” (250), he stresses, although she can only have known him ex negativo, as a man who is not her husband. Here “to know” is used in the sense of “to recognize”. His fellow conspirators know him, of course, but they have to treat him as though he was William Shakespeare, but Anne recognizes him as another man and thus gives him back his identity. “All these long years I thought that none knew me, that all believed me dead. And so it was as I were dead, and buried in Deptford, and he the one who lived” (*ibid.*), he tells her, but now “I am as one again, not split in two.” (251) And for this reason, Marlowe can sacrifice his works.

Right at the beginning of *The Jew of Malta*, its protagonist Barabas is presented in his counting house, “heaps of gold before him” (*The Jew of Malta* 1.1.37) the stage direction tells us. He is counting his gold, jewels, money, his “[i]nfinite riches in a little room” (*ibid.*) as he calls them in his monologue. A small metal chest functions as a prominent motif in Connie Willis’s “Winter’s

Tale”, which also contains “[i]nfinite riches” (*WT* 236), namely Marlowe’s and Shakespeare-Marlowe’s plays and the author makes use of the contents of the metal chest. It starts with the title of the short story which is borrowed from Shakespeare’s play *The Winter’s Tale*. When the company arrives in Stratford, Michael Drayton, old and fat, reminds the reader of Falstaff and the two young actors Bardolph and Gadshill bear the name of two of Falstaff’s associates. Like the thieves, they cannot be trusted. Like Hamlet, who considers the “play” as “the thing / Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king”⁵⁵ (*Hamlet* 2.2.536f), they want to act a part of one of his plays to reveal the true identity of the man who claims to be William Shakespeare. His comedy *Measure for Measure* shall become like Hamlet’s mouse trap because therein a young man who faces difficulties with the law is to be hanged. However, another is killed in his place. This proposal must be very upsetting for the playwright because the title refers to Saint Matthew’s gospel and the threatening penalty: “For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what / measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Drayton then stops the farce by taking Prospero’s part: “Our revels now are ended” (*WT* 249). Although he does not speak them out loud, the other remaining lines of the monologue echo in the reader’s mind:

These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits and
 Are melted into air, into thin air,
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on; and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep. (*The Tempest* 4.1.161–171)

These dreams are now locked up again in the small metal chest, until they will be let out again. The short story’s Marlowe seems to be able to die in peace after he was given back his identity as the man Christopher Marlowe by a woman who loves him. However, she is determined to protect his plays and hopes that future generations will discover the secret and unite the man and his work, so that the world can remember Christopher Marlowe the author. In her short story, Willis

⁵⁵ Another reference to Hamlet can be found near the end of the short story where in the frame the sick man is given medicine by the doctor John Hall, which he calls “[v]ile potion” and asks: “Why did you not pour it in my ear and be done with it?” (*WT* 240)

switches Marlovian and Shakespearean intertextualities. She constructs Marlowe's afterlife after 1593 as that of Shakespeare and, as Ros Barber does in her verse novel, substitutes Shakespeare for Marlowe. She writes herself into Anne Hathaway and, through "The Hathaway Papers", she claims to give him back his identity as the author of William Shakespeare's works.

The authorship question is also addressed by Marjorie Garber in her study *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers. Literature as Uncanny Causality* (1987). She does not try to find an answer to that question, to prove that Marlowe or any other candidate mentioned in the past two hundred years was the real author of Shakespeare's works. Garber wants to take the authorship question seriously

in order to explore the significance of the debate itself, to consider the ongoing existence of the polemic between pro-Stratford-lifers and pro-choice advocates as an exemplary literary event in its own right. (1987: 3)

Garber argues that

Shakespeare is the towering figure he is for us not despite but rather *because of* the authorship controversy. He is *defined* by that controversy, as, equally, he defines it [...] Shakespeare as an author is the person, who, were he more completely known, would not be the Shakespeare we know. (11)

This, in a sense, is also true for Christopher Marlowe. He was established as one of the possible candidates to answer the question: 'Who is the true author of Shakespeare's works?' Therefore, he is also defined by that controversy. When he is chosen as the author, he is not only regarded as the Shakespeare of his day, influencing and paving the way for his artistic contemporaries in the world of Elizabethan theatre. This notion is prolonged; Marlowe becomes the Shakespeare for all time. To choose him is comprehensible because of the parallels between the two men and because of their obscurity and because of Marlowe's mysterious death which naturally provoked the appearance of different theories. So, the authorship controversy also offers a way to construct 'our' Marlowe. It is significant that Willis's Marlowe becomes able to imitate Shakespeare's signature, but that he continues to write his play in his own hand. "A signature", Garber writes, "is very like a ghost" (1987: 21), it shows the absence of one who once was present. As Hamlet forges the signature of his dead father in Garber's example, Marlowe forges Shakespeare's signature, thereby conjuring up the dead man's ghost who continues to haunt him so that he loses his identity and becomes

him. A signature, handwriting does not only show absence, it also points to the one who once was present. So, Marlowe's ghost remains in the papers which are locked up in the small metal chest. Anne Hathaway breaks her promise to burn them and with this decision, she keeps Marlowe's ghost alive for posterity. In *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers*, Marjorie Garber explores "the ways in which Shakespeare has come to haunt our culture" (1987: xiii). She is interested in

the uncanny extent to which these writers are themselves haunted by Shakespeare, the way in which Shakespearean texts [...] have mined themselves into the theoretical speculations that have dominated our present discourses, whether in literature, history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, or politics. (ibid.)

For Garber postmodernist and poststructuralist theorists have become Shakespeare's ghost writers and so, in my opinion, have authors in popular culture become Marlowe's ghost writers.

2.1.4 Substituting Marlowe for Shakespeare

In his new preface to his revised edition of *The Anxiety of Influence* (1997), Harold Bloom focuses on the relationship between William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. Bloom, who does not seem to hold Marlowe's art in high regard, nevertheless speaks of the "aesthetic rivalry" (1997: xxvi) between the two poet-playwrights. He describes how Shakespeare was influenced by Marlowe for some years and how he finally emancipated himself from his precursor by portraying him in *King Lear's* Edmund. Bloom uses the following terms to describe this relationship: He states twice that Shakespeare and Marlowe must have known each other personally (cf. 1997: xxi, xxxii). In his opinion, Shakespeare was fascinated (cf. xxxv), almost seduced (cf. ibid) by Marlowe, "creatively obsessed with Marlowe" (xxxix), and this "creative envy" was "his driving force" (xliv) for several years. Rather, Shakespeare was possessed by Marlowe because, for Bloom, a "misprision of Marlowe kept Marlowe alive in Shakespeare for so long" (xxxix). Bloom uses the verb "haunted" three times (cf. xxii, xxxix, xlvi) and speaks of the difficulties of Shakespeare to exorcise the ghost of the dead man (cf. xxxvi).

The following two examples, Neil Gaiman's comic series *The Sandman* (1989–1996) and John Madden's movie *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), incorporate,

in a way, Bloom's theory. Both follow history more closely: Marlowe indeed dies on 30 May 1593 and subsequently, Shakespeare develops his immense talent. Marlowe is depicted as an ingenious playwright and poet, whose art influences the young Shakespeare. He emulates Marlowe, but as long as the other man lives, he seems not to be able to emerge from his shadow. Here, a term can be applied to the rivalry between Marlowe and Shakespeare which Ian Donaldson uses with regards to the relationship between Shakespeare and Jonson: to look sideways. Donaldson writes:

To *look sideways* was to look enviously or maliciously or askance, with a disapproving and hence a distorting gaze. In the most sinister construction, it was to cast an evil eye, which had power to diminish and ultimately to destroy the victim (2006: 241).⁵⁶

In this case, Shakespeare rather looks up to this pioneer, but the result remains the same. After the Deptford incident, Shakespeare can overcome his rival, and both works of fiction point to the possibility that he played a part in the murder. They show his feelings of guilt, how the dead man continues to haunt his mind and that – other than Bloom's Shakespeare – he cannot exorcise him during his life, at least in one case.

The titular Sandman in British author Neil Gaiman's (born in 1960) comic series is the immensely powerful Dream, also known under other names, such as Morpheus, Oneiros, the Shaper, the lord of and personification of dreams. He is the violent force Shakespeare joins to overcome Marlowe. The stories of volume 10, *The Wake*, conclude the *Sandman*-series; in "The Tempest" William Shakespeare comes up to his part of his contract with Dream which he had negotiated with him in "Men of Good Fortune" (issue 13): Dream gives Shakespeare the inspiration for his plays and Shakespeare, on his part, has to write two plays for Dream about the power of dreams.⁵⁷ Volume 3, *Dream Country*, includes the first one, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (issue 19), which will be discussed in more detail later. In "The Tempest" Marlowe is depicted only in two pictures; however, his impact on the Shakespeare-subject as a whole is far greater.

⁵⁶ Donaldson offers some examples of characters, who look sideways at a person they envy, from literature: the figure of Invidia/Envy in Book 2 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the crowd of blind people in Canto 13 of Dante's *Purgatorio*, who had their eyelids stitched together with a metal thread as a punishment for their gaze; the figure of Envy in the introduction of Jonson's *Poetaster* (cf. 2006: 241f).

⁵⁷ Although only "The Tempest" was published after 1993, this discussion also includes "Men of Good Fortune" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" as background for the argumentation.

In a light-coloured retrospect, Dream shows the old William Shakespeare the meeting between the two men in a tavern in 1589, where they discussed Marlowe's will to "consort and bargain with the darkest pow'rs" (*MGF*)⁵⁸ for one's art and dreams as well as Shakespeare's latest play which leads the other playwright to the counsel: "[I]t should be your last." (*MGF*) Now, the old William Shakespeare witnesses this meeting as a bystander. Drawn in profile, Shakespeare's younger self stands in front of the successful playwright like a petitioner, his upper body bent, his hands folded, his red shirt too large for him. "God's wounds!", he cries, "[i]f only I could write like you!" (*MGF*) He says in addition that he would give all and more he has if he had his talent to create dreams which will live on when he is long dead and gone. In a second speech bubble, Shakespeare even expresses his will to sell his soul to the devil like Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. In these speeches, the young Shakespeare parallels Marlowe's opinion, that art is worth every sacrifice, and he makes clear his will to equal his role model. Marlowe, on his part dressed in a well-fitting light blue vest and a white shirt, is sitting relaxed on a bench or a chair, his right hand is resting on a table, his left one is holding a mug. His face can be seen in half-profile – wisps of his thick, chin-long hair falling over his forehead, the arched brows, the thin moustache, the goatee. It is difficult to make out his expression, his eyes are only sketched, his mouth seems to be slightly open, perhaps in a surprised, perhaps in an amused reaction. In the following picture, however, Marlowe's expression has changed; mocking giving way to something like concern. He seems to fear this rivalry and the possibility to be overtaken by his friend. Dream stands next to the two young writers. He is going to take over the part of Mephistopheles to Shakespeare's Faustus, to lead him away and to promise him Marlowe's talent. Interestingly, he always carries a ruby with him, which shall encourage, among others, creativity, according to those who believe in the power of precious stones. On his part of the contract, Dream furnishes Shakespeare with inspiration and creativity, while the playwright does not have to sell his soul to him, but to write two plays about the power of dreams for him, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. Although he got what he wanted most in life, old Shakespeare is not satisfied and still envies his long dead rival. He tells Dream

⁵⁸ No page numbers are included in the magazine.

that – in contrast to himself – Marlowe was not popular with his contemporaries and no good person. Nonetheless, his *Doctor Faustus* made him immortal although he had no contract with the Sandman, to which Dream retorts with the question if Shakespeare really thought so (cf. *Tempest*). It is left open, if this was a rhetorical question. However, Marlowe's reaction to Shakespeare's sentences in the tavern in 1589 suggests his awareness that the idea of a fallen angel bargaining with a scholar does not belong entirely to the world of fiction. He seems to know that the different worlds can be, in fact, very porous. Maybe Marlowe senses the danger, which lies for him in the rival's speech: That Dream will soon seek a new trading partner who can give him still more than he, Marlowe, had negotiated. And this world only offers space for one genius with an unearthly talent. So, Marlowe has to die for Shakespeare to take over his talent.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is ready to be staged by 23 June 1593, not one month after Marlowe's untimely death. The London theatres are closed because of the plague that haunts the city, and the Lord Strange's Men, including Shakespeare's son Hamnet, are touring the provinces, arriving at the 'Long Man of Wilmington', a hill figure near Wilmington, East Sussex, just before Midsummer's Eve. The Long Man opens his gate and a group of creatures from the land Faerie enters the world of humans to watch the comedy. It includes the play's very characters, Oberon, Titania – who immediately takes an interest in Hamnet –, and Robin Goodfellow, who were all invited by Dream. With this play, Dream, who is called Shaper by this bizarre audience, wants to express his gratitude to the fairies for once being part of this world and he wants to create a literary monument for them: "It is finely crafted, and it will last" (*MND*), he tells them. Dream's intention is to keep the stories alive. He does not care about their writer, may he be called William Shakespeare or Christopher Marlowe. "But he did not understand the price. Mortals never do" (*MND*), Dream explains to the creatures from Faerie, whom he tells about his contract with the playwright. "They only see the prize, their heart's desire, their dream... But the prize of getting what you want, is getting what once you wanted." (*MND*) These words can apply to both playwrights and the conversation between Dream and Shakespeare shows clearly that the latter was just substituted for the other writer. "I wrote it as you told me, Lord. It is the best that I have written, to this date" (*MND*), Shakespeare says. He admires Marlowe; he envies his talent and tries to

surpass him. This becomes clear when he self-confidently says about his play during a break in the performance: “Not even Kit Marlowe will be able to gainsay that.” (*MND*) To this self-confident expression Dream bluntly breaks the news to Shakespeare that his rival was stabbed to death in Deptford three weeks ago and he pretends not to have been aware of the fact that this news would hurt Shakespeare. He got what he wanted, has he not? “Marlowe was my friend” (*MND*), Shakespeare tells Dream. “Dark stranger, already I half-regret our bargain” (*MND*) – but the show must go on and Marlowe has been replaced by Shakespeare as its protagonist, established by the powerful and violent entity Dream. “The overall point of Shakespeare’s appearances in *Sandman*, then, seems to be the price of success”, Paul Franssen argues in his study about Shakespeare’s literary afterlives. “Shakespeare writes immortal verse, but at the cost of neglecting his family. Besides, his whole life has been lived in the service of his art.” (2016: 189) Furthermore, Shakespeare seems to feel a life-long guilt after Marlowe’s untimely end. In order to become a true rival, he had to bargain with a supernatural force which seems to have substituted Marlowe for Shakespeare.

This substitution also takes place in the second example of this chapter: In the very popular romantic drama *Shakespeare in Love*, which won, among many other prizes, seven Academy Awards in 1999, Christopher Marlowe’s presence is reduced to two scenes and actor Rupert Everett is not even mentioned in the credits. However, in an anachronistic turn with regards to the estimation of playwrights, the movie depicts Marlowe’s influence. He seems to be omnipresent and omnipotent in the world of London’s theatres. “Why should Burbage care to produce Shakespeare’s play? He is readying the stage for Kit Marlowe.” (*SL* 0:17:25) Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels, tells Shakespeare. The actor Edward Alleyn introduces himself with a list of his most popular characters: “I am Tamburlaine! I am Faustus! I am Barabas, the Jew of Malta” (0:32:58). And every actor, who auditions for Shakespeare’s new play declaims a more or less successful version of Marlowe’s famous lines from *Doctor Faustus*: “Was this the face that launched a thousand ships / And burned the topless towers of Ilium?” (0:20:17) – apart from Viola de Lesseps, who has to recite different verses so that the story can continue. While the author Christopher Marlowe has already established himself as an entity in Elizabethan London, the young William Shakespeare, played by Joseph Fiennes, is still in search of his identity. In his first

scene, he is presented as a playwright with writer's block who waits in vain for the muse's kiss and is not able to write down more than different versions of his signature, apparently trying to find out who he is and what defines him as an author (cf. Bennett 2005: 2). This search is clearly dependent on Marlowe. The film explicitly presents him as Shakespeare's great contemporary, as his muse, who makes the other's art possible in the first place. In scene eight with the title "Titels", the two playwrights sit at a tavern's bar and one glance in his cup is sufficient for Marlowe to draft the plot of a new play for Shakespeare:

WILL: I hear you have a new play for the *Curtain*.
 MARLOWE: Not new – my *Doctor Faustus*.
 WILL: I love your early work. "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium?"
 MARLOWE: I have a new one nearly done, and better. *The Massacre at Paris*.
 WILL: Good title.
 MARLOWE: And yours?
 WILL: Romeo and Ethel the Pirate's Daughter. Yes, I know.
 MARLOWE: What is the story?
 WILL: Well, there's a pirate ... In truth, I have not written a word.
 MARLOWE: Romeo is ... Italian. Always in and out of love.
 WILL: Yes, that's good. Until he meets ...
 MARLOWE: Ethel.
 WILL: Do you think?
 MARLOWE: The daughter of his enemy.
 WILL: The daughter of his enemy.
 MARLOWE: His best friend is killed in a duel by Ethel's brother or something. His name is Mercutio.
 WILL: Mercutio...good name. (SL 0:19:03–0:20:03)

This scene surely parodies a possible collaboration between two Elizabethan playwrights and could also be seen as an ironical analogy to contemporary script writing in the movie industry. Thus, it points to the collaboration between Mark Norman and Tom Stoppard for the script to *Shakespeare in Love*. "Like Hollywood," Jonathan Bate writes in his study about the genius of Shakespeare, "Shakespeare's world was a place of deals and deadlines, egos and rivalries. The Bard of Avon, 1990s-style, is pragmatic, commercially astute and a team-player." (2008: 353) Contemporary views of Shakespeare have ceased to follow the image of the solitary ingenious artist. These beginnings of *Romeo and Juliet* point to a further aspect which is expanded in the dialogue between Viola and Will after Marlowe was murdered. Shakespeare admits: "Marlowe's touch was in my *Titus Andronicus* and my *Henry VI* was a house built on his foundations." (SL 1:12:09) From a mere "touch" to "a house built on his foundations" – it seems that Shakespeare always turns to Marlowe for help. He explicitly acknowledges the

other one as the more talented playwright. Perhaps there is also an egoistic touch to it and Shakespeare might fear that, without Marlowe's input, his future works will lack quality. He is dependent on the other man and without him he does not seem to be able to find his identity as an author. "I would exchange all my plays to come for all of his which will never come" (1:12:23), he tells Viola. Indeed, the movie lets Shakespeare play his part in the fatal plot against Marlowe – at least Shakespeare believes this. He introduced himself as "Christopher Marlowe" to his lover Viola's fiancé, Lord Wessex, and he must assume that the latter had wanted to get rid of his rival. "What have I done?" (1:08:47), Shakespeare asks himself after he hears the news. "God forgive me, God forgive me!" (1:09:16) For Bloom, all literary texts are a misreading, a misprision as he calls it, of those that precede them and for him a misprision of Marlowe caused Shakespeare to be haunted by Marlowe whom he finally was able to exorcise with his writing. In the movie, a misunderstanding causes Shakespeare's feeling of guilt, it was not a misprision of Marlowe which can be traced in his plays, but Marlowe had a literal hand in them. Now, he will feel the touch of this ghostly hand until he is able to exorcise the ghost to find his identity as an author – our understanding of the identity of the author William Shakespeare – independent from Marlowe. "*Shakespeare in Love*," Andrew Bennett writes in his study *The Author*

is as much about our own love affair with the figure or the idea of the author as it is about the poet, playwright and actor William Shakespeare, and it tells us as much about our own obsession with authorship as it does about Shakespeare himself or about his poems and plays. (2005: 2)

The movie already points to the future development of this authorial identity. The premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*, with William and Viola playing the title roles, is a great success, and in the last scene Shakespeare drafts the plot of his new comedy, *Twelfth Night*, the first play, it seems, he will write without Marlowe's help. The other playwright's influence might be depicted explicitly in the movie; however, it is already infiltrated by Shakespeare because the script often implicitly and also explicitly quotes from his plays. So, *Shakespeare in Love* follows the gradual substitution of Marlowe for Shakespeare and points to our contemporary notion of this author.

These two fictionalizations show that Shakespeare envies the more talented and more successful Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe has already secured

his position in the world of Elizabethan theatre. Shakespeare strives not only for a position next to him; he wants to surpass his rival. According to René Girard the imitator starts to envy the model and they become rivals in their struggle to fulfil their desires. If they cannot have the same thing at the same time, this leads to violence. In their battle, the two lose their individuality, they become doubles:

The rival desires the same object as the subject, and to assert the primacy of the rival can lead to only one conclusion. Rivalry does not arise because of the fortuitous convergence of two desires on a single object; rather, *the subject desires the object because the rival desires it*. In desiring an object the rival alerts the subject to the desirability of the object. The rival then, serves as a model for the subject, not only in regard to such secondary matters as style and opinions but also, and more essentially, in regard to desires. (1972/2013 pos. 3053/3059)

It is the other's ingenious talent and success Shakespeare dreams of in his "[m]imetic" desire (pos. 3115). In *The Sandman* and *Shakespeare in Love*, the rivalry becomes fatal for one of the rivals: Christopher Marlowe. It seems that he has to be sacrificed for Shakespeare. Only after this sacrifice Shakespeare can develop his own ingenious talent and become the successful poet and playwright posterity has come to know. And he knows it.

2.1.5 The Original Collaborator

The original meaning of the Greek name "Christopher" is "bearing Christ". On the one hand, Ros Barber's Christopher Marlowe travels under aliases because "Christopher is too much cross to bear" (*MP* 4). However, it turns out that the name of William Shakespeare, under which he has to publish his plays, is the real burden to bear. This fate is shared by Connie Willis's Marlowe who also puts down his name not only to write, but to live under Shakespeare's. On the other hand, in *The Sandman* and *Shakespeare in Love*, Shakespeare must bear this Christopher on his shoulders. Popular culture might acknowledge that he developed his authorial identity in the course of his career; however, Marlowe always remains the starting point of this development, the pioneer who paved the way for Shakespeare's art. This notion is put to extremes when Marlowe is not only given the role of the pioneer, but is maintained to be the author of Shakespeare's oeuvre. The two poet-playwrights become doppelgänger. It was during the Romantic period that the motif of the doppelgänger became popular,

particularly in Germany, for example in E.T.A. Hoffmann's novel *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (1815/1816). This motif describes a central fear of society, the fear of losing one's identity; what had been 'I' was torn apart, and the doppelganger personifies parts of one's own personality. There is an interesting parallel in Hoffmann's novel with regards to the meaning of the name Christopher: After he has supposedly murdered his bride Aurelie Medardus escapes into the forest, where he is attacked by his uncanny doppelganger Victorin, who jumps on his back and attempts to wrestle him down. In the end, the doppelganger must die so that Medardus can regain his identity, his 'I'. Posterity has developed this special relationship between the two Elizabethan poets and playwrights and the four works of art discussed in this chapter push the rivalry to extremes because they substitute one for the other. However, these two constructs which are termed 'Christopher Marlowe' and 'William Shakespeare' seem to have become inextricably intertwined in these works, so that one always bears the other on his shoulders. With regards to *Shakespeare in Love*, Richard Sawyer writes:

I would suggest that the mixing of pop culture and highbrow entertainment is a defining tenant of postmodernism, and so is the insistence on the collaborative notions of authorship, which returns to us on the alleged rivalry between Marlowe and Shakespeare. (2017: 289)

The works of fiction chosen for this chapter present Marlowe as pioneer, as someone who paves the way for the art works of others, above all for that of William Shakespeare. In this role, I would like to argue that Marlowe points to a creative representation of the author in popular culture as original collaborator. This collaborative notion is shown explicitly in *Shakespeare in Love*: The script is the product of the collaboration between Mark Norman and Tom Stoppard, and the two used lines form Marlowe's and Shakespeare's work for it. This collaborative writing is mirrored and parodied in the tavern scene. Norman and Stoppard, as well as Gaiman, Willis, and Barber make use of Marlovian and Shakespearean intertextualities – by which I mean not only their oeuvre, but everything which was written about them. Therefore, they work together and play their part to construct 'our' Marlowe. However, this does not turn them into "scriptors" in Roland Barthes's sense; they work intertextually, but they are aware of this intertextuality (cf. Bertens 2019: 196 and 198). This representation of the author distances itself from the solitary Romantic genius and also from the claim

to present universal truths through literature. Nevertheless, I have chosen the addition ‘original’ because, from the background of a collaborative act, these authors make use of their strong imagination. Hans Bertens writes:

Post-1960s authorship [...] is still driven by moral seriousness and still proud to give full rein to the human imagination. It is committed to an open, all embracing aesthetic attitude that does not rule out contradiction, discontinuity, incoherence, or the arbitrary. And because it willingly accepts, or even welcomes, such sins against realistic representations, the author’s hand is more visible than ever. [...] The author’s incontrovertible presence demonstrates beyond any doubt that authors are still creators, that they still make it new (2019: 198).

In their works of art, they allow the (almost) impossible to become real: The verse novel *The Marlowe Papers* and “Winter’s Tale” or “The Hathaway Papers”, as I termed the short story are, in a way, forged documents. They present themselves as papers by Christopher Marlowe and Anne Hathaway, which are very unlikely ever to be found. In *The Sandman*, writing becomes a supernatural act, and the anachronism which is most evidently in *Shakespeare in Love* can be found in all four fictional works because they mix our contemporary notions of authorship with Elizabethan cultural surroundings. “[P]ostmodernist authors and the contemporary authors that follow in their wake do believe that they have an important contribution to make” (ibid.), Hans Bertens argues and Christopher Marlowe’s fictional afterlife in the role of the pioneer supports this argument. On the one hand, authors contribute to shaping ‘our’ Marlowe; on the other hand, these fictionalizations show one way in which popular culture imagines the author.

2.2 “[A]ll live to die, and rise to fall”: Creating the Overreacher – Creating the Author as Character

“[T]he highest form of creation is that engendered out of the very forces of destruction”
Harry Levin

2.2.1 Introduction

Christopher Marlowe was interested in historical or legendary characters. In many of his texts, “he centre[d] his fiction on the literary representation of famous individuals” (Cheney 2006: 183), thereby turning them into his characters, for

example Edward II. The strong relationship between the playwright and his tragic heroes was already established by others during his lifetime. The threat against strangers which was discovered on the wall of the Dutch Churchyard on London's Broad Street on 5 May 1593 – now generally known as the Dutch Church Libel – contained allusions to *The Jew of Malta* and *The Massacre at Paris* and was signed 'Tamburlaine'. Disregarding the question if it was written by him or not the signature obviously referred to Marlowe and it is part of the events which finally led to his murder. Soon after his death, the reason for it became a topic for literary comment. The Coroner's Report was not known publicly, neither were Richard Baines's accusations and Thomas Kyd's letters. The death was above all ascribed to his alleged sins, his homosexuality, and his religious views and often thought to be God's just punishment. With his death interest in the man Christopher Marlowe increased and his characters' sinful way of life, their rise and fall, was assigned to him. Gabriel Harvey, in his *Newe Letter of Notable Contents*, composed in September 1593 and published one month later, calls him "Tamburlaine" (cf. Hopkins 2005: 139f), thereby drawing a parallel between the playwright and the character who made him famous in the world of London's theatres. Thomas Beard's more detailed account in *Theatre of God's Judgements* (1597) was already quoted in chapter. Lisa Hopkins points to the fact that Marlowe's alleged death, this attack against another man which led to the accidental killing of himself, about 20 years later became part of a tragedy. It seems to have been picked up by Cyril Tourneur in his *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) and presented as a just punishment for those who mean evil to others (cf. Hopkins 2005: 155). In addition to the comparison to the poet Lycophron, which was also quoted in chapter 1.2, Francis Meres drew further comparisons in *Palladis Tamia* (1598):

As Jodelle, a French tragical poet, being an epicure and an atheist, made a pitiful end, so our tragical poet Marlowe for his epicurism and atheism had a tragical death. (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 155)

Marlowe is named alongside the Greek poet Lycophron (3rd century B.C.) and the French poet Étienne Jodelle (1532–1573) and therefore granted his status as "tragical poet", but as Lycophron was shot and Jodelle died in poverty, Marlowe also met his deserved end. As a gruesome fate is the price his tragic heroes have to pay for their sins, their originator also seems to have met his deserved end. I

agree with Lisa Hopkins who writes in her 2006 essay “Marlowe’s Reception and Influence” that these comments also draw a parallel between a creator and God. God seems to imitate the creator when he works not only divine, but also poetical justice on him (cf. 2006: 284). The tendency to interlock the playwright and poet and his work, exemplified already by these early reports, can also be observed in nineteenth century criticism as the following sentences by J.A. Symonds from 1887 show: “Marlowe’s dramas are mostly series of scenes held together by the poetic energy of his own dominating personality. He is his own hero, and the sanguinary Scythian utters the deepest secret of the artist’s heart.” (quoted from Shepherd 2000: 108) And this tendency continued in twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship. Over the decades, biographies became more and more popular and developed into an important part of Marlowe scholarship. While early biographers based their biographies on (rediscovered) documentary, later biographies, as scholarship in general, show a trend to biographical interpretation, an aim to find Marlowe’s presence in his works. This is probably best summed up by Richard Wilson:

If modernist critics had read Marlowe’s work through his biography, postmodernists interpreted his life through his plays, as the struggle of the subversive author to break from the glasshouse of incarcerating words. (2000: 129)

Stephen Greenblatt, in his influential New Historicism study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), shows the strong connection which is drawn between Marlowe and his characters, when he writes that, Christopher Marlowe “is deeply implicated in his heroes” (1980: 220), while “the one true goal of all these heroes is to be characters in Marlowe’s plays” (221). These scholars practice a very literal reading of the death of the author, choosing it as the starting point for their criticism (cf. Menzer 2000: 358).

This is also exactly what the novels that are discussed in this chapter do: Anthony Burgess’s *A Dead Man in Depdford* (1993), Judith Cook’s *The Slicing Edge of Death* (1993), Liam Maguire’s *Icarus Flying* (1993), and Stephanie Merritt’s *Gaveston* (2002). They also start from the death of Christopher Marlowe. Richard Baines’s and Thomas Kyd’s accusations function as a basis, and above all the Coroner’s Report. It poses more questions than it provides answers and it leaves much space for interpretation. Against this background these novels present their version of Marlowe’s last years and death. Interestingly, three

of the four novels were published in 1993, four hundred years after their protagonist's murder. In writing about his untimely end these authors contribute to his resurrection and open the door for him to a broader reading public. Thus, they commit an act of remembrance and their novels could be compared to epitaphs. All of them do not only construct a Christopher Marlowe on the basis of historical sources, but also as one or as an amalgamation of his tragic heroes, Barabas, Faustus, Gaveston, the Guise, and Tamburlaine. These characters are used to explain the life and death of their author.

Although a different genre, these novels are probably best described as overreacher's tragedies. The term is taken from Harry Levin's monograph *The Overreacher* (1952) about Marlowe's poetics, in which he uses it as a general pattern to interpret his plays. Levin's Marlowe is not romantic, but he shows a playwright who "was more of a disillusioned nihilist than an aficionado of aesthetic transcendence" (Dabbs 1991: 139). The woodcut, which precedes the text, shows a man who is about to fall headfirst from the sky into the ocean because a bright sun is melting his waxen wings. The man, of course, is Icarus whose story is maybe most prominently written down in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The woodcut was reproduced from Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems* (1586) as Levin explains in the Appendix where the following verses can be found:

Heare, ICARVS with mounting vp alofte,
 Came headlong downe, and fell into the Sea:
 His waxed winges, the sonne did make so softe,
 They melted straighte, and feathers fell awaie:
 So, whilst he flewe, and of no dowbte did care,
 He mou'de his armes, but loe, the same were bare.
 Let suche beware, which paste their reache doe mounte,
 Whoe seeke the thinges, to mortali men deny'de,
 And searche the Heauens, and all the staires accoumpte,
 And tell therebie, what after shall betyde:
 With blusshinge nowe, their weakenesse rightlie weye,
 Least as they clime, they fall to their decaye. (quoted from Levin 1952: 168).

For Harry Levin, this image of Icarus serves best to describe Marlowe's tragic overreachers. Marlowe also uses this rhetoric in his tragedies. The Prologue to *Doctor Faustus* contains the following lines: "His waxen wings did mount above his reach, / And melting heavens conspired to his overthrow" (*Doctor Faustus* 21f). In *Edward II*, a similar image from Greek mythology is evoked, when Gaveston is compared to Phaeton by Warwick: "Ingnoble vassal, that like Phaeton

/ Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sun!" (*Edward II* 4.16f) To this outcry, Mortimer replies: "Their downfall is at hand" (4.18). And the Guise in *The Massacre at Paris* characterizes himself as an overreacher in his monologue:

That like I best that flies beyond my reach.
Set me to scale the high pyramides,
And thereon set the diadem of France;
I'll either rend it with my nails to naught,
Or mount the top with my aspiring wings,
Although my downfall be the deepest hell. (*The Massacre at Paris* 2.42–47)

It is an "element of exaggeration that characterizes Marlowe's technique" and it "will provide a unifying key" (Levin 1952: xi): the trope hyperbole:

Rather a figure of thought than a figure of speech, it relates Marlowe's speech to his thought, his manner to his matter. It presupposes a state of mind to which all things are possible, for which limitations exist to be overcome. (Levin 1952: 23)

The now obsolete term "overreacher" was taken by Levin from George Puttenham's translation for "hyperbole" in *The Art of English Poesie* (1589): "The figure which the Greeks call *Hiperbole*, the Latines *Dementiens* or the lying figure. I for his immoderate excess call him the overreacher." (*OED* s.v. *overreacher*, n.) For Levin, every one of Marlowe's protagonists is an overreacher (1952: cf. 23); he is

never Everyman but always *l'uomo singolare*, the exceptional man who becomes king because he is a hero, not hero because he is a king; the private individual who remains captain of his fate, at least until his ambition overleaps itself; the overreacher whose tragedy is more of an action than a passion, rather an assertion of man's will than an acceptance of God's. (24)

Levin speaks of "Marlowe's own hyperbolic impetus" (56) and it is this impetus which falls back on him and turns the author of those overreaching tragic heroes into an overreacher himself. As Levin comments: "Nature imitated art so ruthlessly, that Marlowe's life became an Atheist's tragedy (138). Marlowe's life turns into that of a second Icarus who, in his hubris, flies too near the sun with his waxen wings, whom divine and poetical justice let fall deep and who must find his untimely grave in the ocean or in a tavern in Deptford. However, this long way down, this way to destruction, turns out to be a driving force for creation. With regard to *Doctor Faustus*, Levin writes

If hell is destruction, it follows that heaven is creation; and perhaps the highest form of creation is that engendered out of the very forces of destruction, the imagination spanning beyond despair. (1952: 135)

This notion can also be applied to the novels which were selected for this chapter. Their topic is Marlowe-Icarus's downfall and death, and they use this unalterably destructive drive to create their Marlowe. And in creating him as an overreacher, as an amalgamation of the playwright and his characters, they create a representation of the author as character, as a close reading of the novels in the following chapters will demonstrate.

2.2.2 Marlowe as an Amalgam of the Playwright and his Characters

All three novels show their author's approach more or less directly. Prolific English writer Anthony Burgess (1917–1993) was also interested in historical figures. In 1964, on the occasion of Shakespeare's and Marlowe's 400th birthday, he chose the first over the second one and wrote his Shakespeare novel *Nothing Like the Sun* which was followed thirteen years later by the John Keats novel *Abba Abba*. Finally, while he was already dying from lung cancer, Burgess wrote his Marlowe novel *A Dead Man in Deptford* which was published in 1993, four hundred years after its protagonist's death and in the year its author died.⁵⁹ In his *Author's Note* at the end of the novel he describes his motivation, names his sources – the biographies by John Bakeless, F. S. Boas, and H.R. Williamson as well as Charles Nicholl's study *The Reckoning* – and comments on the difference between biographical studies and historical novels: "The scholarly delving will go on, and other novels will be written, but the true truth – the *verità verissima* of the Neapolitans – can never be known. The virtue of a historical novel is its vice – the flatfooted affirmation of possibility as fact." (*DMD* 271f) Burgess takes the freedom to shape history according to his imagination. The novel is divided into three parts: Christopher Marlowe, while still a student in Cambridge, is recruited as a spy and sent to Rheims, Paris, and Flushing, where, in contrast to the historical sources, he is not arrested for coining. There exists also no historical

⁵⁹*A Dead Man in Deptford* was well received by the public. Mike Imlah wrote in a review for the Independent on 16 May 1993: "And we mark the 400th anniversary of his [Marlowe's; T.P.] death with four novels, only one of which – Anthony Burgess's – cares to evoke the immense literary personality and suggest [...] that to pioneer blank verse on the English stage and to write its first four great tragic plays were meaningful achievements." On 26 May 1993, Kevin Jackson reviewed only this novel for The Independent and wrote: "At the very least, it is the best kind of literary compliment and casts as much glory on its author as on its dead recipient." Some years ago, there were also plans to produce a movie; however, they were never realized (cf. Rutter 2012: 137).

proof that he helped to expose the conspirators of the Babington plot which he does in the novel. They plan to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and put Mary Stuart on the throne. In the end, the conspirators are hanged, drawn, and quartered, and Mary Stuart is also executed. Part two of the novel describes Marlowe's vicious life between the theatre and espionage in London and as a member of the School of Night. The last part deals with his last months and murder which seems to result from his relationship with Walter Raleigh. So, Burgess bases *A Dead Man in Deptford* on facts and fills the gaps with his authorial imagination. He constructs 'his' Christopher Marlowe and he is sure that this practice will not end with him because of the singular personality of his protagonist: "That inimitable voice sings on." (272)

This voice was also heard by another author who published her novel *The Slicing Edge of Death* in the same year and who describes her approach most explicitly. Although the subtitle reads *Who killed Christopher Marlowe?*, the English novelist, journalist, and anti-nuclear campaigner Judith Cook (1933–2004) does not really present an alternative to the Coroner's Report. It is still Ingram Frizer who drives the dagger through Marlowe's eye and into his brain, albeit not in self-defence. In her *Author's Note* at the end of the novel, Cook comments on Christopher Marlowe's last hours and death: "[W]e will never really know what happened that Wednesday night in the house of Eleanor Bull on Deptford Strand. I have made what I consider to be an educated guess" (*SED* 231). She put some flesh on the bones of the bare facts, basing it on the playwright's work as a government spy: To avoid imprisonment, perhaps torture and execution, he plans to escape to the Continent and waits at the widow Bull's house on 30 May 1593 for his ship to take sail. However, this turns out to be a trap; as Marlowe dines together with Ingram Frizer, Robert Poley, Nicolas Skeres, and Eleanor Bull – she is given a rather important part in the underworld of the English espionage system – he is put on drugs and killed as he lies defencelessly on the floor. Rather than presenting another man who plays the role of Marlowe's murderer, Cook was interested in the question why Christopher Marlowe was killed: "What might Marlowe have known that would make him a danger to the government?" (*ibid.*) She found her answer in Daphner Du Maurier's *Golden Lads. A Study of Anthony Bacon, Francis and their Friends* (1975). With this biography Du Maurier was the first to shed some light on the elusive figure of

Francis Bacon's older brother Anthony (1558–1601). Anthony Bacon also worked as a spy for Sir Francis Walsingham and lived in France from 1580 until 1592, where he was charged with sodomy in 1586, but never punished because of the intervention of Henry of Navarre. Cook chose to use this apparently well concealed scandal for her novel: "When I noticed that this incident coincided with the time Marlowe was likely to have been at Rheims, I thought it possible he just *might* have known about it." (ibid.) In the novel, when charged with the crime of sodomy by Sir Francis Walsingham's successor – and Bacon's cousin – Robert Cecil, "Marlowe chose to play his only ace" (169). He blackmails Cecil with the threat to make this delicate information known publicly: "[S]hould it be decided to send me to the stake, then I would have little to lose in publishing it abroad that there are others who might well stand beside me in the flames" (170). However, this shot backfires at Marlowe in the end, as Cecil decides that he could become too dangerous for him and must be silenced for good. Judith Cook, in her *Author's Note*, comments on the novel and also provides some information about the historical characters in it. So, she bases the question 'Who?' on the available facts and tries to answer it as best as she can. The question 'Why?' is answered to large part by her authorial imagination. The novel is about 230 pages long and divided into twenty-one rather short chapters, each of them captioned with a quotation, either taken from one of Marlowe's plays – except *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *Tamburlaine, Part 2* – or from works written by one of his contemporaries: William Shakespeare, Robert Greene, Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker as well as from Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. That means that fragments from the past are presented to the reader after every twenty pages. Judith Cook put them together individually for her novel, they can be read as headlines, as mottos for each chapter and the story derives from them. It is chapter nine's quotation from *Tamburlaine Part 1* which could be read as a caption for the whole book: "Still climbing after knowledge infinite, / And always moving as the restless spheres, / Will us to wear ourselves and never rest ..." (78) Moving restlessly, reaching for infinity, may it be immeasurable knowledge, wealth, power or fame, climbing higher and higher, thereby neglecting one's own zenith and then falling a long way down until one's deathly crash on the earth.

Although poet and novelist Liam Maguire's († 2006) novel *Icarus Flying. The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* does not include an *Author's Note*,

there are some features with which the author lays open his approach. *Icarus Flying* already foreshadows his fall and the subtitle *The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* points to an overreacher's tragedy. The three quotations prefixed to the novel were taken from *Doctor Faustus*, Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, and Michael Drayton, *To Henry Renolds, of Poets and Poesy*. All mourn the untimely death of an excellent and learned man. The first quotation also draws a parallel between Marlowe and his Faustus which is stressed by the cover. It shows the well-known seventeenth century woodcut in which Faustus stands in the middle of a magic circle, a book in his left hand, a stick in his right one, and a conjured Mephistopheles kneeling in front of him. Faustus's original head was replaced by a sketch from Marlowe's putative portrait. The novel starts in the year 1588 and depicts the poet, playwright, atheist, and homosexual Marlowe whose writing repeatedly causes trouble. He joins the fraternity of the School of Night, for instance, but the members later think that he parodied their rituals in *Doctor Faustus*. It is not Christopher Marlowe who dies in Deptford in *Icarus Flying*; a Christopher Morley is killed there while Richard Baines murders Marlowe in London and throws him into the Thames at the end of the novel.

The narrators of the three novels also point more or less directly at their authors. In an act of what might be termed indirect metalepsis, the author of *A Dead Man in Deptford* writes himself into the novel:

My own name you will find, if you care to look, in the folio of Black Will's plays, put out by his friends Heming and Condell in 1623. In the comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*, by some inadvertency, I enter with Leonato and others under my own identity and not, as it should be, the guise of Balthasar to sing to ladies that they sigh no more. (DMD 269)

This is the significant clue to the narrator's identity. Until then, the reader only knew his first name: Jack. He also told the reader that he is Christopher Marlowe's contemporary, that he does not know much about him and that he had the chance to "observe[...] him intermittently" (3) during the last years of his short life. With this, he claims authority. At the end of his own life, he decides to write down Marlowe's story. We see him, "reading the above above my raised alemug" (ibid.). He used to be a "small actor and smaller play-botcher" (ibid.) and he and Marlowe had a sexual relationship. When he met him for the first time he was a "boy-actor" with a "chubby boy's face" (ibid.) who played the role of Bel-

Imperia in a performance of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* on the stage of Richard Burbage's *Theatre*. When he took off his costume afterwards, Marlowe was instantly attracted. Later, he also played roles in Marlowe's tragedies; Zenocrate in *Tamburlaine*, then, when he was older, Tamburlaine's son or Wagner in *Doctor Faustus*. He was an actor and spent his life in the world of London's theatres, he even lived for a time with Edward Alleyn and William Shakespeare. But he does not want to write much about the other playwright because "his is another story" (213), told in Burgess's own *Nothing Like the Sun*. In Act 2, scene 3 of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Balthasar enters the stage, his speech begins in line 24. However, the folio names Jacke Wilson, "apparently the actor who played Balthasar" (cf. Bate, Rasmussen 2007: 304), as the footnote tells us. Anthony Burgess was born as John (Jack) Anthony Burgess Wilson. He wrote himself into the novel and thus made himself visible as its author. With his last sentence the first-person narrator takes his farewell: "Let me lie down and, fair or foul reader, say farewell" (*DMD* 269). Burgess writes another paragraph in which he reveals himself as the "true author" (*ibid.*) who "put off this ill-made disguise" (*ibid.*):

The disguise is ill-made not out of incompetence, but of necessity, since the earnestness of the past becomes the joke of the present, a once living language is turned into the stiff archaism of puppets. Only the continuity of a name rides above a grumbling compromise. (*ibid.*)

This name, however, is "fluid stuff" (137), as the fictional Marlowe says. At the beginning of the novel he introduces himself with the words "Christopher. The other name is unsure. Marlin, Merlin, Marley, Morley. Marlowe will do." (9) And the narrator refers to the only surviving signature on Katherine Benchkin's will: "I must guess and suppose as ever, but that Kit was in Canterbury that November is attested by his name in good black ink in the form of Marley." (71) It is only shortly before his death that he seems to be sure about his identity as the playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe which is stressed by a reference to his *Doctor Faustus*: "To be dissolved in elements. To lose all that is or was Christopher Marlowe." (252) The name posterity has agreed on is a construct, like his characters. With the author's revelation at the end, Burgess stresses his own role, his importance, himself as the creator of 'his' Christopher Marlowe. He displays this construction also with his first-person narrator who mocks historicity

and biography. The former actor Jack, who claims to be Marlowe's contemporary, often hints at variants of Elizabethan English, for example, it "is oft often if you will" (3) or "speaks or speaketh" (ibid.). He presents himself as a serious biographer and uses terms like "to believe" (for example 35), "let us have him (for example 36) or "he tolde me" (162) regularly. When he reports an example of one of Marlowe's curses he turns directly to the reader, in an effort to distance himself from his writing: "God and the reader forgive me and the licensers of print; if this should attain print, avert their eyes in Kit's own manner; after all I do but report as to posterity's own Privy Council, this is not my mouth but his." (4) The narrator overemphasizes his assumptions. In the first paragraph of the first part the verb "to suppose" is used six times. The novel starts with the sentence: "You must and will suppose (...) that I suppose a heap of happenings that I had no eye to eye knowledge of or concerning." (3) He met Marlowe in London and could not always observe him: "I must suppose that what I suppose of his doings behind the back of my viewings is of the nature of a stout link in the chain of his being, lost to my seeing, not palpable but of necessity existent." (3) The novel links supposing and seeing; it "begins with the actor narrator playfully exploring the concept of seeing as a means of acknowledging the inability to know everything about Marlowe's whereabouts" (Orchard 2014: 8). His eye is like a camera which is not able to record everything because some things are hidden from view. To complement the movie, the material has to be cut and scenes have to be amended. Part two is also introduced in this way: "I am not, so I suppose I must suppose, yet done with supposing" (*DMD* 117). The last paragraph summarizes the events with the sentence: "So I suppose it happened, but I suppose only." (267)

The *The Slicing Edge of Death* is told by an omniscient narrator, but some of the action is described through the eyes of the young actor Richard Crawley – whose name, in fact, appears in Henslowe's diary – who has just moved to London at the time of Marlowe's last years and who thinks back on those times years later. He could be seen as an authorial figure who describes the events from the vantage point the years which have gone by provide. "It was as if Marlowe could not stop, as if he had bound himself to a wheel which was now rolling away with him." (*SED* 144) It is this impression, which will stay imprinted on his mind: Years later, when he remembers those days at the Rose, Richard Crawley observes that "the most lasting and indelible impression he had made was of a

man driven to an excess of extraordinary conduct by some daemon gnawing from within. He had seemed hellbent on his own destruction” (139). The playing of a role is stressed by Marlowe when he thinks about spying. As playwright and agent, Marlowe leads a double life, but both occupations seem to be linked to one another. He was recruited by Thomas Walsingham as an undergraduate at Cambridge and now from time to time he receives missions from Robert Poley which the latter uses as a means to keep Marlowe under supervision. Poley considers himself to be a professional spy, while “Cambridge spies” such as the playwright in his view are amateurs and only see the work as a “game of chess” (37). As regards to Marlowe, he is right. When he wants to do spy work again, it is because “[h]e need[s] both the money and the amusement the work provided” (63). As he does some courier work in the Low Countries and summarizes reports from agents in Rheims he wistfully remembers his own days there:

Nothing since had quite matched the excitement of taking such risks, of acting so persuasively that he had totally convinced the seminary that he was, indeed, a recusant student bound for the priesthood, able and willing to plot against the Queen. It had been as if he were pitted against masters in a marvellous game of chess. (*SED* 73)

Those are happy memories: “It still amused him to think of the fuss his absences [from Cambridge] had caused” (*ibid.*) and he hopes to evoke them again, but unsuccessfully. The rise in his spirits only lasts a short time and on his return to London from Scotland, he has to admit that he “had done his work well enough but it no longer gave him the old sense of satisfaction” (126). Marlowe spies and is spied upon under the surveillance of Robert Cecil, who seems to play a certain part as his director and who observes his writings more and more critically. He does not hold playwrights nor the theatre in general in high esteem: “I do not like these writers of plays. Dangerous ideas can be promulgated in the name of entertainment.” (67) After *Doctor Faustus* he seems to want to put an end to Marlowe’s creative engagements because “[h]is writings for the stage are beginning to cause concern” (92). Now, it is Marlowe who is being watched. He feels it and he also foresees his fate; he seems to know that he is a character in a story. “When had it all gone sour? It was hard to point to it exactly. Sometimes he felt the ominous signs were there from the time of that fatal duel in Hog Lane.” (127) Marlowe, the tragic hero, must atone for the murder, he must fall and die. And he knows it. Marlowe sees his downfall coming; as he meets with Robert

Poley at Deptford in September 1592, eight months before the fatal day, he tells him: "I fear that those who dine with you or walk with you in a garden, like Jesus Christ at Easter, do not fare well afterwards, Robert; they do not fare well at all." (104) Poley "seemed unusually withdrawn and cool" when they have an appointment some time later "and their meeting left Marlowe with a strange feeling of unease, which he could not explain even to himself" (126). The playwright cannot shake off the feeling of being watched: "It was about this time that he began to suffer from strange fancies." (130) He does not want to admit it to himself at the beginning, but Walsingham sees the signs, too: "Tom's unexpected warning had shaken Marlowe more than he would admit even to himself, shadowing so closely, as they did, his own illogical misgivings." (133) In the end, his fears are confirmed and pull him down on the day he is arrested: "The marvellous energy that had coursed through him during his ride drained suddenly away, leaving him cold. So he had been right after all." (165) Marlowe seems to accept that he is going to die, but he cares more about his work than himself: "I would that I had finished *Hero and Leander* though." (166) He knows that it is in literature that he will live on.

An omniscient narrator also tells the story of *Icarus Flying*, but in the prologue, a Marlowe-Faustus who lies in bed with Helen – not Helen of Troy, but a whore with the same name – wants to retell the last five years of his life as a kind of repentance. He creates the character of the overreacher himself and turns himself into the character of his story: "Were my ambitions so demented? To be no more than my own man, neither master nor servitor. To fashion Icarus's waxen wings and fly beyond ignorance and superstition." (*Icarus* 2) This is stressed, like in Cook's novel, when he talks about his career as a spy while he was still a university student: "I had played my part, not with honour but for honourable reasons, when I was at Cambridge. Now I prefer a different stage for my new role." (26)

Anthony Burgess's Marlowe also plays his roles. When he comes to London, for example, he plays the role of a gentleman and wears a "velvet cap with a pheasant feather" (*DMD* 17). He always stresses that he must not be confused with his characters. "Not my thoughts, though my words" (23), he comments Machevil's prologue in *The Jew of Malta*, for example. "But I see the danger. A man can be identified with his creation. Create a villain and you

become a villain.” (ibid.) And to Raleigh, he says: “I must create men and women and eke create voices for them, but they are not my voices.” (137) For Marlowe writing seems to be a cathartic act. It is important to cleanse the mind of verses (cf. 256): “The poet was chained to his passions, true, but only that he might discharge them in the splendor of language. The lips spoke and the shackles fell. So let it be.” (96) Burgess created an ingenious author who lives for his art: “Words were moreover to him more than human reality.” (3) Marlowe is conscious about the power of his words; his voices “spoke to a world greater than the playhouse, for they were voices that bade us better comprehend the time and question old assumptions” (119). This power derives out of his own being: “Words often came to him thus, they were dealt by a ghost called muse.” (73) So, he develops his blank verse on a tour through Paris (cf. 74f). The novel also points to the survival of his words: “The England that killed Kit Marlowe or Marley or Merlin will define itself in one of its facets by what he wrote before he died swearing.” (269) The pleasure Marlowe takes in words is also mirrored by his author Anthony Burgess who likes to play with them, for example, with his mock Elizabethan English or puns, for example on the nickname Kit: Thomas Walsingham tries to attract Marlowe’s attention repeatedly with “Kit Kit Kit” (49). Indeed, the poet and playwright, his words, voices, and characters have become almost inextricably intertwined and the novel points to that fact: Burgess wrote his own *Faustus* novel featuring Christopher Marlowe who signs a contract with quite a few devils. In the School of Night the focus lies on gaining knowledge; with Thomas Walsingham, it is the satisfaction of his lusts, and Francis Walsingham’s secret service promises money and power. Sometimes there seems to be no difference between Marlowe’s world and hell, as he stresses when he alters a quotation from his *Doctor Faustus*: “Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.” (162) Nicholas Skeres also quotes from the play when he addresses Marlowe for the last time before the latter is murdered: “Ugly hell, gape not, come not, Lucifer.” (267) Marlowe visits Deptford repeatedly shortly before his death and thinks about future literary plans. So, Deptford becomes a place of inspiration. On 30 May 1593, Nicholas Skeres also refers to *The Jew of Malta*: The Jew “[d]ies and is reborn. Plays preach of the resurrection” (254). Barabas’s death paves the way for a new performance, a new reading. And the death of the historical Christopher Marlowe paved the way for future literary plans.

The Slicing Edge of Death not only ends, but also begins with death, with murder – and with a pardon because of self-defence for the murderer. On 18 September 1589, the playwright and poet Thomas Watson killed William Bradley, a landlord's son, in what will later become known as the Hog Lane Fight, which was mentioned in 1.2. Watson's friend and fellow playwright Christopher Marlowe was also involved. On 28 June 1593, Ingram Frizer is pardoned by Queen Elizabeth for the murder of Marlowe. Between these two exact dates, Cook presents her version of the last four years of Marlowe's life, his work as a playwright for Phillip Henslowe's *Rose Theatre* and his other identity as a spy, now in the service of Robert Cecil, Sir Francis Walsingham's successor as Elizabeth's spymaster. After the first half of the chapters, Cook starts to accentuate Marlowe's downfall, although she includes this tendency in his personality from the very beginning. It is inevitable that the novel ends with Marlowe's death. In contrast to the novel's first sentence and its first victim – “There is no reason why anyone, least of all William Bradley, should have known that 18 September 1589 was to be the last day of his life.” (*SED* 1) – the date of Marlowe's death was no coincidence. It has been planned and it was known by a couple of people that 30 May 1593 was to be the last day of Marlowe's life. The novel's last sentence provides some kind of comfort, albeit a cold one: “With the successful conclusion of the Deptford incident, he [Robert Poley] had ensured that Christopher Marlowe would never be heard of again.” (229) This, of course, is not true. *The Slicing Edge of Death* may be framed by two murders, both of which leave the murderers and their allies immaculate, at least before the public eye, because they were found to have acted in self-defence. So they might go on to live their lives as if these incidents never happened. However, these two murders are essential for the novel: With the Hog Lane Fight it starts and with the notorious tavern brawl about the bill at Eleanor Bull's house in Deptford, with Christopher Marlowe's spectacular downfall at the age of only 29, his (literary) afterlife as an overreacher can begin.

The destructive and creative parts merge in the character of this fictional Marlowe. The playwright himself is aware about the two sides of his character, the light and the dark one. When he thinks about his beginnings in London he remembers bright, early days in the city, when there was no “need to turn the destructive side of his personality either outward on his friends and colleagues or

inward on himself” (127). Marlowe is also somebody who hides his cruelty behind a beautiful face and wraps it up in pleasant words. ““Pox worrying you?” enquire[s] Marlowe silkily” (19), for example, when he sees Robert Greene quarrelling with his pregnant lover Emma Ball. In the first chapter, when William Bradley calls Marlowe a “sodomite”, he reacts “with a pleasant smile” and talks “gently” to him, while drawing his sword and slitting his shirt (3). The fact that Marlowe is “a good and fit sword fighter” (4) also fits his temper. The playwright is often presented from other’s point of view, and mostly negatively: William Bradley considers him to be “an unpleasant, smooth-tongued fellow” (2). The actor Simon (historically Thomas) Pope also sees the creative and destructive side of Marlowe’s character, when he describes his personality to the young actor Richard Crawley: “Brilliant, difficult, adder tongued, dominates any company he’s in ...” (16). Pope already puts his focus on Marlowe’s negative qualities, as does Robert Cecil when he instructs his spy Robert Poley to keep an eye on Marlowe:

At best he is hot tempered and quick to fight and I’m told he has become overweeningly arrogant: a dangerous combination. As you see, he dabbles in esoteric studies with Sir Walter Raleigh and his mentor, Harriot. He has a powerful friend and patron in Thomas Walsingham although, since the death of Sir Francis, he no longer has the same influence at Court. Yes, I would like you to make Marlowe your especial charge. (*SED* 38)

Most of the other playwrights, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, William Shakespeare, are presented in a sharp contrast to Marlowe: “His [Shakespeare’s] personality was in direct contrast to that of his rival, Marlowe, for he was pleasant in his manner, soft spoken and modest as to his achievements, yet with a dry wit.” (138) As regards to his rival’s plays, the vain Marlowe cannot stand any comparison; it makes him turn “white with rage” (50). Although they used to be on friendly terms and have shared a room to write in for some time, Thomas Kyd now rather avoids the other playwright’s company: “He talks, especially in drink, of things of which I prefer not to know. [...] I find it frightening – and dangerous.” (44) Richard Crawley is also rather frightened by Marlowe; when the two meet perchance on London Bridge it is observed that “Marlowe still made Richard deeply uneasy” (41) and a few pages later, the young actor feels “[o]verawed by [...] the terrifying Marlowe” (43). Marlowe is hot-tempered and he likes to provoke others, especially when he is drunk. After the plague ended Philip Henslowe organizes a feast for the company and when it nears its end,

apparently “Marlowe’s mood had darkened again”: “He had now reverted to his old habit of throwing out deliberately provocative statements in an effort to goad listeners into some kind of response.” (143) This feast turns out to be the novel’s climax and its peripety, as Marlowe outplays himself in his blasphemies not only in front of the theatre company, but also in front of the spy Richard Baines, whose mission he is well aware of. He is goaded to this outbreak in a way by his present lover, a mysterious man called Hugh, who might work together with Baines. After Hugh blurted out that Marlowe considers St. John to have been Jesus Christ’s bedfellow, he looks “triumphantly across at Dick Baines” (146). On this night, Marlowe signs his death sentence. As regards to death in general, he is very insensitive and provoking. He only laughs about what the dying Robert Greene wrote for him about his sins and punishment and tells the others, who want to pay Greene one last visit: “Oh, he can die without me.” (91) However, later Marlowe admits – albeit only to himself – that his “feeling of malaise” derives from Greene’s death because he misses the quarrels with his rival, and from Watson’s, because he was one of his closest friends (cf. 126f). The reader gets a closer look at Marlowe’s state of mind in the course of chapter fourteen – at his depression, his restlessness, his feeling of being watched, and his worries about his writer’s blockade: Marlowe is “in a state of turmoil” (125) and in a “dark mood, which he now found it almost impossible to shake off” (126). He seems to be moving unstopably in the direction of his death. As mentioned before, Henslowe’s feast at the Rose marks the climax and turning point. Henslowe’s feast, Marlowe’s outer appearance and his part in it can be seen as a direct contrast to the first feast the novel describes, the “splendid party” (6) organized by Marlowe himself in the *Anchor Tavern* at Bankside in 1590 on the occasion of Thomas Watson’s release from prison. The second feast was organized by somebody else and not in a Tavern, but in the *Rose Theatre*, more exactly, on the stage after a performance of *The Jew of Malta*. Marlowe’s singing of Raleigh’s *The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd* gives the impression of a badly played farce. In the following he turns onto the one-way road to destruction (cf. 142f). It is only the whore and mother of Robert Greene’s son Fortunatus, Emma Ball, who sees clearly into his personality. She turns to Marlowe after he insulted her: “She looked deep into his dark malicious eyes, then saw something which made her stop short. ‘You’re afraid, Kit Marlowe. That’s what’s the matter with you, you’re afraid and God keep me

from what it is you fear.” (145) Working as a government spy does not give Marlowe the satisfaction it used to and, above all, this dark occupation, this role-playing, seems to take hold of the other part of his personality, the existence as a writer, and to block his creative energy:

Now, once again he was kicking his heels in London with nothing to do, unable to write and unable to rest. So it was that the chasm opened at his feet and he did not see it. He had always managed, successfully, to keep the disparate parts of his life separate. (*SED* 75)

The lack of inspiration leaves Marlowe more and more desperate, fear turns into blind panic, “in turn fuelling ever more feverish drinking” (130). His despair of never being able to write again is not his only burden; he feels being watched, he is scared of being arrested and to be made accountable for his misdoings. On a visit to Thomas Walsingham he does not want to share his anxieties with his friend, but he tells him about his writer’s block: “I’m restless, restless – you can’t just summon up the muse at will. She has deserted me, it seems, and leaves me idle” (132f). Marlowe can only start writing again after the fateful feast at the *Rose*. It seems that the destructive part of his personality has exhausted itself there; after this climax Marlowe’s fate is sealed. He had to play his role until this evening which seemed to have absorbed all his creativity. Creativity and destructiveness go hand in hand within himself and the latter is also part of his genius; when he is able to write his destructive energy flows in a cathartic act onto the paper and forms his notorious protagonists. After the feast, Marlowe is able to play a new role and restart writing:

During the last few days he had undergone a dramatic change of mood. The daemon, which for months seemed to have been driving him to destruction, appeared suddenly to have left him, and, what was more, he felt his old urge to write flooding back. Ideas, words, lines of verse filled his head as they used to in the old days. Consequently, he had woken on the morning of 30 April full of elation, his head clear and with a strange sense of peace. [...] Best of all, the fitful Muse had finally returned and now all he wanted to do was write, write the long-planned poem of Hero and Leander. (*SED* 151)

Exactly one month before his death, the daemon seems to be replaced by the muse. Marlowe had to leave London and its stages and at Scadbury he experiences a new kind of energy and two ways to use it healthily:

On the morning of 18 May, Marlowe woke early. The poem of Hero and Leander was now absorbing him day and night, driving him so hard that he could scarcely break off to eat; he felt full of energy, energy that needed to be burned away by exercise. (*SED* 164)

However, this peaceful existence in art and nature is only a retarding moment, as Marlowe is arrested on that day and brought back to the city.

It seems that, like his Faustus, Marlowe also signed a contract with the devil. When he is freed from jail and Watson has to remain there, the latter asks: “Why do you always have the devil’s own luck, Kit?” Marlowe replies: “Because I always give the devil his due!” (6) His plays and their protagonists confirm this exclamation, Tamburlaine, Barabas, Faustus, who sells his soul to the devil. When Thomas Kyd calls this a “terrible bargain”, Marlowe answers: “Your soul for all the world’s knowledge? I’d sell mine for that.” (89) He stresses that he neither believes in God nor Judgment, but “[o]nly in the infinite capacity of man” (90). This is stressed again when Marlowe and another spy, Richard Chomley, spend a night of heavy drinking and Marlowe succeeds in “having convinced him, by reasoned argument, that there was no God” (126). Alcohol increases his negative character traits; when he is drunk, he becomes increasingly arrogant, indiscreet, quick to blaspheme, and to start a fight: When he spends some nights drinking with Robin Greene, they start quarrelling and beating a constable (cf. 74f). On another night in a tavern, Marlowe loses all discretion:

[I]nstead of becoming elated by drink, he was first bad tempered, then morose and, finally, plain evil. His talents, he said loudly, were insufficiently appreciated not only in the theatre, but also by those in high places who owed him so much. (*SED* 76)

This lack of discretion goes hand in hand with an appalling arrogance; when others try to warn Marlowe, he only retorts: “No one can touch me.” (89)

Marlowe’s fall is also mirrored in his outer appearance. Judith Cook modelled his looks on the basis of his putative portrait and describes him at the beginning as a naturally good-looking, as “a slender, dark-haired neatly dressed young man” (2). At the feast which he organizes for Thomas Watson Marlowe is presented in more detail and as the contrary of the affective Greene:

He had penetrating dark eyes in a pale, finely boned, intelligent face with a small beard. His hair was silky and well cut and he wore a velvet doublet in the fashionable colour known as ‘tobacco’, slashed with copper silk. His shirt collar, for he wore no ruff, was of the finest white lawn and spotlessly clean. He looked like a court gallant and he immediately dominated the gathering without any of Greene’s affectation. (*SED* 18)

The playwright is not only handsome, he also is well aware of his good, aristocratic looks and he knows that he owes them to some degree to his patron Thomas Walsingham: “He knew he looked well, thanks to Tom’s generosity, and

his clothes contrasted sharply with the shabby garments of the players.” (59) In the course of the novel Marlowe’s downfall is mirrored and enhanced by his outer appearance. He seems to be so engaged with and disempowered by his inner conflicts that he neglects his attire, although he would never lack the money to dress well and expensively. Thomas Walsingham continues to be his patron and goes on to offer to pay for everything he needs. Marlowe may still dominate the gathering in the *Anchor Tavern*, but now for different reasons:

For those who had not seen him for several months, there was a noticeable change in his appearance. The fine lines of his face seemed coarser and there were deep, purple smudges under his eyes. His clothes, usually so elegant and pristine, were soiled and creased, his doublet stained with wine, his shirt collar grey. It was also apparent he was in a foul mood. Adder-tongued, he put down with crushing effect anyone with the temerity to speak to him uninvited. He must, it was thought, have been drinking hard for several days (SED 86).

At the feast at the *Rose Theatre*, Marlowe may be dressed well, but he is looking ill:

He had lost weight and there was a strange, feverish look about him. He was dressed in the height of fashion in a lavishly slashed doublet of mulberry-coloured satin, over the puffed trunk hose favoured by court-gallants, and he wore a pearl in one ear. (SED 140)

This is stressed again towards the end, when Marlowe is described as looking “so strained and pale” (180). It is also interesting, how he appears through Robert Cecil’s eyes, when he is brought to him to be questioned after his arrest at Scadbury on 18 May 1593: “Cecil [...] found Marlowe’s appearance very unlike that he had imagined. The man looked more like a wary scholar than the blaspheming trouble-maker he had been expecting.” (167) The Queen’s spymaster is surprised because he imagined Marlowe to look like the perfect cast for the role of the blaspheming trouble-maker – which he used to fit in but too well. It seems that everything Marlowe writes rubs off on him: At the novel’s beginning, he is already famous as the author of *Tamburlaine* and has written *The Jew of Malta*. He goes on to write *Edward II* and *Doctor Faustus* which is granted much space. On the contrary, when working at Scadbury, he has turned from his blank verse-boasting protagonists to a more subtle genre, poetry, and a Greek myth, the tale of Hero and Leander. With this occupation he starts to resemble the “wary scholar”. The comparison which is made of Marlowe’s dead face and a mask, is essential for his literary afterlives:

Death had smoothed away the lines and blemishes on Marlowe's face, giving it a look of peace it had never worn in life; with its fine bones, firmly marked black eyebrows and fringe of dark beard it looked almost like a mask. (*SED* 216)

It is not unusual to compare a dead man's face to a mask, but in Marlowe's case, this simile emphasises the fact that he was a player from the beginning; firstly, he had chosen his role actively, then he was forced to play his part – and will be in the future. The peaceful mask of death is only a superficial one; it will change again with another person's decision to turn Christopher Marlowe into a fictional character.

It is at the end of the novel, that the connection to the overreacher is made explicitly. The players talk about Marlowe's death and his former lover Jamie comments: "Poor brilliant Kit, [...] to challenge everything, even God, and then be brought down in such a way", to which Simon Pope remarks: "The Greeks called it nemesis, [...] "which, as you know, walks on the heels of hubris." (227) For him, Marlowe's murder was a just act and for Shakespeare it is consoling that he had started writing again: "I'm told he was halfway through a major piece of work at his death. If that is so, then he died as he soared in flight, like a bird on the wing." (228) He was flying high, but he flew too close to the sun and had to fall. "I feel as sure as I am of anything, that he was not marked out for long life. If it had not been now, then it would have come soon enough. He had bound himself to the wheel of fate with his own hands" (*ibid.*), Shakespeare says. The wheel of fate, for the fictional Christopher Marlowe, was turned by the author Judith Cook.

In Liam Maguire's novel, the connection between Christopher Marlowe, his characters, and Icarus is drawn explicitly, not only in the title. When he joins the fraternity of the School of Night, he is baptized again as Icarus: "Icarus you are and Icarus you shall be till Helios' burning orb melts your wings and you fall, like proud Lucifer, to the depths beyond redemption." (*Icarus* 83) As in Cook's novel his downfall is also mirrored in his outer appearance. He turns from a "pretty boy" (2) to a man with a "pox-scarred" face (*ibid.*): "The face that looked out from the fragmented Venice mirror – a remnant from the spoils of a looting expedition by the previous tenant – was aged by rough and lined skin and the pits of dried-out sores." (316) Richard Baines considers this to be the just punishment for his sins:

Sweet judgment of Divinity, how ugly you've become, so scabbed and scarred, you and your fair features, who were so ready to jeer and jibe at my affliction. [...] But you, Marlowe, you chose to fly in the face of God with your bile and canker. Your countless contumacious sins are made manifest in those loathsome sores. (*Icarus* 349)

Like Faustus, Marlowe has to sign the contract with his blood (cf. 35) when he joins the School of Night. In the following, he seems to turn into the scholar, as he starts to write the play, inspired by the fraternity's rituals. When he talks about wealth, he says: "It's all dross. Where are your tomes of learning? [...] One printed page is more precious to me than this lump of a diseased oyster. Give me knowledge and you give me an omnipotence and a dominion that stretches beyond any empire." (85) In his chamber, a ghost in Marlowe's shape appears and warns him about writing *Doctor Faustus*: "Surely Doctor Faustus, unhappily dubbed by you 'lucky', is the reflected image of unfortunate Marlowe?" (267) Shadows begin to populate his chamber at night, while he writes on his play, and the form that resembles himself turns into Faustus. They only vanish when he finishes his play; it seems that with his last sentence, he signed his doom (cf. 270). Others also notice the resemblance between Marlowe and his characters, for example his sister Margaret who watches him reading from *The Jew of Malta*: "And yet she was fascinated by the way Christopher impersonated the characters." (66) Two times, he is compared to Tamburlaine and called "God's scourge" (250) and "scourge of God" (350), respectively. Maguire is surely the one, who most directly stresses the connection between Christopher Marlowe and his characters, above all, Faustus.

One of the few things we can definitely say about Christopher Marlowe is that he was the author of *Barabas*, *Faustus*, *Gaveston*, *the Guise*, and *Tamburlaine*. He has been dead for over four hundred years, but he still speaks to us through his characters. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, Ros Barber chose to write *The Marlowe Papers* in iambic pentameter because she only knew Marlowe's voice from his plays and thought that imitating it would be the closest she could get to him. Through the plays and their characters we can construct a rather solid bridge which connects our time and the sixteenth century. However, as the tendencies in scholarship of the last decades have shown, which tried to explain the characters on the basis of their playwright's biography and the playwright with the help of his creations, there is always the danger that the borders between the historical person Christopher Marlowe and the tragic characters in his plays become blurred.

Now, the three writers Anthony Burgess, Judith Cook, and Liam Maguire made this danger fruitful for their novels. They constructed an amalgamation of the playwright and his characters and thus ‘their’ Marlowe, ‘their’ overreacher, an impersonation of a figure of speech, hyperbole. So, these novels point to the creative representation of the author as language, as text. They use the term “character” in the literal sense of the noun, as a “member of a set of symbols used in writing or printing to represent linguistic elements, as individual speech sounds, syllables, or words; any of the simple elements of a written language, as a letter of an alphabet, or an ideogram” (*OED* s.v. *character*, n.). Roland Barthes in “The Death of the Author” writes that

writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the identity of the body writing (1967/1977: 142).

I would argue that these texts draw on literary theory, but in order to overcome it and to stress the importance of the author. “[I]t is language which speaks” (Barthes 1967/1977) and it is the author who speaks because he is language. They write the playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe into the novel, create a fictional character and present the text as a space, where he and his creations become almost inextricably intertwined. It is often only possible through close reading to determine where the fictional author Christopher Marlowe ends and where a representation of Barabas, Faustus, or Tamburlaine starts. In his article about the postmodern author, Hans Bertens claims that the “argument that authors and readers were ‘text’ did not have much of an impact outside of avant-garde literature and theory” (2019: 189) because the author still “played a central role in the marketing of literature” (*ibid.*). Authors have many opportunities to create their image as “autonomous and creative individuals” (189f), for instance in newspapers, on television, and as the receiver of literary prizes. With the emergence of the internet they were given even more opportunities to meet the still strong interest of the reader in them who could follow them on their social media accounts and keep also updated on their author’s website. “The news of the author’s death, if heard at all, was never taken seriously by the average reader.” (Bertens 2019: 190) The three novels discussed in this chapter show the influence of literary theory and the need to write against the proclaimed disappearance of the author, to make him more visible in the text. Therefore, Burgess, Cook, and

Maguire display their approach to their novels more or less explicitly; in his narrator, Burgess writes himself into *A Dead Man in Deptford* and also the narration of *A Slicing Edge of Death* and *Icarus Flying* points to the presence of an authorial instance. Finally, the fictional overreacher Christopher Marlowe points to the representation of the author as a character in the literal sense, as text. But that does not mean that he vanishes, it makes him ever more visible. Harry Levin wrote that “the highest form of creation is that engendered out of the very forces of destruction” (1952: 135). It was already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter that the novels use the destructive drive of their protagonist’s downfall and death to create their Marlowe as an overreacher. In addition they make the destructive drive of literary theory, which seeks to destroy the author, fruitful for their projects and create an author as character. And this is more than a swan song, “[t]hat dagger continues to pierce, and it will never be blunted” (*DMD* 269). Christopher Marlowe as well as the contemporary notion of an author can never be buried for good.

2.2.3 Gaveston as Marlowe

Stephanie Merritt did not turn Christopher Marlowe into a fictional character; instead, the English journalist and writer (born in 1974) chose to revive the historical Piers Gaveston in her award-winning debut novel, published in 2002.⁶⁰ The following close reading of *Gaveston* shall show that the novel creates its protagonist as a Marlovian overreacher and that it is indebted to Marlowe’s play as well as its playwright.

Merritt picked her narrator also from one of the historical characters surrounding Edward II, the king’s niece Margaret de Clare. Marlowe gives her but a minor role, as the alibi bride Edward II chooses for his favourite, while Merritt turns her into the twenty-five-year-old PhD student Gaby, that is Gabriele Harvey.⁶¹ It is Gaby, who writes down her story after Gaveston’s death. She is the

⁶⁰ *Gaveston* won a Betty Trask Award for debut novels by Commonwealth authors under the age of 35. Stephanie Merritt went to Cambridge where she specialized in medieval and Renaissance literature and thought about going into academia, which she stated in an interview published on her homepage www.sjparris.com (accessed 26 November 2018).

⁶¹ The historical Margaret de Clare (1292–1342) married Piers Gaveston on 7 November 1307; they had a daughter together, Amy de Gaveston, born on 6 January 1312.

niece of media magnate Sir Edward Hamilton-Harvey who was born in Marlow (cf. *Gaveston* 35), employs a secretary called Roger Mortimer, and is married to a beautiful French-Canadian woman called Isabelle. At the novel's beginning, which is set in the year 1999, Edward built the new "Hamilton Harvey Faculty of Cultural Studies" at the old English university where Gaby writes her doctoral thesis. Gaby is a member of St. Dunstan's college named after an Archbishop of Marlowe's birthplace Canterbury from the tenth century. One of Edward's conditions for giving millions of his money to the university was the appointment of his friend Piers Gaveston, an actor-musician-filmmaker-film-theorist, as Professor of Cultural Studies. He is extremely handsome as well as arrogant and people always wonder about his mysterious past and how he came to his current position. Above all Gaby who falls for him in every possible way. She becomes his marionette, tolerates his icy behaviour towards her, and even an anal rape. She ignores explicit hints about his homosexuality, they become a couple, and even engaged. The rug is pulled out from under her when an investigative journalist reveals Edward's and Gaveston's relationship. This, of course, is no surprise at all for a reader who is familiar with English history and/or Marlowe's play. After Piers Gaveston was killed – or committed suicide – in a motorcycle accident and her uncle told her about his and Gaveston's common past, Gaby decides to write down her story.

The only direct reference to Marlowe is made by Piers Gaveston during his speech about culture at the new Faculty dinner:

And is it only culture because it comes from the imagination of a high-minded individual, like *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, or *Dr Faustus* – because it's created to shed light on the human condition – because it's created for Art's sake – because it lifts us out of our miserable lives for a few minutes? [...] What is wanted is not to restore a vanished, or revive a vanishing culture under modern conditions which make it impossible, but to grow a contemporary culture from the old roots.⁶² (*Gaveston* 169, 171)

Piers Gaveston does not want the story of his life to turn out to be an overreacher's tragedy, but a success story. He is vain enough to think that he is the only one who writes it and in this he resembles Christopher Marlowe and his characters the most: "There are no gods, no chance, no Fate, no serendipity. You make your own luck, by force of will and your actions. Anything else is a lie." (245) For him every individual's goal should be to make a work of art out of one's

⁶² With his last sentence Pies Gaveston quotes T.S. Eliot.

life. As an actor he once played the part of Dorian Gray. Then he turned to directing films “[b]ecause you get to be God, for however long that film lasts. It’s a world you’ve made. [...] That’s what I want life to be like.” (ibid.) He wants to write the screenplay for his own life, but he does not grant this to others either; he wants to direct them, to control them, to make them play the parts he chose for them. Playing God not only means to have full control over your life and others, but also to choose your ending:

Well, that’s the ultimate power, isn’t it – to choose the ending. Not having taken that out of your hands. [...] I don’t find death frightening, but I’m terrified of the idea that it might happen before I’m ready. [...] As long as you have the choice of when and how, nothing can frighten you. (ibid.)

For such a vain man as Piers Gaveston, this must mean that he will die sooner than later because his beauty will not last until old age and with it he would lose his ultimate means of control. Maybe he plans to die at the peak of his success, however, in the end he chooses to cut short his downfall.

Piers Gaveston’s ability to control others, to turn them into characters in his own story, is shown best in Gaby and Sir Edward Hamilton-Harvey. Coming from a wealthy family, her father dead, her mother living in France with her new partner, Gaby is in no hurry to finish her PhD on “twelfth-century chronicles of the Arthurian legend” (24). On the contrary: “After six years, the university had become the only home I knew.” (25) After her student years she went on to write a thesis on the Arthurian legend, she has been working on it for three years now and is theoretically expected to finish it in the near future. However, as she has no prospect of a job at the university, as she cannot imagine anything else to do, and as she does not need money, she delays her work. Her situation and her love for her work, in combination with the fact that she seems to be a heavy smoker – as most of the novel’s characters – is presented early in the novel and thus stressed. But the reader gets a first glimpse at her looks rather late, after 80 of 386 pages. She seems to become aware of herself only after she was introduced to Piers Gaveston and describes what she sees in a mirror: She is

tall and angular, with small breasts and bony hips, but long legs, and thick dark hair; a thin face, barely made up [...] with dark angry eyes and fierce brows in need of tidying. Not *classically* pretty, my mother used to tell me, but *striking*, which I always imagined was a nice way of saying not pretty at all. (*Gaveston* 80)

Gaby does not seem to care much about her outer appearance and style which is stressed by her coming to one of her uncle's parties in "jeans, trainers and a scuffed leather jacket" (65). The contrast between Gaby and Piers, concerning their looks and the importance they attach to it, is exemplified when they are supposed to pose together in front of a press photographer. Gaveston is obviously not happy with the young woman's outer appearance and asks her to comb her hair. As she does not have a hairbrush with her "Piers pulled a tortoiseshell comb from his back pocket and held it out to me. Then he pushed his own hair from his face with both hands, dipping his head so that it swung back into place – a practiced gesture" (87). In the course of the novel, the way he treats her develops from a matter of fact-style to real contempt. Gaby is no fool; she sees clearly that "there was also something strangely perfunctory about the way he dealt with me. As if it were somehow compulsory" (137). After they have not seen each other for three months and now meet coincidentally in the streets, for example, Piers tells Gaby: "I need you to come to a film premiere with me next week. Wednesday.' It was as matter-of-fact as his dinner invitation had been; he appeared to realise this, and back-tracked slightly. 'I meant to say – I would *like* you to come with me.'" (200) His anal rape after the film premiere is a real act of sadism. And Gaby also realizes this: "I had seen his eyes that night, and knew that he had meant what he did to be an act of cruelty and a flexing of power. He had meant to humiliate me, to punish me" (239). However, on the very next page she is able to say: "He stood there in motorbike leathers and carried a helmet under each arm, and he was heartbreakingly beautiful." (240) Gaby closes her eyes before the truth, she seems to be totally under his control and almost possessed by him:

But Piers Gaveston, I reflected, seemed like someone who determined his own story. I wanted to be part of it. I wanted his energy, his unassailable self-possession and certainty and boldness; his irreverence and refusal to tout for anyone's approval. (*Gaveston* 99f)

When he tells her his weird conditions for a kind of relationship – "You don't know me. I don't know you. It's best like that. If this is going to work. [...] I can't be *involved*" (232) – she accepts them without questioning their nature. She changes her looks for him, gets a new haircut, starts to wear make-up, works out and buys fashionable clothes:

Little by little, usually indirectly and without offering anything in return, Piers was shaping me into someone befitting his persona; and I found myself increasingly anxious

to please, to make myself worthy of his attention in the face of such determined competition. (*Gaveston* 265)

This strange relationship is very unhealthy for the young woman and she knows it:

Happy was not quite the right word. I was distracted, disoriented, excited, edgy, exhilarated, disappointed, often despairing; in a permanent state of thrill and fear of falling, as if I were all the time at the top of a ski run. But that was what I had wanted, wasn't it? At least I was living. (*Gaveston* 263)

This last sentence sounds very resigned. Gaby seems to accept everything, as long as she can call herself Piers's girlfriend. She dares seldom to call him by his first name (cf. 233) and is satisfied with what is rather termed mating than lovemaking. After the newspaper's revelations about Edward and Piers's relationship Gaveston decides to leave the country and they meet for one last time. As Gaby realizes that she has run out of cigarettes, he lights one for her, taking it between his own lips: "It was perhaps the most intimate moment that had ever occurred between us." (317) The cigarette which first touched his lips and then hers – the fact that Gaby considers this to be their "most intimate moment" ultimately makes clear her part in this farce, her naiveté, and the plain foolishness of this otherwise intelligent young woman.

According to history and Marlowe's play, the one who is mostly controlled by Gaveston is Edward II, and the novel includes this relationship, as her uncle tells Gaby:

He [Piers Gaveston; T.P.] became the most important thing in my life. I'd have given him anything, and the people close to me could see that. And it upset them – they worried that I was being used and manipulated, and I suppose it made them jealous, too. (*Gaveston* 368)

Gaby once makes a sarcastic comment on Edward's taste for people and says that "he was awed by these people just as he was awed by artists and musicians, by all the things he couldn't comprehend. It was almost touching" (163). This relationship started on the basis of blackmailing. In 1993, six years earlier, Piers and Edward met in New York at a party Edward gave and to which Piers was not invited, but went nonetheless. Soon after, Piers killed a journalist who was about to publish some secrets about Hamilton-Harvey's past arms deals and blackmailed him. "He wanted to be successful", Edward says: "He thought he had a right to *be* someone, you know? To be more than he was born to, but he didn't much like

having to work for it. And he wanted me in his debt so far that I couldn't leave him." (337) So, Edward had ambivalent reasons for bringing Gaveston back to England from his 'exile' in Argentina. For Piers, this new position turns out not to be what he wanted in the end, he fears to be controlled too much. When he confides in Gaby and tells her about his past and his feelings he has to admit: "Oh, this is all Edward and George's project, I just do as I'm told." (122)

To do, what one is told – this is something an overreacher cannot bear. His character is also mirrored in his looks, as well as in his fall. While the first entry is his in Marlowe's play, Piers Gaveston is introduced quite late in the novel, on page 71, at one of Edward's parties in the gallery in St. James's Park on a damp March evening. He appears to be more like a God than a human being:

It is almost impossible to describe the effect of looking unexpectedly at real beauty, except that it makes you gasp aloud, and catch your breath over again, and stare as if you could fasten the image on your retina in case it should disappear as surprisingly as it appeared. I nearly choked on my cigarette. The man who had spoken was exceptionally beautiful. He was tall, taller even than my uncle, and lean; he stood confidently, legs slightly astride, hands tucked into the back pockets of his jeans. His hair was dark blond, and cut to fall loosely over his face. The lines of his sharp cheekbones and jaw formed a perfect parallelogram; his lips were straight and thin and his skin lightly tanned, with a faint splattering of freckles over his fine nose. It was a hard face, symmetrical, a touch haughty. He looked at me, twisting one corner of his mouth into a half-smile, [...] His eyes were the green of water, and his teeth astonishingly white. (*Gaveston* 71f)

This unearthly image is stressed on a tour through the new university: "Sunlight slopped through the glass dome to dance off his hair, throwing a fuzzy aureole around him" (103). That there is also a dark side to such shining beauty is described by Gaby's supervisor George Fenton:

It's an odd thing, isn't it – beauty? [...] Too much of it can be more of a curse than a blessing. I mean real beauty – the rare, exceptional kind that Piers Gaveston has. *For such, being made beautiful over-much, lose loving kindness...* [...] He works a kind of magic. But I wonder what it must be like from his side. [...] Well – to have borne that all your life. To have learned that your face outshines everything else about you – and that it has this extraordinary power to persuade people to almost anything you want – it must be very dangerous. You'd take for granted getting your own way, I imagine. And how you must fear losing it! (*Gaveston* 198)

The quotation is taken from W.B. Yeats' *A Prayer for my Daughter* (1921), but it is not quoted correctly, but rather a summary of some lines. The object of beauty here is a girl/woman and it seems strange and almost burlesque that in the novel the looks of a man are stressed and discussed in such length, at least at first glance. Gaveston's outer appearance is his currency, his way to success, to power, and control and these unearthly good looks contribute to increase the tragic of his

fall. When his affair with Edward becomes publicly known, he loses them and appears “etiolated; hollow-cheeked, wild-eyed and unshaven” (310), as well as “more human, lacking the carapace that always held people at a distance. The hard glitter in his eyes was not there” (315).

“*He above the rest / In shape and gesture proudly eminent / Stood like a tower*” (81) – the description of Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* comes to George Fenton’s mind when he thinks about Piers Gaveston. And he is indeed a devilish character, most in love with himself and enervating vain on the verge of embarrassment. At Edward’s party, for example, he tosses “his hair like a race horse” (81) and then looks around to see if he gets attention. There is always discussion about his age, which is officially thirty-three, but he must be around forty which he does not want to hear. Of course, he owns a special motorbike: “1957 Harley Sportster – first year they made this model. Isn’t she beautiful? A bit extravagant, really [...] But I think it suits me, don’t you?” (142) Although being the new professor of Cultural Studies, he is seldom at university, but mostly in London and seen regularly on television, which better suits his character. He tells Gaby: “I’ll make a programme about almost anything if it means I get my own television series” (249). Probably the best example for his mocking cruelty is the rape scene: After he has forced her to anal sex, Piers finds out that Gaby is bleeding and leaves the room laughing (cf. 235). Despite this incident, Gaby remains sexually attracted to him, but they only spend a few nights together. Edward later tells her: “Pierce wasn’t interested in sex, not really, not for his own sake. But it was his currency, I suppose, and its value increased the more he withheld it. It was his way of reminding you that he was the one in control.” (366) He is a heavy smoker and uses cocaine, but he does not drink alcohol because he fears to lose control. Many of the other characters try to warn Gaby of Piers, like Edward’s wife Isabelle: “Piers Gaveston is dangerous. He has a dangerous influence, and he is very ambitious. [...] He is in love with himself, and people who get involved with him tend to end up –’ she hesitated. ‘*Damaged.*’” (146) Even after she has been “damaged” by Piers, Gaby lets herself be controlled by him, she accepts him the way he is:

But that was him, I was beginning to understand; this intractable solipsism and self-hunger. There was no *kindness* in Piers; there was a latent malice, certainly, but that was not so striking as this absence of kindness, this failure to take even a polite interest in the lives of those around him. (*Gaveston* 261)

His beauty and his ability to control those around him are more of a burden than a bliss for Gaveston: “I’m so dissatisfied always” (259). He always has to reach for more, to fly higher, until he must fall. His ultimate goal is “to be famous” (354), while a character in the novel, who does not stand under his spell, considers him to be only “an over-reaching little catamite” (383).

Lisa Hopkins criticised the novel because, in her opinion, it

is entirely unselfconscious about its own indebtedness, to a degree which at times borders on the ludicrous – it is a bit rich that no one in a department of literature should ever for a moment suspect that a character called Piers Gaveston might be homosexual, and I also cannot credit that the revelation of a public figure’s homosexuality would cause such a devastating public reaction in London in the twenty-first century (2006: 293).

I think, in this argumentation, the starting point is wrong because our reality and history and a novel’s reality and the past its characters know do not have to be congruent. *Gaveston* shows its indebtedness to Marlowe, but not on the story’s level. An author’s general indebtedness to intertextuality is mirrored in Gaby’s special relationship with the past. When she visits the Abbey in Glastonbury together with Piers, she wants to feel the *genius loci*, as she calls it, she wants to lift the veil of the present:

I put out a hand and laid it against the stone, running my fingers over the texture, imagining I might absorb some of its echoes, and closed my eyes. This was a ritual I had learned from George, pure superstition, we knew, but I had come to believe in it; a means of bridging the past. (*Gaveston* 243)

The past is where she lives most of the time; she has been stuck at her university for six years and occupied herself with history, with the Arthurian myth:

That’s why I do what I do – because history makes you feel safe. The stories are written, they don’t change. I’ve been afraid of change, I suppose, because I always want to see the whole story. But you can’t live in the past – you have to live with it. Experience – all the stupid little things that we blunder into – we have to make stories of it, otherwise where’s the sense? (*Gaveston* 384f)

It is the author’s task to make this debt fruitful, to “understand [...] that the present doesn’t always come to displace the past but to build on it” (385).

Gabriele Harvey is the female form of the Renaissance writer Gabriel Harvey who also commented on Marlowe’s death, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. As the novel’s narrator, she writes down her comment on Gaveston’s death, “the story of a man I once knew, unlike anyone else, and I’m writing it because now, finally, I think I have understood” (6). Again, it is Harry Levin’s

argument about creation engendered out of destruction which is mirrored here. Stephanie Merritt also tried to make the author more visible in the text. She chose a first-person narrator who states in the novel's frame how she approaches her project:

I must begin with my own. It starts nearly two years ago, on a bright, freezing January day in a fenland town, before Edward's overtures, before Piers came out of exile, before I became, unwittingly, part of their story. (*Gaveston* 7)

In writing down the story from her point of view, she points to an author's subjectivity; Gaby creates her own overreacher. She, as the novel's author character, writes herself into it and takes over control from the other authorial figure, Gaveston. So the author, as in the preceding three novels, is represented as language, as text. Christopher Marlowe is not written directly into the novel, but merges with Gaveston. As an authorial character and as an overreacher Gaveston points to his other author Marlowe. So, through a character from one of his plays, Stephanie Merritt created also a fictional Christopher Marlowe. With the construction of Marlowe-Gaveston as an overreacher she also points to the creative representation of an author as character.

2.3 "You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute": Marlowe and the Theatre of Espionage – the Author as (Secret) Agent

"a sort of Elizabethan James Bond"
Lisa Hopkins

2.3.1 Introduction

Agent. Informer. Intelligencer. Spy. All these terms refer to somebody who has been employed by a government or official body to observe people or places, to collect information, also to provoke certain actions – all the while acting secretly and never revealing his true identity and motivation. He is an actor in the theatre of espionage and his stage is the world, where only a few people were chosen to be allowed to read the script and to know the difference between fiction and reality. The others do not have any choice; they (un-)consciously play along. The playing of a role is also referred to in *Edward II*. In scene 5, Spencer Junior advises Baldock to "cast the scholar off" (*Edward II* 5.31) and to adopt the ways of court gentlemen: "You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute, / And now and

then stab as occasion serves.” (*Edward II* 5.42f) These features could also be applied to the spy.

Espionage looks back on a long history. Wesley Britton, in his study *Beyond Bond. Spies in Fiction and Film* (2005), puts together spy-oriented fiction, films, and facts from over a century; at the beginning, he retells an anecdote: The CBS *Lux Radio Theatre* broadcast from Hollywood presented an audio adaptation of a successful movie each week. On 13 December 1937, it was Alfred Hitchcock’s film *The 39 Steps*, an adaptation of John Buchan’s 1915 novel with the same title. A special guest was invited: Major C.E. Russel of U.S. Army Intelligence. Film director and host Cecil B. DeMille asked the Major about the qualifications for a good spy and he answered that “the requirements hadn’t changed much since biblical times. Just like Moses, modern spymasters send out those trained in observation and memory, and gifted with descriptive skills” (Britton 2005: 2). The Bible, Homer’s *Iliad*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, or Jonson’s *Volpone*; all include instances of spying: the spy Dolon is murdered by Odysseus, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern spy on Hamlet, and Sir Politic Would-Be observes his surroundings in Venice (cf. Hepburn 2005: 18). “Literature and spying have a long intertwined lineage”, writes Allan Hepburn in his monograph *Intrigue. Espionage and Culture* (2005: 18). However, spy fiction is a relative new narrative genre, which developed mainly in Britain and the U.S.A. and which always adapts and transforms as an answer to the political, historical or cultural changes in our society.⁶³ James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Spy* (1821) marks its beginning in the nineteenth century and in Britain its popularity grew with the increasing fear of anarchism, labour violence, and foreign invasion. Against the backdrop of World War I, the heroic spy entered the world of literature, usually an amateur who did not belong to a professional organization, and who had to act against international rivalries and conspiracies “aimed at destroying the British and American way of life” (Cawelti, Rosenberg: 1987: 40). John Buchan’s *Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) is considered to be the first modern spy story. Facing the Great Depression and rise of fascism in the 1930s and anxieties about a new war, new kinds of heroes, villains and adventures were created. Eric Ambler and Graham

⁶³ In their fundamental study *The Spy Story* (1987), John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg trace the evolution of this popular genre until the 1980s. The following short historical overview is based on chapter two, “The Spy Story’s Story: A Brief History”.

Greene influenced the genre until the 1950s: They “transformed the spy story from a heroic adventure into a more complex and ironic tale of corruption, betrayal, and conspiracy” (1987: 46). After World War II, new fears were created by the Cold War and the nuclear bomb, and Ian Fleming’s James Bond entered the stage, the professional spy who has to defeat an arch villain. Later, spies turned into aging bureaucrats and antiheroes, like John le Carré’s George Smiley, who must fight enemies within their own organizations. The Cold War ended, but the spy story remained popular. Especially after 9/11, it gained a new topicality, reflecting the fear of terror and other indefinite dangers:

Now, unlike previous eras, the twenty-first century began with all aspects of spying now an integral part of our evening news, entertainment, and our history. From the ridiculous to the terrifying, espionage had become intertwined with nearly every aspects of our lives. (Britton 2005: 233)

These “aspects of our lives” also include espionage and writing. In his study *Espionage in British Fiction and Film since 1900. The Changing Enemy* (2015), Oliver S. Buckton focuses on political, literary, and cultural influences on the genre. He points out its association with writing and literature and the tradition of the writer-spy, like Christopher Marlowe (2015: 31). Former spies started to write and writers were recruited as spies because of the parallels between the two professions: “It may seem that novelists seemed to possess a particular skillset – including powers of observation, insight into character and motivation, communication and language skills, and even an ability to fade into the background” (xvii). Christopher Marlowe is said to have worked for Elizabeth I’s secret service and some consider this work to be the reason for his untimely death at the age of 29. Of course, his life as an alleged agent provides plenty of inspiration for authors to write their own spy thrillers featuring Christopher Marlowe. Indeed, academic writing and popular fiction have not only focused on the relationship between Marlowe and Shakespeare and that between the poet and playwright and his characters. A third major topic is that of the spy and the relationship between theatre or writing and espionage. We know for sure that the historical Christopher Marlowe was a poet and playwright; however, apart from this ‘official’ identity, there are some traces for an ‘unofficial’ one: the homosexual, the atheist – and the spy. All of these identities appeal to people of the twentieth and twenty-first century. Lisa Hopkins, in her first Marlowe

biography *Christopher Marlowe. A Literary Life* (2000), introduces him as “a sort of Elizabethan James Bond” (2000: 1). Earlier, Thomas Dabbs commented on the trend to this comparison:

The understanding of Marlowe as a “secret agent”, for instance, although based on intriguing evidence of his service for the queen and his associations, seems colored by a modern understanding of espionage through fictional characters like James Bond. (1991: 138)

This popular trend apparently also influenced scholars as the following examples show: In *The Reckoning. The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (1992/2002), Charles Nicholl presents Marlowe as an intelligencer and tries to reconstruct the underworld of crime and espionage in sixteenth-century London. Roy Kendall wrote the first biography of Marlowe’s nemesis Richard Baines in *Christopher Marlowe and Richard Baines. Journeys through the Elizabethan Underground* (2003). Writing and espionage are even linked in the title of Park Honan’s 2005 biography *Christopher Marlowe. Poet and Spy*. In an essay, David Riggs points to the parallels between the two: “Poets and intelligence agents had special skills in the decoding and re-coding of texts; they shared a proficiency for wordplay, the various species of allegory, and veiled allusions.” (2006: 219) Charles Nicholl chose a sentence by John Le Carré as one of the two quotations which prefix his study: “Espionage is the secret theatre of our society.” This connection is also made a topic of discussion in the four novels which were chosen for this chapter. All four novels are dealing with the investigation into a murder. In the first two, Marlowe investigates; in the other two Marlowe’s own death is the matter of investigation. In M.J. Trow’s series *Dark Entry* (2011; ten books of this series have been published so far), an Elizabethan Christopher Marlowe investigates his friend’s murder. In Robert Olen Butler’s Christopher Marlowe Cobb-series, starting with *The Hot Country* (2012; four books have been published so far) a twentieth century reincarnation of Marlowe is recruited as a spy. The other two novels ask: Why was Christopher Marlowe killed? Robin Chapman’s *Christoferus or Tom Kyd’s Revenge* (1993) and Dieter Kühn’s *Geheimagent Marlowe. Roman eines Mordes* (2007) offer their version of events concerning Marlowe’s death. All of them intertwine the connection between writing and espionage in their construct of Christopher Marlowe. The spy novel, it is repeatedly argued, not only answers to the historical, political, and cultural circumstances; it also draws on the

inhabitants of societies. It “allows us to pierce deeply into ourselves” (Cawelti, Rosenberg 1987: 78):

Yet aside from this glamorous portrayal in popular culture, the spy’s fraught relationship to the establishment s/he serves and sense of personal expendability may function as an often dystopian mirror of the individual in modern and postmodern society. (Buckton: 2015: xix)

Thus, I would argue, writing cannot only provide information about espionage, but also vice versa: Through the lens of espionage it can also be possible to get to know more about writing, about the author.

2.3.2 In Search of Identity

“An Elizabethan mystery featuring Christopher Marlowe”, can be read on the Crème de la Crime-edition of *Dark Entry*, the first part of Meirion James – short M.J. – Trow’s Kit Marlowe series. Starting in 2011, the British history teacher and author (born in 1949) has already published ten historical mysteries with the playwright spy as their protagonist so far.⁶⁴ The books are well written and an exciting read, most of them rather short with around 200 pages. However, they convey the feeling that Christopher Marlowe could easily be substituted for another historical character – at least at first.⁶⁵ The following analysis attempts to show why Marlowe is the most meaningful choice for Trow’s historical mystery series. For this project and especially this chapter, it is worth taking a closer look at his Marlowe because the author is – as far as I can see – the first one who does not make the events in Deptford a subject of discussion in one way or another, but who presents a young Christopher Marlowe. The time of *Dark Entry* is the year 1583, Marlowe is at Cambridge as a Parker scholar and student of divinity and

⁶⁴ Trow is an avid writer, who has published around 25 books, and he is the author of three main series, one featuring Inspector Lestrade, based on the character, who appears in some of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes-stories, the other teacher and amateur detective Peter Maxwell and the ten novels of the third Kit Marlowe: *Dark Entry*, (2011), *Silent Court* (2012), *Witch Hammer* (2012), *Scorpion’s Nest* (2013), *Crimson Rose* (2013), *Traitor’s Storm* (2014), *Secret World* (2015), *Eleventh Hour* (2017), *Queen’s Progress* (2018), and *Black Death* (2019).

⁶⁵ “An Elizabethan mystery featuring Giordano Bruno”, for example, would fit as well for S.J. Parris’s thriller series about the Italian philosopher and spy Bruno during his time in England. A similar avid writer as M.J. Trow, S.J. Parris has published five Giordano Bruno-novels so far: *Heresy* (2010), *Prophecy* (2011), *Sacrilege* (2012), *Treachery* (2014), and *Conspiracy* (2016). For this series, the British writer Stephanie Merritt, author of *Gaveston*, with which I deal in my chapter 2.2, uses the pen name S.J. Parris.

about to take his Bachelor's degree. He plans to stay at Corpus Christi College to study for his M.A..⁶⁶ It shows the playwright in the making, who almost involuntarily plays the part of a detective as he investigates the murders of some of his closest friends. Only at the end of the novel is he recruited as a spy by Francis Walsingham. Marlowe considers it to be his duty to prove that one of his closest friends since childhood, Ralph Whittingside, a gentleman's son, who once saved him from drowning, did not commit suicide, but was murdered. Soon, more of his close friends die under dubious circumstances. In his investigations and the identification of the murderer, Marlowe is helped by his mentor Roger Manwood, Justice of the Peace, and the Elizabethan magus Dr. John Dee.

The Cambridge divinity scholar Christopher Marlowe is described as an outstanding and notorious person. His eyes catch people's attention most of the time; they are described as "liquid" (*DE* 8), "smouldering dark" (16) or just "dark" (39), and "hypnotic" (16), with "a look that would outstare the devil" (*ibid.*) and they are part of an "enigmatic face" (124), a face "no one can read" (61), with a fitting "sardonic, unreadable mouth" (16). However, his eyes also show "honesty [...] and trustworthiness that perhaps few others could see" (184), as the tavern girl Meg Hawley observes. Maybe, it is this young woman, who offers the best description of his appearance:

But Marlowe was always different. There was something dangerous, something cold, something indefinable about Marlowe, and she'd no sooner call him Christopher than fly to the moon and back, still less Kit as his friends called him. (...) The first time she had seen Marlowe, three years ago now, when he came to the town, she was drawn to him and repelled at once. He was handsome, but not in an approachable way (...) But Marlowe made her feel like a child; there was something timeless about him, something old looked out of his eyes. He was always friendly, always polite. (*DE* 15f)

With this description of the "timeless" and "old" Marlowe, the novel could refer back to itself and point to the fact that a historical person from the past was given an afterlife as a character in this work of fiction. As the young man is in search of his identity, his author seems to try different identities for him on his way to

⁶⁶ This is historically incorrect, as Christopher Marlowe took his BA as 199th of 231 graduates on Palm Sunday, 12 April 1584. It might be possible, that he had started to work as a spy earlier, because, as a BA-student, he had already been absent from College two times, between July and August 1582 and from April until June 1583 (cf. 1.2). In *Black Death*, the series' last novel so far, Marlowe investigates Robert Greene's death in 1592, and as the novels' action unfolds chronologically, Trow has not yet reached the year which is the most important for the other writers who turn Marlowe into a fictional character: 1593. However, he seems to be on his way and would be logical to assume that he will let Marlowe be murdered because of his espionage activities.

construct his Marlowe. The Cambridge student appears as a scholar in his grey fustian, which he changes for a black and scarlet roisterer's doublet and a colleyweston cloak when he leaves Corpus Christi College to play another part. He is a heavy drinker and frequently visits the town's pubs, the *Swan* or the *Blue Boar*; he is a "glib talker" and a "gambler who always won" (17). His friends call him Kit, those who do not like him call him Machiavel, and he seems to be like a father figure to most of the students – especially to his closest friends, the other Parker scholars – he is the one they look up to, and not only because he is older than them (cf. 9).⁶⁷ "He has a fine brain", his teacher Michael Johns states. "One of the finest I've come across." (64) And his mentor Roger Manwood tells his friend, the magician Dr. John Dee: "There's no one like Kit Marlowe. Mark my words, John, that man has greatness in him", to which Dee replies prospectively: "Or a short end" (134). Bits and pieces of Marlowe's future self – the self we have come to know – and his works to come are strewn throughout the novel. So, his alleged homosexuality is hinted at several times and he is called an "over-reacher" (63) by the old Dr. Norgate, Master of Corpus Christi College, who never gets his name right and calls him Morley or Marley. "Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?" (17). This rhetorical question from his future fragmentary poem *Hero and Leander* Marlowe asks the tavern girl Meg Hawley after she confided her love for the gentleman's son and scholar Ralph Whittingside in him. And he repeatedly tells his friends that "the only real sin was ignorance" (for example 17), thereby pointing to Machevil's Prologue in *The Jew of Malta*, he will compose some years later: "I count religion but a childish toy / And hold there is no sin but ignorance." (*The Jew of Malta* 14f) It seems, on the one hand, that the foundation for Christopher Marlowe's future theatrical career is already laid within him; on the other hand, verses like these point again to his author M.J. Trow, who used them for his characterization and construction of his protagonist. References to Marlowe's future in the world of Elizabethan theatre are given ample space. When asked by his teacher Michael Johns what he wants to do with his live, he answers: "The theatre [...] Drama. Poetry. Air and fire. *That's* the coming thing." (*DE* 10) In comparison to Dr. John Dee, young Marlowe sees himself as a fellow magician, as "a conjuror of a different sort, playing people and words off against

⁶⁷ Marlowe came to Cambridge at the age of 17 which means he was about three years older than most of the other scholars (cf. 1.2).

one another to keep ahead of the game of life” (212). When Lord Strange’s Men visit Cambridge, he introduces himself to the players to show them his *Dido*-manuscript: “Yet he was drawn to the theatre like a moth to a flame.” (151)

Marlowe is successful: The king player Ned Sledd attests him: “Never seen a metre quite like it before. A mighty line, sir, a mighty line” (218), quoting a future acknowledgment by Ben Jonson. As Sledd is looking for a new playwright, he invites the student to join Lord Strange’s Men and come with them to London. However, after the riot that broke out during their performance at Cambridge and the following fire, which burnt down all the props, Marlowe seems to consider this incident as a bad omen and is no longer sure, what he wants. He tells Dr. Dee: “I don’t write plays [...] I am a poet, at best. I saw what happened to Lord Strange’s Men. A theatrical life is not for me.” (212) With calling himself a “poet, at best”, he could refer to his translations of Ovid. And to Ned Sledd’s offer, he answers: “All right, but I’m not a playwright [...] I never make promises I can’t keep.” (218) On the road, at the very end of the novel, Marlowe finally meets Francis Walsingham, who has been in Cambridge under a false identity for a while to watch him. He appears for the first time after the first half of *Dark Entry* when he offers two of Marlowe’s fellow Parker scholars a drink at the *Brazen George* one night and asks around about Marlowe. He is dressed expensively and does not seem to look like the usual visitor of an inn: “He wore a doublet and colleyweston cloak of deep black and his gloves were of velvet with gold threat.” (119) Furthermore, a “plumed hat” (ibid.) matches his outfit. He introduces himself to Marlowe’s friends as Francis Hall, he seems to be kind and tries to gain their trust with references to his own time as a student at Cambridge.

Francis Walsingham is the master of spies and might also be an author figure. It is not clear, when he heard about Marlowe or who told him about the student; he appears suddenly at a Cambridge inn, where he does not seem to fit in. He makes inquiries about Marlowe, seems to observe him, and collects further information. Walsingham influences the action because it is his black stallion Marlowe ‘borrows’ to chase the murderer of his friends (cf. 182). He sees him riding his horse, but he does not seem to be annoyed and does not take action (cf. 188). When they meet on the novel’s last pages, Marlowe sees his equal in the older man and sees his future in him because Walsingham’s eyes “burned as dark and enigmatic as his own” (219). It might also be said that he sees himself in the

other's eyes, that he recognizes himself as his author's creation. Here, the world of the theatre and the theatre of espionage become intertwined. Walsingham laughs when Marlowe addresses him as "the spymaster", and says: "Ah, you playwrights [...] Always the dramatic." (219) The head of the secret service tells Marlowe that his work as a secret agent would not mean he had to give up everything else: "I see no reason, Master Marlowe, why Her Majesty's business could not be fitted in around your second degree and your writing for the theatre, if you wish. After all, God gave us twenty four hours in any day." (220) In fact, a secret agent needs an 'official' identity to better cover up his secret affairs. Francis Walsingham makes Christopher Marlowe an offer he cannot reject, although the novel leaves his answer open: "The pay's not good, Marlowe [...] But I can guarantee you a life like no other." (219) Indeed, it will be "a life like no other" Marlowe is going to lead, an afterlife as the protagonist of M.J. Trow's series. With the novel's last sentences, Walsingham does not play with the different versions of Marlowe's last name, but calls him by the names people who like or dislike him use, thereby putting his different identities together. "Well, Machiavel, Kit?" Walsingham leaned in again. "What do you say?" (220) It is a rhetorical question because Francis Walsingham, and with him the author M.J. Trow, already know the answer. They create the identity of the future poet and playwright and spy Christopher Marlowe.

While Trow chooses Elizabethan England, Marlowe's 'natural home', as the setting for his historical mystery-series, Robert Olen Butler features a reincarnation of the sixteenth-century poet and playwright in his thrillers. Butler worked as a counter-intelligence special agent in the Army and enqueues in a line of former spies who turned into writers, for instance John Buchan, Graham Greene, Ian Fleming, John le Carré, and Stella Rimington (Buckton 2015: xiii). 'Who am I?' and 'Where do I belong?' were life's central questions, Butler stated in a radio interview at the beginning of 2019. In his opinion, those were questions only fiction could aim at answering. They are those questions the US-American Pulitzer Prize-winning author (born in 1945) and Professor for Creative Writing at Florida State University deals with in his Christopher Marlowe Cobb-thrillers with their journalist turned government agent-protagonist.⁶⁸ At the beginning of

⁶⁸ He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1993 for his short story-collection *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*. Four novels have been published in this series so far: *The Hot*

The Hot Country, the 30 year old, handsome Christopher Marlowe Cobb is a reporter and war correspondent for Chicago's fictional *Post-Express*⁶⁹. In May 1914, he travels to Mexico for news coverage of the United States' occupation of Veracruz, the presidency of Victoriano Huerta and the Mexican Civil War.⁷⁰ Shortly after his arrival in Veracruz, he falls in love with Luisa Morales, a young Mexican woman, who seems to be more than just a laundress. When he learns that there are secret dealings going on between Mexicans and Germans, he decides to tail the German official Friedrich von Mensinger and follows him under a false identity through the country. How important his name is to him becomes clear on the novel's first pages when he introduces himself to Luisa Morales and becomes disappointed because she does not stay to hear the story behind it. However, his following sentences are quite contradictory:

Christopher Cobb is how I sign my stories but Christopher Marlowe Cobb is my full name and my editors right along have all wanted me to use the whole moniker in my byline, but I find all those three-named new boys – the William Howard Russells and the Richard Harding Davises and the George Bronson Reas – and all the rest – and the host of magazine scribblers and the novelists with three names are just as bad – I think they all make themselves sound pompous and full of self-importance.⁷¹ (HC 6)

Cobb's statement surely is also to be read as an ironic hint to the three names of his author Robert Olen Butler. Part of his work is to put on masks and to switch identities in order to get the information he needs for his articles and he ensures himself repeatedly that Christopher Cobb, the reporter and war correspondent, is his true identity. But the fact that he does not use his whole name to sign his articles could mean that he is still trying to find out who he really is, he is still searching for his true identity.

His relationship to his mother is very close; they do not see each other regularly, but they keep a lively correspondence. He literally is a child of the theatre: His mother is the famous actress Isabel Cobb, he was born in the *Pelican Theatre* in New Orleans, she named him after her favourite playwright, and

Country (2012), *The Star of Istanbul* (2013), *The Empire of Night* (2014), and *Paris in the Dark* (2018).

⁶⁹ A daily newspaper titled *Chicago Post* was published from 1890 until 1929.

⁷⁰ The novel spells the city's name Vera Cruz; the Mexican Civil War went on for around ten years, from 1910 until 1920, and the US-occupation lasted seven months, from April to November 1914.

⁷¹ William Howard Russell (1820–1907) was an Irish reporter, who worked for *The Times*. He is considered to be one of the first war correspondents. Another famous war correspondent was the US-American Richard Harding Davis (1864–1916), as was the infamous George Bronson Rea (1869–1936).

everybody close to him calls him Kit. As his father has always been absent and Isabel Cobb has always refused to tell her son anything about him – except that he inherited his “devastating good looks” (111) from him – she is his only ‘maker’, the only constant for him in the turbulent and ever changing world of the theatre. He might consider his namesake as a substitute for his real father, as an affirmation for his origin, and himself as a sort of his reincarnation. His mother was also his teacher in most things, most importantly, she opened the world to (classic) literature to him and during his childhood and adolescent years he says that he read about 3000 books. The telegrams between mother and son are written in an old-fashioned style and full of “thee” and “thy” as well as quotations and interpretations from Marlowe’s and contemporary Elizabethan playwrights’ works. Christopher Marlowe Cobb once states that his mother also uses quotations in talks when she wants to distance herself from the subject, for example, when she told him about the paradoxical behaviour of men, who loved her, but also hit her. This distance is also felt in the correspondence between mother and son which significantly is not written by an individual hand, but anonymised by a telegram, and it can also be seen in Cobb’s choice of work, as he did not stay in the theatre, but decided to become an actor and writer of another kind. Acting, writing and reading are his attributes, and he always brings his props with him wherever he travels: one or two books and his typewriter, which he refers to as “he” and which has, in his opinion, the magical ability to take his words in and transform them into reality (cf. 9). Cobb says:

I was bringing my Corona Portable Number 3. It was only a little over six pounds, but the bag was heavy already, and I hesitated. [...] But no. When a story is big and complex and has life and death and much in between brimming out of it, I need my Corona to think straight. I need to see the words before me shaping themselves not in the personal quirks of my hand but in the uniform surety and clarity of actual type. (*HC* 145)

To telegraph, to typewrite is to take the traits from writing by which the reader could identify the person behind it. Individuality is considered to be a hindrance for reality. So, what is left are scripts, which are not original, but which are only imitations, scripts for an apparent reality, which people can then see clearly, survey and understand. Christopher Cobb, acting as a reporter and war correspondent, provides these scripts and, of course, they are only an illusion. He knows that and this continuing necessity to play scares him:

To be honest, actors – who were, collectively, my aunts and uncles, my older sisters and brothers, my trainers and my professors, my fathers – through all my formative years – actors, I say – including the actor I myself often am – sometimes scare the hell out of me. (HC 179)

He has grown up in an illusory world and he has tried to escape from it, but without success. That is the reason why he always has to ensure himself who he really is: “In life and in any little drama I played inside it, I was still who I was behind the mask. I was a war correspondent. A newspaper reporter. A real one. [...] Nor was I a spy” (165), he says one time, and on another occasion: “*That is who I am*, I reminded myself. *I am a reporter.*” (225) However, he is also aware of the inability of this reporter-I to become his real one:

I was just a reporter. A news writer. I was merely toying with a metaphor. Put it in. Make it fit. Play to the balcony. But there was a real world outside. I still had Hernando’s stitches in my arm. Itching like crazy. I killed four men. Recently. (HC 299)

He is a “real” reporter; however, he is “just” a reporter. He is still living in a world of illusion and can glimpse reality only from time to time. So, he continues to ask himself the two questions his author Robert Olen Butler considers to be life’s central ones: ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Where do I belong?’ “What did I want? What was my real desire, not just the conventional objective of the character I’ve decided to play from the script I was improvising as I went?” (299) As he accepts to work as a government agent, Christopher Marlowe Cobb takes one step towards reality. And this decision also leads to a moment of recognition between mother and son. When the two finally meet at the novel’s end, he has just been recruited as a secret agent and she reveals to him that she has also been working as an agent for some time:

My darling son, I know you have always felt my place was in the great body of classic literature. But this work I am doing is great work as well. It is real. It is deeply representative of our unsettled times. It is all about life and death and the struggle for the good and the true. (HC 325)

Isabel Cobb exchanged the stage of the theatre for the stage of the world. She now plays her part in the theatre of espionage and her son has unconsciously followed her. On the novel’s last page and with his last sentences, he quotes Shakespeare: “‘All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players.’ I’d played at watching others play at the primary narratives of this world. I had a chance to do more now. I would do more.” (326) At the end of Butler’s first Christopher

Marlowe Cobb thriller, its protagonist seems to be on his way to find his true identity.

Christopher Marlowe Cobb is still playing a role, now that of U.S. government secret agent, but with a significant difference, which becomes clear during his last and lethal fight with the German Friedrich von Mensinger:

I was just standing there. A little apart from all this. Which could be the death of me. I was a reporter no longer. That was a German agent standing over there, preparing to kill me. I was an American agent. Standing here. In the middle of the action. Creating the action. (*HC* 315)

He will still have to put on masks and to switch identities for his work as an agent, but now there is a possibility that he will find himself under the mask. He does no longer have to passively imitate reality with his scripts because he can play an active part in the real world and contribute to shape it.

Robert Olen Butler and M.J. Trow created two very different Christopher Marlowe's, but their protagonists have one thing in common: In the first novels of the two series, the nineteen year old Cambridge student of divinity, who is fascinated by poetry and playwriting and who solves the murder of his friends, and the thirty year old reporter and war correspondent, who was born into the world of the theatre and has always played his roles, are both in search of their identity. In each case, this identity is constituted by an 'official' and an 'unofficial' one, by writing and spying; both are closely related and become intertwined in the character Christopher Marlowe. And this identity was created by the author, by M.J. Trow and Robert Olen Butler, respectively.

The spy as part of an authorial identity points to the notion described in the introduction: Parallels can be drawn between spying and writing. As the spy observes, gathers information, interprets it and acts according to it, often in disguise, the author does the same, while his action is his writing. Furthermore, Christopher Marlowe, the poet and playwright and spy, points to a creative representation of the author as an agent in the most literal sense. In popular culture, the terms "spy" and "secret agent" are often used as synonyms, "some critics prefer the term 'secret agent' to the word 'spy', arguing that the latter should be limited exclusively to acts of intelligence-gathering rather than other deeds of adventure and violence". (Buckton: 2015: xviii) "Agent" is the term which best fits for this chapter. Allan Hepburn notes that the words "agent",

“agenda”, and “action” all derive from the Latin *agere*, which means “to act” or “to do” (2005: cf. 22). He writes: “The term ‘secret agent’ designates both a character and the actions undertaken by that character” (22). The term “agent” does not only refer to a “person who works secretly to obtain information for a government or other official body; a spy” (*OED* s.v. *agent*, n.), for example a double or secret agent. The *Oxford English Dictionary* also offers other definitions and two of them are important for this chapter: An agent can also be a “person who or thing which acts upon someone or something; one who or that which exerts power; the doer of an action”, the driving force, so to say, or a “person acting on behalf of another”. The author is creatively represented as an agent of identity; he constructs and claims identity in the first place. At the end of *Dark Entry* and *The Hot Country*, M.J. Trow’s and Robert Olen Butler’s Christopher Marlowes found their identity. However, the genre of the spy story points also to the fact that this claim can be easily deconstructed. “[A] spy’s identity is often an illusion” (Hepburn 2005: xiv). Each of these two novels constructs ‘its’ Christopher Marlowe as a writer and spy. This fictional character points to the creative representation of an author as (secret) agent in popular culture, as an agent of identity. However, this identity cannot be a representation of reality. The genre of the spy novel and the character of the spy already point to the illusion of this identity. So, the process which led to its construction is laid open. But this does not belittle the role of the author. On the contrary, it stresses the importance of creativity and authorial imagination.

Fictional Marlowe’s authors answered life’s essential questions of ‘Who?’ and ‘Where?’ for him. So, they laid the foundations for his afterlife in their two series. Serialized spy stories are popular among writers, as the examples of Ian Fleming’s James Bond, John le Carré’s George Smiley, and Stella Rimington’s Liz Carlyle show. In the course of a series, the spy’s “character and role” have the opportunity to “evolve” (Buckton 2015: 310). The other two novels of this chapter are not part of a series. But the representation of the author as the agent of identity can also be traced in them, albeit they approach it in a different way.

2.3.3 Creating Identity *post mortem*

Kyd writing about Kit, a playwright writing about another playwright, turning both their lives and the other's death into a revenge tragedy, with himself in the centre of action, as victim and avenger – in his novel *Christoferus or Tom Kyd's Revenge*, Robin Chapman chose Thomas Kyd, Marlowe's contemporary and the author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, as its protagonist. Chapman (born in 1933) is a novelist, playwright and screenwriter, who, like Marlowe, studied at Cambridge and was president of the university's Marlowe Society during that time.⁷² He frequently turns historical into fictional characters, with a preference for the first-person narrator: "I distrust the God-like authorial voice of the third person", he once said. "I like to start with a voice, which may or may not be mine, and work outwards. Having a historical figure frames your world for you; but if you're writing fiction, you have a certain freedom too."⁷³ James Woodall, in his review for *The Independent* (3 April 1993), which this quote is taken from, uses the term "literary ventriloquism" for literary works which are populated by characters from history. Despite Chapman's statement that he does not trust God-like authorial voices, the picture this term evokes is the one of a God, of an author, who resurrects a person, who has been dead for a long time, who takes over her or his mind and who makes her or him act according to his script. With his puppets, the author undertakes to re-write history. So, Chapman invents his own version of events which lead to Marlowe's death: He neither dies in a tavern brawl, nor as a spy, who falls victim to the rivalry between Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Essex. Marlowe's espionage in the past and the acquaintances he made back then form the background for the plot against him and Kyd. Both were made victims by Ingram Frizer and, above all, Richard Baines, a double agent for Rome and Queen Elizabeth. The novel follows Thomas Kyd on his way to find out the names of his "Ishamels", as he calls them, and his taking revenge on them. The name was obviously taken from the historical Thomas Kyd's first letter to Sir John Puckering:

⁷² The information was taken from Robin Chapman's homepage: <http://www.robinchapmanauthor.com> (accessed 17 April 2019).

⁷³ "Kydding about Marlowe: Tush. Gadzooks": <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/book-review-kydding-about-with-marlowe-tush-gadzooks-james-woodall-on-a-new-addition-to-the-1453030.html> (accessed: 17 April 2019).

As for the libellaide unto my chardg I am resolved with receyving of the sacramentto satisfie your I[ordshi]ps & the world that I was neither agent nor consenting therunto. Howbeit if some outcast *Ismael* for want or of his own dispoeto lewdnes, have with pretext of duetie or religion, or to reduce himself tothat he was not borne unto by enie waie incensd your I[ordshi]ps to suspect tme, I shall besech in all humillitie & in the feare of god that it will please your I[ordshi]ps but to censure me as I shall prove my self, and to repute them as they ar in deed. (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 230)

In his letter, Kyd uses “outcast Ismael” for an unknown person who could have blackened his name. The novel begins in August 1593, a few months after Kyd’s torture and Marlowe’s murder. Kyd has been luckier than his fellow playwright because he was rescued from prison by a noble lady he calls Pandora, on the one hand, probably, to stress the Greek meaning of the word, “gift”, for him the gift of freedom and life. On the other hand, this name may also mirror his suspicion and his fear that she may turn out to be as Pandora’s famous box was, a source of great trouble. Kyd’s rescuer is Lycia Radcliffe, daughter of the 4th Earl of Sussex. One meaning of the word “lycia” is “surrounded by light” and this might not only point to the part she played in rescuing Kyd from jail. She also helps him find out the truth about the murder of his friend, she helps him to find his way, provides the means, and becomes his guiding light, so to say. The historical 4th Earl of Sussex, Henry Radclyffe, or Radcliffe, only had one son, Robert, his daughter Lycia is Chapman’s invention. At the beginning of the novel, Thomas Kyd lives in a cottage on her estate, trying to recover physically from the torments suffered at the hand of Richard Topcliffe, Queen Elizabeth’s torturer, and psychologically from the false confession he was forced to make about his friend and one-time lover Christopher Marlowe. This burden is stressed by his statement that he gave in after torture on 15 May 1593. It was exactly at five o’clock in the afternoon that his second life began, in which he counts days as years, in order to mirror, it seems, his prolonged suffering (*Christoferus* 4). The only way to free himself from this burden and to be able to live a rather normal life again is by confession, by writing down everything that happened, as he makes clear in the prologue’s last sentences: “Confession must be my task. I’ve nothing else. Take thought. And start. Confess. Confess everything.” (5) The following chapters alternate between the present and Kyd’s “confession” about his time at Thomas Walsingham’s estate at Scadbury with Marlowe, his return to London, his arrest and Marlowe’s death. When the present and the remembered past collide, Kyd has done enough

confessional work, it seems, to be finally able to return to London to revenge himself and Marlowe.

For Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe was his “Christoferus”; only he called him by that name, marking their special relationship: “Oh, yes, I count Christofer akin to me. He was my spirit’s son, my heart’s brother, my friend, my lover, my pupil, my better.” (12) The two referred to themselves as Castor and Pollux, the inseparable twins. According to the Greek myth, Marlowe would have been Castor because this twin was also murdered. Kyd knew that the other playwright was his superior, but he was so close to him that he had the feeling he could share his talent with him: “Oh, yes, I shared his glory. And had enough of my own to make me feel, on occasion, his equal, his co-mate. We lived together. We worked together.” (ibid.) Both also shared a passion for cruelty and both were so ambitious as to try to put everything in a play, to make it a comedy and a tragedy at the same time, to reach the basest nature as well as the intellect of the audience: “Our shared ideal was to write the cruellest comedy ever heard.” (28) This excess of a play would be the ultimate product of mimesis, of art imitating life: “Life, we said, was a child’s story of cruelty and greed so obvious it was laughable.” (12) However, in retrospect Kyd has to admit: “We were the children.” (ibid.) The lesson the playwrights had to learn was that life was not anything they could write themselves, but a story which is told to them by a superior force. This superior force intervenes during a performance of *Tamburlaine Part 2*, which Thomas Kyd describes right at the beginning of the novel in his prologue: He was cast as the governor of Babylon and chained to the wall; he had to watch helplessly how a real bullet from an actor’s pistol killed a pregnant woman in the audience. Philip Gawdy, a gentleman, originally from Norfolk, reports the incident in a letter to his father, dating from 16 November 1587:

My L. Admyrall his men and players having a devyse in ther playe to tye one of their fellowes to a poste and so shoote him to deathe, having borrowed their Callyvers one of the players handes swerved his peece being charged with bullett missed the fellowe he ayimed at and killed a chyld, and a woman great with chyld forthwith, and hurt an other man in the head very soore. (quoted from Bakeless 1942/1964: 199)

Again, Chapman bases an incident in his novel on a historical source, although it is not sure if Gawdy’s letter really referred to a performance of *Tamburlaine Part 2*. Reality and fiction intertwine another time once more when Kyd remembers

what Marlowe told him about his years at Cambridge: “As a student I was Eliza’s eyes and ears, you know? Yes, her devoted secret agent.” (*Christoferus* 30) When he thinks about Marlowe’s story, another recollection pops up in his mind; he once copied out a scene the other playwright wrote about a student, who is given audience by a great lord, and Kyd now becomes aware that this scene mirrors Marlowe’s recruitment by the spymaster Francis Walsingham during his Cambridge years. In the scene, Marlowe calls his student Leander and Kyd concludes that this was “Christofer’s favourite pseudonym. His other self” (31), which he later turned into the male protagonist of his fragmental poem *Hero and Leander*. As a spy, Christopher Marlowe becomes Leander, as a lover and soulmate he turns into Christoferus or Castor, and Robin Chapman chose him to be Christofer Marlowe in his novel. When he spells his name with an “f” instead of a “ph”, the author marks him as “his” Marlowe, as his invention. For Chapman, Marlowe’s long cast down role as the spy Leander catches up with him some years later when he falls victim to other players in the theatre of espionage. The gun that was discharged during the performance of *Tamburlaine* was loaded with a real bullet. And a real dagger pierced Marlowe’s eye.

The novel focuses on the Renaissance topos of the *Theatrum mundi*, the world as a stage, and on the interplay between fiction and reality, its blurred borders. While everybody thinks that he is the author of his own play, it poses the question: Who is really in charge? Who is the real author? In the novel’s prologue, cruel fiction becomes cruel reality; the stage, the place where Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine Part 2* is brought to life, expands and encloses the spectators when a real bullet is fired from a pistol and really kills a pregnant woman in the audience. While the governor of Babylon’s enacted fear becomes Thomas Kyd’s real fear he is chained to the wall and must watch the chaos helplessly, he even wets his pants. Somebody had loaded the pistol with real instead of mock bullets in an act of sabotage, an unknown force, who pulls the strings from the background and who has the power to decide when the line between theatrical and real life is crossed. This superior force intervenes again into the playwrights’ lives when Kyd is tortured and Marlowe killed. It is Elizabeth I’s state and her network of spies who write and direct the theatre of espionage. His work as a government agent during his Cambridge years and the acquaintances he made back then provide the basis for the plot against

Christopher Marlowe, in which Thomas Kyd becomes involved as “collateral damage”, so to say. Marlowe could fashion the role of the spy Leander for himself, but as soon as he dropped out of this business, he lost his influence. The role he played alongside Kyd as his Christoferus could only be seen as a farce, as an interlude, until the members of the theatre of espionage decided how his part will end. The novel also poses the question how one becomes the author of one’s own life – at least to a certain point? The answer is: Play along! Marlowe was not able to stay in charge of his own life because he tried to fashion his role independently from the theatre of espionage, to invent a new one to be played on a different stage. Thomas Kyd has to make his confession; he has to write down what happened in order to drag the superior force from the background into view. He has to get hold of the script in order to be able to write himself into it, to turn himself from victim to avenger in his own revenge tragedy. A tragedy ends with its protagonist’s death and Chapman implicates this when he only borrows Kyd’s voice for the prologue and the main part. The epilogue’s first-person narrator is Lycia who tells the reader that Kyd left her in 1594 because he thought that she had deceived him: She had kept writing to her former lover Richard Baines after the playwright’s discovery of his part in Marlowe’s death. However, Lycia also did it on Kyd’s behalf, to help him in his revenge, as she stresses. She does not know anything about his whereabouts, she writes, but she wishes him well. The historical Thomas Kyd is said to have been buried in August 1594. The novel’s real hero, of course, is Christopher Marlowe, so the ultimate fate of Thomas Kyd can be seen as left open. However, the question of a happy end is not important because the satisfaction, which is provided, is that of understanding.

Christopher Marlowe has been revived as a fictional character mostly in the English-speaking world, but there are also a handful of German books which provide a place for his literary afterlife, among them *Geheimagent Marlowe. Roman eines Mordes*, by the well-known author Dieter Kühn (1935–2015). *Secret Agent Christopher Marlowe. Novel of a murder* – you do not have to read the novel to know most of its content: After the Hog Lane Fight on 18 September 1589 and Marlowe’s arrest, he is recruited by Elizabeth I’s secret service as a spy – for the second time because he had already been working as a secret agent during his Cambridge years. As in Chapman’s novel, he receives the alias “Leander”. He is given the false identity of the Irish student of *Architectura*

Militaria, Red Hugh O'Donnell, and sent to Paris. After bar fights, affairs and various documents written in invisible ink he is uncovered as a double agent and sent back to England, where he faces charges of treason and, consequently, his execution. Marlowe's plan to fake his death and escape to Ireland to write more plays is cut short at Deptford. Dieter Kühn uses mostly a modern language, with colloquial outbursts – "Ah, Scheißreime – stellen sich manchmal ungewollt ein" (*GM* 16). He does not seem to care to write down historical dates and names accurately, for example, he calls the poet Thomas Watson, who had also been involved in the Hog Lane Fight, James L. Watson (cf. 8), and he lets the fight take place in 1592 instead of 1589, thus concentrating the time between the Hog Lane Fight, Marlowe's mission in Paris and his death in Deptford to about one year (cf. 34).

What is interesting for this project and this chapter in particular is not what Dieter Kühn tells, but how he constructs his novel. "Ich schreibe eigentlich Bücher über Themen und Figuren der Vergangenheit nur, um mich auf diesem Umweg, auf diesem scheinbaren Umweg, besser in meiner Gegenwart zurechtzufinden." (265) With this statement, Kühn points to what a historical novel almost naturally does: it points to the present. In this sort of text, there are no detours because past and present become intertwined. Marlowe's case becomes a dossier in the lines and lines of shelves in an Elizabethan secret service which could be any modern governmental institution.⁷⁴ The content appears as a puzzle, the different pieces are records of questioning, an expertise, written by Edmund Tilney, Master of the Revels, about Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*, reports about the staff of the secret service, like Robert Poley, known as "Charon", comments on different topics, like the School of Night, by "James L." Watson, accounts of action, published notes, for example about Marlowe's alleged arrest in the "Daily Universal Register", letters, instructions, reports by spies etc. Pieced together, they show a certain picture of Christopher Marlowe, the secret agent, and the succession of events which lead to his death. This mirrors the constructed nature of the Elizabethan Marlowe we know today, whom posterity has handed down to us, pieced together by one known signature, a doubtful portrait, fragments and different versions of his writings, sources as well as statements and judgments

⁷⁴ The working mechanisms of a secret service, however, do not become any clearer by Kühn's novel, because they are depicted strikingly amateurish and on the brink of parody.

written by his contemporaries and people of following centuries. A dossier also means that documents, which were discovered at a later point of time, can be included and change the picture. A dossier also means that someone could decide not to include certain documents or to take them away again later. The one, who is in charge of the dossier, is in charge of the identity its pieces construct. In the case of the novel's fictional Christopher Marlowe, the dossier is put together by the secret service's staff member Richard "Jeremy" Wilkinson, who – significantly – is also responsible for creating fake identities for the spies and who turns Marlowe into the Irish student Red Hugh O'Donnell. "Jeremy" decides to put Marlowe's private records, which were written in invisible ink, into another dossier with the label "Erledigt" (cf. 48) and hides it in a secret drawer of his nutwood writing desk. Now it is the author's turn to write himself into the novel as "D. Kühn" or "D.K.", an alleged member of the secret service, who was given the codename "Writer". He finds the hidden dossier and arranges its contents into the official dossier in order to include Marlowe's voice and to present the events also from his point of view.

"In fact, the fictional spy had always been defined by – even brought into being by – the threat posed by an enemy", argues Oliver S. Buckton (2015: 292). The "threat of foreign invasion; the presence of an enemy agent buried within the host intelligence organization; the villain's monstrous plots of global domination, have all been recurring obsessions of spy fiction" (323). These two novels also pose the threat of an enemy, the ultimate enemy, so to say: death. It is Christopher Marlowe's murder and the ambition to find an answer for it which gets the action going, the reason to start writing. In contrast to *Dark Entry* and *The Hot Country*, *Christoferus* and *Geheimagent Marlowe*, do not present a Christopher Marlowe who is in search of his identity and who makes an (allegedly) active and free choice to become both a writer and a spy. In Chapman's novel, he tried in vain to cast off his double life; it caught up with him and led to his death. Kühn's novel also leaves him no choice, as he is recruited as a spy under duress and also eventually killed. It is essential to know both, the 'official' and the 'unofficial' identity to answer the question these two novels, like many others, pose: Why was Christopher Marlowe killed? Thomas Kyd has to write down his "confession", as he calls it; he has to search for traces in his past in order to find out the truth and revenge Marlowe and himself. "Writer" searches for more written traces in the

governmental institution: the lost dossier with the label “Erledigt”, which contains secret documents in Marlowe’s own handwriting. Thus, the work of the spy is presented as the work of the author: Both collect all information available and try to interpret it before they start acting or writing. Kyd does the same thing, although he searches his mind and his memory. Secret service’s dossiers and confessions are usually not public knowledge. Here there is another parallel to the author’s work. The research he does for his text cannot be traced through the result, except, he tries to tell the reader about it, for example in an Author’s Note. On the basis of the information and its interpretation, Chapman and Kühn construct their Marlowe. As the novels apparently lay open their procedure, they stress the representation of the author as the agent of identity. However, this claim is undermined at the same time for the same reason because it is debatable how trustworthy Thomas Kyd and “Writer” are. Kyd may call what he writes down a “confession”, but he is also driven by his will to revenge himself for Topcliffe’s torture. And it is Christopher Marlowe, who is to blame for his arrest in the first place. “Writer” works for the secret service and could have left out some papers or even forged new ones in order to shape Marlowe’s identity to his own liking. In the end, these two novels also point to a creative representation of the author as an agent of identity. More directly than Trow’s and Chapman’s novel did, they reveal the illusion of this identity. At the same time, they also stress the important role of the author who creates this identity out of a Marlovian intertextuality and his own authorial imagination.

2.4 “[M]ake me immortal”: Supernatural Marlowe – the Death of the Author and his Afterlife

“Chr. Marlowe, whose ghost or genius is to be seen walk the churchyard in (at the least) three or four sheets”
Thomas Thorpe

2.4.1 Introduction

A few centuries ago, during a performance of Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, a real devil appeared on the stage and scared actors and audience alike. At least, this is what legend tells us.⁷⁵ It was in an age, when magic, witchcraft and supernatural beings naturally belonged to our world; dark spirits haunted humans, witches and sorcerers were persecuted and burnt at the stake, the dead did not find peace in their graves and left them to walk again among the living. Now, these creatures have been exiled from reality – but only to prosper the more in the realm of fiction, where, in turn, they hold the mirror up to reality and reflect genuine human conditions. Among those supernatural beings is Christopher Marlowe, who haunts the two works of fiction which were selected for this chapter: He is a vampire in Jim Jarmusch’s movie *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) and a daemon in Deborah Harkness’s novel *Shadow of Night* (2012).⁷⁶ I use the verb “to haunt” deliberately in this context, to bring to mind Jacques Derrida’s “hantologie” – “hauntology”. In *Spectres of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* Derrida describes a necessity:

to learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship in the commerce without commerce of ghosts [...] And this being-with spectres would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations (1994: pos. 175f)

Spectres of Marlowe, the poet and playwright as a supernatural, spectral being, haunt these two works of art. As a vampire and a daemon he embodies beings of the in-between; the vampire exists on the threshold between life and death and the daemon between this world and the world of the supernatural. Thus, Marlowe points to the cultural necessity – or, if not necessity than added value – to live

⁷⁵ The English Puritan pamphleteer William Prynne (1600–1669) in his *Histrion-mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragædie* (1633) claims that this incident really happened.

⁷⁶ The study of the Gothic, which includes vampire fiction, has been prospering for years. Two encyclopedias can provide a first approach to the topic in general and vampirism in particular: *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic* (2013), edited by William Hughes, David Punter, and Andrew Smith, and Matthew Bunson, *Das Buch der Vampire. Von Dracula, Untoten und anderen Fürsten der Finsternis* (2001; originally published in 1993 under the title *Vampire: the Encyclopaedia*).

with his spectre, the importance of memory, of heritage, the awareness of being a successor. Marlowe's "ghost or genius is to be seen walk the churchyard in (at the least) three or four sheets" (quoted from Orgel 2007: 181), Thomas Thorpe writes in his dedication of *Lucan's First Booke Translated Line for Line, by Chr. Marlow* (1600) to the stationer Edward Blount. As mentioned in 1.2, he turns Marlowe's shroud into the sheets of paper of his works which after his death remained popular with the booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard and, therefore, keep their author alive. Thorpe uses the word "genius" in the sense of a "supernatural being or spirit" (*OED* s.v. *genius*; n.) and relates it to "ghost". "Genius" can also be related to the vampire and the daemon Christopher Marlowe in this chapter, however, in the sense of the Romantic concept of the original genius. Poets are "hierophants of unapprehended inspiration", writes Percy Bysshe Shelley in *A Defence of Poetry* (1821; quoted from Bennett 2005: 65). It is created "by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination" (1817/2014: 213), as Samuel Taylor Coleridge puts it in *Biographia Literaria* (1817). So, its originator is a "Genius" who "has ever been supposed to partake of something Divine", as Edward Young writes in *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759: 16). These examples demonstrate that the Romantic author resembles a supernatural being; he is like a divine entity, possesses supernatural powers, speaks universal truths, and his writings are like scripture. In the creative representation of the author as a supernatural being in these two works of popular culture this concept is pushed, I will argue, to extremes; in the end, it leads to the death of the author – but also to his afterlife. Christopher Marlowe as vampire or daemon presents the decline and deconstruction of this aesthetic principle. At the same time, he points to the need for a new representation of authorship and lays its foundation in the medium most suited for such negotiations: fiction.

2.4.2 The Vampire Christopher Marlowe

Vampires appear in many European cultures in different traditions and shapes, but with similar characteristics and abilities, especially in the countries of the Southeast.⁷⁷ There has been much discussion about the origin of the term *vampire*. It seems to derive from the Macedonian word *opyr*, which means flying creature, and became *vanpir*, *vampir*, and *upiry* in Slavic languages. Knowledge of the revenant spread in Germany and West Europe between 1725 and 1732, due to written reports from East European countries. “‘Educated Europeans’ became aware of the vampire ‘epidemics’ through the process of narrative, as those in power committed to paper the actions of those who were ruled” (2013: 5), writes Deborah Mutch in the introduction to her anthology *The Modern Vampire and Human Identity* (2013). With those written reports, the vampire gradually started to leave reality. In the German plural form *Vanpiri*, it was first mentioned in a report from Serbia to the imperial administration in Vienna in 1725. Shortly after, the word *Vampir* asserted itself in Germany and was included in other Germanic and Romanic languages in the following years, *vampire* in English and French, *vampiro* in Spanish and Italian, for example. When the vampire was exiled from reality during the era of Enlightenment, he found a new home in literature and later also in other media. “At the end of the eighteenth century, the vampire began to move from folklore to literature” (Mutch 2013: 6). Christian Begemann, Britta Herrmann and Harald Neumeyer write in the introduction of their anthology *Dracula Unbound. Kulturwissenschaftliche Lektüren des Vampirs* (2008):

Vermutlich ist das eine der Bedingungen dafür, daß sie als Wiedergänger auf das literarische Feld überwechseln konnten, um dort ihr unheimliches und subversives Treiben mit einem dieses Mal ästhetisch legitimierten Appell an die Einbildungskraft fortzusetzen. (2008:10)

They consider the expulsion of the vampire from reality during the Enlightenment to be a condition for him to prosper in the realm of fiction. Literature became the vampire’s natural home and with the invention of the cinema they seem to have found a new medium in which they feel especially comfortable. Nina Auerbach

⁷⁷ For detailed information about the spread of the vampire myth in the modern age, see, for example, Hans Meurer’s essay „1732 – Die Wiedergeburt des Vampirs in der Neuzeit” in *Draculas Wiederkehr* (1997).

gives an interesting reason for the vampire's conquest of the film: "Vampires go where power is: when, in the nineteenth century, England dominated the West, British vampires ruled the popular imagination, but with the birth of the film, they migrated to America in time for the American century." (1995: 6) By now, although English speaking vampire movies may dominate the market, they are made all around the world and not only in the U.S.A.. The vampire's conquest of this medium started in the 1920s with Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922), starring Max Schreck as Graf Orlok / Nosferatu. The genre boomed with the Hammer movie productions of the 1950s and 1960s and was fully revived at the beginning of the 1990s with two successful adaptations, Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and Neil Jordan's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994).⁷⁸ In 2013, US-American director Jim Jarmusch (born in 1953) joined in this trend with his award-winning movie *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).⁷⁹ Jarmusch, who also wrote the script, shows a world which is destroyed by humans – *zombies*, as his protagonist Adam (played by Tom Hiddleston) calls them contemptuously. Most of them seem to have forgotten how to appreciate creative work, music, literature, movies, art, and with their unhealthy way of life in a polluted environment they slowly extinguish themselves. As an inevitable consequence, the movie predicts, vampires, who not only feed on blood, but also live for the enjoyment of creative achievements, will eventually die, too. It reflects upon the fear and the danger of AIDS, a central topic of the vampire movies of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Joel Schumacher's *The Lost Boys* (1987).

The movie does not only focus on the love story of its protagonist couple Adam and Eve (Tilda Swinton), but it celebrates their aestheticism, their collecting of and indulgence in art. It seems like the reversal of genesis: The first two human beings are turned into immortal creatures that still live because they appreciate aestheticism, which has become a constituting principle. Adam and Eve are apparently thousands of years old; they have witnessed supernatural beings' displacement from reality, and now live unrecognized among humans in

⁷⁸ Margit Dorn published a very readable and fruitful book-length study on the vampire film genre, although some time ago: *Vampirfilme und ihre sozialen Funktionen. Ein Beitrag zur Genregeschichte* (1994).

⁷⁹ The movie was nominated for 42 awards, among them the Palme d'Or of the Film Festival in Cannes 2013, and won nine of them.

their own parallel aesthetic world. The couple has been together forever. He, with dark hair and dark clothes, and she, his light-coloured counterpart. They cannot live without each other and form a perfect unity, like the symbol of yin and yang. However, at the beginning of the movie, they lead a long-distance relationship. He lives in a spacious house in the ruins of Detroit among vinyl records and a constantly growing collection of old guitars, where he creates his own, dark music, while she shares an apartment with hundreds of antique books in all the world's languages in Tangier. Eve only leaves Morocco, when she fears that her depressed partner, who suffers from the way the world has become, will commit suicide. Indeed, he has already purchased a wooden bullet.

In fact, the vampire is a very old phenomenon; legends and myths can be found in different cultures. In Homer's *Odyssey*, for instance, Odysseus lures the dead out of Hades with a blood sacrifice:

But when with vows and prayers I had made supplication to the tribes of the dead, I took the sheep and cut their throats over the pit, and the dark blood ran forth. Then there gathered from out of Erebus the ghosts of those that are dead, brides, and unwed youths, and toil-worn old men, and frisking girls with hearts yet new to sorrow, and many, too, that had been wounded with bronze-tipped spears, men slain in battle, wearing their blood-stained armor. These came thronging in crowds about the pit from every side, with an astounding cry; and pale fear seized me. Then I called to my comrades and told them to skin and burn the sheep that lay there killed with the pitiless bronze, and to make prayer to the gods, to mighty Hades and dread Persephone. And I myself drew my sharp sword from beside my thigh, sat there, and would not allow the strengthless heads of the dead to draw near to the blood until I had enquired of Teiresias. (2014: 403)

Attracted by the blood of the slain animals, the dead become revenants, they return from the underworld, eager to drink and to gain power again. The vampire has always been connected to the ingestion of blood. What all of them have in common in the first place, is their need for blood to sustain them. Only through the red liquid, which has always been believed to contain supernatural and mystical powers and to be the source of life, can they keep their life and power (cf. Bunson 2001: 32f). However, in doing so, they commit a mortal sin; in Leviticus 17: 10–14, God forbids the people of Israel and strangers to eat blood because blood is life and therefore a sacred liquid:

If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood. Any one also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or

bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. (Leviticus 17: 10–14)

With sucking blood, vampires draw God's wrath on them and become outcasts. It is not only the *Old Testament* which forbids the drinking of blood. Hans Richard Brittnacher writes in an essay about vampires' eating habits: „Selbst unter den Kannibalen heben sie sich als Gourmets heraus: Der alttestamentarisch untersagte und selbst bei Naturvölkern tabuisierte und nur ausnahmsweise gestattete Verzehr des Rohen ist ihnen selbstverständlich“ (2008: 371). However, in the *New Testament*, Jesus explicitly permits the faithful to drink his blood: “For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.” (John, 6, 55–58). The Eucharist is central to the Catholic service, the faithful believe in the transubstantiation, the transformation of bread into Jesus' flesh and of wine into his blood. God's son has made himself the willing victim for the vampiric human being, however, the drinking of his blood will not end in everlasting damnation, but, on the contrary, in salvation and everlasting life after death.

Meanwhile, some contemporary vampires have stopped biting humans and turned to animals or blood banks. In Jarmusch's movie, they visit hospitals and bribe doctors for 'good' blood because they fear it might be contaminated. In one scene, Adam drives to a hospital in order to get a new supply of blood. He is disguised as a surgeon, his hair is covered by a plastic cap, he wears a face mask and dark sunglasses; his name badge says 'Dr. Faust'. He is a damned creature and his cruel, base nature shines through when he passes a room where a nurse is bandaging a girl's bloody thigh. The dropping blood seems to hypnotize him and he has to pull himself forcefully away from it. Eve fights the same struggle on the airplane, when a man next to her cuts himself opening a tin. Normally, they turn the drinking of blood into a ritual. They drink it slowly from liqueur glasses, careful not to spoil one drop. Before they taste the blood, Adam and Eve touch a white stone on a band around the neck and a black one on a band around the wrist, respectively. These stones signify each partner. When they drink blood they seem to feel connected. It seems to have the same effect as drugs: the room starts to spin like a vinyl record, their heads loll back, and they bare their bloody pointed

teeth. On the other side, drugs used by humans are considered to be dangerous. People are less and less interested in art and numbing it with drug abuse, the movie proclaims. Some other vampires have started to follow them, poisoned by their blood, like Eve's sister Ava (Mia Wasikowska) – young, superficial and apparently oblivious to the disastrous state of the world – who turns Adam's living room into a chaos of broken vinyl records and smashed antique guitars after she has fed off a human being. The fear of contamination turns out to be justified because, in the end, the old and fragile vampire Christopher Marlowe is so weak that he dies from contaminated blood. Not from exposure to sunlight, not from silver bullets – or a wooden one – or from a wooden stick pierced through his heart. The Latin motto *Quod me nutrit, me destruit* – 'That which nourishes me destroys me', which is painted on the upper left edge of the alleged portrait, turns out to be true for the vampire Marlowe.

However, the spectator does not encounter a young, handsome man. The supporting role of the vampire Christopher Marlowe – he appears in four scenes – is played by John Hurt, who was 73 years old at the time *Only Lovers Left Alive* was shot. An older version of the famous portrait comes through an inner door of the all-night Café *Mille et une Nuit* in Tangier, leaning on crutches. The shoulder length hair is still tousled, but it has turned from brown to grey, just like the moustache and the goatee, which have also grown quite long. His face is full of lines and his eyes – there are still two of them – are shaded by gold-rimmed sunglasses. Marlowe's worn suit is as grey as his hair and beard and he wears a very old-fashioned shirt and doublet. The doublet is one of his favourite garments, which was given to him as a present in 1586, as he tells Eve, when she criticizes his appearance. The four hundred-year-old vampire looks fragile and tired, but he still resembles the man from the portrait, as his older, poorly dressed version. This fictionalization of Christopher Marlowe is surely one of the most striking ones, not only because it depicts an old Marlowe, but also an old vampire, who stands in contrast to the image of the aristocratic, handsome, seductive, and never-aging creature, with which the history of the modern fictional vampire started out.

His birthplace can be located quite precisely in the Villa Diodati at Lake Geneva in June 1816, now suitably known as the year without summer. Due to the extraordinarily bad weather, Lord Byron, his physician Dr. John Polidori, Percy Shelley, his later wife Mary Godwin and her half-sister Claire Clairmont had to

spend much of their time inside. After the joint lecture of some ghost stories, they agreed to each write a tale themselves. Mary Godwin started her *Frankenstein, Or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), and John Polidori wrote *The Vampyre* (1819), which was not only based on Lord Byron's fragment *Augustus Darvell*, but also on Byron himself and for a time also ascribed to him. In Germany, for example, E.T.A. Hoffmann picked up this assumption: Vinzenz, in the frame of the story „Vampyrismus“, which is part of *Die Serapionsbrüder*, refers to him as the “vampyrische[] Lord Byron” (1819/2008: 1119).⁸⁰ Polidori's Lord Ruthven is “a nobleman, more remarkable for his singularities, than his rank” (*Vampyre* 3), with “dead grey eye[s]” (ibid.), a “deadly hue of his face” (ibid.), which is nevertheless “beautiful” (ibid.). “He has nothing in common with other men” (5) and therefore raises much interest in the women around him. Lord Ruthven marks the beginning of the vampire's triumphal procession through a new subgenre of gothic fiction. This image of the vampire with the hypnotic gaze, which has long dominated people's minds, was shifted from the mind's eye in front of the real eye for the first time in Tod Browning's movie *Dracula* (1931). The adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1898) saw Bela Lugosi in the lead role and his presentation of Count Dracula was later taken over and slightly complemented by Christopher Lee in the Hammer movies of the 1950s and 1960s (cf. Bunson 2001: 79f). And now: John Hurt. The actor was asked several times about this unusual depiction and his interpretation of Christopher Marlowe, the vampire, but he did not say much about it. In an interview with Red Carpet News TV in February 2014, he states:

I haven't got much comment to make on that, because I don't quite know how that happened. Anyway, it happened and there I was, because it's in the script. In there I am 300 years old or 400 years old, it becomes a matter of fact.⁸¹

It is in the script, but its writer also refused to comment on his character: “I don't want to discourage anyone from analyzing the film, I just don't want you to ask me to do it”, Jim Jarmusch said at the Press Conference for the Film Festival in

⁸⁰ In 1995, Tom Holland published his novel *The Vampyre*, in which he tells the story of the vampire Lord Byron.

⁸¹ “*Only Lovers Left Alive* John Hurt Interview – Tom Hiddleston & Vampires”, published by Red Carpet News TV on *YouTube* on 3 February 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBRWKqKW1WM> (accessed 1 October 2018).

Cannes in the spring of 2013.⁸² “I think the answers are in the film. I want the film to speak for itself.” So, everybody who does not consent himself with taking Christopher Marlowe’s part as a 400-year-old vampire in *Only Lovers Left Alive* as a given fact, has to listen closely to what the movie has to say about its special character. Indeed, it gives an interesting answer.

Only Lovers Left Alive does not comment on the year Christopher Marlowe was transformed into a vampire and by whom, but it offers the possibility that Eve, the worshipper of literature, transformed him. When he sees her in his first scene, he calls her “mistress mine” (*OLLA* 0:14:38), she once calls him “My old darling!” (1:37:16) and they have a very strong bond. It seems that Eve could not stand true genius to die. Her admiration is stressed two times in the course of the movie: When she is on the airplane on her way to her partner, she reads in an old, leather-bound little book of poems and the last four lines of one of them are heard: “Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, / But bears it out even to the edge of doom. / If this be error and upon me proved, / I never writ, nor no man ever loved.” It is the end of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116, but the vampire leans back in her seat, sighs, whispers “Oh ... Marlowe” (0:36:51), and sighs again. She repeats this a second time in Adam’s house, when she looks at the many portraits above the chimney and sees the famous Cambridge portrait – with John Hurt’s face photoshopped into it – among those of Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka and Oscar Wilde, and others. (0:54:31) It sounds like a lover’s sigh; the poet and playwright seems to be able to satisfy her aesthetic desires. In Tangier, he is also the one who sustains her, who supplies her with blood because he knows where to get “the good stuff” (1:37:54). At every dark corner, passers-by are offered drugs, so it would be dangerous to bite humans. In Tangier, the authorship controversy is also made a subject of discussion and Marlowe is presented as the true author of Shakespeare’s works: “I wish I’d known him when I wrote Hamlet”, he tells Eve one night at the port in Tangier about Adam, because the “suicidely romantic scoundrel [...] would have provided the most perfect role model imaginable” (0:35:22). If one follows the possibility that Eve turned Marlowe into a vampire, and given the fact that Adam and Eve seem to have been together for centuries, Marlowe apparently wrote his plays and poems

⁸² “*Only Lovers Left Alive*. Cannes 2013. Press Conference”, published by Anna Egle on *YouTube* on 25 May 2013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOqTQ7A__Jc (accessed 1 October 2018).

while he was still a human being and was turned into a vampire later, in old age. Eve particularly responds to the word “romantic” and says: “Even so, I blame Shelley and Byron [...], he used to hang around with” (0:35:24). One could read this scene in a way that Adam, who saw the great Romantic poets live and die, and who now must witness Marlowe’s decline, mourns the loss of genius. Marlowe survived 30 May 1593; he was not killed in Deptford and kept both of his eyes. He had to fake his death for political reasons, lived on into old age and wrote the works for which the “illiterate zombie-philistine” (1:39:17), as he loathingly calls Shakespeare, earned all the fame. That was the price he had to pay in order to get his work published. Maybe the vampire hoped that one day this secret would be uncovered and that he could witness how his name and his words are finally put together again. But the time never seemed to be right and after hundreds of years, Marlowe seems no longer to be interested in this fact to be ever known publicly. When Eve greets him in the Café with the words “How is the fabulous Christopher Marlowe tonight?”, (0:15:02) he gets angry and tells her not to use his real name in public. She, on the other side, thinks that it would be fun if “the most outrageously delicious literary scandal in history” (0:15:19) would be circularized because “it would call such thrilling chaos” (0:15:46), but Marlowe only answers: “I think the world has enough chaos to keep it going for the minute.” (0:15:50) When Marlowe sits dying in his room – he does not lie in bed but sits in an armchair – he quotes from Hamlet’s monologue in Act II, scene 2: “What a piece of work is a man?” and Adam, who has come back to Tangier with Eve, answers “What is this quintessence of dust?” (1.37:32) Facing the state of the world and the human condition, this seems to be the ultimate resignation by the four-hundred-year-old vampire, who is eventually killed by humans. He seems to be content to leave this world which has nothing more to offer and so he breathes out his last words: “Anyway, I was supposed to be dead ... and now ... at last ... actually I am.” (1:39:41) After they have lost their supplier of blood in Tangier, Adam and Eve have no choice, but to change the liqueur glass for a human neck and their small sips for a plain, brutal bite.

The world does not seem to provide much scope for the old vampire Christopher Marlowe. He lives in a Café called *Mille et une Nuit* which means he lives in the world of literature. It refers to tales which are told to delay death. This shelter also seems to delay the end of his existence. His secret room behind the

bar looks like a walk-in memento mori painting: The door is hidden by a bookshelf, candles are burning, stacks of books, parchment rolls, a globe, and a skull – surely also pointing to *Hamlet* – can be seen. The desk is covered in scattered pages with scenes from *The Massacre at Paris*, on which he continues to work, as two pens, one of them still open, show. The Café seems to be situated at a traffic calmed area and several steps lead to its entrance, so Marlowe, who has to support himself with crutches, is not able to go far away from his home. It is interesting that three works of fiction focus on injured legs: In addition to this movie, in Connie Willis's "Winter's Tale", old Marlowe, who looks like Shakespeare, has a limp and in Neil Gaiman's "Men of Good Fortune" the young man is depicted with a broken leg. The injured leg seems like a means to make him stay, to show that his fate does not belong to him anymore, but to those, who fictionalize him.

The vampire genre is as complex as its subject; therefore, it is best defined through the vampire himself. From the gothic novel to a mixture of genres and topics in literature and film, horror, parodies, works of fiction for children and teenagers, romance, the vampire genre and the vampire himself have proven to be very flexible and adaptable and always seem to be finely tuned seismographs, negotiating current trends in culture, society and politics. The Romantic period knew its aristocratic Lord Ruthven; in the course of the nineteenth century, in literary texts such as Théophile Gautier's short story *La Morte Amoureuse* (1836) and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (1872), the vampire became the projection screen for negotiations of sexual perversions and Bram Stoker's Count Dracula established himself as a role model for the twentieth century. The novel referred to him as "the other", but he has always shown us the suppressed parts of ourselves. He represents what Sigmund Freud calls "Das Unheimliche" – "The Uncanny". According to Freud, the uncanny is "jene Art des Schreckhaften, welche auf das Altbekannte, Längstvertraute zurückgeht" (1919/1981: 244), the return of something, which was once familiar, which had been repressed and therefore becomes uncanny, terrible, horrible (cf. 263f). Stoker's *Dracula* is also indebted to James Malcolm Rymer's penny dreadful *Varney the Vampire, or the Feast of Blood* (1847), which was published as a serialised novel for over two years and made it to around eight hundred pages in two columns. *Varney* and *Dracula* paved the way for the vampire who became one of the key characters of popular fiction in the following decades. He travels through outer space, populates

an apocalyptic future, spreads epidemics, fights side by side with other creatures or becomes a hybrid – in short, through the vampire, a wide range of topics can be negotiated, be they cultural, social, religious, political or scientific. In the late twentieth century, the vampire also starts to become more and more human, a creature people do not have to fear, but rather can identify with, starting with Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) and its melancholy protagonist Louis de Pointe du Lac, who is rather a tragic hero than a villain. The vampires of Rice's popular *Vampire Chronicles* are also the first-person narrators of the books, a creative decision which lets the reader see the world through their eyes and thus find it easier to understand their actions. The vampire moves from the edge to the centre, his role shifts from object to subject, from antagonist to protagonist, from villain to anti-hero. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, interest in vampire fiction seems to have become more intense than ever; consider, for instance, Stephenie Meyer's immensely popular *Twilight* series (2005–2008), which was adapted into five movies (2008–2012), Charlaine Harris' *The Southern Vampire Mysteries/ Sookie Stackhouse* series (2001–2014), adapted for television as the series *True Blood* (seven seasons, 2008–2014), and Elizabeth Kostova's debut novel *The Historian* (2005).⁸³

Vampires, who do not possess a reflection, have held a mirror up to human beings and their reality since they started to populate fictional worlds two hundred years ago.⁸⁴ They can also help us to see the world of our popular culture clearer.

⁸³ For detailed information, consider, for example: Norbert Borrmann, *Vampirismus oder die Sehnsucht nach Unsterblichkeit* (1998); the entry "Vampir" in Matthew Bunson's *Das Buch der Vampire* (2001); Ruth Heholt's and Rebecca Lloyd's entry "Anne Rice" and Anna Chromik's entry "Vampire Fiction" in *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic* (2013); Victoria Nelson, *Gothicka. Vampire Heroes, Human Gods, and the New Supernatural* (2012); Deborah Mutch, *The Modern Vampire and Human Identity* (2013). It was only in the second half of the twentieth century, when the humanities began to gain interest in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. It has been successful since its publication in 1898, but it has been counted as popular fiction and thus not been taken seriously for a long time. This only changed in the 1970s and this development is explored, for instance, by Elizabeth Miller's essay "(Un)tot auf ewig? Hundert Jahre Dracula und kein Ende" in *Draculas Wiederkehr* (2003). She writes: "Dankenswerterweise war die postmoderne Infragestellung des traditionellen Literaturkanons mit der Abneigung verbunden, eine Art von Texten gegenüber einer anderen zu privilegieren" (2003: 14). As a result, gothic fiction was able to secure its place in the academic world.

⁸⁴ Over the last two and more decades, a number of studies were published, which stress the parallels between vampires and human beings, partly also in their titles, and turn them into chief negotiators of, among others, cultural and political discourses: In *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995), Nina Auerbach claims: "I am writing about vampires, because they can be everything we are" (1995: 6). According to Auerbach, "vampires blend into the changing cultures they inhabit" (8) and the aim of her book-length study is to "trace an evolving myth through two centuries of [English and American] cultural history" (8). Norbert Borrmann's study *Vampirismus oder die*

The vampire can become “eine Figur ästhetischer und poetologischer Reflexion, die für nahezu jede Position im Feld künstlerischer Produktion und Rezeption stehen kann” (Begemann, Herrmann, and Neumeyer 2008: 22). Following this theory, I would argue that the vampire Christopher Marlowe, as he is represented in Jim Jarmusch’s *Only Lovers Left Alive*, takes over the position of the ingenious author. Begemann, Herrmann, and Neumeyer have also commented on the relation between the vampire and the author:

[E]s ist mehr als ein historischer Zufall, daß sich gegen das gleichzeitig entstehende Konzept des genialen Dichters die Gestalt des Vampirs erhebt. Diese läßt sich im Kontext des genieästhetischen Konzepts als Zerrbild des intertextuell agierenden Schriftstellers lesen, des Epigonen, der von Inspirationsquellen und Traditionsbeständen abhängig ist. Der Schrecken vor dem Vampir entspricht nicht zuletzt der Befürchtung, derartigen produktionsästhetischen Abhängigkeiten zu unterliegen – einer ‚anxiety of influence‘, die das Originalitätsdenken und sein Streben nach Unsterblichkeit immer schon grundiert und die verdeutlicht, was das Genie programmatisch abwehrt: selbst zum Wiedergänger der ‚Alten‘ zu werden (2008: 22).⁸⁵

The vampire became a popular character in the literature of the Romantic period, a time, when the concept of the original genius was developed. This argument regards him as the genius’s worst nightmare. Creative production becomes a kind of vampirism because the author cannot, in fact, be an original genius, he always has to be an epigone, too, drawing creative energy from his predecessors and contemporaries. But what happens if original genius and vampire turn out to be one person? The work for which the vampire Marlowe is revered was created by

Sehnsucht nach Unsterblichkeit (1998) wants to point to the “Vampir in uns“ (1998: 7). Christian Begemann, Britta Herrmann, and Harald Neumeyer refer to the vampire’s adaptability to a certain time and its human beings, when they write in the introduction to the anthology *Dracula Unbound. Kulturwissenschaftliche Lektüren des Vampirs* (2008) they edited together: “Jede Epoche und jede Generation hat ihre eigenen Vampire”, their “historische Anschlußfähigkeit [...] ist nahezu unbegrenzt” (2008: 11f). One year later, Christian Begemann gave a lecture he held during the summer term at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München the title “Wir Vampire. Vampirismus in kulturgeschichtlicher Perspektive”. Deborah Mutch speaks of a “humanized vampire which began with Anne Rice’s Louis de Pointe du Lac” in her novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) in the introduction to the anthology Mutch edited and published in 2013, *The Modern Vampire and Human Identity* (2013: 7): “Our relationship with the vampire is closer than it has ever been. The vampire is not the external predator, the threat from outside which will change us from within, make us ourselves and yet not ourselves. Now the vampire lives among us, lives like us, looks to the human, not as a food source but as a source of inspiration and aspiration and the human aspires to the beauty and purity of the ‘good’ vampire.” (17). These examples shall show that the vampire is no longer “the other” as Bram Stoker has termed him in his groundbreaking novel *Dracula* (1898), but that he has meanwhile blended into a kind of human state.

⁸⁵ This concept was not only applied to the author, but also to the text and the reader; all three can become vampire and victim in turn. The author can be sucked dry in the course of the production of his vampiric text as well as by the reader and the latter can also become exhausted by his reading. Britta Herrmann focuses on this aspect in her contribution to the vampire anthology, “Buchstaben sind Vampire. Zur Poetik des Untoten.”

the human being Marlowe and he was turned into a supernatural creature before the Romantic concept of the original genius was developed. So, the vampire incorporated this concept, thereby, on the one hand, pushing it to extremes, but, on the other hand, also deconstructing it. It was the incorporation of two mutually exclusive entities in one body. This is stressed by the proposition that Marlowe wrote Shakespeare's plays. As mentioned before, Jonathan Bate argues that the term "genius" was given its new meanings to define William Shakespeare, in the first place: "Shakespeare was the cardinal exemplar of 'original genius' since it was above all because of his supposed 'artlessness' that the concept was developed and became so widely accepted." (2008: 163) So the ingenious predecessor of the Romantic authors turns out to be a lie, he is only a construct, which is easily deconstructed because it never existed in the first place. Marlowe does not seem to have published anything since the seventeenth century; instead, he is still working on a play he wrote as a human being. The old, fragile, and sick vampire is a revenant of the human being, a spectre which haunts a world in which he does not belong anymore. He embodies an absence and is only able to point to what he once achieved in his human state. All three vampires live in the past, in small islands they created for themselves; Adam in a house full of old mementos in a deserted area of Detroit, Eve in an antiquarian bookshop-like apartment and Marlowe in a secret room, which resembles an old painting. Their connection to the past is also stressed by Eve's ability to date Adam's guitars exactly with only a touch of her hand. The vampires seem to be somewhat outdated. And within the character of Marlowe the Romantic ingenious author; there is no place for him in our contemporary culture. The movie proclaims the death of the author, the death of the original genius, but it also points to a new possible direction cultural negotiations of authorship might take. Marlowe has become a mentor for another aspiring writer. The owner of the Café where Marlowe lives is called Bilal (Slimane Dazi), who calls him his teacher, who considers him to be his family and who has sworn to keep his secrets – the secret about his inhuman condition as well as the secret of his authorship of Shakespeare's works. Bilal is a middle-aged man of humble origins. He is presented as a contrast because he incorporates what the Romantic genius feared most: As he is the vampire Marlowe's pupil and clearly influenced by him he is a "Wiedergänger der 'Alten'" (2008: 22). It seems to be the right time for a new

beginning. “Bilal is an excellent writer in his own right” (1:38:59), Marlowe says in one of his last speeches. To this, Bilal answers: “Maybe not yet” (1:39:05). But this “not yet” points to the possibility that he might become one. He might become the creator of a work, which is indebted to his precursors, but this indebtedness is not seen as a failure or burden, but accepted as something which constitutes the afterlife or new life of the author. And that this work might be read again by human beings. Here, a third meaning of the word “genius” comes into focus, an old meaning of the word, which derives from Latin, with a reference to a pagan belief: “the tutelary god or attendant spirit allotted to every person at birth to govern his or her fortunes and determine personal character, and finally to conduct him or her out of the world” (*OED* s.v. *genius*; n.). The vampire Christopher Marlowe was present at the birth of the author Bilal and became his genius, determining his development as a writer. He does not live long enough to conduct Bilal “out of the world”, but the death of the one author makes room for the birth of another, who can go on to develop his own character.

2.4.3 The Daemon Christopher Marlowe

Daemons are creatures, which belong to this world as well as to the afterworld. They can be helpful, but mostly they are baneful. The Oxford English Dictionary offers a long list of entries for the term “demon”, which follows two general directions: On the one hand, the term has a negative connotation and refers to “[a]n evil spirit, and related senses” (*OED* s.v. *demon*; n.) – now surely the more common understanding of the word; on the other hand, it can also be used in a neutral and positive way to describe “a supernatural being, spirit, or divinity” and it is then usually spelled “daemon”. The ancient religious belief in demons/daemons was very popular. Already the Sumerian people (around 3000 B.C.) knew light and dark divinities. With the establishment of new religions, the gods of the old ones used to be turned into dark and evil spirits. In the course of Christianization, demons, revenants, vampires, and witches were all considered to be servants of the devil and they had to be destroyed by the purifying force of fire (cf. Bunson 2001: 52). In *Shadow of Night*, Deborah Harkness also draws a close connection between daemons – she spells it with an ‘a’, vampires and witches.

They might live among humans, but at the same time, they have established a reality of their own and only they can recognize another creature while most human beings are not aware of them. They exist on another level of reality, in a parallel world, and natural and supernatural beings should not mingle. One of these daemons is Christopher Marlowe. The US-American writer (born in 1965) is a history scholar and an expert on Elizabethan England and the history of science and medicine, who currently teaches European History and the History of Science at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. *Shadow of Night* (2012) is the second novel of her bestselling *All Souls Trilogy*, which starts with *A Discovery of Witches* (2011) and ends with *The Book of Life* (2014). The first part of the trilogy was adapted into a TV series, starring Teresa Palmer and Matthew Goode, and was released on Europe's SKY One in 2018. Tom Hughes – born in 1985 in England, with dark, wavy hair, blue eyes, full lips, and arrogant, self-confident appearance – will play the role of Christopher Marlowe in season two of the drama series, which will be released in 2020.

When asked in an interview, posted on her website, if she could tell the reader something about the interplay between real people and fictional characters in her second novel *Shadow of Night*, Deborah Harkness answered:

Back when I started *A Discovery of Witches* and was first imagining this story about an ancient vampire scientist and a reluctant witch, I thought, “Wouldn't it be fun if my vampire was someone who really lived, someone mysterious who knew interesting people but remained in the shadows?” I knew of just such a person in Elizabethan England, the poet-spy Matthew Roydon. From that moment on – and this was in 2008, so it was some time ago – Matthew Roydon's life story determined a great deal about Matthew Clairmont's intellectual habits and his taste in friends. A historical figure like Matthew Roydon is a novelist's dream, because what little we know about him is so fascinating and leaves so much room for creative invention. I like to think that the historical characters add the same air of verisimilitude to this book set in 1590 as going to yoga and entertaining trick-or-treaters did to *A Discovery of Witches*. As for the minor characters, I drew them from interesting individuals I'd come across in my research. They are usually people about whom I wanted to know more, but there is, alas, no further evidence about them.⁸⁶

It seems almost naturally then that Christopher Marlowe became a minor character in the historical fantasy novel. Harkness created a supernatural role for him: a lovesick and dangerously jealous daemon, who plays the part of the protagonist's antagonist and is, in a way, destroyed by her. In the world of the novels, witches, “creative, destructive daemons” and “long-lived vampires”, as

⁸⁶ <https://deborahharkness.com/all-souls-world-home/reading-guides-all-souls/> (accessed 1 October 2018).

they are described on the author's website appear as human beings and have been living among them for millennia.⁸⁷ The protagonists are Diana Bishop, a thirty-three-year-old US-American history of science scholar, and witch, who currently lives in Oxford to do some research for her new project, and geneticist and 1500-year-old vampire Matthew Clairmont, who is originally from France, but now also lives and teaches in Oxford. At the story's centre is an enchanted alchemical manuscript known as Ashmole 782, which was written by the seventeenth century English scientist and alchemist Elias Ashmole. In the first novel of the trilogy, Diana Bishop orders it in Oxford's Bodleian Library and she is the only one, who is able to get it from the archive and to open it. Although she descends from a long line of witches, Diana does not want to live up to her family's legacy and does not want to use her powers, but with the opening of the manuscript the world of magic bursts into her ordinary life. The other non-human creatures become interested in it because they believe that Ashmole 782 contains important information about their past and possibly their future, explaining their origin, loss of power and eventual extinction. Witch and vampire work together to unveil the manuscript's secrets – and fall in love, a tabooed connection, which threatens to end the peace between the otherworldly creatures. This peace is protected by the Congregation, a covenant of daemons, vampires and witches that will punish everybody who breaks the rules. Nonetheless, Diana and Matthew even get married at the end of the first novel and consider themselves to be (soul-)mates. In the second novel of the trilogy, they time-travel to Elizabethan London with the help of Diana's awaking witchcraft; not only in order to flee from the Congregation, but also to follow leads and unlock the secrets of Ashmole 782, and to find a witch who can teach Diana how to control her powers. In 1590 London, the vampire is known as poet and spy Matthew Roydon. He meets again with some of the other members of what is now generally referred to as the School of Night: first and foremost his best friend Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Harriot, another daemon, and the human beings Walter Raleigh, the "Wizard Earl" of Northumberland Henry Percy, and George Chapman. It is doubtful if this group ever existed, but the novel claims its existence to be true. It is Chapman who provided the title for the novel. In 1594, his *Shadow of Night* was published, a

⁸⁷ <https://deborahharkness.com/all-souls-world-home/the-all-souls-world-books/> (accessed 1 October 2018).

long poem which glorifies learning and knowledge. He dedicated it to Matthew Roydon and refers to other members of the School of Night, who dedicated their life to the pursuit of knowledge:

I remember, my good Mat, how joyfully oftentimes you reported unto me that most ingenious Derby, deep-searching Northumberland and skill-embracing heir of Hunsdon had most profitably entertained learning in themselves, to the vital warmth of freezing science, & to the admirable lustre of their true nobility (quoted from Hopkins 2005: 153).⁸⁸

With “Derby”, Chapman refers to Ferdinando Stanly, 5th Earl of Derby and Lord Strange, patron of the theatre company Lord Strange’s Men; Northumberland is, of course, Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, and with “the heir of Hunsdon” Chapman means George Carey. All are considered to have been members of the School of Night. The fellow poets and spies Roydon and Marlowe are even historically considered to have been friends. In his second letter to Sir John Puckering, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Thomas Kyd refers to the connection between the two men when he writes about Marlowe’s “monstruous opinions”: He wold perswade with men of quallitie to goe unto the K[ing] of *Scotts* whether I heare *Royden* is gon and where if he had livd he told me when I sawe him last he meant to be.” (quoted from Kuriyama 2002: 231) In the novel, the vampire becomes the personified Shadow of Night; Queen Elizabeth I calls him her “Shadow” and for Marlowe, he is the “Shadow of Night” in the last verses he writes before his death.

Deborah Harkness seem to be very interested in the playwright and historical character Christopher Marlowe: When asked in the same interview, which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, for a companion piece to her novel, she answers:

I think it would have to be Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* or a book about Marlowe, like Charles Nicholl’s *The Reckoning*, which brilliantly conveys how tricky it was to lead a double (or triple) life in Elizabethan England.

According to the writer’s description, daemons are “creative” as well as “destructive”. With these attributions, Harkness shifts between some of the different meanings of the term “demon”/ “daemon”. Although Christopher Marlowe is a supernatural creature, apart from his unearthly creative talent, he

⁸⁸ Lisa Hopkins includes this dedication in her *Christopher Marlowe Chronology* and reads it as an indication about the kind of company Marlowe kept.

seems more or less like a human being and the novel also points to his death. This rather speaks for another definition which does not include the supernatural element: “A cruel, wicked, or destructive person or animal. Also in weakened use: a mischievous or unmanageable person, esp. a child.” Interesting in connection to the playwright is one of the *OED*’s neutral or rather positive definitions: “A spirit associated with a particular person; an inner or attendant spirit; (also) an inner source of creative inspiration.” This description can be used to explain the intense relationship between Matthew Roydon and Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe is not only in love, but rather possessed with the vampire, he regards him as the source of his own existence. But as he seems to be an amalgamation of the different meanings of the word “daemon”, he is not only a creative, but also a destructive being. If “destructive” is also read as “self-destructive”, this description applies perfectly to the Christopher Marlowe we have come to know today. He was a playwright and poet of immense talent, but posterity also focused on his life as a spy, atheist and homosexual and considers the latter to be the reason of his untimely death in Deptford. In *Shadow of Night*, the daemon Marlowe’s creative character traits are mostly neglected in favour of his (self-)destructiveness.

The reader of *Shadow of Night* can easily imagine what Christopher Marlowe looks like in the novel. When Diana sees him for the first time, she recognizes him immediately: “I’d seen that face before, on my paperback copy of Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*.” (SN 5) His face is that of the putative portrait. Diana describes him as “a man with tousled brown hair (...) of average height, with a neat build and expensive, tailored clothes” (4). However, the witch’s initial pleasure of meeting Marlowe – “I suppressed an urge to rush at one of England’s greatest playwrights and shake his hand before peppering him with questions” (5) – is soon replaced by disappointment and irritation because Marlowe turns out not to be the man Diana has imagined him to be:

My dreams of sitting with him by a cozy fire discussing magic and literature faded further in the harsh light of this November morning. I had been in 1590 for less than twenty-four hours, but I was already heartily sick of Christopher Marlowe (SN 28).

The daemon is the vampire Roydon’s best friend, above all desperately in love with him and dangerously jealous of his wife.

The young man's scorn was evident, his jealousy better hidden. Marlowe was indeed in love with my husband. I had suspected it back in Madison when my fingers had travelled over his inscription in Matthew's copy of *Doctor Faustus* (SN 6).

Diana and Kit become antagonists immediately. At first, he refuses to address her directly or to use her name and he only refers to her as "the witch" (11). He seems to hate witches and to be a misogynist in general. Marlowe is usually called by his nickname "Kit", which is reminiscent of "kid" and it is "a troublesome child" (37). Diana compares him with: "Kit unerringly gauged the worst moment to deliver the mail, announce dinner, or request Matthew's help with some problem." (ibid.) With Diana around, he always seems to be in a bad temper, quick to complain, for example about the lack of wine (cf. 13), and to push himself into the centre of the scene when he feels he attracts not enough attention (cf. 11). The novel focuses on its character's negative character traits and destructive energy. When Diana and Matthew time-travel back to 1590, they arrive at Matthew's home in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, and in an attempt to get rid of Diana, Marlowe spreads rumours among the villagers that she is a dangerous witch (cf. 95). In the course of the novel, he even tries to kill her himself under the influence of opiates and with the help of Matthew's lunatic sister Louisa (cf. 602ff). "Kit was unusually perceptive, even for a daemon" (12), Diana notices once, and Marlowe does not only see her as a rival in his pursuit of Matthew's love, but also clearly recognizes her as an intruder, as someone, who does not naturally belong to the world of the sixteenth century. He wants to get back to the original state, to win back the creative part of his being, which he stresses two times, when he says: "We were happy before" (96) and "Our plan was to kill her (...) Then everything will be as it was before" (604). Marlowe's character and his way of life must inevitably lead to his destruction. This is also hinted at when the rules of the Covenant are explained: "The ancient promises made among daemons, vampires, and witches prohibited meddling in human politics or religion and forbade personal alliances among the three different species." (17) Marlowe the spy, the atheist and the lover of a vampire breaks all these rules. However, in the course of the novel, he does not see himself, but the witch as a mortal threat:

We are not safe with a time spinner in our midst. She can see what fate has in store for each of us. The witch will be able to undo our futures, cause ill fortune – even hasten our deaths (...) I have no intention of putting *my* future in her hands! (SN 33)

So, in the novel, Christopher Marlowe wants to take his future into his own hands and kill her. However, his attempt on the jousting place at Queen Elizabeth's palace in Greenwich parallels his own untimely death, as he aims a dagger at Diana's right eye and leaves a bloody mark just under her brow. With cutting out her eyes, he wants to make sure that she does not enchant him before he can do both, kill her and also take a look at his fate: "She knows my death. I am sure of it (...) To break her spell, I must have her eyes." (605) When Marlowe is introduced at the beginning, the novel also offers an explanation why he is stabbed through his eye in Deptford. It is the gaze of the daemon, which possesses a special power and must therefore be destroyed: "Marlowe's eyes flickered when they spotted me, nudging me with the insistent pressure that marked him unmistakably as a daemon." (5) Before he tries to murder her, it seemed that the daemon has gone as far as he could go when he even resorts to begging Diana to leave her husband to him: "I am not fully alive without him. All poetry flies from my mind when he is gone" (96). And later, he explains his attempted murder with "What I did was out of love" (626). This dependence is also stressed by other characters; Walter Raleigh reminds him that "everything in you and on you – from your ideas to your last cup of wine to the hat on your head – is thanks to Matthew Roydon's good graces" (34) and that he "can't step out of [his] own door in daylight for fear of [his] creditors" (59). It seems that Matthew Roydon always pays for Marlowe's debts and also keeps him from other trouble, as the vampire's nephew Hancock hints at when it is revealed that Roydon is one of the secret members of the mighty Covenant: "Of course it's true! How do you imagine he's kept you from the noose, young Marlowe?" (76) It is strange that the novel offers no direct comment from Matthew Roydon himself on Marlowe's love for him. Although he does not return this strong affection, he seems to accept it as a given fact and tries to treat Marlowe as the best friend he has always been – until the latter attempts to kill his wife. "Christopher Marlowe is a masochist of the first order" (41), he tells Diana and thereby hints at the daemon's self-destructive energy. "With Kit, Matthew was indulgent and a bit exasperated" (28), the witch observes, but she also senses a relationship built on dependence. Once she asks her husband: "Is Marlowe your friend or your puppet?" (16) When Diana and Matthew leave Early Modern England in the summer of 1591 and time-travel back to the twenty-first

century the ‘real’ Matthew Roydon of the sixteenth century also seems to have disappeared for good in Scotland – the marionette’s threads are cut.

Shadow of Night depicts Christopher Marlowe as a supernatural being and therefore, his creativity, characteristic of daemons, is also considered to be an inhuman trait. Thereby the novel takes Harold Bloom’s concept of *daemonization* in his study of Romantic poets literally. Bloom proclaims a poet’s imagination to be something inhuman: “The power that makes a man a poet is daemonic” (1997: 100). The new and strong poet “is never ‘possessed’ by a daemon. When he grows strong, he becomes, and is, a daemon” (ibid.). The contrast between the Romantic individual artist and his precursor is stressed, as the one is daemonized, the other is more humanized (cf. ibid). In Harkness’s novel, like in Jarmusch’s movie, the Romantic aesthetic concept of the original genius is pushed to extremes.

However, the daemon incorporates the two parts of the medal. He is able to create as well as to destroy, so the deconstruction of the genius is already foreshadowed at the very beginning and points to the need for a new representation of the author. The concept of the solitary ingenious author, which is proclaimed in the figure of the daemon, does not withstand, and not only because it has not been developed at the time the novel is set in. This is made clear when Diana witnesses Marlowe’s dependency on Roydon. He needs his love as well as his (financial) support. The two poets seem to inspire each other and they also seem to draw inspiration from their network, the School of Night. Two of the three items that help the witch and the vampire to time-travel show that the bond between Christopher Marlowe and Matthew Roydon used to be a strong one: Next to an earring, they use a small figurine of the goddess Diana, which Marlowe once won from Roydon, and the playwright’s handwritten manuscript of *Doctor Faustus*, a present for his friend. When they arrive in the sixteenth century, Marlowe immediately feels replaced by Diana and tries everything to gain his place back. Diana has not only taken over Christopher’s place at Matthew’s side. She also seems to have taken over his verses. She uses his *Doctor Faustus* for a powerful spell and when she sees him writing in front of a tapestry, which shows “a golden-haired maiden standing in a tower over the sea” (602), she senses that he is composing his *Hero and Leander* and recites some lines. Marlowe is taken aback and shouts: “What witch’s mischief is this? You know what I am doing as soon as I do it.” (ibid.) Diana Bishop stands for another creative representation of the author which replaces the

one depicted in the daemonic Christopher Marlowe. She is a contemporary witch and scholar, who decided to dedicate her life to the study of the past. In light of her knowledge and her magical powers she is able to visit the past, even live in it, and to begin developing her own extraordinary witchcraft. As a weaver, she is the creative one, not only able to conjure spells that already exist, but to produce them. In this she could point to the creative processes of contemporary authors. And Deborah Harkness has fashioned her female protagonist with some similarities to her own personality. Her name also begins with a “D” and she is another trained historian, who specializes in the history of science, with a special interest in the history of alchemy. When asked in an interview attached to the first part of the trilogy about these parallels, Harkness answers: “Really, all the characters have some element of me in them. I think that’s how authors create imaginary people who nevertheless feel real.” (*DW* 5) In the creative witch and scholar of the past Diana Bishop, Harkness has also created a representation of authorship in contemporary culture.

The first two novels of the trilogy also point to another replacement, at least at first glance: In *A Discovery of Witches*, Diana reads Marlowe’s dedication in *Doctor Faustus*, she thinks the lines to be Shakespeare’s: *To my own sweet Matt [...] Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?* (*DW* 706) Matthew corrects her and says: “Will was something of a magpie when it came to collecting other people’s words.” (*ibid.*) So Shakespeare used the line from *Hero and Leander* for *As You Like It*. This is a confusing scene because Diana turns out to be an expert on Marlowe: She owns a copy of *The Jew of Malta*, knows him at first glance to be the man from the portrait, is very happy at first to have a chance to get to know him, and even appears to know his poem *Hero and Leander* by heart. This leads us back to the first chapter of this project and the depiction of Christopher Marlowe as a pioneer, as somebody, who paves the way for other’s art, above all, that of William Shakespeare. It focused on the special relationship of the two Elizabethan poets and playwrights, which is also hinted at in the *All Souls* trilogy. In the twenty-first century, their lines seem to have become so entangled that it might be difficult to distinguish them, even for an expert on Elizabethan England. The epilogue of *Shadow of Night* shows another example of the supposed “magpie”. Shakespeare has discovered the scratch of paper with Marlowe’s last words on them, which was kept by one of the latter’s servants: “Black is the badge

of true love lost. / The hue of daemons, / And the Shadow of Night.” (SN 700) He alters them in the following way:

Black is the badge of hell / The hue of dungeons and the school of night. (...)
Shakespeare felt not a single pang of regret as he altered the past, thereby changing the future. Marlowe’s turn on the world’s stage had ended, but Shakespeare’s was just beginning. Memories were short and history unkind. It was the way of the world.” (SN 702)

Shakespeare furthermore turns “true love lost” into “Love’s Labour’s Lost”, which he writes down in capital letters and decides to use it one day. Indeed, he used it as the title of one of his comedies, in which he also included this passage, which provided the name for the alleged group of intellectuals around Christopher Marlowe and Matthew Roydon. The School of Night is the topic of Lindsay Ann Reid’s essay “The Spectre of the School of Night: Former Scholarly Fictions and the Stuff of Academic Fiction” (2014), in which she explores the afterlife of this theory in three contemporary novels of academic fiction, among them *Shadow of Night*. Also following Derrida, for Reid, these novels are not only haunted by this spectre of theory. Furthermore “the authorial ghosts of Shakespeare and Marlowe continue to haunt and counter-haunt one another’s texts, both in academic scholarship and the popular imagination” (2014: 25). This confirms my theory, but I want to stress that the case of Christopher Marlowe can also be explored independently from William Shakespeare. As a supernatural as well as an authorial being in general, Marlowe can never be replaced, he is never truly gone, but continues to haunt our culture. Regarding the ghost in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Derrida introduces the “visor effect” (1994: pos. 309) a characteristic of the spectre’s appearance: “This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us”, but “we can “not see it even when it is there.” (ibid.) Concerning Marlowe, we can see him clearly and can look him directly in the eyes because his portrait, on which posterity has agreed, has accompanied us through these chapters as every work of fiction bases its account more or less visibly on it. It seems to be a ghostly presence because it depicts a Christopher Marlowe who is absent. And it is unclear if he ever was there, if he really sat for this portrait. He seems to look the authors of his fictionalizations directly in the eyes because they look at him. They revive the portrait because they project ‘their’ Christopher Marlowe into it. In the end of the introductory chapter I wrote that his gaze seems to invite us to reach out for him, to make him ‘our’ Marlowe, to show what contemporary creative

representations of authorship can look like and to secure his place in our culture. Since Christopher Marlowes 'resurrection' in 1993, we have learned to live with that ghost.

3. Conclusion

Terminat hora diem; terminat author opus.
Christopher Marlowe

1993 and 2020 – the year that triggered the sheer wave of fictional Christopher Marlowes in popular culture and the year this PhD thesis was completed: “‘Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that hath ravished me.” *Christopher Marlowe’s Fictional Afterlives*. This project aimed to answer the following questions: As what kinds of fictional characters has Christopher Marlowe been constructed over the last about twenty-five years? What are the creative representations of authorship in popular culture these different ‘Marlowes’ point to? Over the course of the past twenty-seven years he has wandered in a variety of shapes through the fictions of popular culture. And all those fictionalizations of the Elizabethan poet and playwright point to creative representations of the author in popular culture. They negotiate popular imaginations of authorship. On the basis of a specific Marlovian intertextuality – including his (alleged) life, his works and his reception – and out of the freedom of creative writing, the freedom of imagination, the authors of these fictionalizations constructed a Christopher Marlowe in their works of fiction who, in different roles, can tell us more about the author. Fictional Christopher Marlowe is a pioneer who paves the way for other authors and who points to the author as an ‘original collaborator’ (chapter 2.1). He becomes the overreacher who turns the author into a character (2.2). As a spy he recruits the author as a fellow (secret) agent (2.3). Finally, as a supernatural being, Christopher Marlowe drives the originally Romantic notion of the ingenious author to the next level (2.4). The author dies, but he is resurrected.

The argumentation in the main part develops from an account of Christopher Marlowe’s life and the reception of his person and his works from his lifetime to his death and throughout the centuries until the present. Furthermore, a short overview of the history of authorship is also provided as a foundation. The first chapter of the main part focuses on Marlowe the pioneer who paves the way for the art works of others, above all for that of William Shakespeare. The works of fiction discussed are Ros Barber’s verse novel *The Marlowe Papers* (2012), Connie Willis’s short story, “Winter’s tale” (1993), “Men of Good Fortune”, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, and “The Tempest” from Neil Gaiman’s comic

series *The Sandman* (1989–1996), and John Madden’s film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). These works of fiction focus on the relationship between Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare and push their rivalry to extremes when they substitute one for the other. Through Marlowe’s role as a pioneer a creative representation of the author in contemporary popular culture is developed: the ‘original collaborator’. The four novels, which were selected for the next chapter, create Christopher Marlowe as an overreacher: Anthony Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993), Judith Cook, *The Slicing Edge of Death. Who Killed Christopher Marlowe?* (1993), Liam Maguire, *Icarus Flying. The Tragical Story of Christopher Marlowe* (1993), and Stephanie Merritt, *Gaveston* (2002). They present their fictional Christopher Marlowes as amalgamations of the playwright and his characters and Marlowe as his character Gaveston, respectively. Christopher Marlowe the overreacher – an impersonation of a figure of speech, hyperbole – points to a creative representation of the author as language, as text, as character in the literal sense of the word. The poet and playwright also inspired quite a few novels which belong to the popular spy genre. M.J. Trow’s *Dark Entry* (2011), the first novel of his *Kit Marlowe* series (2011 –), and Robert Olen Butler’s *The Hot Country* (2012), also the first novel of a series (2012 –), are discussed in the third chapter. Dieter Kühn’s *Geheimagent Marlowe. Roman eines Mordes* (2007) and Robin Chapman’s *Christoferus or Tom Kyd’s Revenge* (1993) are also included. Each of these novels constructs ‘its’ Christopher Marlowe as a writer and spy. So, this fictional character points to the creative representation of an author as (secret) agent, as an agent of identity. The last chapter focuses on Christopher Marlowe as a supernatural being, as a vampire in Jim Jarmusch’s movie *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) and as a daemon in Deborah Harkness’s novel *Shadow of Night* (2012). In the fictional character of a supernatural Marlowe the Romantic aesthetic concept of the author as an original genius is pushed to extremes. It ultimately leads to the death of the author. At the same time it points to the need for a new representation of the author and thus to his afterlife.

These works of fiction do not only introduce Christopher Marlowe to a broader public. Ultimately, all of these fictionalizations of the Elizabethan poet and playwright aim to make the author more visible in popular culture. In the introduction I mentioned Leah S. Marcus’s term ‘Marlowe effect’ which she defines as the “effect of adjusting Marlowe to fit different audiences”. While

Marcus uses 'Marlowe' as a metonymy, I took this literally for my project and included the works as well as the person. My aim was to show that contemporary authors attempt to create a fictional Christopher Marlowe who generates the 'Marlowe effect' for a twentieth and twenty-first century audience because this fictional character points to creative representations of authorship in popular culture. At the end of his *Doctor Faustus*, Marcus argues, Marlowe displayed "a majestic gesture of authorial finality" (1996: 39): *Terminat hora diem; terminat author opus. (Doctor Faustus, epilogue, 9)* – 'The hour ends the day, the author ends his work.' The Elizabethan author ended the world of the play with a last strike of his quill. The contemporary author ends the world of his work of fiction usually by typing the last words on his computer. It is with this authorial gesture that Christopher Marlowe's fictional afterlife really begins. 'Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that still ravishes us.

Appendix: Fictional Marlowe – an Overview⁸⁹

Literature:

- Ludwig Tieck, *Dichterleben* (1826 – 1831)
- Richard, H. Horne, *The Death of Marlowe. A Tragedy in One Act* (1837)
- W.L. Courtney, *Kit Marlowe's Death* (1890)
- Wilbur G. Zeigler, *It was Marlowe: A Story of the Secret of Three Centuries* (1895)
- James Hosken, *Christopher Marlowe, a Tragedy* (1896)
- Josephine Peabody, *Marlowe, a Drama in Five Acts* (1901)
- Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (1928; references to Marlowe)
- Philip Lindsay, *One Dagger for Two* (1932)
- C.E. Lawrence, *The Reckoning* (1934)
- Eric Ambler, *Background to Danger* (1937; reference to Marlowe)
- Norman, Charles, *The Muses' Darling: Christopher Marlowe* (1946)
- Anthony Burgess, *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964; references to Marlowe)
- Helmut Mader, *Selbstportrait mit Christopher Marlowe und andere Gedichte* (1965)
- Antonia Forest, *The Player's Boy* (1970)
- Hugh Ross Williamson, *Kind Kit: An Informal Biography of Christopher Marlowe* (1972)
- Herbert Lom, *Enter a Spy: The Double Life of Christopher Marlowe* (1978)
- Chris Hunt, *Mignon* (1987)
- Melissa Scott, Lisa A. Barnett, *The Armor of Light* (1988)
- George Garrett, *Entered from the Sun. The Murder of Marlowe* (1990)
- Stephen Marlowe, *The Death and Life of Miguel de Cervantes* (1991)
- Peter Whelan, *The School of Night* (1992)
- Anthony Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993)
- Stephanie Cowell, *Nicholas Cooke: Actor, Soldier, Physician, Priest* (1993)
- Connie Willis, "Winter's tale", in *Impossible Things* (1993; short story)
- Robin Chapman, *Christoferus or Tom Kyd's Revenge* (1993)
- Judith Cook, *The Slicing Edge of Death. Who Killed Christopher Marlowe?* (1993)
- Lisa Goldstein, *Strange Devices of the Sun and Moon* (1993)
- Liam Maguire, *Icarus Flying. The Tragical Story of Christopher Marlowe* (1993)
- Andy Lane, *The Empire of Glass* (1995)
- Neil Gaiman, "Men of Good Fortune" (*The Sandman* #13), "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (*The Sandman* #19), "The Tempest" (*The Sandman* #75) (1989 – 1996; comic)
- Andreas Höfele, *Der Spitzel* (1997)
- Iain Sinclair, *Slow Chocolate Autopsy. Incidents from the Notorious Career of Norton, Prisoner of London* (1997)
- Robert DeMaria, *To be a King: A Novel about Christopher Marlowe* (1999)
- Rosemary Laurey, *Kiss Me Forever* (2000)
- Alan Wall, *The School of Night* (2001; references to Marlowe)
- Stephanie Merritt, *Gaveston* (2002)
- Harry Turtledove, *Ruled Britannia. A Novel of Alternate History* (2002)
- Leslie Silbert, *The Intelligencer* (2004)
- Louise Welsh, *Tamburlaine Must Die* (2004)
- Elizabeth Bear, *The Promethean Age* series (2006–2013)
- Dieter Kühn, *Geheimagent Marlowe. Roman eines Mordes* (2007)
- Louis Bayard, *The School of Night* (2011)
- M.J. Trow, *Kit Marlowe* series (2011 –)
 - *Dark Entry* (2011)
 - *Silent Court* (2012)
 - *Witch Hammer* (2012)
 - *Scorpion's Nest* (2013)

⁸⁹ This list does not make a claim to completeness, but lists the results of my research until January 2020.

- *Crimson Rose* (2013)
 - *Traitor's Storm* (2014)
 - *Secret World* (2015)
 - *Eleventh Hour* (2017)
 - *Queen's Progress* (2018)
 - *Black Death* (2019)
- M.J. Trow, *All Hallows' Eve: A Kit Marlowe Short Story* (2015)
- Ros Barber, *The Marlowe Papers* (2012)
- Deborah Harkness, *Shadow of Night* (2012; book two of the *All Souls Trilogy*)
- Robert Olen Butler, *Christopher Marlowe Cobb* series (2012–)
 - *The Hot Country* (2012)
 - *The Star of Istanbul* (2013)
 - *The Empire of Night* (2014)
 - *Paris in the Dark* (2018)
- Ulrich Land, *Messerwetzen im Team Shakespeare* (2014)
- Jacopo della Quercia, *License to Quill: A Novel of Shakespeare and Marlowe* (2015)
- Gerald Szyszkowitz, *Das falsche Gesicht oder Marlowe ist Shakespeare* (2015)
- Gerald Szyszkowitz, *Marlowe und die Geliebte von Lope de Vega* (2016)
- Gerald Szyszkowitz, *Marlowes Romeo und Julia auf Kreta: Erzählung* (2017)
- Michelle Butler Hallett, *This Marlowe* (2016)
- Phillip DePoy, *Christopher Marlowe Mystery* series (2016 –)
 - *A Prisoner in Malta* (2016)
 - *The English Agent* (2017)
- Neal Stephenson, Nicole Galland, *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O* (2017)

Films:

- *Will Shakespeare* (no director named, written by Clemence Dane; thirty minute TV drama; 1938)
- *Shakespeare in Love* (John Madden; 1997)
- *Ye Olde Agent* (John Moss; twenty minute comedy; 2005)
- *The Barde* (Joshua Wolfson; twelve minute drama; 2010)
- *Anonymous* (Roland Emmerich; 2011)
- *Only Lovers Left Alive* (Jim Jarmusch; 2013)
- *Bill* (Richard Bracewell; 2015)

Television:

- “Will Shakespeare” (*BBC Sunday Night Theatre* [1950–1959], season four, episode twenty-one, directed by Rudolph Cartier; 1953)
- “Dead Shepherd” (*Will Shakespeare* [1978], season one, episode one, directed by Peter Wood; 1978)
- *Upstart Crow* (created by Ben Elton; 2016 –)
- *Will* (created by Craig Pearce; 2017)
- *A Discovery of Witches* (based on the *All Souls Trilogy*, written by Deborah Harkness [2018–], season two; 2020)

Plays:

- C.E. Lawrence, *The Reckoning* (1934)
- Peter Whelan, *The School of Night* (1992)
- Heathcote Williams, *Killing Kit* (2014)

Musicals:

- *Marlowe* (Leo Rost and Jimmy Horowitz; 1981)
- *Kit. The Musical* (Julian Ng; in progress since 2017)

Radio:

- Ged Parsons, *The Christopher Marlowe Mysteries* (BBC Radio 4, four episodes; 1993)
- Michael Butt, *The Killing* (BBC Radio 4; references to Marlowe; 2010)

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

“‘Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that hath ravished me.” *Christopher Marlowe’s Fictional Afterlives*: Die vorliegende Doktorarbeit legt den Fokus auf Christopher Marlowes fiktive Nachleben. Der Elisabethanische Dichter und Dramatiker Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) war ein Zeitgenosse William Shakespeares, erfolgreicher Autor von Dramen wie *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus* und *The Jew of Malta – Der Jude von Malta*. Im Zuge der Urheberschaftsdebatte um die Werke William Shakespeares wird immer wieder auf Marlowe als „wahren“ Shakespeare, als eigentlichen Autor von Shakespeares Oeuvre, verwiesen. Er soll als Spion im Dienst von Königin Elizabeth I. gestanden haben, außerdem soll er homosexuell und Atheist gewesen sein – letztere im 16. Jahrhundert „Vergehen“, die mit dem Tod bestraft wurden. Am 30. Mai 1593, mit nur 29 Jahren, kam Marlowe unter mysteriösen Umständen ums Leben; er wurde in einer Taverne in Deptford erstochen, angeblich während eines Streits um die Rechnung.

Christopher Marlowe und das, was die Nachwelt über ihn weiß oder zu wissen glaubt, laden geradezu zu einer kreativen Verhandlung ein – und dies wurde in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten tatsächlich sehr oft getan, in Büchern verschiedener Genres – hauptsächlich Romanen – in Filmen, TV-Serien und anderen Medien. Der Appendix bietet einen Überblick über Marlowe-Fiktionalisierungen im englisch- und deutschsprachigen Raum. Jedoch erhebt er keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit, sondern spiegelt die Ergebnisse meiner Recherche bis zum Jahr 2020 wider. Die Kreativen unserer Zeit scheinen ein abgewandeltes Zitat von *Doctor Faustus* als Motto gewählt zu haben: “‘Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me“. – „Magie, Magie ist’s, was mein Herz entzückt.“ Und so trägt meine Dissertation den Titel: “‘Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that hath ravished me.” *Christopher Marlowe’s Fictional Afterlives*.

Marlowe ist bei weitem nicht die einzige bekannte historische Persönlichkeit, die in der Literatur und den visuellen Medien weiterlebt. Autoren als Charaktere sind ein beliebtes Thema. Die Kreativen, die sich in ihren künstlerischen Werken Christopher Marlowe gewidmet haben, stehen in einer langen Tradition von Autoren, die das (angebliche) Leben und Werk ihrer Vorgänger in ihren Büchern verarbeiten. Dies beginnt bereits in der Antike: So lässt Platon in seinem *Symposion* (~ 4. Jh. v. Chr.) den griechischen

Komödiendichter Aristophanes eine Rede halten, in der er die erotischen Anziehungskräfte, die zwei Menschen aufeinander ausüben, mit dem Mythos der Kugelmenschen erklärt. Dante Alighieri wählte den lateinischen Dichter Vergil als einen der Führer durch das Jenseits in seinem Epos *Die Göttliche Komödie* (~ 1307 bis 1321). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe entschied sich, dem italienischen Dichter Torquato Tasso ein Drama (1790) zu widmen. Goethe selbst wurde dann unter anderem von Thomas Mann für *Lotte in Weimar* (1939) zu einer Romanfigur gemacht, in dem es um die Jugendliebe des Goethes, Charlotte Buff, geht. 1994 widmete sich der spätere südafrikanische Literaturnobelpreisträger J.M. Coetzee in seinem Roman *Der Meister von Petersburg* mit Fjodor Dostojewski einem der bedeutendsten russischen Schriftsteller. Diese Beispiele ließen sich noch um viele weitere ergänzen. Der Autor als Charakter sei kein neues Phänomen, schreiben Paul Franssen und Ton Hoenselaars in der Einleitung des Sammelbands *The Author as Character. Representing Historical Writers in Western Literature* (1999). Sicher sei aber, dass wir gerade eine Blütezeit des Genres erleben (1999: 18). Die Frage, warum gerade die Postmoderne, die ja eigentlich in der Theorie den Tod des Autors ausgerufen hatte, ihn nun in ihren künstlerischen Werken umso lebendiger gestaltet, wird auch im Laufe dieser Arbeit beantwortet.

Was Marlowe-Fiktionalisierungen betrifft, spielt das Jahr 1993 eine entscheidende Rolle. Exakt 400 Jahre, nachdem er erstochen wurde, wurde er in der Populärkultur als fiktionale Figur wieder zum Leben erweckt und seitdem wandert er in verschiedenen Gestalten durch ihre Fiktionen. Meiner Meinung nach kann 1993 als Trigger gesehen werden. Davor wurden zwar auch schon Marlowe-Fiktionalisierungen veröffentlicht, jedoch scheint es sich bei diesen eher um sporadische Fälle zu handeln. Vor 27 Jahren begann ein Trend und dieser Trend dauert bis heute an. So berühmt Christopher Marlowe in der Welt des Elisabethanischen Theaters war, so schnell wurde er nach seinem Tod von der Nachwelt vergessen, um später in der Romantik als Prototyp des genialen Autors wiedererweckt zu werden. Wie jeder Autor und jedes Werk muss Marlowe im Kontext seiner Zeit gesehen werden, dem 16. Jahrhundert, gleichzeitig spiegelt sich die jeweilige Zeit in Auslegungen seiner Person und seines Werkes. Das 20. Jahrhundert musste sich noch entscheiden, wie es Christopher Marlowe zu „seinem“ Marlowe macht. Im 400. Jahr nach seinem Tod schien die Zeit dann reif

für ihn zu sein: Er betrat die Bühne der Populärkultur und wurde allein in diesem Jahr in sechs Romanen und einer Kurzgeschichte als fiktionaler Charakter entwickelt, nämlich in Anthony Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford*, Robin Chapman, *Christoferus or Tom Kyd's Revenge*, Judith Cook, *The Slicing Edge of Death. Who Killed Christopher Marlowe?*, Stephanie Cowell, *Nicholas Cooke: Actor, Soldier, Physician, Priest*, Lisa Goldstein, *Strange Devices of the Sun and Moon*, Liam Maguire, *Icarus Flying. The Tragical Story of Christopher Marlowe* und Connie Willis, "Winter's tale", die in ihrer Sammlung *Impossible Things* veröffentlicht wurde. Außerdem wurde in Beiträgen für das Radio, in Zeitungen und mit Gedenkveranstaltungen an ihn erinnert. 400 Jahre nach seinem Tod waren er und sein Werk immer noch präsent und wurden als wichtiger Teil des kulturellen Gedächtnisses angesehen. Diese Präsenz hat sich seitdem ständig erweitert. Und sie scheint einen neuen Lieblingsplatz gefunden zu haben: Fiktionen.

Die vorliegende Doktorarbeit hat das Ziel verfolgt, die folgenden beiden Fragen zu beantworten: Welche Arten von fiktionalen Christopher Marlowes wurden in den vergangenen fast drei Jahrzehnten entwickelt? Wie sehen die kreativen Darstellungen von Autorschaft aus, auf die diese Fiktionen verweisen? Jede der fiktiven Gestalten, die Christopher Marlowe in den rund 25 Jahren angenommen hat, verweisen auf kreative Darstellungen des Autors in der Populärkultur. Sie verhandeln populäre Vorstellungen von Autorschaft. Basierend auf einer spezifischen Marlowe-Intertextualität – zu der sein (angebliches) Leben, seine Werke und die Rezeption von beidem gehört – und sich aus der Freiheit kreativen Schreibens entwickelnd, aus der Freiheit der Fantasie, konstruieren die Autorinnen und Autoren dieser Fiktionalisierungen einen Christopher Marlowe der, in den verschiedenen Rollen, die ihm zugewiesen werden, mehr über den zeitgenössischen Autor und Autorschaft im Allgemeinen aussagen kann. Der individuelle Autor schreibt über einen anderen Autor, Christopher Marlowe, er formt auf kreative Art und Weise dessen Leben und Tod um und übernimmt so die Kontrolle über das literarische Erbe des Elisabethanischen Dichters und Dramatikers auf der einen Seite und späterer Rezipienten dieser historischen Persönlichkeit und seines Werkes auf der anderen Seite. Der Autor baut einen Dialog mit „seinem“ Marlowe auf und entwickelt durch dieses kreative Spiel

allgemeinere Ideen von Autorschaft, kreative Darstellungen des Autors und auf diese Weise eine Poetik von Autorschaft in der Populärkultur.

Der Hauptteil dieser Arbeit gliedert sich in vier Kapitel, in denen Christopher Marlowe als fiktionale Figur untersucht wird. Die ausgewählten Print- und visuellen Medien lassen sich vier verschiedenen „Marlowes“ zuordnen: Marlowe, der Wegbereiter, der den Weg für andere Kreative ebnet und auf den Autor als „original collaborator“, als „Original-Kollaborateur“, verweist (Kapitel 2.1); Marlowe, der „overreacher“, der den Autor zu einem Charakter macht (2.2); Marlowe, der Agent, der den Autor als (Geheim-)Agenten rekrutiert (2.3); Marlowe, das übernatürliche Wesen, Vampir oder Dämon, der das romantische Konzept des Original-Genies ins Extreme treibt – der Autor stirbt dabei, aber er wird wieder zum Leben erweckt.

Das erste Kapitel des Hauptteils legt den Fokus auf Marlowe, den Wegbereiter, der den Weg für die kreativen Arbeiten anderer ebnet, besonders für die von William Shakespeare. Folgende Fiktionalisierungen werden besprochen: Ros Barber's Versroman *The Marlowe Papers* (2012), Connie Willis' Kurzgeschichte, „Winter's tale“ (1993), „Men of Good Fortune“, „A Midsummer Night's Dream“, und „The Tempest“ aus *The Sandman* (1989–1996) einer Comicbuchreihe von Neil Gaiman, und John Madden's Film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Diese Fiktionalisierungen heben die Beziehung zwischen Christopher Marlowe und William Shakespeare hervor. Sie treiben die Rivalität zwischen den beiden Elisabethanischen Dichtern und Dramatikern ins Extreme und stellen den einen als Ersatz für den anderen dar. Ausgehend von Marlowes Rolle als Wegbereiter wird eine kreative Darstellung des Autors als „Original-Kollaborateur“ in der zeitgenössischen Populärkultur entwickelt.

Die vier Romane, die für das nächste Kapitel ausgewählt wurden, stellen Christopher Marlowe als „overreacher“ dar: Anthony Burgess, *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993), Judith Cook, *The Slicing Edge of Death. Who Killed Christopher Marlowe?* (1993), Liam Maguire, *Icarus Flying. The Tragical Story of Christopher Marlowe* (1993) und Stephanie Merritt, *Gaveston* (2002). Sie präsentieren ihre fiktiven Christopher Marlowes als Verschmelzungen des Dramatikers und seiner Charaktere, beziehungsweise lassen sie Marlowe und seine Figur Gaveston aus der Tragödie *Edward II.* zu einer Person verschmelzen. Damit greifen sie auch eine Tendenz in der akademischen Welt auf, in der die

historische Person Marlowe und sein Werk ebenfalls oft verzahnt werden. Als “overreacher” personifiziert Christopher Marlowe die Sprachfigur der Übertreibung und verweist so auf die kreative Darstellung des Autors als Sprache, als Text.

Der Dichter und Dramatiker inspirierte auch einige Romane, die zum beliebten Spionage-Genre gehören: M.J. Trows *Dark Entry* (2011) ist der erste Roman der bis jetzt zehnteiligen *Kit Marlowe*-Serie. Genauso bildet Robert Olen Butlers *The Hot Country* (2012) den Auftakt zu der bislang vierteiligen Christopher Marlowe Cobb-Reihe (2012 –). Daneben wird in diesem Kapitel Robin Chapman’s *Christoferus or Tom Kyd’s Revenge* (1993) besprochen sowie ein deutscher Roman, Dieter Kühns *Geheimagent Marlowe. Roman eines Mordes* (2007). Es haben vor allem britische und US-amerikanische Autoren Marlowe als fiktive Figur konstruiert; daneben gibt es aber auch eine Handvoll deutscher Schriftsteller, die sich literarisch mit ihm beschäftigt haben, wie der Appendix zeigt. Die in dieses Kapitel aufgenommenen Spionageromane konstruieren ‘ihre’ Marlowes als Dichter und Dramatiker sowie als Spion in Personalunion. Damit verweisen diese fiktiven Marlowes auf eine kreative Darstellung des Autors als (Geheim-)Agent, als einen Agenten, der Identität schafft.

Das letzte Kapitel thematisiert das übernatürliche Wesen Christopher Marlowe. In Jim Jarmuschs Film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) tritt er als alternder Vampir auf und Deborah Harkness stellt in ihm ihrem Roman *Shadow of Night* (2012) als Dämon dar. Ein übernatürlicher Marlowe überhöht das romantische ästhetische Konzept des Autors als Original-Genie, treibt es ins Extreme. Auf der einen Seite führt dies in beiden vorliegenden Fällen zum Tod des Autors, auf der anderen Seite betont es gleichzeitig die Notwendigkeit, eine neue Darstellung des Autors zu entwickeln und verweist damit auf sein Nachleben.

Diese Fiktionen machen Christopher Marlowe nicht nur einem breiteren Publikum bekannt; letztlich verfolgen sie alle das Ziel, den Autor sichtbarer zu machen. *Terminat hora diem; terminat auctor opus.* (*Doctor Faustus*, Epilog, 9) – “The hour ends the day, the author ends his work.” Diese letzten Sätze von Marlowes *Doctor Faustus* weisen darauf hin, dass, so wie die Stunde Mitternacht den Tag beendet, der Autor in einer gottgleichen Geste mit dem letzten Strich seiner Feder die Welt seines Stückes beendet. Der zeitgenössische Autor schließt

seinen Text inzwischen in der Regel damit ab, dass er auf einen letzten Buchstaben auf der Tastatur seines Computers tippt und auf „Speichern“ drückt. Mit dieser Geste des Autors entlässt er „seinen“ Christopher Marlowe in die Welt des Lesers. Erst dann kann sein fiktives Nachleben wirklich beginnen. “‘Tis Marlowe, Marlowe that still ravishes us.“ Marlowe, Marlowe ist’s, der noch immer unser Herz entzückt.