

UDK 821.111.09-2"15/16"

Primljeno: 07. 09. 2019.

Izvorni naučni rad

Original scientific paper

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STAGING THE SELF: STORYTELLING AND SELF-NARRATION IN CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S *TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT* AND JOHN WEBSTER'S *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI*

This paper examines the use of dramatic techniques of storytelling and self-narration on the English stage in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, with an emphasis on Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. The playwrights of the period were negotiating their way in a new world in which language was a medium which was coming more and more to be respected, and those who could command it had the potential for advancement in ways never before conceivable. In the forefront of those negotiating for such a place through their dramaturgy were Christopher Marlowe and John Webster. They may be considered the instigators in the development of the self on the English stage in the early modern period through storytelling and self-narration as representational techniques. The paper also examines some of the profound changes in dramaturgy which took place in the period in question and which culminated in the drama of Marlowe and Webster.

Key words: English Renaissance Drama; Christopher Marlowe; John Webster; *Tamburlaine the Great*; *The Duchess of Malfi*; storytelling; self-narration

1. INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the 17th century, stories and especially the manner of their telling became crucial in the development of dramatic technique as the English state itself sought to write its own story on the international scene. And the development of the self in drama, perhaps paralleling the story of the nation and the Tudor project of (re)inventing the English persona, took a giant step forward. The playwrights of the period were negotiating their way in a new world in which language was a medium which was coming more and more to be respected, and those who could command it had the potential for advancement in ways never before conceivable. In the forefront of those negotiating for such a place through their art were Christopher Marlowe and John Webster. They may be considered the instigators in the development of the self on the English stage in the early modern period through storytelling and self-narration as representational techniques.

This paper examines the use of techniques of storytelling and self-narration on the English stage in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, with an emphasis on Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* Part I (1588) and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613). The paper examines some of the profound changes in dramaturgy which took place in the period in question and which culminated in the drama of Marlowe and Webster.

In his *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (1996), Louis Montrose tells us that the Tudors, disturbed by the cycle plays' ritual aspects and closeness to Catholic ritual in particular, moved to suppress this form of drama (24). He shows that

the Elizabethan government was actively engaged in efforts to curtail traditional, amateur forms of popular entertainment and festivity and to suppress polemical and religious drama, including the civic Corpus Christi plays. (Montrose 1996: 24)

In other words, Elizabeth and her advisors evidently found that the old way of playing did not fit into the new idea of a national theater, one that would reflect the modern state and not the medieval one. But even without this push from the queen, a new drama was already emerging from the old one. As Montrose further observes,

Recent studies in sixteenth-century English social history have emphasized that a major transformation in cultural life took place during the early decades of Elizabeth's reign and that this

cultural revolution manifested a complex interaction among religious, socio-economic, and political processes. (Montrose 1996: 22)

And it would be very surprising, since the theater did not exist in a vacuum, if the dramaturgy of the age did not reflect these momentous changes in some way.

2. THE “NEW” THEATER: STORYTELLING AND SELF-NARRATION IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DRAMA

This section examines the changes that affected English drama in the transitional period of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. It provides an insight into how the new theater grew from the old and how Marlowe and Webster were able to exploit the resources of narrative.

In his *Self-Speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama* (1997), Richard Hillman comments that Tudor secularization of the theater is very much in the forefront in explaining what he calls “the representation of subjectivity” (Hillman 1997: 68). If this is true, then the situation in the late 16th century was one of a rapidly developing professional theater which was looking to establish itself as a profitable and permanent fixture of the London business world. And the playwrights and players of that theater chose ways to represent human beings which suited their art and which would appeal to the public. This suggests that the characters which came to be represented on the stage in the 1580s and afterwards found favor with the audiences. Characters with complicated life stories suggestive of depths previously unknown on the stage must have been popular to thrive on it. The playwrights of the period found many ways to develop the life stories of characters, in ways that suggested a previously unknown measure of character subjectivity and interiority. As Yachnin puts it,

Nevertheless, [the] shifting of the angle of view so that it includes persons as persons rather than as mere effects of power remains highly instructive for anyone pursuing an understanding of how Renaissance playwrights might have negotiated for legitimacy within an ideological field not of their own making, not under their control, and not even fully visible or comprehensible to them. (Yachnin 1997: 35)

It is true, then, that the concept of the self as spoken in the life stories and other narratives of the characters on the Renaissance stage changed radically during the

late 16th century. Paul Yachnin and Richard Hillman argue that this change took place partly because of the secularization of the theater and the move by that same professional theater to negotiate a place for itself in what Yachnin has termed the knowledge marketplace. From what we know of many of the writers of the period, it seems that humble beginnings were the rule rather than the exception in their own life stories. Thomas Kyd, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, John Webster, and William Shakespeare all came from backgrounds in which labor rather than privilege provided a living. It is not so surprising to see an accent on self-invention through language in the works of these men. That they could negotiate a respected place in the theatrical culture of London through their skill with language was unthinkable in medieval times, and it is not a wild surmise to say that this must have delighted them, perhaps even astonished them, that an entire milieu had developed in the London business world in which men of their particular skills could not only earn a living but might be held in high esteem, too. And this could be accomplished without the ownership of land, another new concept unheard of in medieval times. Asa Briggs (1983) comments on the shifting ground of the late 16th century in the social fabric of England, in which it was difficult to know the rules of society when mobility within that society was becoming more and more evident (Briggs 1983: 85). For Kyd and others it was an opportunity not to be missed, provided the new theater could be used as a vehicle for the new man of stature.

Joan Lord Hall (1991) goes a step further when she writes,

A more recent challenge to the notion of character or unified self in these plays has come from deconstructionists. Jonathan Dollimore, writing from the standpoint of cultural materialism, argues that Renaissance drama 'problematizes subjectivity rather than foregrounding man as a spiritual or psychological unity'. The more radical philosophical movements of the time, he finds, deconstruct man as an 'essential' self at the centre of a providentially organized universe. While it is true that the self emerging in the period is 'flexible, problematic, elusive, dislocated', the possibilities are surely creative as well; to define the self as an 'object and effect of power' is to ignore man's impetus towards integrity and coherence, plus his desire to shape his own destiny - however much socio-historical forces may help to determine, or inform, his choices overall. (Hall 1991: 5)

Hall goes on to argue that older ways of interpreting the plays of the period have not necessarily been superseded by newer criticism such as that of Jonathan Dollimore (1984). The 'essential' self of which she speaks is a very neat contention which seems

to have eliminated the loose ends inherent in a study of characterization in the Renaissance period. But such a view tends to attempt to lift literature into another realm in which the grubby, everyday business of making money is supposed to fade into the background. And it cannot be plausibly argued that Kyd and the others who wrote for the Renaissance stage were not interested in money.

However, Hall makes an argument for an aesthetic appreciation of just how character was handled by the writers of the period and finds that the self is at the center of the stage. Renaissance characters, she says, are often very self-aware. Writing of John Webster, for example, she says that his

tragic characters (Vittoria, Flamineo, and the Duchess of Malfi) also exploit 'acting' or imaginative self-dramatization. By doing so they integrate a self in an environment where the pressures towards fragmentation are immense. (Hall 1991: 7)

In criticizing Dollimore, then, Hall does not disallow the possibility/probability that the self on the Renaissance stage was a construct onto which the writers of the period projected their own desire for social advancement and financial gain. She seems, rather, to agree with Briggs, who writes,

While it is important for the social historian to recognize the value of a poet's reactions to his society as historical evidence, they need especially close scrutiny. They may encompass uncommon views of common experience and common views uncommonly, even dazzlingly, expressed. (Briggs 1983: 130)

In other words, it is important to realize that we can appreciate the way characters were portrayed on the Renaissance stage without necessarily pigeon-holing them into political categories. This is an approach that deserves our attention.

Yachnin argues,

In general, then, the playwrights moved to open up dramatic form to a multiplicity of interpretations in order to capture as large a segment of their heterogeneous audience as possible, and also to be able to represent political issues from the blind of their devotion to the nonpolitical world of the imagination. (Yachnin 1997: 16)

Commenting on the change in the theaters in the late 16th century, A.R. Braummuller (1990) writes,

Theatres, like universities, are among society's most conservative institutions. When they admit or achieve innovation it is often spasmodic rather than prolonged, intense rather than gradual, and the old long lingers beside the new. (Braunmuller 1990: 53)

Given this principle, that the theaters are often a paradox of conservatism and innovation, we must ask why storytelling and self-narration stayed rather than faded in theatrical discourse as the 16th century closed and the 17th century progressed. For stay they did, which is plainly evident in the drama of the later period.

This point is absolutely crucial. There must have been something more in the relation of narrative on stage than mere novelty. It has been remarked that narrative "in all its forms must be partly shaped by its social and cultural context; not only by the intentions of the speaker, but by the customs, wishes, whims and thoughts which together shape the imagination of the audience" (Chamberlain and Thompson 1998: 15). So when a character on the stage revealed something to the audiences of the public playhouses, the playwright was in fact challenging those audiences to make judgments about the speaker's motives and credibility. The audiences were also being warned to listen to the details revealed in the narratives of the speakers, because this would give insight into the complex world of the play. This was a very different type of theater than the medieval one. And evidently the crowds kept coming back.

3. LIFE NARRATIVES ON THE ENGLISH STAGE: THE STORYTELLING AND SELF-NARRATION IN CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT

The audiences of Renaissance drama as it evolved in the minds of men like Christopher Marlowe were caught up in the life stories of the characters on the stage not only because they found them entertaining, but also because they perceived relevance to the times and themselves there. Marlowe demonstrates his understanding of one of the most important principles of storytelling in *Tamburlaine*, and indeed in others of his plays. Ulric Neisser (1994) comments, "Life narratives are significant because they are one way of defining the self (Neisser 1994: 1)." The ultimate dramatic self-definer, the one who lives to dictate how he is to be perceived by all others, of course, is Tamburlaine. Joan Lord Hall (1991) comments,

For self-definition, with role-playing as a means to achieve it or as a dangerous diversion away from it, was indeed a preoccupation in the late Renaissance, not simply a concern that our own self-reflexive age has projected back on to the earlier period. (Hall 1991: 8)

Indeed, Marlowe's superman seems always to be playing a role that grows to fit him until it is impossible to separate the man from the artifice, if in fact there is to be a separation. As L.G. Salingar (1982) points out,

The high astounding terms of the shepherd conqueror, coming at the peak of enthusiasm for the exploits of men like Drake, gave a decisive momentum to the dramatic speech of the next twenty years. (Salingar 1982: 57)

Tamburlaine's mode of address, his ability to speak better than anyone else on stage and to accomplish his ends as a result, not only reflected new tastes in drama but a new currency of words and speech in which Marlowe himself was pre-eminent. In creating a hero who might be galling or annoying to some members of the audience but who would certainly carry that same audience along with his lines, a word-master who cannot be bested with steel or, more importantly, vocabulary, Marlowe comments on his own times and his own profession. The knowledge marketplace, in which a brilliant user of language could convert that talent to solid coin and prestige was, indeed, a new phenomenon on the stage of the early modern English era. And, commenting on *Doctor Faustus* but in a quote which could equally apply to Tamburlaine, Salingar observes that "the highly important difference (is) that the central figure is no longer Mankind but an individual hero" (Salingar 1982: 57). The London public was clearly ready for what Marlowe could do with language by 1587.

And one of his most well-used devices was storytelling. In medieval and early 16th century plays, tidings were brought to the characters on stage who used them as pretexts for long speeches. Marlowe does the same thing, but does it infinitely more subtly and as a consequence both raises suspense and deepens the interiority of his characters. Mycetes, the king of Persia and a hapless fool, has heard rumors and reports

about that Tamburlaine

That like a fox in midst of harvest time

Doth prey upon my flocks of passengers,

And, as I hear, doth mean to pull my plumes.

(1.Tam.I.i.30-33)

The suspense is established early. When we meet Tamburlaine, he will be a man who is the scourge of at least one king and, more importantly for the terms of this thesis, the subject of many rumors and tales, reports and tidings. But there is more. Why is Mycetes so dithery and fearful? Is he not a powerful king? Why is he so frightened of a man who, for all we know at this point, is a bandit? These questions naturally occur to us as we hear Mycetes bumble and tremble his way through the reports of the “fox” Tamburlaine. Cosroe’s contempt for his brother is hardly subtle, and this suggests that there will be trouble in this kingdom from more than one source. The use of tidings in medieval and early 16th century plays was much more wooden, but here the external chaos of Mycetes’ kingdom suggests the inner turmoil of the king himself. And, on a bare stage, this must be accomplished through the use of language, and more specifically through the use of rumor and report. That Marlowe accomplishes this indicates to us how far the device of tidings had come in a generation.

Marlowe uses the device of self-narrative once we have actually met Tamburlaine. He uses it to inject an element of mystery and awe into his play, to show us that we are dealing with a man who understands the concept of constructing one’s own life narrative. When Zenocrate still does not know with whom she is dealing, Tamburlaine asks her, “But tell me, madam, is your grace betrothed?” (1.*Tam*.I.ii.32). Zenocrate, astonished that a mere shepherd would speak so well, replies, “I am, my lord - for so you do import” (1.*Tam*.I.ii.33). And then Tamburlaine gives us a hint of his life story which, taken with another soon to come, deepens the mystery surrounding this character and makes the audience wonder even more how he can become the man he does. “I am a lord,” he confidently replies, “for so my deeds shall prove, / And yet a shepherd by my parentage” (1.*Tam*.I.ii.34-35). Peter Steele (1989), in a comment which seems tailor-made for this quote, says,

Boring autobiographies are just that, in fact - the words of Narcissus untouched by Mercury. Those which escape the curse of boredom do so in virtue of a mercurial agency which quickens a collaborative attention in the reader: they alert as much as they inform: in fact, they may alert a good deal more than they inform. (Steele 1989: 26)

Tamburlaine’s life narrative, surely not in any way the boring life narrative Steele abhors, alerts the audience that they are dealing with a man whose life story, to hear him tell it, is informed by that mercurial element and will repay careful attention well. Of course this works at different levels, for it is also Marlowe’s comment on the val-

ues of alternative currencies in his own age, and the power of language as a measure of his own worth.

Perhaps this point bears more investigation. Paul John Eakin (1999) comments

Given the face-off between experiential accounts of the “I,” on the one hand, and deconstructive analyses of the “I” as illusion on the other, my own instinct is to approach autobiography in the spirit of a cultural anthropologist, asking what such texts can teach us about the ways in which individuals in a particular culture experience their sense of being “I” - and, in some instructive cases that prove the rule, their sense of not being an “I.” (Eakin 1999: 4)

The new social mobility, looked at as *arrivisme* by some members of Renaissance English society and as opportunity by others, meant - among other things - that more and more people actually had a life story to tell. It would have been a terrible shame, for example, if William Shakespeare had stayed at home and learned to make gloves, or if Ben Jonson had been content to merely learn bricklaying. And why would they? In the new world of opportunity on offer to a talented, intelligent young man who could use words they would have been foolish to simply do what their fathers had done and no more. The fact that many people had opportunities to actually have life stories different from their ancestors' meant that more people very likely had the opportunity to experience life using Eakin's concept of the “I.” This paper would argue that Marlowe, noticing this in his own life and in the lives of others, seems to have known a fascinating and appealing thing when he saw it and used it in his plays.

We must compare Tamburlaine's previous quote to his words to Cosroe, when he proudly asserts,

*For fates and oracles of heaven have sworn
To royalize the deeds of Tamburlaine,
And make them blest that share in his attempts.*
(1.Tam.II.iii.7-9)

If ever a character spoke using the emphatic first person pronoun in a play, it is Tamburlaine. Here he presents more of his life story. He has already revealed that he is of humble, indeed the humblest, birth. Yet, as Steele comments,

Mimesis is all, here, we might think. Yet mimesis notoriously is not action but the imitation of an action - or, riddingly, that action which is the imitation of an action. (Steele 1989: 31)

And, as he comments earlier in his essay, “For autobiography is, through and through, an act of wit” (Steele 1989: 28). Tamburlaine not only recalls the details which leave us tantalized but completely unsatisfied. He also puts his own interpretation on them, and uses them to explain and mystify at the same time, using language to draw the thoughts and eyes of the audience to the speaker. For Tamburlaine has been the subject of spectacular prophecy, and he knows it and trusts it. So far he has succeeded, and trusts that he will succeed further, and all who ally themselves with him will be successful, too. Nor does Marlowe feel any obligation to categorically clear up the source and implications of this prophecy. Indeed, Tamburlaine is more of a mystery because he does not. It is more effective as simply part of the Scythian conqueror’s autobiography, presented as he chooses to present it from time to time and in parts.

And Marlowe does this in his other plays, as well. Faustus turns to the fatal realm of study he chooses because, as he tells us at the beginning of the play, he has tried all others. Barabas, although Stephen Greenblatt (1977) looks at his description of poisoning wells and the like as a story that “tends to de-individualize him, accommodating him to an abstract, anti-Semitic fantasy of a Jew’s past” (Greenblatt 1977: 53), nevertheless shows us something of his own life story. The wonderful descriptions of

*Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds.
(JOM I.i.25-27)*

and the like, in addition to the descriptions of his ships and captains, all suggest powerfully the lifetime pursuits of Barabas in building up his wealth. And when Gaveston of *Edward II* plans to divert the king with masques and shows, he comments,

*Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masques by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
(Edward II.I.i.53-55)*

Hearing this, we understand that Gaveston knows Edward intimately and knows how to please him. The king’s life is suggested to us in the language Gaveston uses,

and this is one of the most profound differences between the medieval theater and the Renaissance theater. The characters in the latter have life stories to tell, to reflect upon and either improve or destroy. In medieval times, this was hardly the case. Clearly, one of the main differences between the two theaters is to be found in the concept of the life story and how it is told.

4. RUMORS AND STORIES: STAGING THE SELF IN JOHN WEBSTER'S THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

The idea that a character could not only have a rudimentary background, but a complex, deep, and often dark life story was refined as the 16th century turned into the 17th. It is expressed in a previous section that a virtual revolution of technique took place in the English Renaissance theater because of this advancement in theatrical discourse, the use of storytelling by characters to suggest worlds of experience and attach a complex interiority to the narrator.

The techniques of storytelling are used with yet more subtlety and complexity in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, written and performed after the previously discussed play. As in *Tamburlaine*, it is crucial that the characters all have past lives to which they refer time and again. This is a clear indicator of how deeply story could be used to indicate character interiority, for without fear of hyperbole it may be fairly claimed that the characters in this play, with few exceptions, are deep studies in psychology and dramatic art. The Duchess herself is very well aware that she is both the author and subject of her own life story. Choosing to defy her brothers' threats against her remarriage, she will pursue and marry her own steward, and she shows that she is aware that people will construe her precipitate action in ways beyond her control. As she says,

*So I, through frights, and threatenings, will assay
This dangerous venture. Let old wives report
I winked and chose a husband.
(I.i.338-40)*

Webster shows his Duchess as an astonishing mixture of brashness and timidity, a prince who is determined to be one but is amazed at every step she takes toward her desires. Ferdinand dismisses her as a "lusty widow" (I.i.331), and although she

is not so in the sense he means (as the promiscuous stock figure), she is clearly physically attracted to Antonio. Ferdinand has told her, referring to her past marriage, “You are a widow: You know already what man is” (I.i.284-85), cautioning her against any dalliance. But her marriage to the old Duke cannot have been much adventure for her. She obliquely refers to her marriage to this man when she tells Antonio, while wooing him,

*What jet distracts you? This is flesh, and blood, sir;
'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
Kneels at my husband's tomb.
(I.i.443-45)*

It is quite possible that this is the first time she has felt the possibility of emotional and sexual fulfillment might be hers, and this is clearly indicated in her references to the past. As a contrast to the present, it is an effective device.

Another character who continually refers to the past with quite different aims in mind is Bosola. As he bitterly says to the Cardinal,

*I fell into the galleys in your service, where, for two years
together, I wore two towels instead of a shirt, with a knot on the
shoulder, after the fashion of a Roman mantle.
(I.i.34-36)*

This is Bosola's version of events. We hear more of the story from Delio:

*I knew this fellow seven years in the galleys
For a notorious murder, and 'twas thought
The Cardinal suborned it; he was released
By the French general, Gaston de Foix,
When he recovered Naples.
(I.i.65-69)*

Piece by piece, from his own self-narrative and the stories of others, we hear the story of Bosola's life. And what a life it has been! Murder, prison, ingratitude, scorn from his superiors, a dramatic release, and more make up the details of the life of the “only court-gall” (I.i.23). Perhaps initially we feel pity for him, but his readiness to

serve the two brothers again, and his incessant whining about the injustices of his life, very soon offend us and grate on our nerves. Webster shows here that he is aware that the details of a story are important, but the way in which the story is told can be equally so.

This is seen again and again in the play. Julia gaily invents a story to explain her trip to Rome to see the Cardinal. Antonio invents transparent excuses to explain the Duchess' labour pains. And all the while, as we find out in Act III, the common people have heard the rumours of the Duchess and are lasciviously repeating them. As Antonio, well-intentioned but demonstrably artless as a spinner of tales, spits out in disgust, "The common rabble do directly say / She is a strumpet" (III.i.25-26). The Duchess herself refers to the rumors and stories about her when she pleads with Ferdinand,

*But, sir, I am to have private conference with you
About a scandalous report is spread
Touching mine honour.
(III.i.46-48)*

Ferdinand tells her to "Go, be safe / In your own innocency" (III.i.54-55), and all the Duchess can reply is a transparent and forced, "O blessed comfort! / This deadly air is purg'd" (III.i.55-56). Webster uses the rumors and stories swirling about the Duchess to heighten the terrible suspense and sense of foreboding, since, although we do not know precisely what Ferdinand will do, we have seen clearly that his hysteria has been steadily growing, fed on just those stories.

By the beginning of the 17th century, the techniques of storytelling had been refined and were widespread, and they were used with varying degrees of art and success by the writers of the period. They were to continue to be used into the late Jacobean and Caroline periods. Thomas Middleton, in *The Changeling* (1622), gives us a villain whose complex psychology is further complicated by the fact that he feels his life has been a series of injustices, beginning with a birth marred by disfigurement and a fall from the rank of gentleman, while John Ford, in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1626), explores a very strange field of experience with free reference to the past lives of his characters.

5. CONCLUSION

The audiences of the English Renaissance drama as it evolved in the minds of playwrights like Christopher Marlowe and John Webster were caught up in the life stories of the characters on the stage not only because they found them entertaining, but also because they perceived relevance to the times and themselves there.

In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), Greenblatt comments,

My subject is self-fashioning from More to Shakespeare; my starting point is quite simply that in sixteenth-century England there were both selves and a sense that they could be fashioned. Of course, there is some absurdity in so bald a pronouncement of the obvious: after all, there are always selves - a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires - and always some elements of deliberate shaping in the formation and expression of identity. (Greenblatt 1980: 1)

This is the point of Marlowe and Webster's dramaturgy. That is, they take what has been generally acknowledged for a long time and apply it to their works. In this way they and many others genuinely explore the inner man on stage. This paper is not arguing that Marlowe and Webster sacrificed the exterior, the concepts of spectacle and sensation, for a study of the self on the stage. Quite the opposite, in fact we need only to think of the imprisonment of Bajazeth in a cage and Tamburlaine's chariot drawn by a team of kings to know that this is not true. Marlowe and Webster obviously loved sensation and action on the stage. Duels, drinking and bawdy jokes, costumes and more suggest that they knew that their audiences liked these things and appreciated them in the plays they paid to see.

But whether as a marketable commodity, or as a sincere attempt to probe the depths of the human being, or most likely as a mixture of both motives, Marlowe and Webster invested their characters with dynamic past lives and life stories. And these life stories did not simply become an accoutrement of the characters involved, a kind of extra something which would, to help move the plot along, give the character something to talk about while on the stage. That would have been easy. Instead, they saw the possibilities in such an investment. Marchette Chute (1949) comments,

An Elizabethan audience had become highly susceptible to the use of words, trained and alert to catch their exact meaning and full of joy if they were used well. (Chute 1949: 90)

Such audiences, accustomed to the necessity of listening to the language of the play, were fertile grounds for playwrights like Marlowe and Webster. Perceiving their world sharply and able to, as it were, feel the pulse of London in particular, Marlowe and Webster found a way to explore the self on the stage through storytelling and self-narration. Typically, and fortunately, they do not answer all the questions they raise. In this silence they acknowledge that the playwright, when dealing with real human beings, does not always have the answers. Indeed, he or she does not often have them. But raising the questions produces great art.

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SEBSTVO NA POZORNICI: PRIPOVIJEDANJE I SAMONARACIJA U DJELIMA TAMERLAN VELIKI CHRISTOPHERA MARLOWA I VOJVOTKINJA MALFEŠKA JOHNA WEBSTERA

Sažetak:

Ovaj rad istražuje upotrebu dramskih tehnika pripovijedanja i samonaracije u engleskom pozorištu tokom kasnog 16. i ranog 17. vijeka, sa naglaskom na dejla Tamerlan Veliki Christophera Marlowa i Vojvotkinja malfeška Johna Webstera. Pisci ovog perioda krčili su sebi put u novom svijetu u kojem je jezik bio medij koji se sve više i više poštivao, a oni koji su uspijevali da ga savladaju imali su mogućnost napredovanja koje do tada nije bilo dostižno. Na čelu onih koji su kroz svoju dramaturgiju krčili sebi put do takvog položaja bili su Christopher Marlowe i John Webster. Oni se mogu smatrati začetnicima dramatizacije sebstva kroz reprezentativne tehnike pripovijedanja i samonaracije u engleskom pozorištu ranog modernog perioda. Ovaj rad također istražuje neke od dalekosežnih promjena u dramaturgiji koje su se desile u navedenom periodu i koje su kulminirale u dramama Christophera Marlowea i Johna Webstera.

Ključne riječi: renesansna drama; Christopher Marlowe; John Webster; Tamerlan Veliki; Vojvotkinja malfeška; pripovijedanje; samonaracija

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