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## Review of Deats, Sarah M et al. "Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe." Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008

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**Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe: Fresh Cultural Contexts.** Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 264 pp. \$89.95. ISBN 978-0-7546-6204-4.

REVIEWED BY: Andrew Vorder Bruegge, Winthrop University

This collection of essays represents the fourth volume published by the Marlowe Society of America. The majority of the contributions in this volume originated as presentations at the Fifth International Marlowe Conference in 2003. The editors' stated goal is to re-illuminate the ways in which Marlowe remains relevant to us and to all generations. Indeed, many of the essays explicitly develop persuasive arguments of current significance/relevance. The editors have organized the anthology into four logical groups of essays: Marlowe and the Theater; Marlowe and the Family; Marlowe, Ethics, and Religion; and (inevitably) Marlowe and Shakespeare. An excellent introductory essay by the editors provides a useful overview for the reader. They note particularly that the collection of essays in the Marlowe and the Family section explores an underdiscussed topic. The volume contains a comprehensive, exhaustive bibliography on current Marlovian scholarship.

This collection is dominated by feminist theoretical approaches, as exemplified by the essays of Sara Deats, Joyce Karpay, Merry Perry, Lagretta Lenker. Some of the contributors boldly use psychoanalytical theory in their arguments—refreshingly assuring legitimization of that unjustly ridiculed school of interpretation. Moreover, a number of the contributors (Joyce Karpay, Merry Perry, and William Hamlin among them) write with the postmodern/cultural studies inclination to focus upon “complicating,” “problematizing,” and “ambivalent” issues. Aside from the excellent content of the anthology, it is permeated with a reverential tone of homage for Sara Munson Deats, the primary editor and acclaimed *doyenne* of scholarship on Marlowe. She claims the most citations in the bibliography (even more than Marlowe himself). A number of the contributors, such as Joyce Karpay, Lagretta Lenker, and Stephanie Moss, seem to be protégées of Ms. Deats, for their theoretical bases and avenues of investigation about Marlowe resonate with hers.

The editors note that criticism of *Dr. Faustus* maintains a substantial presence in this anthology. Among the scholars who address this masterpiece, Rick Bowers writes with a flair that calls to mind the freewheeling, wide-ranging brilliance of Terry Eagleton. Bowers places *Dr. Faustus* on the same pedestal as *Hamlet*, claiming that these two dramas are core “memes” in western culture. While several other contributors probe the bottomless mine of issues in *Dr. Faustus*, the editors have intelligently included many superb essays on *Edward II* and *The Jew of Malta*. These two dramas certainly deserve careful scholarly attention and theatrical production. John Parker and Stephanie Moss present excellent historical studies of productions of *The Jew of Malta* in the mid-seventeenth and early nineteenth century respectively, while Ruth Lunney analyzes *Edward II* as a dramatic exemplum in the vein of earlier morality plays. Lunney's essay and William Hamlin's essay on *The Jew of Malta* also offer useful interpretive guidance for theatre artists who would need to grapple with elusive characters such as Barabas (*The Jew of Malta*) and Mortimer (*Edward II*) that Marlowe so often created.

The final section—dedicated to the Marlowe-Shakespeare rivalry—offers the most rewarding reading. Constance Kuriyama (a well-established Marlowe scholar who is widely cited by the other contributors in this volume) delivers a blistering attack on the well-known bardologist Harold Bloom, whose *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead, 1998) denigrates Marlowe for his limited abilities. Kuriyama positively destroys Bloom's credibility as a scholar as she catalogues his numerous factual errors about Marlowe. Robert Logan (one of the anthology editors) makes very lucid assertions about

the connections between *Dr. Faustus* and *The Tempest* that affirm the pervasive cultural influence that Marlowe's masterpiece maintained well into the Jacobean era. The anthology closes with an essay by the renowned scholar David Bevington. He writes with ease, cogency, and assurance about Marlowe's (and Shakespeare's) mastery of the playwriting craft—strong conflict and decisive resolution.

Most of the essays represent excellent examples of effective rhetoric, for authors such as Stephanie Moss, Rick Bowers, John Parker, and Constance Kuriyama articulate concise theses and then move through orderly arguments of support. Overall, this collection unabashedly reaffirms the long-standing scholarly view of Marlowe as a writer who consciously strove to startle and disturb. It is a joy to read a collection of essays such as this one that so strongly radiates these scholars' love of Christopher Marlowe—that restless, over-reaching writer who, in their eyes, is the greatest in the English language.

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**The Genius of Luther's Theology.** Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 240 pp. \$21.99. ISBN 978-0-8010-3180-9.

REVIEWED BY: Derek R. Nelson, Thiel College

This book is a historical investigation with a constructive intent. Kolb and Arand synthesize a good deal of recent scholarship on Martin Luther with an eye toward offering historians a glimpse into Luther's continuing relevance for today's world and also to show that Luther's key theological insights remain important for the contemporary church. The book comprises two parts, which are dialectically related to each other. Part 1 lays out the anthropological positions and suppositions that characterize Luther's distinctive contribution to sixteenth-century religious thought. Part 2 describes Luther's fundamental theology, that is, his understanding of the self-identity of God with his word as that word is communicated to the world in revelation.

Part 1 is probably the more valuable section of the book. It takes as its anthropological mooring Luther's distinction between the two kinds of righteousness present in the human creature. There is first the passive righteousness implanted in the believer by God's grace and then the active response thereto on behalf of the human creature which seeks as righteous a response to grace as it can muster. This is of course not a new way to approach Luther's theology, but Kolb and Arand make the distinction do yeoman's work in discussing such key concepts as faith, the Word, promise, and redemption. But more significant is the contribution to studying Luther's ethics in chapter 3. Instead of portraying Luther's ethic as a coarse divine command theory, Kolb and Arand ground human "performance" in the concept of a "continued creation" (55–57), and along with it the created orders or vocations (58–64). Chapters 4 and 5 contain noncontroversial treatments of Luther's views on sin as self-glorification, repentance as a lifelong process, and a minimalist account of sanctification seen as growth in understanding one's need for an alien righteousness.

Part 2 presents Luther's multifaceted understanding of the word of God. As is well known, Luther attributed manifold powers to God's word. Kolb and Arand discuss the word as creating, re-creating, establishing human-divine fellowship, eliciting human faith, at once revealing and hiding God's identity, and killing and making alive again. Of particular value in this last function of the word is the discussion of the logic of the *simul justus et peccator* motif in Luther's thought (148–59). Chapter 7 outlines briefly Luther's view on the Incarnation and his essentially Chalcedonian Christology, as well as offers a view of the "inspired written word" in the Bible (166–73) that deftly sidesteps most of the interesting questions about the authority of scripture in the sixteenth century. Part 2 concludes with two chapters