

## **overSEAS 2020**

This thesis was submitted by its author to the School of English and American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. It was found to be among the best theses submitted in 2020, therefore it was decorated with the School's Outstanding Thesis Award. As such it is published in the form it was submitted in **overSEAS 2020** (<http://seas3.elte.hu/overseas/2020.html>)

# DIPLOMAMUNKA MA THESIS

Jungbauer Loretta Anna  
Anglisztika MA  
Angol irodalom szakirány

2020

EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Bölcsészettudományi kar

# DIPLOMAMUNKA

## MA THESIS

*A halál megjelenítése Christopher Marlowe Nagy  
Tamerlánjának első és második részében*

*Representation of Death in Christopher Marlowe's  
Tamburlaine The Great, Parts One and Two*

**Témavezető:**

Dr. Gellért Marcell

Főiskolai docens

**Készítette:**

Jungbauer Loretta Anna

Anglisztika MA

Angol irodalom szakirány

2020

## CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH

By my signature below, I certify that my ELTE MA thesis, “**Representation of Death in Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine The Great, Parts One and Two***” is entirely the result of my own work, and that no degree has previously been conferred upon me for this work. In my thesis I have cited all the sources (printed, electronic or oral) I have used faithfully and have always indicated their origin. The electronic version of my thesis (in PDF format) is a true representation (identical copy) of this printed version.

If this pledge is found to be false, I realize that I will be subject to penalties up to and including the forfeiture of the degree earned by my thesis.

Date: 22/04/2020

Signed: .....

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Death in Elizabethan Popular Culture.....	2
3.	Violence on the Marlovian Stage.....	5
	3.1. <i>Death and Conquest on Stage</i> .....	12
	3.2. <i>The Transforming Power of Death</i> .....	19
	3.3. <i>“Tamburlaine the scourge of God must die”</i> .....	23
	3.4. <i>Death as Means of Theatre</i> .....	33
4.	Conclusion .....	40
	Works Cited.....	42
	Appendices .....	46

## 1. Introduction

The social beliefs of the English Renaissance era heavily relied on the heritage of antique Latin and Greek attitudes as well as Anglo-Saxon culture combined with Christian dogma. This rich compound proved to be a basis suitable for Marlowe to raise unpleasant but topical questions in his provocative works. The theatrical environment was perfectly fitting for such pieces since, as Neill (2008) notes, theatre offered the possibility of staging anxieties which were supposed to be repressed by the individual (32). All the seven plays written by Christopher Marlowe revolve around troublesome events and present challenging ideas most of which are recurrent in the plays, usually in different proportions. Marlowe generally chooses provoking motives like treachery or religious discrepancy as the core problem of the given play. The employment of themes such as religious heterogeneity, use and abuse of power, the art of deception, as well as the physical and the metaphysical limitedness of mankind had followed a long literary tradition. These topoi were widely discussed and well-known from the everyday as well: people encountered them at school while studying historical and literary texts of the classical corpus, at the same time they were also confronted with the religious connotations of such ideas by the church services. This religious emotional and visual experience had a notable effect on theatre, as Hardin (2006) remarks (31). Marlowe made ample use of the permanent presence of these concepts, with which he was thoroughly familiar. The omnipresence of their visual or literary representation had transformed these themes into integral parts of public knowledge, thus, the audience's familiarity with their meaning could be taken for granted.

As MacKenzie (2010) claims, the printing revolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to the popularity of emblem books in the households since they were affordable. Emblem books provided entertainment for both literate and illiterate people for the mottos and epigrams were to be

considered together with a simple picture which illustrated the meaning of the text (xxiv–xxv). Marlowe, however, did not only use the traditional interpretations of the well-known images, he was ready to experiment and explore new possibilities offered by the medium of the theatre. Marlowe, instead of building upon the traditional reading of the prominent emblems, introduced a new kind of perception, since as MacKenzie (2010) asserts, “Marlowe’s manipulation of visual resources often seeks to challenge or extend the thinking of the playgoer” (xvii). The purpose of visual representation was shifted from impression and the expression of meaning became more important (xvii–xviii). Marlowe counted simultaneously on the audience’s knowledge of the classical interpretations and on their bewilderment, when being confronted with nonconventional representations of familiar concepts; in order to be able to do so, he had to rely on topics present in Elizabethan popular culture.

## **2. Death in Elizabethan Popular Culture**

The main motif Marlowe chose for his *Tamburlaine* plays is one which was ubiquitous in Renaissance England. The presence of death was in many ways inescapable. Foister (1997) states that “skulls were frequently worn in the sixteenth century as badges or other macabre forms of jewellery” (46). The plague, these memento mori objects and their depictions on church windows transformed death into an organic part of daily life. The main concept behind the literary and pictorial representations of mortality was not only to remember the dead but also to show the inevitability and omnipotence of death itself. Early medieval representations of death appear in various shapes, though, as Spinrad (1987) claims, the fleshless skeleton and the heavily decomposed corpse are considered to have been the most popular images of this era (2). Spinrad’s concept is underpinned by the increased number of depicted corpses with each of them showing a

different stage of decomposition. On the one hand, it confirms the vogue of portraying decaying bodies but on the other hand, these images also enable the spectators to contemplate their own mortality. The depictions were a reminder that every human has to go through the same stages of existence: from a living body to a bare skeleton. The usage of bodies in different states of decomposition also implies that death was viewed from a different perspective. Contrary to the present-day attitude, it was seen as a much less detached section of human existence; the line between the world of the living and the afterlife was rather blurred. Llewellyn (1998) claims that in opposition to the modern binary concept of life and death, the period between birth and the moment of death was regarded as a phase of dying, a lengthy process rather than a state of being (15–16). This idea, however, can be traced back to Plato's works. The dialogues about Socrates's death do not give a picture of death but rather emphasise the continuous nature of dying. Plato expresses the importance of the preparational phase concerning death, and dying is described as a process in which Socrates is allowed to participate actively (Gavin 1974, 238–240). Considering life as a process of slow death enabled people to make preparations in advance concerning their own fate, thus, the whole of human life became a long *Danse Macabre*.

Mortality and the death cult itself gained another set of meanings when considered in a religious context. The church recognised the advantages of using Dance of Death imagery featuring well-known figures, and used this for their own purposes. The emphasis was shifted to the spiritual preparation preceding death which was aided by the already existing, popular imagery and representative artefacts. The intent was to persuade people to lead a moral life and distance themselves from sin and temptation; furthermore, the appropriate way of dying also gained an important role. Marlowe does not only rely on these interpretations of the well-known imagery in the construction of his *Tamburlaine* plays, but his tragedies also draw on the long tradition of representing death on the stage. People were already familiar with the traditions of mystery and



morality plays. Mystery plays presented well known biblical stories and the lives of saints, and many of these plays were much concerned with physical pain and suffering. Morality plays, on the other hand, offered allegorical representations of personified abstractions with moral features among them on the stage.<sup>1</sup>

The themes on Christopher Marlowe's allegorical stage were not only familiar to the audience but also incredibly topical: conquests and mortality were topics immensely relevant to the state of England. The early modern age was the era of great explorations and, as Greenblatt (1984) states, Marlowe was "fascinated by the idea of the stranger in a strange land" (194); the figure of "the Other" is a recurrent image in his dramas, and in this respect the *Tamburlaine* plays are no exception. The other main theme of *Tamburlaine the Great*, the issue of mortality, was not only discussed in connection with the individual's life, death and after-life. The fact that the monarch was heirless evoked amongst citizens the question of the succession to Queen Elizabeth, which at the time of *Tamburlaine's* writing was still in debate. The link between the theme of mortality and the figure of the sovereign can be established not only on the basis of the lack of an heir but also through the popularity of public executions in the Elizabethan era. According to Cunningham (1990), the employment of violence and executions by the Tudors served as a means of power solidification. The success of these public events resided in their "quasi-dramatic" implementation: their structure relied on recognizable elements such as the fight of evil and good, the punishment of villains, and the triumph of righteousness. The accused person was put in the position of the antihero while the monarch was shown as the personification of justice; furthermore, the dead body became a prop of the "play" and was transformed into a symbol of justice and its

---

<sup>1</sup> *The York Play of the Crucifixion*, for instance, elaborates on the events of Christ's crucifixion in the form of a comic dramatic piece, whereas the morality play *Everyman* invites several allegorical figures (such as Death, Confession, or Good Deeds) onto the stage.

omnipresence. That executions followed the same pattern draws a striking parallel between them and morality plays for “Jurists, defendants, even executioners responded with standardized forms and themes, as if in self-conscious accord with their roles in [...] a sort of ‘Everyman Goes to the Gallows’” (209–212). The proximity of scaffolds, bear-baiting places and theatre buildings (see Appendix 1) enhanced the rivalry of the different spectacles for the attention of the audience; the theatre had to be able to offer entertainment of equal allure to animal-baiting or the punishment of criminals.

### 3. Violence on the Marlovian Stage

The contemporary popular culture incorporated these sets of meanings which could be used as a common ground of reference so as to establish a connection between Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* and the theatre goers. The *Tamburlaine* plays could present the well-known brutality of the era through staging the torture of the body and, thus, their performances were well-established means of providing entertainment for the crowd. Both *Part One* and *Two* are immensely physical plays; like in many contemporary visual illustrations, great emphasis is put on substantial details, and on what happens to the tortured, dying or dead body. The copperplate engraving *A flayed man holding his own skin* by Nicolas Beatrizet (see Appendix 2),<sup>2</sup> for example, shows a skinned muscle-man with a dagger in his right hand and his skin in the other. The figure is observing his own skin thoroughly without any visible sign of pain. Similarly, the dying characters in the *Tamburlaine* plays often reflect on their own death occupying the roles of the audience and

---

2 Beatrizet’s image is often likened to Michelangelo’s depiction of St. Bartholomew in the Sistine Chapel’s fresco of *The Last Judgement*. The picture appeared in Juan Valverde’s book on anatomy, *Anatomia del corpo humano*, which was directly inspired by Vesalius’s *De humani corporis fabrica*, one of the cornerstones of modern anatomy. Pilcher (1914) remarks that a plagiarized version of Vesalius’s work was published by Thomas Geminus in London in 1545 (351), which means that similar printed material was accessible to the English readers from the mid-sixteenth century onwards.

the experiencer simultaneously. As Greenfield (2004) asserts, “many of Tamburlaine’s victims (...) perform a verbal dissection as they die” (233–236). Marlowe realised the sensation evoked by physical wounds on stage and he began to use pain as a spectacle. Staging and showing death was not only entertaining but also a more authentic way of representation than plain verbal description since the audience was allowed to see various stages of death’s physical effects on the living body. Kiss (2011) proposes that early modern tragedies often employ the penetration of the body in order to reveal and “locate the depth behind the surface” (31). Cosroe,<sup>3</sup> for instance, gains insight through the wounds Tamburlaine inflicts upon him during their battle: he interprets verbally the ongoing processes underneath his skin. According to Kiss (2011), public anatomy confronts the audience with the materiality of the human body and exposes the underlying corporality of notions such as face, character, or speaker (34). As a liminal character, Cosroe possesses the ability to communicate with both the characters in the world of the play and members of the audience. His character metamorphoses into an animated memento mori object and becomes the physical manifestation of the bridge between not only life and death but also the stage and the auditorium. Edwards (2010) explains that the “living corpse” embodies the paradox of a transitional state between life and death, implying some sort of limbo where being alive in death is possible (109). Indeed, many characters in *Tamburlaine* deliver a lengthy speech about the physical effects death has on their body. Cosroe, for instance, gives a detailed description of how he slowly departs this life:

COSROE. My bloodless body waxeth chill and cold

And with my blood my life slides through my wound.

---

3 Cosroe is brother to the king of Persia. As the plot unfolds, he plots against his brother, Mycetes, to overthrow him. Tamburlaine persuades him to join his side in the battle against Mycetes. Although Tamburlaine has promised Cosroe the crown of Mycetes, after the battle, he turns against his ally: Tamburlaine wounds Cosroe mortally and claims the crown of Persia for himself. The above excerpt is Cosroe’s death-monologue.

My soul begins to take her flight to hell  
And summons all my senses to depart.  
The heat and moisture, which did feed each other  
For want of nourishment to feed them both  
Is dry and cold, and now doth ghastly death  
With greedy talents gripe my bleeding heart  
And like a harpy tires on my life.

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One* II.VII.42–50)

Cosroe's speech about his wound and his own death illustrates the transforming power of the theatrical space and performance which, as Edwards (2010) explains, lies in their way of transgressing the boundaries of mundane life by which they seemingly are defined (109). Cosroe's words serve as means of revealing not only the underlying structure of his physical body, but also of what happens to him on a spiritual level. This concept corresponds to the idea proposed by Heraclitus of Ephesus's Fragment 71 according to which "You will not find the boundaries of soul by travelling in any direction, so deep is the measure of it."<sup>4</sup> Unlike people off stage, Cosroe is able to stop time by reflecting on his own death while experiencing it.<sup>5</sup> His need to describe the procedure is more important than giving in to the physical torment. Similarly to the case of the

---

4 All fragments of Heraclitus are quoted in the translation of John Burnet, based on the 2005 reprint of his *Early Greek Philosophy* (1920). Kocher (1962) has discovered similarities between Fragments 43 and 44 by the pre-Socratic philosopher and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays, which I will reflect upon in more detail in chapter 3.1.

5 Tarlowe and Battell Lowman discuss several purposes a dead body could serve in early modern times. According to them, dead bodies were often believed to be suitable for performing magic, furthermore, different healing qualities were attributed to certain body parts due to the blurred lines between magic, science, and medicine (Tarlowe and Battell Lowman 2018, 60). Following this idea, Cosroe's body in transition becomes a tool of performing transformative theatrical magic by which the effects of death are not only displayed visually but also interpreted verbally. The necromantic power of the theatrical environment is exemplified through the animation a dead body combined with the theatre's control over Time, both of which are observable during Cosroe's extended moment of death.

Tudor executions or animal-baiting, the theatres' representative power of suffering and wounds is made use of so as to evoke sensation on behalf of the audience. These forms of entertainment shared not only the same attitude towards the usage of pain, but they were very much alike in terms of space as well. Animal-baiting arenas had a similar circular shape as theatres, furthermore, baiting did not only take place in the neighbouring arenas but also in the theatres when there were no plays on, a widespread practice also referred to in the induction of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*.<sup>6</sup>

The theatres, however, were also suitable for hosting dissections of a more sophisticated type due to the spatial conformity between them and anatomic theatres. The interior structure of the early anatomic theatres was constructed similarly to the ancient amphitheatres (see Appendix 3): the auditorium was circular, and the dissecting table was placed in the centre of the room so as to grant an exquisite view from every angle on the ongoing public autopsy. The arrangement of early modern theatres followed a similar pattern (see Appendix 4): the auditorium surrounded the stage as a circle, thus, the stage could be used for the theatrical autopsy of certain staged characters, which was visible from each place occupied by the audience. Dissecting a character on stage was spectacular and it also meant a less dangerous manner of anatomising a person both in the biological and the moral sense. The roles were not divided anymore into active pathologist and passive body under examination: both roles were cast upon the dying character. This strategy also offered the possibility of interpreting the process of dying, but unlike in anatomic theatres, here, the dying people themselves explained their own experience, which gave a personal touch to the scene. Cosroe, for instance, is able to familiarise the audience with both the physical and the spiritual aspects of his death. This becomes possible because, as Nevitt (2013) explains, suffering

---

<sup>6</sup> It is explicitly stated by the book-holder that the stage-keeper is "[...] gathering up the broken / apples for the bears within [...]" (Jonson 1989, *Bartholomew Fair*, The Induction 61–62), suggesting that the bears for the animal baiting are kept backstage, or at least nearby.

as a concept may be separated from the messy bodily aspects of death (21). Relying on Nevitt's theory, Cosroe gains the ability to separate and highlight those aspects of his own death which he deems the most important.

As Greenfield (2004) points out, a person who is in extreme pain is unable to describe his experience with the help of words since "pain destroys language" (237). This unusual response to a mortal injury in which language becomes superior to wounds grabs the attention of the audience and shifts the focus to the character delivering the death-speech; the aesthetic description of violence and death allows them to rule the stage in that particular extended moment of dying. Cunningham (1990) states that this way the characters transform everyone into members of the audience (215). The role of the audience is not only assigned to the spectators in the auditorium but also to the other characters who are present on stage.

The lengthy elaborations on the dying process and the spectacular staged violence, such as the suicides of Bajazeth<sup>7</sup> and Zabina, present death as theatrical means of entertainment. This attitude towards mortality can also be observed in contemporary visual arts. "The Knight" from *The dance of Death* (1538) by Hans Holbein the Younger (see Appendix 5), for instance, presents a knight fully dressed in armour, stabbed by a skeletal figure. The living embodiment of death smiles at the stabbed man, enjoying his reaction to being pierced; the skeleton does not only observe the knight on its own but also invites the spectator to be entertained by the view, similarly to the people on stage who deliver a death speech. The various eye-pleasing presentations of dying together with the extraordinary rhetoric nature of speeches compel the audience to observe the

---

<sup>7</sup> Brown (1971) notes that Marlowe's treatment of Bajazeth is surprisingly reminiscent of the one observed in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, also known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (40–45). Although Marlowe relied on one of the most significant writings of Protestant history and martyrology, his aims of depicting Bajazeth as a tyrant or as Tamburlaine's footstool differ greatly from Foxe's. Foxe's description becomes reused and animated on the Marlovian stage in order to show the artistic complexity of the scene's enactment. Unlike in *Actes and Monuments*, Marlowe's focus is rather on the imagery than the sacred or moral aspect of the scene.

events in awe so much so that even “Jove viewing [Tamburlaine] in arms looks pale and wan” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.II.390). The emphasis is put on having an immediate effect on the spectators which is achieved by establishing a connection through mundane, worldly ideas and wealth. Tamburlaine is rarely concerned with the thought of spiritual riches after death or the afterlife itself. The significance of temporal prosperity is clearly expressed in the following excerpt:

TAMBURLAINE. The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,  
That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops  
To thrust his doting father from his chair  
And place himself in the empyreal heaven  
Moved me to manage arms against thy state.  
What better precedent than mighty Jove?  
Nature that framed us of our elements  
Warring within our breasts for regiment,  
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:  
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend  
The wondrous architecture of the world  
And measure every wand'ring planet's course,  
Still climbing after knowledge infinite  
And always moving as the restless spheres,  
Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest  
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,  
That perfect bliss and sole felicity?

The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.12–29)

Tamburlaine delivers a speech which explains that even gods consider “the thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown” of main importance.<sup>8</sup> Despite referring to superhuman beings, they are described as being involved in events similar to those in which Tamburlaine participates in the two plays, but no thought is devoted to divine deeds or events after conquering or death. This also implies that Tamburlaine considers himself closer to gods than to humans. Parker, however, notes that the crown speech has significant religious overtones despite being primarily focused on material values. The lines about “[the] souls, whose faculties can comprehend / The wondrous architecture of the world” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.21–22) present an allusion to *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin, more specifically to the passage which defines the powers attributed to the soul. Parker (2007) also remarks that the “earthly crown” may be interpreted as Christ’s crown of thorns (221–222). The image of the crown made of thorns automatically implies the close relationship of physical suffering and sovereignty; this body-centric approach is observable regarding Tamburlaine’s reign. Levin (1965) argues that Tamburlaine focuses on great achievements in material terms (51). This statement is supported by Act two, Scene seven in *Part One*, where, immediately after Cosroe’s death, Tamburlaine reaches for the Persian ruler’s crown proclaiming that “[n]ot all the curses which the Furies breathe / Shall make [him] leave so rich a prize as this.” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.53–54). Such

---

<sup>8</sup> Steane (1964) asserts that the crown represents “the means to all desirable ends.” (79) Following this hypothesis, the crown presents Death as a “desirable end” since Cosroe’s death is desired by Tamburlaine; it is essential for him to get hold of the Persian crown. This implication, however, is also present on a more abstract level. The crown, as an emblem of rule, links Tamburlaine’s own death to itself and the concept of regal power, thus death also becomes the “desirable end” for Tamburlaine himself by the end of the second play, since it enables him to fight for the crown of the celestial realms.



earthly riches are closely related to the motif of conquest for the physical “earthly crown” of Cosroe and those belonging to the other oppressed kings, which are earned through conquering their countries. Interestingly enough, Death is referred to as “the monarch of the earth” (*Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.216) by Tamburlaine in the second play which strengthens further the similarities between Death and his own figure for he soon appears as the most successful warlord of his time.

### **3.1. *Death and Conquest on Stage***

Tamburlaine aims to become the most powerful ruler of the world through victorious battles. In the second play he is seen as a potent and mighty ruler, superior to other kings, one who has already conquered most of the then known world. The Scythian seems to be omnipotent like the Tudor monarchs, especially in the first part but a significant difference is observable concerning his character in *Parts One* and *Two*. MacKenzie (2007) proposes that in the first part, Marlowe relies heavily on the English military tradition of heroic chivalry and the classical Roman image of Mars Ultor. The following excerpt illustrates how Tamburlaine fits into the tradition of “military chivalry”:

TAMBURLAINE. Though Mars himself, the angry god of arms,  
And all the earthly potentates conspire  
To dispossess me of this diadem,  
Yet will I wear it in despite of them  
As great commander of this eastern world,  
If you but say that Tamburlaine shall reign.  
(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.58–63)

Tamburlaine clearly puts Mars into the position of his opponent and shows himself as a person who accepts the crown only if the crowd's approval is granted. This quasi-democratic attitude, however, undergoes a sudden change, as MacKenzie points out. Tamburlaine begins to resemble the image of Mars Ultor and evolves into a fearsome warlord, so much so that "the god of war resigns his room to [Tamburlaine], / Meaning to make [him] general of the world" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.II.388–389). This presents how Marlowe's protagonist has abandoned the attitude of the English type of Mars (MacKenzie 2007, 13–14).

Kocher (1962) remarks that in Tamburlaine's world "force is the nature of God, the constitution of the universe, and the law for mankind." (72) Kocher also notes that this concept is extremely similar to the content of some fragments by Heraclitus of Ephesus, especially the following ones (73):<sup>9</sup>

"Homer was wrong in saying: 'Would that strife might perish from among gods and men!' He did not see that he was praying for the destruction of the universe; for, if his prayer were heard, all things would pass away. ..." (Fragment 43)

"War is the father of all; and some he has made gods and some men, some bond some free." (Fragment 44)

---

<sup>9</sup> Kocher (1962) notes that the Renaissance knowledge about the works of Heraclitus was most probably rather sketchy due to the lack of frequency regarding their appearances in the available Aristotelean or Platonic texts. This suggests that there is little evidence considering Marlowe's access to these fragments. However, Kocher also asserts that, in respect to the philosophical texts after the pre-Socratic era, no clearly identifiable philosophical influence can be found regarding Tamburlaine's Strife-philosophy. Although Marlowe was familiar with the Empedoclesian doctrines of Love and Strife as well, his approach to Strife resembles rather that of Heraclitus, who does not regard it as an evil force (72–73). It is not only Fragments 43, 44, and the earlier mentioned 71 which connect to the overall atmosphere of the *Tamburlaine* plays and the representation of Death. I have also discovered the relevance of Fragments 4, 13, and 15 which are of exquisite importance concerning the employed branches of art. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.4.

While Fragment 43 implies the necessity of strife in terms of keeping the universe in motion, Fragment 44 is especially close to the concept of Mars turning Tamburlaine into “the general of the world”. As Marlowe’s protagonist becomes more and more powerful, he also begins to behave in a way which is reminiscent of the idea expressed in Fragment 44. He determines whether someone is free, or not, which is most prominently exemplified by the cases of Bajazet and Zenocrate. Furthermore, he also possesses the authority to transform himself gradually into a god-like figure while others remain humans.

His new image as a cruel and fearless semi-human gains further significance in the first scene of act four in *Part Two*, where Tamburlaine stabs his own son, Calyphas, since his son’s murder is the only staged example of Tamburlaine killing his victim directly. Cole (1995) remarks that the situation is ironic, since Tamburlaine regards himself as a most powerful Titan and still kills an unarmed human, who happens to be his own flesh and blood (71). I argue that this destructive image of the Scythian and the murder of his innocent offspring fits Tamburlaine perfectly into the Graeco-Roman mythological heritage:<sup>10</sup> he does not only liken himself to Jove (Zeus), but his behaviour also resembles that of Jove’s father, Saturn (Kronos), who devours his own children, because he perceives them as a threat. Calyphas may also be interpreted as a threat to Tamburlaine’s reign: he is weaker than his brothers and is more likely to fail in continuing his father’s legacy, thus, his elimination is a means of stabilising the future of the empire. This hypothesis is underpinned by the following lines spoken by Tamburlaine, immediately after having stabbed his son:

---

10 The father figure’s willingness to sacrifice his own offspring is a motif which also appears in the Bible: one of the most famous examples is the sacrifice of Isaac. This motif, however, also establishes a connection between Tamburlaine and the Christian God. Christ’s death is accepted to be a part of God’s ineffable plan, which implies that, through his passivity, God willingly sacrificed his unarmed and innocent son by refraining from intervening in the crucifixion. God’s responsibility in terms of Jesus’s death establishes a further allusion to divine action in the Tamburlaine plays, furthermore, it also likens Tamburlaine’s figure to the Christian God himself.

TAMBURLAINE. By Mahomet, thy mighty friend, I swear,

In sending to my issue such a soul,  
Created of the massy dregs of earth,  
The scum and tartar of the elements,  
Wherein was neither courage, strength, or wit,  
But folly, sloth, and damnèd idleness:  
Thou hast procured a greater enemy  
Than he that darted mountains at thy head

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, IV.I.120–127).

The death of Calyphas, however, also shows how human aspects are gradually replaced by interests of immortalising Tamburlaine’s figure on earth. The shift to a less human and more godlike identity results in Marlowe’s protagonist being presented as a force mightier than everyone else and his conquest is strongly connected to death itself. The connection gains importance not only because Tamburlaine is the cause of many people’s death on and off stage but also for being based on the complex relationship of Death and the Scythian.

Tamburlaine often refers to Death as his servant, but their relationship is much more layered than a simple master-servant partnership.<sup>11</sup> The first play seems to identify Tamburlaine as the superior character and Death as an inferior entity. Tamburlaine decides over life and death, he is in command, and this power relation seems firm and consistent. Tarlow and Battell Lowman (2018) assert that having power over the living body was crucial in terms of running a state successfully

---

<sup>11</sup> The same approach to the question of hierarchy is exquisitely illustrated by Holbein’s “The Emperor” of *The dance of Death* series (see Appendix 6). The emperor is depicted with a sword in his hand, able to cause or to order anyone’s death. The skeletal figure of death is shown bending over the emperor’s figure with one of his hands inside the emperor’s skull. The emperor is implied to be Death’s superior both in this representation and the *Tamburlaine* plays. The positioning of Death in Holbein’s image, however, evokes the question whether the emperor truly acts out of his own free will or if he acts under the influence of a subtle but cunning Death.

in Elizabethan times (73). This approach to power is also present in both *Tamburlaine* plays: Tamburlaine controls and defines his subjects, his children, his wife, and also himself. He seems to be always in control. The second play, however, alters the power structure. As Tamburlaine strives for a superhuman state of being, his portrayal alludes more and more to the various representations of death. The image of Tamburlaine being drawn in his chariot by kings<sup>12</sup> is a recognisable reference to the Triumph of Death motif (see Appendix 7), which, according to Neill (2008), presents King Death as an equalising entity (88) since “it is no longer the personal confrontation between man and death, but the collective power of death” (Ariès 1981, 119). The Triumph of Death, however, is not the only reference in terms of macabre art: the allusions to the tormenting skeletal death is apparent in connection with the tortured victims, such as Bajazeth or the Governor of Babylon, but also in terms of conquest since violence is at the core of his military actions.

Tamburlaine’s conquest is not only present on the corporal level but also in connection with verballity. His speech expresses sublimity in the sense of triggering fear and awe, as the prologue promises in advance. This sublimity, however, is considered “false sublimity” in Longinian terms, since Tamburlaine uses his grand speeches to describe worldly issues and the “grandeur of spirit is corrupted by worldly concerns and the ephemeral values to which it is subjected” (Doran 2017, 56).

From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits

And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,

---

12 In this image Cole (1995) also identifies a pictorial allusion to the opening of *Jocasta* (1566) which was reprinted in 1587 (also the supposed date of the first *Tamburlaine* play’s composition). Gascoigne’s play opens with a dumbshow which shows an emperor who, similarly to Tamburlaine’s figure, is also drawn by other kings in a chariot (73).

We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,  
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine  
Threat'ning the world with high astounding terms  
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.  
View but his picture in this tragic glass,  
And then apploud his fortunes as you please.  
(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, Prologue.1–8)

As Levin (1965) remarks, the audience is invited to observe the events on stage in awe (48). Immediately at the beginning, even before any action takes place on stage, the audience is prepared for the importance of the ensuing auditory and visual stimuli through the employment of expressions such as “rhyming”, “scourging”, “conquering”, and most importantly: “picture” and “hear”. Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays are extraordinarily language-centric dramatic pieces. Tamburlaine is not only able to subdue his enemies physically, but he is also able to dominate his opponents by his words. His dominance on the verbal level is underpinned by the fact that he is able to decide over life and death of the other characters, furthermore, as Levin (1965) shows, Tamburlaine’s superiority is also supported by the number of lines spoken by him; thirty-three percent of all lines are uttered by the protagonist in the first part and this number grows to thirty-eight percent in the second play (211). The central role of language is not only apparent when considering statistical evidence, it also becomes clearly recognisable through the examination of death’s description: both early biblical and Renaissance methods of representation are observable. According to Neill, the description of death in Genesis is metaphorical. Language played a fundamental role in substantiating it: the first step in creating an allegorical persona was to address Death in speech; this development led to the incarnation of the fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse.

It is not until the thriving popularity of macabre art towards the late fourteenth century that a personality is bestowed upon Death (Neill 2008, 3–5). Spinrad (1987) asserts that in the early sixteenth century the representation of death went through a noteworthy change: the skeletal figure of death was moved to the background; this became a widespread motif amongst portrait painters (16–18). I argue that a similar method of portrait painting is applied in *Tamburlaine the Great*, but Marlowe uses a different medium for the portrayal of his protagonist. Marlowe produces the same image of Tamburlaine and death with the employment of language.<sup>13</sup> Tamburlaine is in focus, but Death lurks permanently in his immediate ambience. This compositional strategy is observable not only in the events of the play but also concerning the construction of Tamburlaine’s persona. The verbal descriptions of Tamburlaine often allude to different well-known representations of death, but it is never explicitly stated that he is the human manifestation of Death. Through the relationship between Death and Tamburlaine, Death gains a special role in the play: it is both visible and invisible at the same time. Invisibility is to be understood in terms of traditional impersonation on stage. Death is not staged by the employment of an allegorical figure like in the case of Revenge in Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*. Addressing Death as a person and presenting violent and spectacular deaths, such as those of Bajazeth and Zabina, or the execution of Babylon’s Governor, create the persistent presence of Death as an idea on the stage. The allegorical persona, however, is not completely missing from the play, but it is much less didactic than in Kyd’s tragedy.

---

13 Although Marlowe uses two branches of art in order to establish the connection to popular visual representations, the represented image of Death is never complete. According to Derrida (1977), a speech cannot be “fully present” (8) since meaning is restricted and simplified by being expressed through linguistic structures (21). Similarly, visual representations are not able to express all facets of the original meaning either. Thus, transforming an expressive as well as, defective pictorial element into a linguistic description of the very same image results, in the spirit of Marlovian dialecticism, in both the confirmation and the twofold corruption of the original meaning. Consequently, it is impossible to gain access to the experience of the staged characters directly, but the signification of meaning remains accessible. Therefore, absence and presence share the same verbal representation. This means that Death is also present on stage due to its verbal signification even in the case of no physical representation being visible on stage.

Tamburlaine's figure is adorned with the pomp and levelling power of King Death,<sup>14</sup> he is even presented as an allusion to the biblical Horseman of the Apocalypse before the gates of Damascus. The colours of Tamburlaine's tents, however, are not only a reference to the Apocalypse, but the colours white, red, and black were also closely associated with the tradition of mourning. Llewellyn (1997) explains that while black is usually regarded as the colour of grief, white was traditionally associated with mourning the loss of an exemplarily virtuous person, while red represented redemption and the blood of Christ. He also notes that the combination of black and red had been considered as imperial since classical Antiquity (89). These associations and sets of meaning do not only emphasise the omnipresence of death and its inseparable bond with Tamburlaine, but they also strengthen the implications of the apocalyptic allusions and foreshadow the inevitable fate of the citizens of Damascus.

### **3.2. *The Transforming Power of Death***

The close relationship of Death and Tamburlaine undergoes a significant change in the second *Tamburlaine* play. The stable hierarchy of the first play is replaced by turbulence in terms of power relations. Tamburlaine is seen aiming to enlarge his empire and at the beginning of the second play he seems to have achieved the highest position imaginable: his kingdom is growing, he is superior to several kings, he has a happy marriage and heirs to follow in his footsteps. Death, however, is not shown as inferior to Tamburlaine anymore: in fact, he is presented as an equally powerful force as "the scourge of god". Tamburlaine's rapid growth of political weight seems to threaten the power of King Death. Death evolves from an ally into an opponent and calls forth the central key event

---

<sup>14</sup> In Marlowe's time, Death was often referred to as "the king of kings" due to the fact that everyone (including kings) was treated equally by death and all people had to pass away, regardless of their social ranks.



by which the major changes in the play are evoked. Zenocrate's death strikes Tamburlaine at the peak of his private and political career, and it is the first time he is confronted with loss on a personal level. This loss triggers a change in Tamburlaine's perception of Death: the collective power of death is replaced by the protagonist's personal confrontation with death itself. Kübler-Ross (2009) argues that the suffering of another person reminds the individual of its own limitedness and mortality (8). Indeed, Tamburlaine realises the physical boundaries of human existence and immediately tries to deny his own limits by declaring war on heaven. He uses his wife's death as *casus belli* and instructs his men to "Raise cavaleros higher than the clouds / And with the cannon [to] break the frame of heaven, / [to] Batter the shining firmament" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, II.IV.102–106). Due to the loss and suffering, Tamburlaine is metamorphosed into a vengeful warlord who aims to achieve superhuman status and extend his terrestrial conquest to transcendental realms.

Despite not being present in Marlowe's sources, Zenocrate's death gains a determining function and serves as a catalyst in many aspects. It triggers a change in terms of Tamburlaine's attitude and identity, furthermore, it also calls forth change concerning the allegorical figure of Death, but the transforming power of the event does not end here. The death of Zenocrate is presented as an example of the good way of dying. Spinrad highlights that the dying queen accepts the inevitability of death as a natural part of life, as the line "I fare, my lord as other empresses" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, II.IV.42) indicates.<sup>15</sup> She also tries to comfort and prepare Tamburlaine and her sons for her death; this way of acceptance transformed her into an example figure of patience and courage in the eyes of Marlowe's audience. The exemplary nature of her

---

15 Zenocrate's acceptance evokes the image of a peaceful death. Her virtuous approach is reminiscent of Holbein's "The Empress" of *The dance of Death* series (see Appendix 8). Here, the empress is guided by a calm skeleton-figure who holds her by her arm and appears to be rather supportive than aggressive. Similarly to Zenocrate, the empress accepts Death's help and answers his call confidently.

death is also emphasised by the application of music in her death scene, for music symbolised harmony in the Renaissance era (Spinrad 1987, 134). The commendable way of her death is intensified through Tamburlaine's wrong response to it: according to Spinrad, he acts contrary to the deathbed tradition and does the opposite of what should be done (131). The scene draws parallels between Tamburlaine's behaviour and Xanthippe's reaction to Socrates's death in Plato's *Phaedo*. Gavin (1974) asserts that while Xanthippe is present "on stage" she acts hysterically and is removed from Socrates's side since she cannot provide help in the dying process and is unable to learn from her husband's death (239). Tamburlaine shows similar behaviour at Zenocrate's deathbed: he rages against death; it is not him that comforts the dying empress, but it is him who has to be calmed down.<sup>16</sup> The improper attitude to the loss of his queen continues even after she has passed away.

Marlowe's Tamburlaine distorts and twists several conventions throughout the play. He is unable to accept the mortality and the limits of his wife's human body and tries to immortalise her in his own way. After her death, Tamburlaine has her body embalmed. He follows the tradition of preserving the memory of the deceased. When observing the treatment of the dead queen, it becomes apparent that her body is dismantled, but unlike in the case of most of Tamburlaine's victims, not in the physical sense but according to the different levels of function. Llewellyn (1997) describes the human body as a conjoint construction established through the combination of a person's natural body, social body, and monumental body (46–48). Tamburlaine, however, does not completely distinguish these approaches of Zenocrate's realisation. Instead of following the

---

<sup>16</sup> McCarthy (2012) remarks that Zenocrate's death scene proves Marlowe's knowledge of the *ars moriendi* traditions. The queen's behaviour corresponds to the suggested patient acceptance of death while Tamburlaine's raging is presented as "the sin of impatience" (64–65). Marlowe, however, manipulates the traditionally expected attitude in Tamburlaine's death scene. It is not due to his firm belief in the Christian God he becomes able to ascend to Heaven: Tamburlaine considers himself as a divine figure, thus, he has the power to ensure his own way to the celestial realms.

Renaissance tradition by immortalising her virtue through a solid monument or other forms of art, he opts for another way of perpetuation. According to Llewellyn (1997), the preparations of the natural body preceding the burial were primarily meant to delay the process of putrefaction; the aim was to provide a lifelike representation of the deceased person's physique without signs of corruption rather than to preserve their human remains (54). Zenocrate's natural body is transformed into a monumental body through the employment of precious material and embalming her in order to preserve her social body as virtuous empress and wife. Through this objectification, Zenocrate is transformed into a twisted form of memento mori object who is meant to be at Tamburlaine's side until his own death.

Tamburlaine's means of immortalising his wife, however, involve decay and destruction to a large extent. Ironically, Tamburlaine chooses embalming as the technique of preserving Zenocrate, this, however, has only a temporary result and is unable to stop the process of corruption permanently (Llewellyn 1997, 54). He also produces an apocalyptic landscape as a reminiscence of his wife making a threatening exclamation according to which "This cursèd town will [he] consume with fire / Because this place bereft [him] of [his] love: / The houses burnt will look as if they mourned" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, II.IV.137–139). This image of destruction again, calls forth the omnipotence of Death and hints at the similarities of the protagonist's character and the very same Death, whose existence he desperately tries to leave out of consideration. Cole (1962) claims that Tamburlaine's most intense outbursts are rooted in the loss of his wife and the loss of his self-image as a superhuman being (112). These two factors are hardly separable since it is precisely Zenocrate's death which triggers the change in Tamburlaine's perception. It is then that he realises the lack of his omnipotence and starts to fight against the limitations of his power. Cole proposes that Tamburlaine's extreme urge to reach superhumanity through martial victories results unavoidably in inhumanity (113).

### 3.3. “*Tamburlaine the scourge of God must die*”

The importance of territory is also emphasised by not only earthly riches and prosperity (such as gaining crowns through conquest) but also by the death scene of Tamburlaine. The expansion of Tamburlaine’s terrene empire stops when “sickness prove[s] [him] now to be a man” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.44). At this point, Tamburlaine still tries to deny his mortality and the limits of his physical being. Tamburlaine’s strong personality is of extraordinary significance in terms of the construction of his identity. Throughout the two plays, he is presented as a self-made man: he transforms himself from a shepherd into a mighty emperor relying only on his own skills instead of divine support. Although being quite unusual and fairytale-like, the course of his fate is presented as something natural:

COSROE. Well hast thou portrayed in thy terms of life

The face and personage of a wondrous man.

Nature doth strive with Fortune and his stars

To make him famous in accomplished worth

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.I.31–34).

Although Steane (1964) regards Nature and Fortune as the “world-spirit” aiding Tamburlaine in achieving greatness (93), I argue that Nature may also be interpreted as not only Mother Nature, but also as Tamburlaine’s own nature. The lines “Nature that framed us of four elements / Warring within our breasts for regiment, / Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds” (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, II.VII.18–20) suggest that Mother Nature formed Tamburlaine’s nature in a manner that his lust for power becomes one of his most substantial attributes. This intensifies the image of a character who is able to shape not only his own persona but his future too. It almost

seems as if the Scythian wasn't in need of any higher authority or of fitting into any preconstructed religious framework. This hypothesis seems to be justified by him burning the Quran and also by him declaring war on Heaven. Tamburlaine seems to achieve divinity gradually. Kocher (1962) observes that Tamburlaine's reputation as the scourge of God is established by himself; he is never referred to as God's scourge by his enemies, nor is he explicitly identified as such by any divinity (86). This fact implies that Tamburlaine has reached a new level in terms of identity: he is not only allowed to make decisions for other humans, but he also has the right and power to speak in the name of gods; this may be interpreted as a sign of his gradual transformation into a superhuman being.

I believe that in addition to Kocher's observation regarding Fragments 43 and 44 by Heraclitus, Fragment 67 is also strongly relevant concerning Tamburlaine's approach to life and death. In this piece, Heraclitus proposes that "Mortals are immortals and immortals are mortals, the one living the others' death and dying the others' life." Tamburlaine may be seen as an example of both mortals and immortals and his development throughout the course of the two plays shows that mortals and gods are truly the same since he fits into both categories. Tamburlaine's figure is seen as "dying life" not only according to the contemporary interpretation of life, but also since he is constantly accompanied by Death. Similarly, his death may be seen as him "living death" since he continues to live as an immortal being in a realm which is associated with the death of mortals.

As Tamburlaine's body becomes weaker, he shifts his focus from worldly battles to the empyreal realms as the following lines show:

TAMBURLAINE. Techelles and the rest, come and take your swords

And threaten him whose hand afflicts my soul;

Come let us march against the powers of heaven

And set black streamers in the firmament  
To signify the slaughter of the gods.  
Ah friends, what shall I do? I cannot stand –  
Come, carry me to war against the gods  
That thus envy the health of Tamburlaine.  
(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.III.46–53)

Richards (1965) points out that Tamburlaine refuses to consider himself as dying, which, for him, is but proceeding with the expansion of his kingdom and reign (387). Carpenter (1912) proposes that although “physical death” destroys certain faculties, the human essence or “deeper Self”, as he calls it, remains unaffected and thus is able to proceed to a new state of existence (81–83). He also claims that the physical changes evoked by death are deeply rooted in the extension and growth of the metaphysical facets of the self. This transformation becomes necessary due to the discrepancy between the limitedness of the bodily conditions and the proportions of spiritual growth (129). Carpenter’s concept seems valid when examined in the context of Tamburlaine’s death: Tamburlaine’s metaphysical self seems to have reached the limits of his human body, which means that death becomes essential in order to liberate him from his boundaries and to allow him further growth.

In this sense Death is put into the position of a loyal servant (one might even regard death as an ally) ensuring a peaceful death for Tamburlaine and helping him to proceed to the afterlife for further conquest.<sup>17</sup> On his deathbed Tamburlaine asks for a map depicting the territory he has already under his control. Neill (2008) describes mapping as a means of depicting territory already

---

<sup>17</sup> This type of death is reminiscent of the one observable in the death-scene of Zenocrate, already hinting towards the possibility of an altered relationship between Death and Tamburlaine.

known and conquered (2). The employment of maps might also be interpreted in the context of the early modern anatomical approach to the human body. Since Marlowe's own time was the era of great expeditions and anatomic discoveries, both scientific fields were immensely topical and fascinating. The analogy of mapping was also used in connection with anatomising the human body for every unknown "territory" had to be recorded and illustrated, similarly as new continents were being explored and depicted.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Tamburlaine's map may be interpreted as not only a depiction of the land he knows well: based on the underlying metaphorical meaning, the fact that he has conquered most of the world implies that he knows himself, too. Tamburlaine's spiritual expansion has reached not only his body's limits but also that of the Earth and needs a new environment to be able to unfold his suppressed qualities.<sup>19</sup> Turner (1982) suggests that passing from one social status to another one is often linked to geographical movement (25). Tamburlaine's change of status seems to correspond to Turner's idea: the Scythian moves across the globe as he conquers kingdoms and becomes more and more powerful. Tamburlaine's movement, however, is not only horizontal but also vertical. After having exhausted the earthly possibilities, a new dimension is opened by redirecting his movement. Tamburlaine is proceeding to a land completely unknown to him, a new *terra incognita* which has to be discovered. His upward movement is significant in terms of his identity shift: the ability to aim for a new direction implies his superiority when compared to the conquests of other rulers.

---

18 A similar attitude to the human body appears also in William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, in the scene where Dromio of Syracuse describes the body of Nell, the kitchen maid. Dromio depicts her as "[...] spherical, like a globe; [he] could / find out countries in her." (Shakespeare 2001, 3.2.114–115) Every body part of Nell is "mapped" and identified with a certain country: thus, her palm becomes Scotland, her Forehead is identified as France, her chin is England, and Ireland is found in her buttocks.

19 Steane (1964) notes that by the first scene of the second act in *Part One*, Tamburlaine's worth is not yet shown through actions (92–93). I claim that Tamburlaine's true potential is never revealed completely throughout the two plays, since his development does not end on Earth but is carried on in the celestial realms where ordinary humans, like Marlowe's audience, are unable to follow him. Consequently, Tamburlaine's true power and worth remains hidden even by the end of *Part Two* for the audience is not allowed to look beyond the limen.

By leaving his worldly heritage to his sons and preparing to ascend to heaven at the same time, Tamburlaine distinguishes his physical body from his soul, thus acquiring a spiritual body, which adds another layer to the threefold body-theory of Llewellyn. Marlowe's protagonist leaves behind both his social body and his natural body, dividing the monumental body into two abstract parts. The lines "My flesh divided in your precious shapes / Shall still retain my spirit, though I die, / And live in all your seeds immortally." (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.172–174) clearly show the division of "flesh" and "spirit". Tamburlaine immortalises himself both in the physical world through his offspring and the empire he has built and also in the metaphysical dimension: he finally steps over the boundaries of human existence and grows to be a superhuman entity. By evolving into a superior being similar to Death, he becomes capable of entering a domain perceived as uncanny by ordinary mortals. According to the Platonic idea, certainty is unachievable in terms of death for it is myth and therefore incompatible with rational interpretation and worldview. This vagueness, however, leaves room for hope, since it is possible to grow in an elusive context. Death may be perceived as a passageway to another life which can be used as means of transmitting knowledge and growing (Gavin 1974, 241–242). Tamburlaine's death may be interpreted as a necessity which has to be endured in order to gain entrance to the unknown territory as it is suggested by the following exclamation:

TAMBURLAINE. In vain I strive and rail against those powers

That mean t'invest me in a higher throne,

As much too high for this disdainful earth.

Give me a map, then let me see ow much

Is left for me to conquer all the world,



That these boys may finish all my wants.

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.III.120–125)

Tamburlaine clearly plans to conquer the heavenly realms, leaving the earthly terrain for his sons with the intention of providing the maintenance of his social body through their actions. This attitude shows serious preparation on behalf of Tamburlaine, which implies a different approach to his own death than to Zenocrate's dying.

The procession of Tamburlaine's death is contrasted to Zenocrate's way of dying on several levels. The first striking difference is the perception of Tamburlaine and his role in each case. While Zenocrate's death makes him automatically observe the events from the family member's point of view, his own death puts him into the position of the experiencer. The image of Death changes accordingly to the shift in Tamburlaine's perception in Marlowe's play, similarly to the alteration in terms of visual representation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Neill (2008) asserts that staged tragedy confronted the audience with their own mortality and compelled them to contemplate their individual fate. This encounter also served as a didactic practice to rehearse ways of responding to death (31–32). Tamburlaine makes use of the educational quality of Zenocrate's performed death-ritual and, correspondingly to Plato's implications, learns and grows through her death. Concerning his death, first-hand experience plays a similarly important role as in the case of early modern anatomical studies: the focus of education was shifted from books and other people's accounts to the immediate confrontation of the individual with the experience through which learning became significantly easier and more effective.

By the time he is forced to face his own death, Tamburlaine is able to react properly. However, Tamburlaine's denial of his own mortality might be interpreted as a weakness of character or as the failure of a great warlord to die in a dignified manner. Spencer (1936), for

instance, regards Tamburlaine's death as a consequence of Marlowe's lacking craftsmanship which he bases on the fact that the playwright did not follow the convention of granting his warrior a brave, heroic death. Although Spencer states that "it is too much to expect that [Marlowe] could have achieved completion at once" (228), I firmly believe that the brave form of death was neglected because Marlowe had no intention of following this tradition since his protagonist does not completely fit the epic tradition either. Tamburlaine, contrary to the epic hero, does not accept death as an end of his life but regards it as a necessary limen between his earthly rule and his celestial conquest. Furthermore, proof of Marlowe's familiarity with the noble art of dying is observable in the cases of both Zenocrate and Olympia.

Tamburlaine's death is also often interpreted as a consequence of provoking Mahomet and burning the Quran: Steane (1964), for example, claims that due to his behaviour, Tamburlaine dies punished (70). I, on the other hand, argue that Mahomet does not have any power over Tamburlaine since Mahomet is a prophet, not a deity, and Tamburlaine himself has succeeded in becoming a superhuman being by this time, which is underpinned by the following excerpt:

TAMBURLAINE. In vain, I see, men worship Mahomet:

My sword hath sent millions of Turks to hell,  
Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends,  
And yet I live untouched by Mahomet.  
There is a God full of revenging wrath,  
From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,  
Whose scourge I am, and him will I obey.

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, V.I.177–183).

Tamburlaine clearly states that he only follows one God, yet this God remains nameless. His description as being wrathful and revenging recalls the character and behaviour of Tamburlaine after the death of Zenocrate. Based on this, the unnamed God whom Tamburlaine follows may be interpreted as Tamburlaine's figure himself. The establishment of Tamburlaine's own myth and cult is an ongoing process throughout the two plays which is not only based on his accounts of himself but also on the supernatural descriptions of him given by other characters. Consequently, he does not only become a transcendental being through death but also a mythological creature by the creation of his own myth.

I argue that it is precisely this attitude of his towards Death which allows him to die a death more elevated than those of the other characters' in the play. Tamburlaine's death differs not only from the deaths of Marlowe's other protagonists, but it is also unique in the dimension of the two *Tamburlaine* plays. Llewellyn (1997) maintains that preparation preceding death was regarded as an essential part of the procedure; furthermore, sudden deaths were thought to result in spiritual damnation and social stigmatisation (28). When observing the deaths in both plays, it becomes apparent that most of them are sudden and violent; the characters who die in such a manner are deprived of the possibility of preparation; thus, they are not allowed to die a proper death in Protestant interpretation. Zenocrate's death is exceedingly different from the usual bloody executions and it is regarded as a "good death" in terms of preparational phase and the patient and virtuous acceptance of mortality and death, emphasised by the harmonious music during the process of dying. Her death, however, is not left spotless, since the procedure is not allowed to follow the deathbed conventions due to Tamburlaine's excessive outbursts. This extreme reaction and the neglect of funeral customs are needed to show the transforming power of Zenocrate's death. Tamburlaine's attitude towards Death as an allegorical being changes immediately: he recognises him as a potent opponent and the battle for terrestrial hegemony begins between them. Tamburlaine

tries to weaken Death's power, as Zenocrate's preservation exemplifies, and he also aims to show that he is capable of similar cruelty as it is demonstrated by the execution of the Governor of Babylon.

Tamburlaine's own death seems to be another turning point regarding their relationship. By the time of Tamburlaine's illness, he has developed a new attitude towards death: he accepts Death's power, but he does not see dying as a sign of being defeated. Amongst the several dying characters on stage, he is the only one who is allowed to perform an ideal death.<sup>20</sup> Although the emergence of his disease is quite sudden, Tamburlaine still succeeds in making preparations before the moment of his death: he sees his successor being crowned, comforts the ones left behind, and prepares for his spiritual journey to the metaphysical realms. Tamburlaine's whole life may be regarded as a "rite of passage"<sup>21</sup> during which he acquires the most beneficial approach to dying and moves from the lower social group of shepherds to the elevated level of transcendental beings. This hypothesis is underpinned by Turner's reading of Arnold van Gennep's *Rites de Passage* (1908), which implies that van Gennep uses the term "rite of passage" to express either the "seasonal changes for an entire society" or the "individuals' change in social status" (Turner 1982, 24). Both of these concepts are present in the two *Tamburlaine* plays. Tamburlaine's whole empire, thus also its society, is affected by the emperor's death as the following lines from Tamburlaine's death-monologue exemplify:

---

20 Olympia's death also begins like a proper, virtuous death, reminiscent of the expected Roman way for women, which is exemplified by the story of Lucrece. Marlowe, however, decides to twist this tradition by ridiculing it. Although Olympia dies by being stabbed similarly to Lucrece, her suicide is ridiculed since her first attempt is prevented by a love-stricken Theridamas. Her second attempt only succeeds because she tricks Theridamas into stabbing her while he tries to woo her.

21 In the context of liminality, Tamburlaine might be interpreted as an allegorical figure of the *Tamburlaine* plays themselves in a metatheatrical sense. Marlowe's plays represent the limen between two theatrical traditions: the playwright relied on former conventions, but he combined these sets of meanings in an innovative manner by which *Tamburlaine the Great* evolved into a fruitful basis for a new theatrical trend in Renaissance England.

TAMBURLAINE. Farewell my boys, my dearest friends farewell,  
My body feels, my soul doth weep to see,  
Your sweet desires deprived my company,  
For Tamburlaine the scourge of God must die  
(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two* V.III.245–248)

The last few lines of Tamburlaine's final speech express clearly that he fears the consequences of his own death only in respect to his subjects he leaves behind. His lines seem to be confirmed by his son's response "Let earth and heaven his timeless death deplore, / For both their worths will equal him no more." (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two* V.III.252–253) which implies that the loss of Tamburlaine's greatness will have serious consequences on the future of their people. Tamburlaine's death, however, also shows the improvement of his social status. While Zenocrate dies willingly as a human in a physical world, unlike her, Tamburlaine does not regard death as an end but rather as a threshold leading to a new domain where, due to its vagueness, he might grow into the superhuman entity he aims to become. As Hamlet's famous soliloquy suggests, death was often likened to sleep or even described as its relative. This approach implies that based on their relatedness, sleep and death share some inherited qualities which are not acquired but generic. Treating death as a form of extended sleep also means that irrational events, which are not definable by ordinary everyday limits and methods, are more likely to happen in death. Following this analogy, Tamburlaine gains an even greater freedom and his transformation from human shepherd to a deity seems even less absurd within a realm ruled by dream-like rules.

Numerous critical debates have been devoted to the question of whether it is possible to regard the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* as one entity or not. Kocher (1962), for example, refuses to regard the two plays as one coherent unit since *Part Two* had originally not been planned,

and also due to Marlowe having already exhausted his sources in *Part One* (69–70). I argue that it is precisely these same aspects which make it possible to consider the two plays as one. The overarching process of Tamburlaine's development serves as a means of unification. Tamburlaine's metamorphosis is not only rooted in the plays' plot line but also in the circumstances of their composition. Due to the lack of sources, Marlowe was not bound anymore to the historical accounts of a human emperor. This also meant that he did not have to consider either historical accuracy or the limits set by humanity and earthly existence during the process of composing. Tamburlaine's passage from humanity to a transcendental state of being may be paralleled to Marlowe's play: as soon as both strip off their human boundaries, their transition begins. Marlowe's play gains a broader horizon which is also reflected by the more comprehensive usage of the possibilities offered by the theatrical space. Thus, the "death" of human-shaped sources becomes in a way the beginning of not only *Part Two* but also of Tamburlaine's transformation into a superhuman being. I claim therefore that moving away from historical sources and relying on his own imagination as primary source had a liberating effect on both protagonist and playwright for it offered Marlowe the possibility to treat the figure of his Tamburlaine more freely. This unlimited freedom allowed him to shape his character not only within the mortal limits set by humanity but also to let the Scythian become larger than life.

#### **3.4. *Death as Means of Theatre***

The transforming power of death, however, is not only observable concerning Tamburlaine's character development and regarding the various aspects of the human body, but also in the metatheatrical sense. Death is used as the most frequent spectacle on Marlowe's stage and due to its complex representation, many facets of the phenomenon are displayed in the play. Scholars,

such as Levin (1965, 64–65) and Cole (1962, 87), usually draw attention to the central role of language. Similarly, to the theme of violence, language is used as a theatrical device in order to evoke change. Language itself has an immense transforming power and it can, as it is exemplified in the biblical development of the death-image, substantiate elusive phenomena. Linguistic expression, however, is not always enough to describe certain things, since some things are indescribable (Levin 1965, 9). Cole (1962) declares that “the visual action undercuts the nature of the speech” for the contrast between the glorious language and the executions evokes irony (109). I argue that the striking difference between staged brutality and the magnificence of speech are used in a combination to create an interpretation of the staged matter more complex than any form of art would be able to do on its own since one facet of expression proves to be too limited and its possibilities are easily exhausted.

Kiss (2015) proposes that the emblematic theatre in Renaissance England focused on complex representation and transcending the limits set by human knowledge in order to access a less didactic, questionable reality. Kiss also notes that absence and presence were of crucial importance in terms of representation since the aim was to “conjure the presence of that which is not present on the stage” (3). Reality as such, however, is not fully representable, since through the process of representation, some aspect of reality is always lost. Consequently, one branch of art is unable to show the thing itself without the loss of certain qualities of the original. According to Kállay’s reading of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, motives should be looked for not within the self but in the surroundings which one is exposed to as part of our shared everyday (Kállay 2002, 72–73). In his writing on Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* Kállay also notes that the form of depiction is the possibility of elements relating to each other as parts of the picture, which establishes the meaning of the overall image (270). This is precisely what the different arts do in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays: employing details associated with Death known from the everyday

they act as the elements of the overall representation of Death, which becomes interpretable based on their chosen way of portraying. The perception of Death is altered according to the various combinations of arts and their manner of representing it.

Marlowe's overall approach to the arts and their perception is reminiscent of the attitude towards the senses expressed in the following fragments by Heraclitus:

The things that can be seen, heard, and learned are what I prize the most  
(Fragment 13)

The eyes are more exact witnesses than the ears. (Fragment 15)

Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to men if they have souls that understand not their  
language.  
(Fragment 4)

Similarly to the message of Fragment 13, Marlowe also seems to put a great emphasis on visuality, audiality, and comprehension: Death is staged in a manner that it becomes not only visible or audible, but it is also often interpreted and explained by the characters on stage. Fragments 15 and 4 imply that relying on solely one sense is not enough: even if one hears or sees, the individual has to be able to interpret the "language" of the visual and audial elements they perceive. It seems that Marlowe's aim was to create a Gesamtkunstwerk in order to stimulate as many senses of his audience as possible at the same time so that the people would not only see and hear his play but also understand the impulses they were exposed to.

Homan (1969) states that "literal deeds are continually set against the poetry itself as words alone convert what is physical and horrid to something metaphorically grand. The play in this sense is [...] a testament to the theatre's own alchemic power." (395). It is only plausible that dead bodies



should be employed on the Marlovian stage considering the various magical powers attributed to corpses, which further emphasise the enchanting atmosphere of the theatrical environment, especially if applied together with verballity. Visual representation combined with overwhelming rhetorical speeches, for instance, also alludes to the limitations of human beings as shown in the following lines:

TAMBURLAINE. Behold my sword, what see you at the point?

[FIRST] VIRGIN. Nothing but fear and fatal steel, my lord.

TAMBURLAINE. Your fearful minds are thick and misty then,

For there sits Death, there sits imperious Death,

Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge.

But I am pleased you shall not see him there.

He now is seated on my horsemen's spears,

And on their points his fleshless body feeds.

Techelles, straight go charge a few of them

To charge these dames, and show my servant Death

Sitting in scarlet on their armed spears.

(Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part One*, V.II.45–55)

Tamburlaine invites the virgins, and through them the audience, to observe the visual manifestation of death which they are unable to see for he is invisible to the ordinary human eye. Although the audience of the theatre shares humanity and its limits with the virgins, Parker (2007) claims that they do not have to be confronted with their "terminal limits"; instead they encounter the limits of Marlowe's own medium: theatre itself (227). This way of staging mortality is an effective method of involving the audience for it is less terrifying and also easier to process than direct confrontation

with Death. Didi-Huberman (2008) asserts that some forms of traumatising events are only accessible through “reflections” either due to the lack of first-hand experience or due to the unbearable nature of the experience itself (32–39). I argue that the virgins are such a “reflection” of the audience’s own humanity through which the spectators could not only meet the limits of theatre, but they were also allowed to face their own mortality from a safe distance. The audience is frequently put on the threshold between staged life and death in order to allow them to have a glimpse of the superhuman facets of Tamburlaine’s world. This insight, however, is only limited, since they are never permitted to see beyond the limen, implying again the superiority of Tamburlaine who is able to see death, as shown by the virgin-scene. This type of insight, on the other hand, is often gained by him becoming involved in death-related rituals such as executions, which take place within the play, thus being inaccessible to the audience for these rites are not part of their reality. The presence of Death, however, went sometimes beyond symbolism.

Philip Gawdy’s letter (dated November 16, 1587) has been regarded as one of the most important documents when it comes to determining the date of *Tamburlaine*’s composition. This letter, however, is also significant since it recalls an accident during a performance by the Lord Admiral’s men (the company mentioned on the title-page of *Part One*’s first edition). This accident is worth mentioning since it exemplifies the importance of the position obtained by the audience in terms of metatheatre. According to the letter, members of the audience were killed and injured by the hand of the actor playing the executioner. Although Gawdy does not mention the play’s title, several scholars, such as Poirer (1968), argue that Gawdy’s description of the scene resembles the execution of Babylon’s Governor in *Part Two* (90). Even if the performed play was not Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*, this incident adds another, metatheatrical layer to the representation, or rather presentation of death on stage: as soon as the symbolic enactment of violence became real and was directed towards the audience, the spectators unwillingly became participants of the action and

were transformed into actors of the play. This newly gained position in relation to violence and death evoked a different response on behalf of the audience, since, due to death's passage from the simulated execution to offstage reality, the audience lost the protective distance which was formerly granted by the liminal position between reality and staged violence.

Death as a motive is ritualised on the Marlovian stage. The two *Tamburlaine* plays feature several exclusively death-related events such as executions, sacrifices, and suicides which are all procedures following conventions. Another layer of the ritualistic realisation is language itself, since it is used accordingly to rhetorical conventions as it is observable in Tamburlaine's lengthy speeches. Cole (1995) calls Tamburlaine a "word-warrior", and argues that his greatness is achieved by poetic prominence instead of martial action (67). Tamburlaine's wars are fought either offstage or on the linguistic level, which on one hand implies that Tamburlaine's magnificence is not rooted in solely physical dominance but also in his spiritual superiority. His wars and Death are employed in a manner which conforms to Derrida's theory about absence and presence, which I have referred to earlier. Even though Death and the wars are often invisible, they are still perceivable, and their effects are apprehensible which often have determinative consequences.

Although several scholars have pointed out the prominent role of verbality, it is mostly the usage of language as means of domination which is usually highlighted, while other facets remain unworthily neglected. I have already discussed the role of verbality in respect of visual arts, but I also intend to highlight the connection between language and further sister-arts. All the other branches of art are summoned onto the stage by what I call "the language of death". In her death scene, Olympia exclaims against Theridamas's wooing and professes that "No such discourse is pleasant in [her] ears / But that where every period ends with death /And every line begins with death again –" (Marlowe 1997, *Tamburlaine Part Two*, IV.II.46–48). While uttering this statement Olympia seems to act as Marlowe's *raisonneur* since it is precisely this attitude to language which

characterises both plays. Language is not only loaded with death when it is used to describe it explicitly but also in each case when a literary or visual allusion is established with its help. Visual arts and rhetoric remain not the only arts summoned by language.

Steane (1964) remarks that Tamburlaine's speech is characterised by a "violent tone" and "percussive style" while his long monologues often become "aria-like" (104). This observation corresponds to my claim according to which language is also used for filling the gaps left by the medial possibilities in terms of musicality. Several references to drums and trumpets may be found in both parts of *Tamburlaine*, but the possibilities in terms of the instruments' storage and acquisition were quite limited for Elizabethan theatres. Therefore, Marlowe reached back to the most ancient and most practical instrument in terms of attainability: the human voice. Although human voices may be used for singing, it is not necessary to employ such strategies, since the mere recitation of poetic speeches is also capable of creating rhythmic auditory stimuli. Singing and rhetoric are of crucial importance due to their significant roles concerning death related rituals and mourning traditions they have played throughout the centuries. The play's musicality, however, is only partly achieved by the acoustic impulses of the awe-inspiring speeches. Marlowe employs Death as a Leitmotiv in Tamburlaine's story, which overarches the dramatic framework of both plays. The different arts take turns in representing Death, which create a rhythm based on the length of representation and frequency of taking turns. Due to this manner of composition the plays' construction becomes similar to a polyphonic piece of music.

All the aforementioned facets are applied in the theatrical context, which itself is heavily rooted in ritualistic performance. The ritualistic approach to performative arts has a decidedly religious implication. The cyclical concept is evidently present in the repetition of performances: as the play is performed, the characters die but through the next performance, the same characters are reborn; repetition, however, also implies the obligatory reliving of suffering as well. The topos

of rebirth is present manifold in the *Tamburlaine* plays. The motif is observable in the identity-shift of the actor since he has to “die” symbolically in order to gain a new identity through the impersonation of someone else. The third layer of rebirth is rooted in the relationship between character, play, and playwright: as the real-life character of Timur Lenk died and was reborn, reshaped, and reinterpreted in the newly contextualised world of Marlowe’s plays.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* plays are manifestations of the playwright’s genius in terms of stagecraft displaying the artistic complexity of his medium. The two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* testify Marlowe’s familiarity with the contemporary mind: he made use of the popular and topical themes in Elizabethan England and incorporated them as crowd-tickler features in his plays. He relied heavily on conventions and public knowledge to make his plays both relevant and easily digestible for his audience. At the same time, he showed the familiar themes from a different, provocative angle and often manipulated the familiar implications so as to puzzle the spectators’ minds.

Although he chose an ancient theme as the central motif of his *Tamburlaine* plays, the traditional connotations are displayed in a different, renewed manner. Marlowe’s depiction of Death on stage does not only draw on the medieval heritage of morality and mystery plays, but also on the contemporary pictorial representations. I claim that the appearance of Death on the Marlovian stage became revolutionary in the sense of combining different branches of art in order to express its manifold presence. Contrary to previous portrayals, the interpretation of Death was not limited by the boundaries of descriptive language or the means of fine arts. Although it is the central role of rhetoric which is usually highlighted, the visualisation of the same theme proves to

be of equal importance. The combination of these two branches allows a more complex and less limited perception.

The fruitful match of complexity and ambiguity is of major importance in terms of dramatic development since, as the Platonic idea maintains, it provides the basis for the individual's growth. Character development and identity shift are not only rooted in the altering quality of Death but also in the transforming power of theatre itself. Death and language become ritualised in the theatrical context. The ritualistic repetition of the performances does not only repeatedly present the play but also implies some form of re-displaying the same motives again and again. As a result, the audience is able to rediscover and redefine mortality, similarly to the Marlovian practice of reusing and reinterpreting death as the theme of the greatest conceptual and figurative complexity in his plays.

## Works Cited

- Ariès Philippe. 1981. *The Hour of Our Death*. Translated by Helen Weaver, London: Allan Lane.
- Brown, William J. 1971. "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's Actes and Monuments and Tamburlaine, Part I". *Renaissance Quarterly* 24 (1): 38–48.
- Burnet, John. (1920) 2005. *Early Greek Philosophy*. London: A & C Black. Reprint, London: Elibron Classics.
- Carpenter, Edward. (1912) 2020. *The Drama of Love and Death A Study Of Human Evolution And Transfiguration*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. Reprinted, Delhi: Facsimile Publisher.
- Cole, Douglas. 1962. *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1995. *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Cunningham, Karen. 1990. "Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death". *PMLA*, 105 (2): 209–222.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1977. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Hopkins University Press.
- Didi-Huberman, Georges. 2008. *Images in Spite of All Four: Photographs from Auschwitz*. Translated by Shane B. Lillis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Doran, Robert. 2017. *Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, Dic. 2010. "The Living Corpse: A metaphysic for Theatre". In *Eroticism and Death in Theatre Performance*. Edited by Karoline Gritzner, 109–122. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

- Foister, Susan., Ashook Roy, and Martin Wyld. 1997. *Holbein's Ambassadors*. London: National Gallery Publications.
- Gavin, William J. 1974. "Plato: On Death and Dying". *Journal of Thought* 9 (4): 237–243.
- Greenblatt, Stephen Jay. 1984. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Greenfield, Matthew. 2004. "Christopher Marlowe's Wound Knowledge". *PMLA*, 119 (2): 233–246.
- Hardin, Richard F. 2006. "Apocalypse Then: *Tamburlaine* and the Pleasures of Religious Fear". *Baylor Journal of Theatre and Performance* 3 (2): 31–41.
- Homan, Sidney R. 1969. "Chapman and Marlowe: The Paradoxical Hero and the Divided Response". *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 68 (3): 391–406.
- Jonson, Ben. 1989. *The Selected Plays of Ben Jonson*. Edited by Martin Butler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kállay, Géza. 2002. *Nem puszta kép*. Budapest: Liget.
- Kiss, Attila. 2015. "Demetaphorization on the Early Modern Emblematic Stage". In *Szólító Szavak – The Power of Words*. Edited by Sára Toth, Nagy Viktor Kókai, Éva Marjai, Judit Mudriczki, Zita Turi, and Judit Arday-Janka, 295–304. Károli Könyvek. Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó.
- . 2011. "The Anatomy of the Revenger: Violence and Dissection on the Early Modern English Stage". *Early Modern Culture Online* 2:(1) 26–42.
- Kocher, Paul H. (1946.) 1962. *Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, Reprinted, New York: Russell & Russell.



- Kübler-Ross Elisabeth. 2009. *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families*. London: Routledge.
- Levin, Harry. 1965. *Christopher Marlowe: the Overreacher*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Llewellyn, Nigel. 1997. *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c. 1500 – c. 1800*. London: Reaktion Books.
- McCarthy, Andrew. 2012. “Marlowe’s *Ars Moriendi*”. *Marlowe Studies: An Annual* 2: 57–70.
- MacKenzie, Clayton G. 2010. *Deathly Experiments: A Study of Icons and Emblems of Mortality in Christopher Marlowe’s Plays*. New York: AMS Press.
- . 2007. “Marlowe’s Grisly Monster: Death in *Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two*”. *Dalhousie Review* 87 (1): 9–24.
- Marlowe, Christopher. 1997. *Tamburlaine: Parts One and Two*. edited by Anthony B. Dawson, London: Methuen Drama.
- Neill, Michael. 2008. *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Nevitt, Lucy. 2013. *Theatre & Violence*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Parker, John. 2007. *Aesthetics of Antichrist: From Christian Drama to Christopher Marlowe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Pilcher, Lewis Stephen. 1914. “The Vesalian Spirit”. *La Bibliofilia* 16 (9/10): 347-54.
- Poirier, Michel. 1968. *Christopher Marlowe*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Richards, Susan. 1965. “Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine II: A Drama of Death*”. *Modern Language Quarterly* 26: 375–387.
- Shakespeare, William. 2001. *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*. Edited by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan, and Harold Jenkins. London: Arden Shakespeare.

Spinrad, Phoebe S. 1987. *The Summons of Death on the Medieval and Renaissance English Stage*.

Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Steane, J. B. 1964. *Marlowe: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarlow, Sarah, and Battell Lowman, Emma. 2018. *Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse*.

Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

## Appendices



### Appendix 1

Detail of *Visscher's view of London* by Claes Visscher

(1616)

<https://www.bl.uk>

The engraving shows The Bear Garden, a popular baiting-house, and The Globe Theatre, which were not only close in terms of location, but the two buildings were also visibly similar considering their arrangement.





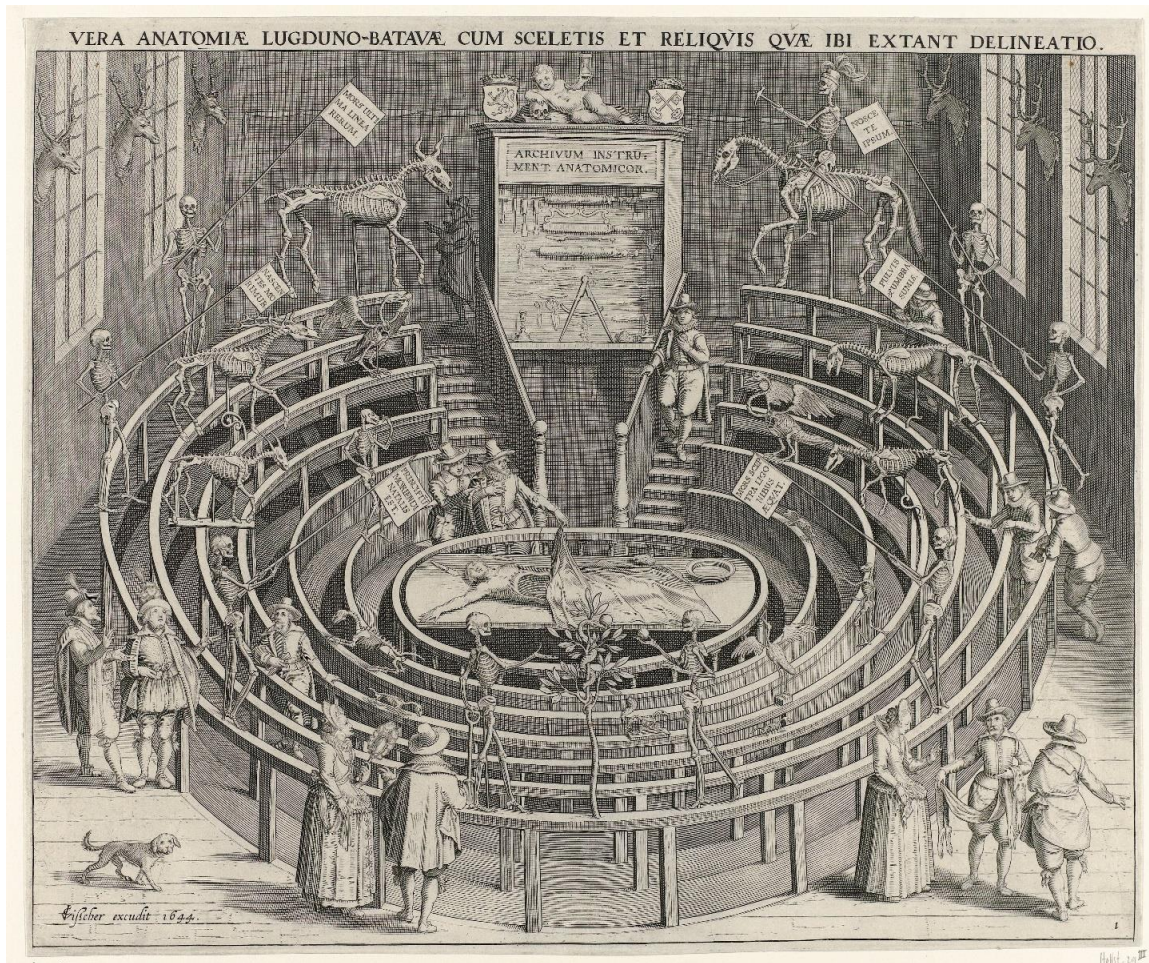
## Appendix 2

A flayed man holding his own skin, copperplate, engraved by Nicolas Beatrizet from Juan de Valverde de Amusco, *Anatomia del corpo humano*

(Rome, 1556)

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk>





### Appendix 3

*The Anatomical Theatre of The University of Leiden*, engraved by Willem Isaacs van Swanenburg (1610)

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl>





#### Appendix 4

The only existing depiction of an Elizabethan public playhouse, which shows the interior of The Swan Theatre, drawn in his manuscript by Arnoldus Buchelius after the original (lost) by Johannes de Witt

(c. 1592-1621)

<https://bc.library.uu.nl>





**Appendix 5**

*The Knight*, woodcut by Hans Lützelburger from Hans Holbein the Younger's *Dance of Death* (Lyon, 1538)

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl>





**Appendix 6**

*The Emperor*, woodcut by Hans Lützelburger from Hans Holbein the Younger's *Dance of Death*  
(Lyon, 1538)

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl>





O ciechi iltanto affaticar che gioua:  
Tutti tornate all'agram madre antica:  
El nome uostro a pena firmituoua.

N on aspectate che lamorte scocchi  
Chome fa lapiu parte che per certo  
Infinita e la schiera degli sciocchi.

## Appendix 7

*The Triumph of Death*, engraved by Francesco Rosselli

(c.1480–1490)

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/research>





**Appendix 8**

*The Emperor*, woodcut by Hans Lützelburger from Hans Holbein the Younger's *Dance of Death* (Lyon, 1538)

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl>