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## "Not Marching Now in Fields of Thrasymene": Producing Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus for the modern stage

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*The University of Notre Dame Australia*

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“Not Marching Now in Fields of Thrasymene”:  
Producing Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*  
for the Modern Stage

By

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Master of Philosophy Submission

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&

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I declare that this Research Project is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

## Abstract

This thesis offers theatre practitioners a method for approaching Christopher Marlowe's performance texts. *Doctor Faustus* is offered as a case study. Within it I provide a brief account of Marlowe's education, identifying the key influencing factors that led to his resultant compositions. A discussion of the variant texts of *Doctor Faustus* follows, which provides the reader with an understanding of the text and its context. Various approaches to the text are explored and reviewed in their degree of success. My purpose is to identify the most significant aspects of Marlowe's text and to offer a method of approach to production which successfully communicates with modern audiences.

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## Introduction

Marlowe became famous on England's early modern stage with the production of his *Tamburlaine* plays. These were plays of great military feats, quests and conquests, plays in which men of action plague the stage with their passionate blood lust and thirst for action. However, as Marlowe states in the play's opening line, *Doctor Faustus* is not like those plays. This, he states, is not a play about men in the splendour of battle, this is not a valiant victory against all odds, the characters you are about to observe are "not marching now in fields of Thrasymene". This play does not deliver what Marlowe's audiences had come to expect from the playwright.

This sentiment of this opening line is equally relevant to the discussion that this thesis presents, with regards to Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The following discussion will bring to light a number of important details about Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, and seek to provide the reader with a method of producing the text, as a play, which does not necessarily reflect what audiences have come to expect.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is a complex construction, combining components of medieval and early modern, literary, religious, social and dramatic traditions. Marlowe's intended audience existed within those traditions: they knew them without thinking about them, they knew the form of the play they were witnessing, they knew the figures who appeared on the stage before them, and they got Marlowe's joke about the devil appearing on the stage as a Franciscan monk. They knew it because they lived it. Although we are perhaps not Marlowe's intended audience, his play is still seen by audiences in the twenty-first century.



*Doctor Faustus* is a text deeply embedded in the cultural context of its conception, therefore it is not a text always easily approached by modern audiences. It is easy to see Marlowe's text as a didactic religious monologue about the dangers of magic, and to disregard it as irrelevant to our modern sensibilities. *Doctor Faustus* has, to a certain degree, come to have been labelled as an historical artefact, being produced only as an historical oddity. I understand that there is merit in producing this text in the fashion of historical recreation for public consumption: it is important to acknowledge our past. However, Marlowe's text is more significant than a mere historical record. *Doctor Faustus* is a multi-faceted critique of the society in which Marlowe created it. I suggest that Marlowe's text is still a useful tool of social criticism. It is, therefore, the modern theatre practitioner's job to facilitate Marlowe's masterpiece and through sub-textual and dramaturgical adjustment to comment upon the context in which it is being produced, rather than on the context in which it was conceived.

This thesis aims to provide theatrical practitioners, intending to produce Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, with a conceptual framework of approach to production. The author's intention is to provide a close analysis of Marlowe's text and his mode of composition, it is not intended to be prescriptive. The hope is that practitioners may, having read this text, approach *Doctor Faustus* as well-informed as possible so that the play might, as successfully as possible, be produced as a modern social commentary.

This thesis' first chapter will begin with a discussion of the playwright, Christopher Marlowe, as an historical figure, providing the reader with an insight into Marlowe's life, and the ways in which his life and context influenced the composition of his plays. The

information provided here is significant to theatre practitioners, as it provides an insight into a Christopher Marlowe's life, and how that came to shape the plays that he has left us.

Chapter two regards current thought on how the variant versions of *Doctor Faustus*, the A-text and the B-text, came about, their legitimacy, and how the variations make significant differences to the narrative. An argument is given for both versions of the text as to why a practitioner might choose to work with either version.

A consideration is given, in chapter three, to the components of the play which are often troublesome, or which might be considered complex by modern practitioners. These components are discussed with the intention of clarifying the purposes and meanings, so that means by which practitioners might overcome or resolve these difficulties might be discovered.

The final chapter presents a consideration of recent historical productions of *Doctor Faustus* is offered to the reader, with the intention that a breadth of approaches to the text might inspire further innovation. This discussion concludes with a speculative production design, based on a re-contextualisation production methodology. Analysing past productions of the text, and understanding how the production methodology which is being presented might be put into practice, will provide the reader with a practical means by which the information contained within earlier chapters might be put into practice.

## Chapter 1. Marlowe's Development

A number of recent biographical commentaries on Christopher Marlowe have been written because of the interest that has evolved around Marlowe as an intelligence agent, and the dangerous life he lived as a consequence of that occupation.<sup>1</sup> It could be argued that a preoccupation with Marlowe as an historical figure has been a distraction from serious Marlovian literary study. However, as Emily Bartels states, Marlowe's experience of the world in which he lived, as a homosexual, spy and playwright affected the works he produced.<sup>2</sup> Understanding the works of a playwright demands that the playwright himself also be understood. In relation to a study of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, I assert that this play, which is fundamentally about, and centred on, the scholar, is best understood by first understanding the scholarly experience of Marlowe the playwright.

### Canterbury, Petty, Grammar and King's School

Tom Rutter gives some attention to Marlowe's family, considering the environment into which he was born. Of his father, John Marlowe, numerous records exist from his participation in the local church and in the shoemaker's guild in Canterbury. John appears to have held numerous high-ranking positions within the guild because of his ability to read

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<sup>1</sup> Two such notable texts include Charles Nicholl's *The Reckoning*, London, Vintage Books, 1992, and Park Honan's *Christopher Marlowe: Poet & Spy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness, Imperialism, Alienation and Marlowe*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1993, p. xvi.

and write, skills not many shoemakers of the period are likely to have possessed.<sup>3</sup> What education John did receive allowed him to advance within his community. The recognition that John gave to the progress that was afforded him by his learning encouraged him to ensure the education of his only son.<sup>4</sup>

Christopher Marlowe's childhood was likely one of nurturing and care. There is no doubt that it was the support and encouragement of his parents which allowed Marlowe to pursue a career as a scholar.<sup>5</sup> Marlowe rose above his rank through the opportunities he was given as a youth. The theme of men rising above their station is recurrent throughout his works, as in *Doctor Faustus* and the *Tamburlaine* plays.

Marlowe's education began when he was approximately six years old. He attended what was known as a petty school, where he learned to read and write. The ultimate aim of such schools was to keep young members of poor families busy and productive, so as not to resort to destructive tendencies in their idleness.<sup>6</sup> The value of the education received was often very mean and basic for, as David Riggs indicates, regarding the teaching staff of these schools, "good scholars would not abase themselves to it".<sup>7</sup>

The syllabus of the petty schools was laid down by King Henry VIII and reinstated by Queen Elizabeth when she inherited the throne from her sister Mary. Rather than being instructive in practical skills, the syllabus was based on rote learning and focused on

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Rutter, *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Rutter, *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 2004, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

religious instruction, teaching the students Protestant prayer and doctrine, which, once taught, could be recited back to the teacher upon request.<sup>8</sup>

Henry, and Elizabeth after him, believed that by religiously educating their subjects they would instil in them a religious passion that would drive them to become better Christians. To this point and purpose, the official language of the Church of England was changed from Latin to English.<sup>9</sup> Church services were to be given in English and a large network of schools was established to teach the people of England how to read and write. Unfortunately, the opposite effect to that wished for by Henry and Elizabeth resulted and free thought developed on a much wider scale than was ever possible before in England. One cannot question something that one does not understand, and the use of the English language meant that English subjects, universally, could, for the first time, question the doctrine and scripture preached to them by the church.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, in the 1540s Sir John Cheke “coined the word Atheists.”<sup>11</sup> “Atheist” referred to an individual who either disputed the existence of God, or who disputed the righteousness of God. In 1553 atheism was distinguished from heresy as a crime in its own right, in a statute by Archbishop Cranmer.<sup>12</sup> One might suggest that a correlation can be seen between the implementation of the new Tudor education system and the sudden need for a term defining an individual who disputes the existence of God.

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<sup>8</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p, 29.

Riggs suggests that not all of Marlowe's education happened in his schooling: in 1572, when Marlowe was eight years old, Protestant French refugees fleeing religious persecution arrived in his home town of Canterbury.<sup>13</sup> The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 saw the deaths of thousands of French Protestants at the hands of the Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup> Living in Canterbury, Marlowe would likely have been witness to the arrival and settlement of the escapees from the atrocities on the other side of the English Channel.<sup>15</sup> It is very likely that Marlowe heard firsthand accounts of the atrocities in France from those who managed to escape across the Channel. The violence which marked the massacre came to influence many of his works, especially his play *The Massacre at Paris* which is based on the event.

In the same year, Marlowe would have finished his studies at his petty school. Following his completion of his petty school, Marlowe was provided a grammar school education, before attending The King's School in 1578.<sup>16</sup> It is unknown how this interim schooling might have been afforded, however, Constance Kuriyama proposes that he attended the Eastbridge School run by Archbishop Parker.<sup>17</sup> This school was run at no cost for students, making it a very likely option for Marlowe's financially deprived parents. The curriculum was only four years long, meaning that, it did not provide its students with the means to complete their grammar school education, which was itself a six-year long

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

<sup>14</sup> R. J. Knecht, *French Wars of Religion 1559–1598*, New York, Taylor and Francis, 2010, pp. 45–53.

<sup>15</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>16</sup> Constance Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, London, Cornell University Press, 2010, pp. 21–24.

<sup>17</sup> Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, pp. 21–22.

syllabus. Marlowe had to have been attending grammar school between leaving petty school and entering the King's School, as the King's School required that its students be able to read and write and have at least the basics of Latin grammar.<sup>18</sup> Kuriyama furthers her argument for Marlowe's attendance of The Eastbridge School by pointing out that it included music in its syllabus. Part of the terms of the scholarship on which Marlowe would later attend Cambridge was the capacity to read music and sing. Music was not on the syllabus at The King's School, therefore, it is very likely that Marlowe learned these skills in his earlier grammar-school career.<sup>19</sup>

Before the Reformation grammar school students studied a syllabus of medieval Latin grammar. This syllabus was designed to educate them as contributors within a Catholic society. To this end, teachers were encouraging students to think like Thomas Aquinas. For Marlowe and his post-Reformation schoolmates the intention was to think more like Cicero and scholars from the classical Roman period.<sup>20</sup> "Founders of the Grammar schools agreed that education served to promote religion, moral virtue, wisdom and eloquence, that these qualities were linked and that the training best suited to produce them was a study of classical languages and literature."<sup>21</sup> The figure below features the curriculum of four different sixteenth-century grammar schools. Peter Mack does not provide commentary on the fact that one, Wolsey's Statutes for Ipswich, is pre-Reformation, while the other three are post-Reformation. However what I think most notable is that, despite this fact, the

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<sup>18</sup> Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

<sup>20</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Mack. *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002, p. 12.

curriculums are not identical, and they tend to include similar source texts, emphasizing classical Roman scholars.

<p>Wolsey's Statutes for Ipswich (1523)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eight parts of speech, pronunciation</li> <li>2. Latin grammar, speaking, Cato</li> <li>3. Aesop, Terence, Lily</li> <li>4. Virgil</li> <li>5. Cicero, <i>Selected Epistles</i></li> <li>6. Sallust, Caesar</li> <li>7. Horace, <i>Epistles</i>, Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>, <i>Fasti</i></li> <li>8. Donatus, Figures of Rhetoric, Valla, <i>Elegantiae</i></li> </ol>	<p>Harrow (1591, reflecting earlier practice)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grammar, Cato, Mimus etc., Cicero, <i>Selected Epistles</i></li> <li>2. Aesop, Cato, Erasmus, <i>Colloquia</i>, Mancini, <i>On the Four Virtues</i></li> <li>3. Cicero, <i>Epistolae familiares</i>, grammar, Terence, Ovid, <i>Tristia</i></li> <li>4. Cicero, <i>De officiis</i>, <i>De amicitia</i>, <i>De senectute</i> or <i>De finibus</i>, Virgil, <i>Eclogues</i>, <i>Georgics</i>, or Horace, Erasmus, <i>De copia</i>, <i>De conscribendis epistolis</i>, Greek grammar</li> <li>5. Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>, Caesar, Cicero, <i>De natura deorum</i>, Livy, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Hesiod, Heliodorus or Dionysius Halicarnassus</li> </ol>
<p>Sandwich (1580)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accidence</li> <li>2. Constructions, Cato</li> <li>3. Catechism, Castalio, <i>Dialogues</i></li> <li>4. Terence, Cicero, <i>Selected Epistles</i>, Aphthonius, <i>Progymnasmata</i></li> <li>5. Sallust, Cicero, <i>De officiis</i>, rules of verse, Virgil, <i>Eclogues</i> or Christian poet</li> <li>6. Cicero, <i>Orations</i>, Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>, Horace, <i>Epistles</i>, <i>Odes</i></li> </ol>	<p>Rivington (1576)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grammar</li> <li>2. Cato</li> <li>3. Castalio, <i>Dialogues</i>, Erasmus, <i>Colloquies</i>, <i>Apothegms</i></li> <li>4. Terence, Cicero, <i>Selected Epistles</i>, Buchanan's <i>Psalms</i>, Ovid, <i>Heroides</i>, Horace, <i>Odes</i>, Erasmus, <i>De copia</i>, <i>De conscribendis epistolis</i></li> <li>5. Greek grammar, Isocrates, Cicero, <i>De officiis</i>, <i>De amicitia</i>, <i>De senectute</i>, <i>Tusculan Disputations</i></li> <li>6. Rhetoric, Cicero, <i>Orations</i>, Sallust, Virgil.<sup>5</sup></li> </ol>

Figure 1: "Listing of Four 16th Century grammar school syllabus". Peter Mack. *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002.



The observable problem with Christian schoolboys being exposed to non-Christian texts is the risk of them absorbing more than just the methods of grammatical composition. Riggs notes this risk and discusses the composition of texts designed to combat this issue. Riggs offers a detailed account of two: Alexander Nowell's *A Catechism or First Instruction of Christian Religion* and *A Short Introduction of Grammar* by William Lyly.<sup>22</sup> Nowell's text drilled into the grammar-school students the concepts of Calvinist theology; it taught students to obey the church and the state. The content of Lyly's text was repetitively copied by students, who were expected to memorise and internalise an almost endless number of variant Latin verb forms and modes of syntax. Just as it was in Marlowe's petty school, rote learning was the method employed to ensure that students learned exactly what was expected of them.<sup>23</sup>

The first few years of Marlowe's grammar school education were dedicated to mastering Latin grammar by means of rote learning.<sup>24</sup> As per the Latin definition of the term "grammar", these schools provided their students with proficiency in language.<sup>25</sup> The later years of Marlowe's grammar schooling, which he spent at the King's School, were of a much higher calibre of learning. The King's School curriculum consisted of a robust regime of specialised tasks, including the translation of classical texts, writing rhetorically effective

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<sup>22</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Rutter, *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe*, p. 4.

Latin prose and learning the elements of Latin poetry.<sup>26</sup> William Kempe wrote of the school syllabus:

First the scholar shall learn the precepts; secondly he shall learn to note the examples of the precepts in unfolding other men's works; thirdly to imitate the examples in some work of his own; fourthly and lastly to make somewhat of his own without an example.<sup>27</sup>

The final year of the curriculum was dedicated to learning the skills of oratory and poetry. Oratory was the art of constructing arguments while abiding by classical Latin rhetorical skills. The study of Poetry consisted of imitating the grammatical traits of the greatest classical Roman poets. Exemplary grammatical skill was the prerequisite for studies at Oxford or Cambridge. Many of the scholars who belonged to wealthy or clerical families did not need to go on to university studies, they therefore did not need to study in great detail the rules of grammar.<sup>28</sup>

Marlowe did not belong to any such family. He was therefore working especially hard to achieve competence and fluency of both oratory and poetics, as his future success depended on his acceptance into one of the Universities.<sup>29</sup> His hard work eventually paid off and Marlowe's proficiency with poetics was such that he subsequently won a scholarship to Cambridge.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, p. 106.

<sup>28</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 49.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p, 50

<sup>30</sup> Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, pp. 40–43.

The calibre of Marlowe's poetic skill can be observed in the construction of his verse. Upon observation, Marlowe's education in poetics quickly becomes apparent. What may not be so easily observed is the way in which the skills of oratory influenced Marlowe's works. Since oratory was taught as a means by which one might overthrow one's opponent, through use of words, it is perhaps unsurprising that Marlowe has Tamburlaine, a master orator, achieve astonishing feats merely through the use of his speech. Following the first encounter between Theridimas, Mycetes' captain, and Tamburlaine, Theridimas says to Tamburlaine:

Won with thy words and conquered with thy looks,  
I yield myself, my men and horse to thee,  
To be partaker of thy good or ill.<sup>31</sup>

Given his education, it is perhaps unsurprising that Marlowe would commit to such an affirmation of the power of oratory in this text. However, in *Faustus* we see a much more sceptical view of the potency of oratorical skill. Faustus begins to question Mephistopheles once he has appeared to him, following his elaborate conjuration ceremony, asking:

Faustus: Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee?  
Speak.  
Mephistopheles: That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*.  
For when we hear one rack the name of God,  
Abjure the scripture and his Saviour Christ,  
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul,<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Tamburlaine*, Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2, lines 228–230.

<sup>32</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 47–50.

Faustus believes that, like Tamburlaine, his words have potent power. However, when he asks Mephistopheles if this is case, Mephistopheles assures him that “the shortest cut to conjuring// is stoutly to abjure the trinity”.<sup>33</sup> Mephistopheles mitigates any preconception, either on the part of Faustus or the audience, that Faustus’ “conjuring speeches” had any real effect, and that it was merely Faustus’ abjuration of God.

### **Cambridge, Reading in Divinity**

The Parker scholarship, on which Marlowe attended Cambridge, came with it the intention that the recipient would, having finished his studies, join the church. Rutter explains that the context for such scholarships is the existence of an educationally inept clergy within the Church of England.<sup>34</sup>

The significance of the education model to which Marlowe was subject at school, and at Cambridge, is what defined him as a playwright. With a significant focus on classical literature, students did not merely learn the methods of composition, they also learned the subjects of the texts they studied. Regardless of the fact that Marlowe was at Cambridge studying Christian theology, he was reading works written by the Romans and the Greeks.<sup>35</sup> The texts studied came from civilisations that differed from Elizabethan England in two very important ways: they were not Christian and they were not monarchies. In being exposed to these works, Marlowe and his peers were subject to radical religious and political material. The content of these classical texts had the capacity to make the reader question the society

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<sup>33</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 53–54.

<sup>34</sup> Rutter, *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

in which they existed. Certainly in the case of Marlowe, who would later proceed into a career as a playwright, the skills learned while at university were applied to pursuits entirely non-religious.

Cambridge encouraged its students to study in a wide variety of academic fields outside of their official field of study. Students of divinity read in the fields of rhetoric and dialectic, mathematics and physics, even History and Greek.<sup>36</sup> However, one of the lessons that Marlowe learned during his time at Cambridge, which he seemed to carry very close to his heart, related neither to language nor to theology but to the hierarchy that was imposed upon students. There were four basic categories of student, based on a combination of scholarly and social merit. At the top of the order was the Fellow Commoner: sons of wealthy men who paid a great deal to study at the University without actually pursuing a degree. These students had social privileges at the University that were not allowed to other students. For instance, they sat at the high table during meals with the University fellows. Next in the order was the group to which Marlowe himself belonged: scholarship holders. The merit of this group came not from their social standing but from their academic prowess. Below the scholarship holders were the Pensioners, who managed to pay their own way through the study of their degree. At the bottom of the social order was the group known as Sizar. These boys were from poor families, usually showing advanced academic prowess, but who had attended grammar schools without any available scholarships to

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<sup>36</sup> Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric : Theory and Practice*. West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002. ProQuest Ebrary. Web., 17 September 2015, pp. 49–50.

attend either of the Universities. As a result, these students had to perform menial tasks in order to pay their way through their studies.<sup>37</sup>

The hierarchy of the University was based both on scholarly status and social standing. While to be a scholar was respectable, the wealthy students of the University were allowed many more privileges than their financially deprived peers.<sup>38</sup> The place of the emerging educated class in society was defined by the universities that produced them.

The Latinate, linguistically sophisticated, pedantically theological culture of the early modern universities, together with the premium that they placed on eloquence, largely set the style of the wider community.<sup>39</sup>

The most outwardly notable divide between poor scholars and their more wealthy counterparts was recognised in the clothing that they were allowed to wear. Scholars were required by university rules to wear full length robes “of black puke, London brown, or other sad colour.”<sup>40</sup> Because of the existence of what were known as “Sumptuary laws”, wealthier students were allowed a much greater liberty in what they could wear.<sup>41</sup> This then became a status symbol within the university. If scholars were of a higher social or economic standing, they could flaunt their social standing with their attire.<sup>42</sup> While Marlowe and his peers were

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<sup>37</sup> Emily C. Bartels, Emma Smith, *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013, p. 184.

<sup>38</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 68–69.

<sup>39</sup> Victor Morgan, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, 4 vols, Vol. II: 1546–1750, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 134.

<sup>40</sup> Nicholl, *The Reckoning*, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality*, Berg Publishers, Oxford, 2003, pp. 12–16.

<sup>42</sup> Emily C. Bartels, Emma Smith, eds, *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 184.

being raised above the station into which they were born, they were also being repressed within the academic world into which they had been raised.

Clothing as a symbol of social status appears as a motif within his plays. Arguably, the correlation between clothing and social status was never far from Marlowe's mind, even when he left Cambridge behind. Both Tamburlaine and Faustus reflect Marlowe in that they are individuals who by various means rise above their ranks: Tamburlaine through his military prowess, Faustus, as with Marlowe, through his academic achievement. In

*Tamburlaine the Great* Part 1, Tamburlaine exclaims:

Lie here, ye weeds, that I disdain to wear  
This complete armour and this curtle-axe  
Are adjuncts more beseeming Tamburlaine.<sup>43</sup>

Tamburlaine sees his attire as an important projection of his status. Tamburlaine the shepherd is defined by the weeds he wears, Tamburlaine the Conqueror is defined by his armour. Faustus raises this issue as well, though dealing much more directly with the sanctions that Marlowe himself faced. Faustus imagines that, when he comes into his demonic powers, the scholars would be allowed to wear clothes that he saw as being more fitting.

I'll have them fill the public schools with Silk,  
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad.<sup>44</sup>

When put into perspective of the other achievements and deeds that Faustus wishes to accomplish, establishing empires and commanding princes and emperors, the idea of dressing scholars in silk is, by comparison, inconsequential. Yet such was Faustus', and

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<sup>43</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2, Lines, 41–43.*

<sup>44</sup> *Doctor Faustus, Act 1, Scene 1, Lines 92–93.*

Marlowe's, concern for the validation of scholars that right in the middle of a declaration of his enterprise to militarise Germany, Faustus thinks of students wearing silk.

I'll have them wall all Germany with Brass  
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg.  
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,  
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad.  
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring  
And chase the prince of Parma from our land.<sup>45</sup>

It could be argued that Marlowe saw the provision of scholars as equally important to national security as the assembly of armies and armaments. The construction of such an argument would require significantly more research. However, what one can appreciate is the lasting impact that the regulation of student's attire had on Marlowe and the resentment that he held towards that regulation.

The reality was that the same kind of strict regulation that Marlowe faced with attire was true of many facets of university life. Scholars followed a closely monitored timetable of prayer, disputation, class and study. There was nearly no time allowed for leisure.<sup>46</sup> The two aspects of Marlowe's university life which were most rigorously enforced and encouraged, Christian theology and dialectic, are, perhaps unsurprisingly, two of Faustus' most prominent concerns. Mandatory attendance, of Marlowe and his peers, was required in the Corpus Christi chapel between five and six every morning from Monday to Saturday.<sup>47</sup> On Sundays, sermons were held for the entire University both in the morning and in the afternoon.<sup>48</sup> When students went to class, they trained in the methods of disputation or

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<sup>45</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 1, Lines 90–95.

<sup>46</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 77–79.

<sup>47</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 77.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.



dialectic. Dialectic was “an art to reason probably, on both parts, of all matters that be put forth, so far as the nature of the thing can bear”.<sup>49</sup> Dialectic was taught throughout a student’s course and was used as the primary method of assessment. In the same way that modern students are assessed in exams, students would be pitched against one another in order to analyse both the breadth of their knowledge and their dialectic skill.<sup>50</sup> Marlowe’s knowledge of divinity was assessed via this very method.

During the 1580s, when Marlowe was still completing his B.A., Cambridge was at the centre of such disputation regarding Calvinist and anti-Calvinist doctrine.<sup>51</sup> It could be likely that Marlowe was made to dispute on such topics. Certainly he explores various perspectives of this very topic in his later stage works, especially within *Faustus*. The degree to which, and the ways in which he does so, will be explored in a later chapter.

As was stated earlier, Marlowe attended Cambridge on an Archbishop Parker scholarship. This scholarship was given out with the intention that the recipient would, having finished his studies, proceed into the church.<sup>52</sup> Marlowe did not do this, instead he used his theological education to write commentary on the English church, which was then disseminated into the theatres. Speculation at the time that Marlowe was completing his M.A. inferred that he had turned Catholic, having spent some time in the final year of his study in Rheims at a Catholic seminary. “Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77–80.

<sup>51</sup> G. M. Princiss, “Marlowe’s Cambridge Years and the writing of *Doctor Faustus*”, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 33, No. 2, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1993), pp. 249–264.

<sup>52</sup> Paul H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1962, p. 21.

was determined to have gone across the seas to Rheims and there to remain, ..."<sup>53</sup> Rumours regarding Marlowe's Catholic affinities resulted in his M.A. being withheld. However, these rumours were stifled by a statement from the Privy Council, stating: "... that in all actions he had behaved himself orderly and discreetly, whereby he had done her Majesty good service".<sup>54</sup>

Rather than a catholic, a popular view on Marlowe in recent years, has been that he was in fact an atheist. Robert Greene, in his Epistle to *Perimedes the Blacksmith*, cites Marlowe's apparent atheistic affinities, writing that Marlowe was: "... daring God out of heaven with his atheist Tamburlaine".<sup>55</sup> Greene does not call Marlowe an atheist directly but accuses him of producing atheistic literature. The Protestant state of England at the time meant that the monarch was the head of the church. As per the Tudor Statute of 1534, to speak against the church was to speak against Elizabeth. Subscription to atheism was, therefore, a matter of treason and punishable by death.<sup>56</sup> Kocher validly points out that rather than being defamatory for the sake of slander or jealousy, or another instance of the frequent defamation between poets and playwrights of the era, Greene wrote his epistle while on his deathbed.<sup>57</sup> Greene had nothing to gain monetarily or personally from

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<sup>53</sup> Rutter, *The Cambridge Introduction to Christopher Marlowe*, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Greene, *Perimedes the Blacksmith*, Replication of the copy held in the Harvard College Library, 1930, The Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/stream/perimedesblacke00greegoog#page/n10/mode/2up>, p 11.

<sup>56</sup> Rebecca Lemon, *Treason by Words: Literature, Law, and Rebellion in Shakespeare's England*, Ithaca, NY, USA: Cornell University Press, 2006. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 18 October 2015, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character*, p. 21.

defaming Marlowe: his statement therefore bears significant weight, especially compared to the accusations which would later bring Marlowe to trial shortly before his death.

I argue that because academia and scholarship is at the very centre of *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe's own academic experiences, his academic achievement, theological disputations, development of social and political opinions, are intrinsic to the very creation of the text.

## Chapter 2. Context and Textual Deviations

One of the matters which has concerned Marlovian studies for a long time is the fact that we do not possess an original copy of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* manuscript. In its place we have two variant versions of the text which differ in a variety of ways. This chapter will discuss current thought on how the variant versions of *Doctor Faustus* have come about, their legitimacy, and how the variations make significant differences to the narrative.

### The Context of Conception

When was *Doctor Faustus* written? Scholars have for a long time had great difficulty in verifying precisely where *Doctor Faustus* belongs within the Marlovian canon. Textual analysis and record evidence from the period seem to be at odds. The earliest known account of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* seems to be an entry into the stationers' register in 1592.<sup>58</sup>

Knowing that Marlowe had the text completed in 1592 gives scholars a date to work back from. We know that before Marlowe completed *Faustus* he was working on his *Tamburlaine the Great* plays.<sup>59</sup> Referential evidence dates the *Tamburlaine* plays somewhere between 1587 and 1588. Robert Greene's *Perimedes The Blacksmith*, which appears in the stationers' register on March 29 1588, and refers to Marlowe "Daring God out of Heaven with that Atheist Tamburlan".<sup>60</sup> We do not know if Greene is referring to

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<sup>58</sup> E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 Volumes, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1923. Vol. 3, p. 422.

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus: Oxford Student Texts*, Edited by Richard Gill, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 178.

<sup>60</sup> John D. Jump, *Christopher Marlowe: Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1967, p. xi (Introduction).

Tamburlaine from Marlowe's first or second *Tamburlaine* play but it is at least apparent that Part One of the *Tamburlaine* plays was in circulation by 1588.

In 1587 Philip Gawdy described, in a letter to his father, an accident at the theatre in which "having borrowed their callyvers one of the players handes swerved his peece being charged with bullet missed the fellow he aimed at and killed a child"<sup>61</sup> This accident is often attributed to the first scene in Act Five of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine The Great, Part 2*, in which the Governor of Babylon is hung up in chains and shot.<sup>62</sup> If this reference is truly aimed at the scene in question, then both of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays were already in circulation by 1588 and he would have already commenced his work on *Doctor Faustus*. On this basis, the composition of *Doctor Faustus* can be reasonably dated between 1588 and 1589.

A problem seems to arise when looking at these dates and those of Marlowe's source books. Marlowe was evidently influenced by the *Faust* legends when composing his text. Chief amongst these was the German *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, the English translation of which is *The Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus*.<sup>63</sup> The earliest English translation that remains of this text is dated to 1592,<sup>64</sup> well after the presumed date of Marlowe's play. However, as David Riggs points out, the edition that we now possess contains a note on the title page stating that the text is "newly imprinted and in convenient places

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<sup>61</sup> Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*. Vol. 2, p. 135.

<sup>62</sup> Jump, *Christopher Marlowe: Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II*, pp. xi–xii.

<sup>63</sup> R. J. Fehrenbach, "A pre-1592 English Faust book and the date of Marlowe's doctor Faustus". *Web of Science*, (4), 12/2001, 327-35. DOI: [10.1093/library/2.4.327](https://doi.org/10.1093/library/2.4.327).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

imperfect matter amended".<sup>65</sup> This note indicates that there was an earlier edition of the text that we do not have access to, but which Marlowe might very well have.<sup>66</sup>

*The Damnable Life* went through no less than fourteen different editions between 1587 and 1593 in various languages and variants of prose and poetry.<sup>67</sup> Lisa Hopkins explains that the widespread interest in the Faustian magician stories of the late sixteenth century is an adverse reaction to fear-mongering by the Lutheran church.<sup>68</sup> Luther took a hard line on witchcraft, encouraging witch hunts and the punishment of anyone believed to be involved in magic of any kind.<sup>69</sup> The Faust legend was perpetuated by the Lutheran church as a propaganda campaign, making it clear that those who were not punished by the church would be claimed by the devil in the afterlife.<sup>70</sup>

It is clear that Marlowe was not establishing a new trend in writing his *Faustus* play, but was merely participating in one. Marlowe's contribution is, however, very significant, in that he subverts the form in order to question Lutheran propaganda. Throughout the play, Faustus questions or doubts the validity of the pact he has made with Mephistopheles,

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<sup>65</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 232. (For a more fully developed exploration on this matter, see R. J. Fehrenbach, "A pre-1592 English Faust book and the date of Marlowe's doctor Faustus". *Web of Science*, (4), 12/2001, 327-35. DOI: [10.1093/library/2.4.327](https://doi.org/10.1093/library/2.4.327)).

<sup>66</sup> For a discussion on this matter see the introduction to David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham's 1985 edition of the A-text: *Dr Faustus: The A-Text*, Nedlands, The University Of Western Australia Press, 1985.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233. (For a detailed discussion on this matter, see Paul H. Kocher, "[The English Faust Book and the Date of Marlowe's Faustus](#)", *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Feb., 1940), pp. 95-101, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2910133>).

<sup>68</sup> Lisa Hopkins, *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2008, p. 27.

<sup>69</sup> Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks and Susan C. Karant-Nunn, eds, *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*, West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 228–229.

<sup>70</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 234.

whether it be the case that he is indeed beyond saving,<sup>71</sup> or that hell truly is as bad as it has been made out to be<sup>72</sup>. Faustus remains the cynic throughout the play rather than the accepting figure presented in the *Damnable Life*. However, what Marlowe changes most about the text is less in its content and more in its form. The narrative is being performed upon the live stage, and Marlowe explicitly states this in the Prologue to the play:

“Only this gentlemen: we must perform  
The form of Faustus’ fortunes, good or bad”<sup>73</sup>

According to Riggs, the significance of the word “perform” cannot be understated. At the time Marlowe was writing, the meaning of the word “perform” was changing from the existing meaning, used to express ‘the completion of something’, to a modern definition, meaning ‘to play a part’. This subtle word play gives the impression that the narrative is still in action and the outcome is not yet decided.<sup>74</sup> Marlowe adds to this illusion, appealing:

“To patient judgement we appeal our plaud”<sup>75</sup>

Marlowe opened the narrative to an audience who could interact with the characters, they could judge the action of the play for themselves, they were not being dictated to by church doctrine, they were asked for an opinion. Marlowe engaged audiences on their own terms, and turned a church propaganda tool into what is arguably his most successful play.

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<sup>71</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Oxford University Press, 2008, Act 2, Scene III, lines 8–17.

<sup>72</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 2, Scene I, lines 120–143.

<sup>73</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Prologue, lines 7–8.

<sup>74</sup> Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, p. 236.

<sup>75</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Prologue, line 9.

## The Difference Between the A- text and B-text

The question does remain: “how much of the play was actually his?” Marlowe’s *Faustus* has remained popular for over four hundred years, it has become an accepted part of the western canon, yet we do not have an extant copy of the script.

Possibly the most vital consideration a director of *Faustus* takes concerns the script. While consideration of venue, technical resources, and timing are paramount, questions of technical taste and preference also arise. Should either the A-text or the B-text be selected...?<sup>76</sup>

Since no extant copy of Marlowe’s script still exists, practitioners of Marlovian theatre, when faced with directing *Doctor Faustus*, must make a decision regarding their choice of script before undertaking a production. Each version carries with it different connotations and different problems which must be dealt with if one wishes to turn the text into a successful production.

John Barton directed, in 1974, a production of *Faustus* using a heavily cut version of the A-text spliced with passages from *The English Faust Book*. *Faustus*, played by Ian McKellen, was made to appear a far more tragic figure than the text would suggest, by removing most of the comic scenes from the text and inserting some of Barton’s own devised work.<sup>77</sup> Earlier, in 1968, Clifford Williams dovetailed the A- and B- texts to create a new whole, emphasising the more serious scenes from the longer B-text and using the less farcical comic scenes from the A-text. The result was an amalgam of two already complex

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<sup>76</sup> William Tydeman, *Text and Performance, Doctor Faustus*, London, Macmillan, 1984, p. 51.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.



figures into a singular figure of massive inconsistencies.<sup>78</sup> Earlier still, Walter Hudd, in 1946, embraced the complete 1616 B-text. Every one of the elaborated scenes was included in the production. The result, Tydeman found, was the loss of the sanctified scholarship of the text and of the tragic hero.<sup>79</sup> Though each of these productions had their virtues, none was wholly satisfying, at least as far as Tydeman is concerned.

Each version of *Doctor Faustus* is problematic in its own right. No version is without difficulties, which need to be dealt with delicately. Interfering with the text too much creates new problems. However, leaving the inconsistencies of the text unaddressed is problematic as well. I propose that the best way to go about solving the problem of text choice is to discover the origin of each version and to discover the problems that each seems to carry with it.

We know that Marlowe died tragically in 1593. However, the earliest script that we have retained of *Doctor Faustus* was published in 1604: the version which has come to be known as the A-text. Certainly *Faustus* was written before 1593, probably somewhere around 1589, as was discussed earlier. We also know that in 1602 Philip Henslowe commissioned the playwrights Samuel Rowley and William Bird to make some “adicyiones in doctor fostes”.<sup>80</sup> What these additions are exactly has for a long time been a matter of debate.

In 1950 W. W. Greg published *Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus, 1604–1616, Parallel Texts* in which he offers a comprehensive discussion regarding the two versions of *Doctor Faustus*.

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<sup>78</sup> Tydeman, *Text and Performance, Doctor Faustus*, p. 53.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>80</sup> *Henslowe’s Diary*. Edited by R.A. Foakes and R.T. Rickert, Cambridge University Press, 1961, p. 206.

His conclusion is that the B-text is the closer of the two versions to Marlowe's original manuscript, while the A-text is merely a memorial reconstruction on the part of actors in the company of Pembroke's Men.<sup>81</sup> "It is not at all likely that the Admiral's Company, having paid a considerable sum for giving the play fresh attraction on the stage, would willingly have released the additions to the press."<sup>82</sup> He goes on to make comparative analysis of the texts, remarking on subtleties within each text and reasoning out their causes. The repetition of expression displayed within the A-text, Greg asserts, would surely not have been the practice of a playwright of Marlowe's calibre:

When an author has to say something several times over he generally tries to vary the expression and avoids mechanical repetition. But an actor will not always burden his memory with such niceties, and a reporter is apt to get one form of expression fixed in his mind and to produce it whenever anything of the sort is called for.<sup>83</sup>

A comparison here is made between the two versions of scene eleven, the horse courser scene. The B-text, Greg points out, features three different variations of the reference to "hay", citing: "A little straw",<sup>84</sup> "a bottle of hay"<sup>85</sup> and "a bundle of hay".<sup>86</sup> The A-text has no such variety and the horse courser refers to "a bottle of hay" each time. Such close textual

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<sup>81</sup> W. W. Greg, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604–1616, Parallel Texts*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950. (For a uniquely succinct summary of Greg's argument, see William Empson, *Faustus and the Censor*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, pp. 41–44.)

<sup>82</sup> Greg, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604–1616, Parallel Texts*, p. 30.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (B-text), Act 4, Scene 4, Line 25.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, Act 4, Scene 4, Line 29.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Act 4, Scene 4, Line 35.

analysis comprises the entirety of Greg's study, which provides a substantial and persuasive argument for the legitimacy and purity of the B-text.

The introduction to the A-text by Christopher Wortham and David Ormerod in their 1985 edition discusses the possible link between the 1604 edition and an edition entered in the stationers' register in 1601.<sup>87</sup> The concession is made that the link is purely speculative as we do not possess any editions of *Doctor Faustus* preceding the 1604 text. The entry in the stationers' register may in fact be a holding entry and not a fully realised publication at all, yet it is not impossible to suppose that there was an earlier text. There is only one single copy of the 1604 edition remaining and only five copies of the first three editions. To imagine that an earlier edition has been lost entirely is not at all unimaginable, in fact it seems quite likely.<sup>88</sup> If this were the case, and the 1604 edition is in fact the reprint of an earlier 1601 edition, then the source of the A-text pre-dates the additions commissioned by Philip Henslowe in 1602. This would put the A-text out of contention as the text in which Samuel Rowley and William Bird had a hand.

Wortham and Ormerod suggest that these alterations instead exist within the much later 1616 B-text. Four pounds, they propose, was a significant sum of money to be paid for script doctoring. Extensive additions would have to have been made in order to justify the sum paid by Henslowe. The A-text, Wortham and Ormerod argue, is a text far too short, certainly by Elizabethan standards, to contain such extensive alterations so as to justify

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<sup>87</sup> David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham, eds, *Doctor Faustus: The A-text*, The University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1985, p. xxiv.

<sup>88</sup> Wortham and Ormerod, eds, *Doctor Faustus: The A-text*, p. xxi.

Henslowe's commission. He could not have felt justified in paying such a sum for such scanty results.<sup>89</sup>

Wortham and Ormerod come to the conclusion that though the alterations commissioned by Henslowe do not feature in the 1604 edition, the A-text is the result of memorial reconstruction by the Earl of Nottingham's Men after the loss or destruction of the original manuscript.<sup>90</sup> Consolation can be found in the fact that though probably memorially based, the A-text's claim to represent the play "As it hath been performed by the Right Honourable the Earle of Nottingham his servants",<sup>91</sup> at the very least carries with it the authority of the play's original acting company.<sup>92</sup> Eric Rasmussen supports the argument for the superiority of the A-text. However, he agrees that both texts are compromised and the refined manner of the B-text is a result of revision rather than purity.<sup>93</sup>

The strong argument for the A-text's superiority over the B-text, made during the latter part of the twentieth century, has remained the accepted one in contemporary Marlovian study. In his introduction to 2010's *Doctor Faustus: A Critical Guide*, David Bevington agrees that "The B-text appears to incorporate these additions, and they are pretty uniformly in the direction of augmenting the play's scare factor, delighting in Black

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<sup>89</sup> Wortham and Ormerod, eds, *Doctor Faustus: The A-text*, pp. xxvi–xxvii.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>93</sup> Eric Rasmussen, *A Textual Companion to Doctor Faustus*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1993, pp. 1–6.

Magical stunts".<sup>94</sup> No other statement or argument regarding the matter of textual authenticity is offered elsewhere in the compilation of critical essays. The case argued for the superiority of the A-text has thus far remained unchallenged since the claims made by W. W. Greg and Kirschenbaum, in support of the B-text, were debunked.

Having reached one conclusion, we must now seek to reach a new conclusion. Even though the A-text is decidedly purer than the B-text, both texts are available to a theatre practitioner. It is therefore the practitioner's choice as to what statement they want their play to make, and which text they choose to use for that purpose.

The A-text is shorter than the B-text, which includes several elaborated scenes. The manner of Faustus' death varies in each text, the B-text's being brutal and bloody,<sup>95</sup> the A-text's being subtle and quiet.<sup>96</sup> There are subtle variations between the two texts which make all the difference to the meaning of the play as a religious narrative. All of these differences are merely the result of separation in time, each text reflects the world from which it came.

The A-text is written in a way that causes the play to reflect Calvinist opinions of the day. Lisa Hopkins uses an example from Act 2, Scene 3, involving Faustus and the Good and Evil angels.

Faustus: ... Is't not too late?  
Evil Angel: Too late.  
Good Angel: Never too late if Faustus can repent.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Sara Munson Deats, ed., *Doctor Faustus: A Critical Guide*, London, Continuum, 2010, p. 43.

<sup>95</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (B-text)*, Act 5, Scene 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (A-text)*, Act 5, Scene 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 3, lines 81–83.

The good angel uses the word “can”: “if Faustus can repent”. According to Calvinist theology, it is beyond human control to gain access to heaven. “Access is predetermined by God, nothing a mortal man can do will change his status in God’s kingdom.”<sup>98</sup> Therefore, it is not a matter of whether Faustus chooses to repent or not, it is actually a matter of whether Faustus is destined for redemption or not. The Good Angel’s line could almost be thought of as an aside to the audience, rather than to Faustus. This is a very different story from that told in the 1616 B-text, in which the conversation instead reads:

Faustus: ... Is’t not too late?  
Evil Angel: Too late.  
Good Angel: Never too late if Faustus will repent.<sup>99</sup>

The word “can” is changed to “will” and the meaning of the line and indeed the entire narrative is changed to one of Lutheran values and beliefs. Throughout the play Faustus has the opportunity to repent and be saved and time and time again he succumbs to evil, but for different reasons in each text. The A-text would have us believe that Faustus was destined to damnation from the beginning. The B-text tells us that Faustus is not beyond salvation until the very end. This sentiment is reinforced by Mephistopheles, who during Faustus’ final moments, says in the B-text:

Mephistopheles: I Faustus, now thou hast no hope of heaven,  
Therefore despair; think only upon hell,  
For that must be thy mansion there to dwell.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Hopkins, Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist, p. 31.

<sup>99</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (B-text)*, Act 2, Scene 3, lines 81–83.

<sup>100</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (B-text)*, Act 5, Scene 2, lines 81–83.

“Now”, says Mephistopheles, as if up until “Now” Faustus still had a chance at redemption. Mephistopheles does not feature in Faustus’ dying scene in the A-text; Faustus is alone on an empty stage.

The differences between the two versions of the play certainly do not end there. James Ross Macdonald elaborates the discussion in references to the different roles of Lucifer in each of the texts. As we have seen, the A-text seems to reflect a Calvinist theology, wherein Faustus was always doomed to damnation. Calvinist theory states that the devil is “a vigorous, intimidating tempter whose agency is nevertheless bounded both by divine permission and human depravity”.<sup>101</sup> At no point is anyone other than Faustus a causer of the action of the play. Even if we consider Mephistopheles to be the primary tempter of Faustus, this is only true once Faustus has already determined to sell his soul. Mephistopheles hides nothing of the truth before Faustus makes his own decision:

Mephistopheles: ...     Thinks’t thou that I, who saw the face of God  
  And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,  
  Am not tormented with ten thousand hells  
  In being deprived of everlasting bliss?  
  O Faustus, leave off these frivolous demands,  
  Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.<sup>102</sup>

In the same way that Claudius, in Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, finds himself unable to repent his wrongdoing:<sup>103</sup>

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> James Ross Macdonald, “Calvinist Theology and “Country Divinity” in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*”, *Studies in Philology*, Volume 111, Number 4, 2014, p. 828.

<sup>102</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (A-text)*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 79–84.

<sup>103</sup> Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, eds, *Hamlet*, London, Macmillan, 2008, Act 3, Scene 3, lines 39–75.

<sup>104</sup> *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 3, lines 100–101.

Faustus also continually falters in his attempts at seeking redemption. If we take the stance that the Evil Angel is an exterior force, an agent of Lucifer, attempting to influence Faustus' decisions, then he still arrives at ends beyond the beckoning of the Angel:

Good Angel: Sweet Faustus, think of Heaven and of Heavenly things.

Evil Angel: No Faustus, think of honour and wealth.

*Exeunt*

Faustus: Of wealth?

Why the seigniory of Emden shall be mine.

When Mephistopheles shall stand by me,

What God can hurt thee Faustus? Thou art safe.<sup>105</sup>

The Evil Angel lures Faustus with the thought of wealth, and Faustus immediately proceeds to thoughts of invulnerability from God's judgement. "His own fantastic flights of imagination put the Evil Angel's suggestions to shame: he is still his own worst tempter."<sup>106</sup>

All physical violence within the *Faustus* A-text is limited to the Robin and Raphe scenes.<sup>107</sup> Although the devils do threaten Faustus with violence, such violence is never forthcoming, which only heightens the observed impotence of their devilish powers.<sup>108</sup> This represents a significant difference to the action of the devils in the Lutheran B-text. The Lutheran view of infernal influence states that mortals are subject to physical interference, but not compulsion, from devilish activity.<sup>109</sup> Mephistopheles proudly admits this:

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<sup>105</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 19–25.

<sup>106</sup> Macdonald, James Ross, "Calvinist Theology and Country Divinity in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*" *Studies in Philology*, Volume 111, Number 4, Fall 2014, pp. 821-844. DOI: 10.1353/sjp.2014.0029.

<sup>107</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (A-text)*, Act 3, Scene 2, lines 29–45.

<sup>108</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 3, line 83.

<sup>109</sup> Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks and Susan C. Karant-Nunn, eds, *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*. West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 228–231.



Mephistopheles: I do confess it, Faustus, and rejoice.  
'Twas I that, when thou wert i'the way to heaven,  
Dammed up thy passage. When thou took'st the book  
To view the Scriptures, then I turned the leaves  
And led thine eye.<sup>110</sup>

The physical violence of the devils can be noted twice in the B-text, firstly in the elongated scenes involving the Emperor's knight, in which Faustus commands his devils to punish the knights following their failed attempt to kill Faustus:

Faustus: Go, Belimoth, and take this caitiff hence  
And hurl him in some lake of mud and dirt.  
Take thou this other; drag him through the woods  
Amongst the pricking thorns and sharpest briers,  
Whilst with my gentle Mephistopheles  
This traitor flies unto some steepy rock  
That, rolling down, may break the villain's bones  
As he intended to dismember me.<sup>111</sup>

And lastly, at the very end of the play, the true power of Lucifer and his devils is revealed when the scholars enter Faustus' study to find his body torn apart and his remains scattered about the room.<sup>112</sup> This ending differs massively from the mild expiration of Faustus at the end of the A-text, concluding with a simple "Ah, Mephistopheles".<sup>113</sup>

All of these factors are important for practitioners to consider. However, I believe that one scene, more than any other, explicitly defines the difference between the two versions of the text, especially in terms of stage production. Words alone can often be missed by the audience, who may not perceive the difference between a "will" and a "can"; action counts for a great deal on the stage. With this in mind, Act 3, Scene 1, the scene in

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<sup>110</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (B-text), Act 5, Scene 2, lines 97–101.*

<sup>111</sup> *Doctor Faustus, (B-text), Act 4, Scene 2, lines 84–91.*

<sup>112</sup> *Doctor Faustus (B-text), Act 5, Scene 3.*

<sup>113</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text), Act 5, Scene 2.*

which Faustus travels to Rome to meet the Pope is a pivotal scene for practitioners of the play to consider when making their choice of version. In the A-text, Faustus and Mephistopheles begin the scene by discussing the various places that Faustus has already visited, before proceeding to interfere in the Catholic celebration of Holy Peter's feast. Faustus proceeds to play some silly jokes while in the cover of Mephistopheles' invisibility cloak, before throwing firecrackers at some monks and leaving. The scene serves only to show Faustus' wastefulness and to let Marlowe's Protestant audience have a laugh at the expense of the Catholics.

The B-text is quite a different scenario. The B-text has the addition of a second Pope, the rival German Pope Bruno, who has been captured by Adrian, the Roman Pope. Faustus resolves that he and Mephistopheles shall disguise themselves as cardinals and proceed to rescue Bruno. In place of the A-text's farcical interlude, the B-text presents a more heroic Faustus, who, rather than using his power to pull pranks, uses it to do good. The contextual effect would have been the provision of a sense of satisfaction for Marlowe's Protestant audience at Faustus outwitting the Catholics. What the difference could mean for us, in a modern context, is the opportunity to decide when Faustus begins his decline into frivolity, and whether it is an immediate or a gradual process.

The long-running study of the two *Faustus* texts, especially the findings made by the recent wave of New Historicists, has revealed an astonishing amount of detail about both versions. However, while it is important for practitioners to understand these differences, it is the job of the practitioner to decide which version of the text they will put into

production, based upon who their audience is and what they want their production to say to that audience.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Any reader wishing to review a side-by-side comparison of the two versions of the text should consider reviewing the following text: W.W Greg, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604 – 1616, Parallel Texts*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950.

## Chapter 3. Textual Issues: Content and Structure

Due to the age of *Doctor Faustus*, problems can arise in the performability of the text when approached by modern practitioners. In the same way that alterations and additions were deemed necessary by audiences contemporary to 1616, so might we now make alterations or adjustments to the text for performance to a modern audience. For this purpose it would be wise to begin by identifying those aspects of the text which are the most troublesome for modern practitioners to convey to modern audiences.

### Content

#### Latin

Marlowe's own education was immensely important to the way in which he developed *Doctor Faustus*. The fact that Marlowe was educated at all was only by virtue of the religious Reformation that England had undergone during the course of the Tudor dynasty. That the education syllabus was heavily focused on Latinate grammar is a considerably troubling matter for modern theatre practitioners in producing modern incarnations of *Doctor Faustus*. Although Latin had been replaced by English as the official language of the English Church, Latin was still widely used and, as was stated in Chapter 1, studied within English schools. It also remained the official language of the Catholic Church. Latin, therefore, carried with it connotations of Catholicism and learning. Contextually, Latin was a provocative instrument for Marlowe to use.

When Faustus summons Mephistopheles, he does so in Latin. Faustus' summoning speech represents the longest passage of Latin within the A-text. The inclusion of Latin was a calculated move on Marlowe's part. By using the language of the Catholic Church to

summon demons, it could be interpreted that Marlowe was aligning Catholicism with Satanism.

FAUSTUS: ...Sint mihi dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex  
Jehove! Ignei, aerii, aquatani spiritus, salvete!  
Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni ardentis  
monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus vos, ut appareat  
et surgat Mephistophilis, quod tumeraris: per Jehovam,  
Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo,  
signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse  
nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis!<sup>115</sup>

The connotation of learning that Latin carried is reflected in its use by Faustus and Mephistopheles throughout their discourse. Faustus' disputation with Mephistopheles contains many Latinate phrases:

FAUSTUS:	Well, resolve me in this question; why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, in some less?
MEPHIST:	Per inoequalem motum respectu totius.
FAUSTUS:	Well, I am answered. <sup>116</sup>

Mephistopheles' Latinate answer seems to satisfy Faustus, but we, who are not so well versed in Latin, have no idea what Mephistopheles has just said. It could be suggested that here is the intention of Mephistopheles' use of Latin, or perhaps we are supposed to feel as though Faustus is such a great scholar that we cannot comprehend what he and Mephistopheles congenially discuss. Yet if this were the purpose, then it could not have had the same function in its original sixteenth-century context when Latin was still in reasonably common use.

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<sup>115</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 16–23.

<sup>116</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 2, Scene 3, lines 62–66.

In truth, we can never really know what Marlowe had originally intended by using Latin, whether for religious purposes, intellectual purposes, because he was acting in accordance with some theatrical or cultural convention, or simply because Latin was such a commonplace part of his life as a scholar. What we, as modern practitioners, must decide is how we can best deal with the presence of Latin within the play for ease of communication with modern audiences. *Doctor Faustus'* opening scene, in which Faustus announces the various fields of study that he has mastered, is an especially troubling scene, insofar as it uses a substantial amount of Latin.

[He reads] '*Si una eademque res legatur duobus,  
Alter rem, alter valorem rei'* etc.  
A petty case of Paltry legacies!  
[He reads] '*Exhaereditare filium non potest pater nisi –'*  
Such is the subject of the institute  
And Universal body of the church.<sup>117</sup>

Past productions have used different techniques for dealing with this problem. The 2011 Globe production used actors as bookshelves: these provided the audience with the English translation of Faustus' Latin phrases. The 2009 production at the Greenwich Theatre used members of an ensemble to translate the Latin for the sake of the audience. This tendency to provide translations on top of Faustus' initial Latin speech has become a frequently used method of overcoming the issue, at least in this scene. I would suggest that the mechanism is perhaps a little bit tired and would hesitate to use it. I would also question the inclusion of the Latin passages at all, depending on where, and when, a practitioner might decide to set the narrative. A modern setting might make the use of Latin seem quite out of place.

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<sup>117</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 29–34.

## Contextual Knowledge

As with any piece of literature, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* reflects, to a certain degree, the context in which it was created. Marlowe was not writing his play for the sake of twenty-first-century audiences; he wrote it to entertain and enlighten the audiences of London in the late sixteenth century. Marlowe refers to a number of contextually topical matters within the text which, for the play's contemporary audience, would have made complete sense. Yet few people seeing *Doctor Faustus* in 2016 would have any idea what Marlowe's characters are referring to.

In Act 2, Scene 1, Faustus delightedly imagines "Why the Seigniory of Embden shall be mine."<sup>118</sup> Embden was a significant Protestant sanctuary for refugees from the Netherlands from the early 1570s which, as a result of religious rivalry, became one of the wealthiest places in Europe for a very short time.<sup>119</sup> The grandeur of Faustus' prospect is lost on modern spectators, who are unlikely to know where Embden is, let alone what Faustus means in referring to his dominion over it.<sup>120</sup> When put into the context of the conversation, one can gather that Embden has something to do with the wealth mentioned in the line earlier by the Evil Angel: "No Faustus, think of honour and wealth."<sup>121</sup> However, instead of allowing this to become a throw-away line, which adds nothing to the impact of the text, I would argue that maintaining the meaning of Marlowe's script is more important that

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<sup>118</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 2, Scene 1, line 23.

<sup>119</sup> Williem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: 1650 Hard-Won Unity*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 87.

<sup>120</sup> Emden is a seaport in northern Germany which gained significant wealth during the sixteenth century, as a result of divisions between Catholic and protestant nations.

<sup>121</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 1, line 21.

maintaining the script in a word-perfect form. A relevant reference could be made in its place:

EVIL ANGEL: No, Faustus; think of honour and of wealth.

[Exeunt ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS: Of wealth!  
Why, all the profits of Wall Street shall be mine.

Of course, it does depend on where we determine to set the play. If the play is set in a modern context, the above example might be appropriate; if set in the Victorian era, we must devise a contextually relevant comparison to convey the meaning of the line most clearly to the audience.

This is not to say that all of the classical references made by Faustus throughout the play must be altered to a modern comparison. Faustus is a classical scholar, and it is important that we maintain the structural integrity of the play wherever possible. However, given the correct circumstances, an adjustment to the text could allow for a stronger engagement with it.

Another example of this problem exists in the characters of Valdes and Cornelius, the two scholars with whom Faustus consults in Act One. Faustus asks them to share their knowledge of magic with him, to which Cornelius replies:

He that is grounded in astrology,  
Enrich'd with tongues, well seen in minerals,  
Hath all the principles magic doth require.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 140–142.



We as modern readers or viewers of the text would not second-guess this statement, it seems reasonable that it would take a well-educated man to enter into the dark arts. Yet what Marlowe is really doing with this scene is to present a social commentary. During the period immediately prior to Marlowe composing *Doctor Faustus*, there was a massive shift in the way that magic was thought of, and how it was portrayed within the Protestant Church. It had been agreed, towards the end of the 1580s, that it was through no instrument of mortal man that magic could be worked or beings of power summoned. Conjurations could be achieved only through the work and will of Satan.<sup>123</sup> This is clarified by Mephistopheles:

FAUSTUS.	Did not he charge thee to appear to me?
MEPHIST.	No, I came hither of mine own accord.
FAUSTUS.	Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak.
MEPHIST.	That was the cause, but yet per accidens For, when we hear one rack the name of God, Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ, We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul. <sup>124</sup>

Cornelius represents an obsolete view of magical practice, he is a fool pretending to be an expert. These claims are later corrected by Mephistopheles, as in the above passage. Yet it may not be immediately apparent to audiences, unless they have a very keen ear, that two opposing ideas have been proclaimed. Some kind of adjustment might be made to compensate for the fact that modern audiences are unlikely to understand or be aware of

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<sup>123</sup> Genevieve Guenther, "Why Devils Came When Faustus Called", *Modern Philology*, vol 109, no. 1, (August 2011), <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/173769732>.

<sup>124</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 44–50.

the shift in church doctrine regarding magic in the later part of the 1580s. Matthew Dunster, in his 2011 Globe production, seems to have missed this problem and portrayed both Cornelius and Mephistopheles as authorities on the subject of summoning. I suggest that Cornelius and Valdes must be made to appear foolish in the most apparent way. The audience must be left in no doubt that Cornelius is not to be taken seriously in his advice on magic.

### **Astrology and Astronomy**

Modern knowledge differs in a variety of ways from Elizabethan knowledge. Even if we know that certain Elizabethan “truths” have been superseded by modern science, some of these notions exist within *Doctor Faustus*, and therefore must be addressed. Marlowe sets Faustus’ and Mephistopheles’ conversations around a number of very interesting and complex topics. Faustus questions Mephistopheles about the heavens:

FAUSTUS:                                 ...Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon  
  Are all celestial bodies but one globe,  
  As is the substance of this centric earth?

MEPHIST:                                 As are the elements, such are the spheres,  
  Mutually folded in each other's orb,  
  And, Faustus, All jointly move upon one axletree,  
  Whose terminine is term'd the world's wide pole;  
  Nor are the names of Saturn, Mars, or Jupiter  
  Feign'd, but are erring stars.<sup>125</sup>

The Elizabethan obsession with the zodiac is prominent in much of the prose and poetry of the era. It was commonly believed that the stars had a significant influence on human life.<sup>126</sup> Yet their understanding of true Astronomy was quite limited. Therefore,

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<sup>125</sup>        *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 3, lines 35–43.

<sup>126</sup>        Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 59.

when Mephistopheles refers to Saturn, Mars and Jupiter as “erring stars”, and claims that they “move upon one axletree”, twenty-first century audiences are very likely to realise the mistake. The suspension of disbelief is at risk of falling away. Faustus goes on to ask:

FAUSTUS: How many heavens or spheres are there?

MEPHIST: Nine; the seven planets, the firmament, and the empyreal heaven.<sup>127</sup>

Frequently this scene is left uncut and the audience is expected not to notice that what is being said is completely false. Perhaps with a small amount of adjustment, Mephistopheles' answers could be made to resemble the truth more closely:

FAUSTUS: Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon  
Are all celestial bodies but one globe,  
As is the substance of this centric earth?  
Have they all one motion, both situ et tempore?

MEPHIST: As are the elements, such are the spheres,  
All jointly move from east to west in twenty-four hours  
Upon the poles of the world; but differ in their motion  
upon The poles of the zodiac.

FAUSTUS: Tush,  
Hath Mephistopheles no greater skill?  
Who knows not the double motion of the planets?  
How many heavens or spheres are there?

MEPHIST: Nine; the seven planets, the earth,  
And the empyreal heaven.

With some minor adjustments, cutting and rearranging Marlowe's own words, and changing only three words from an extended passage, Mephistopheles answers Faustus just as aptly as he had done originally, only he no longer tempts ridicule from modern science. Those with a keen ear, and a particular interest, might also find a joke about the removal of

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<sup>127</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 3, lines 59–61.

Pluto from planet status, which brings the total count to “eight” instead of “Nine”, the remainder “one” instead being heaven. This is, of course, entirely a choice of circumstance and taste.

## Structure

If the goal of the modern practitioner is to present to his or her audience with a theatrical production which is relevant to their audience, then a practitioner seeking to produce Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* must first address certain components of the text which are counter-intuitive to that end. As has been identified, Marlowe produced his text within a specific context for a specific audience. Therefore, In order to successfully adapt the text for audience consumption outside the intended context, a modern practitioner must first understand the contextually embedded play-form that Marlowe built his play upon. Once this has been achieved, a practitioner can more easily appropriate the text to their own ends.

## The Morality Play

English drama at the beginning of the sixteenth century registers as allegorical, didactic and moralistic, yet by the end of the century theatre would be censured as emotional, fantasy-arousing, and even immoral.<sup>128</sup>

Pamela King offers a succinct definition of what morality plays are, noting that “they offer their audiences moral instruction through dramatic action that is broadly allegorical”.<sup>129</sup> John Cartwright surmises that this definition is possibly too broad to define

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<sup>128</sup> Kent Cartwright, *Theatre and Humanism : English Drama in the Sixteenth Century*, West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

<sup>129</sup> Pamela M. King ‘Morality Plays’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. Richard Beadle, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 240–264: see p. 240.

morality plays exactly without also including a plethora of other, closely affiliated plays.<sup>130</sup>

More useful than King's definition, I assert, is a rather older definition offered by Douglas

Cole:

It was a drama of the Fall and the Redemption, but in it Adam is replaced by Everyman, and Christ by the Christian legacy of repentance. The doctrine of Man's salvation was the essential core of the morality play throughout its two centuries on the English stage.<sup>131</sup>

What Cole's definition importantly identifies is the persistence of the "Fall and the Redemption" and the fact that it was a form which existed actively for two centuries. The morality play as a form is therefore something which cannot be identified as an absolute formulaic structure, but rather a "type" which correlates the Christian concept of "The Fall" with agents contemporaneous to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English audiences.

Sidney R. Homan concedes that elements of the morality play within *Faustus* cannot be ignored. What Homan argues is that the elements of the morality play within *Faustus* are elements and nothing more. The presence of the good and bad angels, the old man and the Vice are not indicators of a morality play but motifs taken from that tradition to express a much more complex tragic narrative.<sup>132</sup> "Marlowe joins a humanist tragedy to this morality, and *Faustus*, not just a man, is an aspiring soul whose search for immortality is both glorious

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<sup>130</sup> John Cartwright, "THE 'MORALITY PLAY': Dead End or Main Street?." *Medieval English Theatre* 18, (July 1996): 3-14. *International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 20, 2015).

<sup>131</sup> Douglas Cole, *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1962, p. 25.

<sup>132</sup> Sidney R. Homan Jr., "Doctor Faustus, Dekker's Old Fortunatus, and The Morality Plays", *Modern Language Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (December 1965), p. 497. Literary Reference Center, EBSCOhost (accessed September 20, 2015).

and fatal.”<sup>133</sup> If we agree with Homan, then we can accept that Marlowe at the very least was influenced by the morality play tradition in developing *Doctor Faustus*. What then was the extent of that influence and how was it used?

Thomas Healy poses the question of whether Marlowe was using *Faustus* to subvert the morality play, ridiculing the tradition by subverting the representation of good and evil as certain and identifiable entities, or if through *Faustus* he was attempting to marry the traditional dramatic form with modern theatrical spectacle and style.<sup>134</sup>

It was the trend of the period from which *Faustus* arose that plays, rather than being absolutely didactic, were instead constructed to assert ideas which were then debated for and against throughout the course of the play. The perceived outcome of such discussion was that by leaving the question of the play unanswered, while providing audiences with effective evidence for both sides of the argument, a deeper truth might be realised through a wide breadth of thought.<sup>135</sup> This would certainly explain the ambiguity of Marlowe’s text.

Sara Munson Deats identifies the schools of thought, representing these opposing arguments, as Christian and heroic. The Christian school argues that *Faustus* is the causer of his own demise. That despite the presence of a compassionate God *Faustus* damns himself to hell. Those from the heroic school argue that it is in fact the case that *Faustus* was raging

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Patrick Cheney, ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 175.

<sup>135</sup> Sara Munson-Deats, *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Surrey, 2015, p. 74.

against a world which would ultimately damn him despite his actions towards or against damnation.<sup>136</sup>

Healy proposes that the play's Chorus embodies these schools. In both versions of the text, the Chorus subscribes to each of these positions. The prologue informs the audience that they will witness a spectacle:

Not marching now in fields of Trasimene  
Where Mars did mate the Carthaginians,  
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love  
In courts of kings, where state is overturned,  
Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds  
Intends our muse to daunt his heavenly verse.  
Only this, gentlemen: we must perform  
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad.<sup>137</sup>

While the play does not concern the matters of state and war, or love and heroics, it does concern a man who:

For falling to a devilish exercise,  
And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,  
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy.<sup>138</sup>

The Chorus is giving its audience a taste of the spectacle that is about to take place. It does not pass judgement on Faustus, it says nothing of what will happen to him as consequence of his action, except that "his waxen wings did mount above his reach,/ And melting heavens conspired his overthrow."<sup>139</sup> This, however, like the rest of the play is somewhat ambiguous. If audiences want to know what happens to Faustus they will have to watch and learn.

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–83.

<sup>137</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Prologue, lines 1–8.

<sup>138</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Prologue, lines 23–25.

<sup>139</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Prologue, lines 21–22.

The Chorus delivering the Epilogue has an entirely different tone:

CHORUS:                   Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,  
                                  And burned is Apollo's laurel bough  
                                  That sometime grew within this learne'd man.  
                                  Faustus is gone. Regard his hellish fall,  
                                  Who fiendful fortune may exhort the wise  
                                  Only to wonder at unlawful things,  
                                  Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits  
                                  To practice more than heavenly power permits.<sup>140</sup>

The audience is urged to take note of what it has witnessed, "Regard his hellish fall."

Faustus has eventually paid the ultimate price for his choice "To practice more than heavenly power permits." This piece of verse is unashamedly preaching to its audience about avoiding the same sinful behaviour that they have just witnessed.

Commentators arguing that *Doctor Faustus* is a Christian text cite such instances within the play as the congealing of Faustus' blood when he is signing the contract with Mephistopheles<sup>141</sup> and the inscription which miraculously appears on Faustus' arm.<sup>142</sup>

Commentators arguing that *Doctor Faustus* is a presentation of the heroic Renaissance man cite passages, such as that in the prologue, which states that "melting heavens conspired his overthrow".<sup>143</sup>

The case has been argued that rather than using the morality play traditions to the same end as was their initial intention, Marlowe is using the morality play motifs to subvert the form. The traditional Vice character of the morality play tradition entices the victim by

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<sup>140</sup>     *Doctor Faustus* A-text, Epilogue, lines 1–8.

<sup>141</sup>     *Doctor Faustus* A-text, Prologue, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 61–65.

<sup>142</sup>     *Doctor Faustus* A-text, Prologue, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 76–77.

<sup>143</sup>     *Doctor Faustus* A-text, Prologue, line 22.



accentuating the benefits of the deal being struck whilst trying to hide the requisite cost.<sup>144</sup>

Within Marlowe's text, the obverse is seen, where Mephistopheles, the would-be tempter, counsels Faustus against selling his soul:

O' Faustus, leave off these frivolous demands  
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.<sup>145</sup>

While Faustus carries on resolutely, regardless of the warnings that he is being given:

FAUSTUS:      What, is great Mephistopheles so passionate  
                    For being depriv'ed of the joys of Heaven?<sup>146</sup>

Jonathan Dollimore argues that in the conflict present within Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the disparity between what the form of the play is designed to affirm and what the content of the play actually affirms, represents intentional subversion of form by Marlowe. Dollimore sees Marlowe's text as an exploration of the idea of "subversion through transgression".<sup>147</sup> The morality play format was designed in such a way so as to be didactic in the extreme. Marlowe's audience is confronted with a polarised version of a morality play in a morality play format. Faustus' actions transgress the acceptable behaviour of the society, both in which he exists and, to whom his character was originally being performed. What the audience of *Faustus* can take away from the narrative is not a lesson, or an instruction, but a question. The format with which Marlowe's audience would have been so

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<sup>144</sup> Sara-Munson Deats, Sara; Logan, Robert A, *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2015. <http://UNDA.ebib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1887313> (accessed June 19, 2015), pp. 78–79.

<sup>145</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 83–84.

<sup>146</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 85–86.

<sup>147</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Third Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010, pp. 109–119.

familiar is subverted by the actions of a character who freely and knowingly contractually damns himself while physically performing nothing that is, in realistic terms, damnable. Marlowe constructs *Faustus* in such a way so as to make his audience question whether the typically accepted punishment of damnation for fraternisation with malevolent powers is in itself reasonable.<sup>148</sup>

Kent Cartwright suggests that there is an evolutionary link between the morality play and Marlowe's *Faustus*, which he identifies as "Pedagogical Drama". Cartwright suggests that before Marlowe inherited the morality play traditions they had already been inherited by individuals like John Redford who, somewhere between 1530 and 1547, produced the play *Wit and Science*.<sup>149</sup> Redford, Cartwright argues, "refashions the allegory of Everyman's salvation into the metaphor of transformation through academic study, with secular knowledge replacing divine grace as the goal."<sup>150</sup> Instead of the central character being Everyman, he is: Wit. Instead of the goal being something approximate to good deeds, it is instead: Science. The challenge that Wit must overcome is Tediousness, which he achieves with the help of his companions: Diligence, Study and Instruction. When Wit finally defeats Tediousness, he ascends to the form of Wisdom and finally marries Science.<sup>151</sup> Redford, Cartwright argues, uses a familiar form to convey an entirely different message to that of

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–119.

<sup>149</sup> Cartwright, Kent. *Theatre and Humanism : English Drama in the Sixteenth Century*. West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1999. ProQuest February. Web. 20 September 2015.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Victor I. Scherb, "Playing at Maturity in John Redford's "Wit and Science"", *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Tudor and Stuart Drama (Spring, 2005), pp. 271–297, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844545>.

the church. Cartwright suggests that Redford's play influenced the plays which came to follow it by providing a precedent of manipulation of the morality play form.

Clifford Leech agrees that there is a combination of the religious morality play and what Cartwright calls the pedagogical play, *Doctor Faustus* is primarily focussed on the matter of the soul, yet the setting is within a University community, regarding a scholar, Faustus. However, the play is not limited to these in its scope and in equal part also addresses matters of politics.<sup>152</sup> Toni Francis reads the texts in reference to Elizabethan England's developing socio-political issues of imperialism and colonialism.

I have already argued that Faustus' intention is not the attainment of knowledge but is rather the attainment of power and wealth. Throughout the play knowledge is either sought after, or disregarded, in regards to the ends that Faustus might achieve through its mastery. The dialogue and discussions in which Faustus takes part, whether with the audience, with Valdes and Cornelius, or with Mephistopheles, reveals that the greatest part of his desire is the achievement of expansive wealth, usually expressed through the acquisition of land.<sup>153</sup> I believe the most telling of these references is as follows:

Faustus:        Had I as many souls as there be stars,  
                      I'd give them all for Mephistopheles.  
                      By him I'll be great emperor of the world  
                      And make a bridge through the moving air  
                      To pass the ocean with a band of men;  
                      I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore  
                      And make that land continent to Spain,  
                      And both contributory to my crown.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Clifford Leech, *Christopher Marlowe: Poet For The Stage*, AMS Press, New York, 1986, pp. 104–105.

<sup>153</sup> Toni Francis, "Imperialism as Devilry: A Postcolonial Reading of *Doctor Faustus*", in, *Doctor Faustus. A Critical Guide*, ed. Sara Munson-Deats, Continuum Renaissance Drama, 2010, pp. 111–123.

<sup>154</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 104–111.

Francis asserts that Marlowe perceives a connection between Empire and Devilry. The association of Faustus' acquisition of an empire can only be achieved by devilish interference. If this is the case, and the Devil is inherently evil, then it must be assumed that those feats achieved through devilish means must therefore also be evil.<sup>155</sup> Francis backs his statement through emphasising Lucifer's own apparent imperial desires.

Faustus: Stay Mephistopheles, and tell me, what good  
will my soul do thy lord?

Mephistopheles: Enlarge his kingdom.

Just as Faustus desires to command an ever-growing kingdom so too does Lucifer, whom Francis describes as "a colonizer of souls".<sup>156</sup>

William Tate also notes the connection between Marlowe's text and the contemporaneous discussion of colonialism. Tate draws on the icon of Solomon, which he cites was, a relevant figure during the period, in respect of the comparison frequently made to Queen Elizabeth in an ongoing discussion of Elizabeth's godly right to rule.<sup>157</sup>

Where Solomon begins to descend from God's grace is in his endeavour to expand his kingdom through marriage. In doing this Solomon begins to compromise his ideals to the purposes of empire. Marlowe, Tate claims, associates Faustus with these negative characteristics. Masculinity is foregone for empirical expansion, resulting in emasculated leadership. As Solomon becomes emasculated through his process of compromise, to the end of imperial expansion, so too does Faustus become emasculated through his deal with

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<sup>155</sup> Graham Hammill, "Time for Marlowe" *ELH*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Summer, 2008), pp. 291–314, The Johns Hopkins University Press. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27654613>.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> William Tate, "Solomon, Gender, and Empire in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Tudor and Stuart Drama (Spring, 1997), pp. 257-276, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/450833>.

Mephistopheles to the end of power, often expressed as empire. The observed outcome is that Faustus, following his emasculation, never achieves the ascent to power that he initially desires.<sup>158</sup>

We cannot be absolutely certain as to what Marlowe's intent was in devising *Doctor Faustus*. The play is evidently ambiguous in its message, whether intentionally or not. It is up to the individual approaching the text to discover their own interpretation. As with Munson Deats' argument,<sup>159</sup> I believe that this was the intended outcome of the text's ambiguity, the provision of contrary evidence for audience consideration. The message that I, as a reader, derive from the text falls very much in line with that read by Clifford Leech:

It is "in manner of a moral play" ... But *Faustus* has little to do with morals. It shows us a man's infirmity frankly enough: the protagonist can be rash and petty and cruel... Marlowe makes us ask whether any man deserves to suffer to the degree that every man does; in the end, he invites the question whether any man's burning in hell is tolerable to contemplate"<sup>160</sup>

A fundamental shift in the way that damnation was understood during Marlowe's own lifetime caused him to fashion his play after a genre which preoccupied itself with the matters of salvation and damnation, but damned his protagonist where salvation was usually achieved within the genre. This is where the Prologue is most important.

The impression given to the audience is that the outcome of the play is in flux: Marlowe utilises the word "perform", in the play's opening Chorus, implying the active nature of the narrative, stating:

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Munson Deats, *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, p. 74.

<sup>160</sup> Leech, *Christopher Marlowe: Poet For The Stage*, p. 120.

“Only this gentlemen, we must perform

The form of Faustus’ fortunes, good or bad.”<sup>161</sup>

The second line reveals what it is that the audience is supposed to be judging: Marlowe could and might have said “good and bad”, but he did not, he used “or” not “and”. It is not Faustus’ individual fortunes which the audience must judge. Faustus’ fortunes individually might be seen to be a collection of good and bad. However if judged as a whole, they must be one or the other, they must be “either”/”or”. The question being asked by Marlowe is whether Faustus’ ultimate damnation is just or not?

At the very beginning of the play the audience is given the opportunity to judge. But Marlowe appeals for “patient judgement”:

“To patient judgement we appeal our plaud”<sup>162</sup>

Marlowe is not asking for the audience to immediately judge Faustus, even when the Chorus reveals that “he surfeits upon cursed necromancy”. The audience must be patient and see the narrative played. Marlowe is not asking his audience to judge Faustus, he is asking them to judge Faustus’ damnation:

Faustus is to sit in his infernal chair for eternity. Does the rash and impudent signing of a bond warrant that? Is it warranted by a refusal to repent, even if induced by a fear of immediate torment? No man in Marlowe’s audience, if thinking hard, could say that justice was done.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Prologue, lines 7–8.

<sup>162</sup> *Doctor Faustus A-text*, Prologue, line 9.

<sup>163</sup> Leech, *Christopher Marlowe: Poet For The Stage*, p. 120.

Marlowe then has, almost dramaturgically, edited and altered the form of morality play to convey his own message, setting up Faustus as a straw-man figure who produces expectations in the audience which are demolished throughout the course of the play.

It would be impossible for a practitioner to convey all of this information about the morality play form through the medium of theatre, though such an act is unnecessary. What is necessary is for practitioners to know the form from which *Doctor Faustus* descended in order to adequately understand the text and therefore produce it successfully.

## Chapter 4. Critical Analysis of Modern Productions

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the practitioner with an analysis of the varied productions of *Doctor Faustus* presented by practitioners in the field since the beginning of the twenty-first century. By no means is this chapter a discussion of the entire collection of twenty-first century productions of *Doctor Faustus*. The productions that I have elected for analysis, I believe, represent a wide range of textual, dramaturgical and production methodologies which will aid in understanding varied approaches to Marlowe's text and the way in which certain practitioners achieve different ends through their use of the text.

If a thorough discussion of the play's original production context and methodology is sought, see *Doctor Faustus: A Critical Guide* by David Bevington.<sup>164</sup>

### 2002 – The Young Vic

This Natural Nylon Theatre Company's production of the 1604 A-text at the Young Vic Theatre, directed by David Lan, featured film star Jude Law in the lead role as Faustus. Philip Fisher observed that:

The programme notes ask the question as to whether the play is a modern tragedy or a morality play. In David Lan's eyes, it cleverly manages to be both. The accelerating descent of an intelligent young medical man is also seen satirically as the penalty for an excess of pride. This resonates as much today as it must have in the late 16th Century.<sup>165</sup>

Law was an unusually young Faustus, whose depiction, Elizabeth Schafer described as being "well out of his depth, a youthful, rather silly academic who was no match for the

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<sup>164</sup> David Bevington, 'The Performance History', in *Doctor Faustus: A Critical Guide*, ed. Sara Munson Deats (Continuum Renaissance Drama, 2010), pp. 41–72.

<sup>165</sup> Philip Fisher, 'Dr Faustus', *The British Theatre Guide*, 2002.



devil.”<sup>166</sup> Neil Smith from the BBC seemed to think that there might have been some sub-textual correlations being made, if the audience are looking hard enough, stating: “swap Lucifer for Hollywood and earthly delights for movie stardom and there is an intriguing parallel between the character and the man now playing him.”<sup>167</sup> The actors were costumed in Renaissance garb which slowly transformed into modern dress as the play progressed.<sup>168</sup> Lizzy Loveridge, from *Curtain Up*, observed that: “What David Lan has attempted, in giving Marlowe's play a modern focus, is to portray Hell as individual despair, as the depths of depression.”<sup>169</sup> Loveridge goes on to explain that Lan puts an emphasis on Faustus’ desire for knowledge, which he embodies within the book that Mephistopheles gives to him once their deal has been struck. Lan has Mephistopheles present Faustus with the same book at the end of the play. Where once the book filled Faustus with wonder and delight it is now meaningless and symbolic of his frivolity and wastefulness.<sup>170</sup> Schafer notes that this symbol of wastefulness is reinforced by the inclusion of junk piles at each end of the traverse stage, into which everything is thrown once it has been used and expended throughout the course of the play’s action.<sup>171</sup> The text remained relatively uncut, though an emphasis was certainly put on the play’s tragic aspects. Neil Smith, from BBC News observed that; “Director David Lan wisely raced through these unrewarding scenes, spanning 24 years in an hour so he can

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<sup>166</sup> Elizabeth Schafer, “Doctor Faustus 2002”, *RORD* 42 (2003), 111-112.

<sup>167</sup> Neil Smith, “Natural Law for Doctor Faustus”, *BBC News*, 22 March 2002.

<sup>168</sup> Schafer, “Doctor Faustus 2002”.

<sup>169</sup> Lizzie Loveridge, “Doctor Faustus”, *CurtainUp London*, May 2002.

<sup>170</sup> Loveridge, “Doctor Faustus”.

<sup>171</sup> Schafer, “Doctor Faustus 2002”.

concentrate on the hero's climactic anguish."<sup>172</sup> Richard McCabe's Mephistopheles is much older than Law's Faustus, which introduces an interesting relationship between the two characters. *The Guardian's* Michael Billington notes that McCabe



Figure 2: "Jude Law as Doctor Faustus at the Young Vic theatre, 2002." Neil Smith, "Natural Law for Doctor Faustus", BBC News, 22 March 2002.

"invests this devilish go-between with the resonant sadness of someone who has looked on the face of God and is now cast into outer darkness."<sup>173</sup> Adding that Mephistopheles is raised in this production to "tragic status"<sup>174</sup> which complements Faustus' own tragic fall. Critical response to this production was generally very good, offering praise to Lan's presentation of the text for modern audiences.

## 2004 – Chichester

In 2004, Jane Heathers designed a production of *Doctor Faustus* for the Chichester Festival. Heathers adapted the play into a moving production in which the audience followed the actors throughout the town as the scenes progress. Rob Conkie elaborates that Heathers had at her disposal seven professional actors and a host of over a hundred amateur contributors whom she used to create a demonic atmosphere throughout her professional production.<sup>175</sup> The play was set somewhere between the 1970s and the production's own

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<sup>172</sup> Neil Smith, 'Natural Law for Doctor Faustus', *BBC News*, 22 March 2002

<sup>173</sup> Michael Billington, '*Doctor Faustus*', *The Guardian*, 20 March 2002.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> Rob Conkie, "Doctor Faustus Chichester 2004" *RORD* 44 (2005), pp. 128–131.

2004 setting which, Conkie adds, was done for no apparent reason other than to contemporise the narrative.<sup>176</sup> Locales in the town were used to correlate features of the play with people's frequently visited sites, Conkie jests that: "The Abbey bank may not have appreciated their close association with Greed, as devils lasciviously slithered over their automatic teller machines."<sup>177</sup> However, as Lyn Gardner points out in her review for *The Guardian*, "as an experience of Marlowe's Dr Faustus, it is not always completely satisfactory. I reckon that anyone unfamiliar with the play wouldn't know what on earth was going on."<sup>178</sup> Gardner pegs this down to being a logistical fault rather than a creative one.



Figure 3: "Faustus and Mephistopheles in the 2004 Chichester Production." Lyn Gardner, "Dr Faustus", *The Guardian*, 11 September.

The relationship between Faustus and Mephistopheles was highly eroticised, which may or may not have had something to do with conservative church ideals and their commentary on traditional relationships. However, Conkie states, "After the piercing agony of Faustus' last speech the cathedral bell ominously tolled twelve times before Mephistopheles seductively claimed his prize with a long kiss. Here was the fittingly

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Lyn Gardner, 'Dr Faustus', *The Guardian*, 11 September.

sexualised climax of this contemporary Faustian temptation, the danger and reward of overwhelming desire.”<sup>179</sup>

## 2005 – Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse

Early in 2005, Philip Wilson directed an all-male cast in his production at the Liverpool Playhouse. Wilson opted for the A-text, citing that it is “shorter, harsher, more focused and altogether more disturbing”.<sup>180</sup> Set within a university library, Marjorie Bates Murphy, from *The Stage*, states that: “Designer Mike Britton’s stage cleverly creates a floor to ceiling library of thousands of books.”<sup>181</sup> Setting the play in the late twentieth century, Sue Hall-smith observed that costume was used to good effect in this production, outfitting Faustus as a bespectacled scholar in a brown corduroy jacket. Each of the Seven Deadly Sins, in their parade for Faustus, wore their own version of Faustus’ own costume. The implication of this being that the characters are all merely sinful personifications of Faustus himself.<sup>182</sup> Wilson did encounter problems with the use of an all-male cast when he took on Marlowe’s magnificently scripted “Helen of Troy” scene wherein “the face that launched a thousand ships” belonged to a man in drag. Lynne Walker, from *the Independent* expressed that it was disappointing that little was done to try to deal with the scene alternatively or creatively.<sup>183</sup> Despite the production being brought forward in time, out of its sixteenth-century world, Murphy indicates that Wilson’s play failed to make any great relevance of

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<sup>179</sup> Rob Conkie, *RORD* 44 (2005), 128–131.

<sup>180</sup> Sue Hall-Smith, “Doctor Faustus 2005 - Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse”, *RORD* 45 (2006), pp. 137–138.

<sup>181</sup> Marjorie Bates Murphy, “Dr Faustus”, *The Stage*, 26 February 2005.

<sup>182</sup> Hall-Smith.

<sup>183</sup> Lynne Walker, “Doctor Faustus”, *The Independent*, 17 February 2005.

the narrative for his modern audience. The combination of modernising the setting while using a typically Renaissance all-male cast seemed to display a sense of confusion on Wilson's part. The production was not a classical reproduction, nor was it a modern commentary; it was stuck somewhere in the middle where it achieved neither. It did drive home a very Christian sentiment in the final scene, when, following Faustus' burning of his books in a spectacular display of smoke and fire: the only thing left was a fiery crucifix smouldering in the embers.<sup>184</sup>

## **2005 – Etcetera Theatre**

In contrast with Wilson's production, later in 2005, Etcetera Theatre's production of *Faustus*, in its tiny pub setting, offered audiences a very refined and stripped back version of Marlowe's play.

As Maryam Philpott wrote: "Etcetera Theatre considers whether the intangible things humans crave are worth making that damning pact with Lucifer."<sup>185</sup> Intangibility really is the theme of the play that this production focussed on. Thomas Larque writes that; physically realising the emptiness of Faustus' tropes was a cast of five actors who mimed almost the entire production, with the help of a few props, from the observation of Helen of Troy to the frightening apparition of Mephistopheles in his true form.<sup>186</sup> The production was minimalist to the great effect of creating an all-consuming emptiness.

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<sup>184</sup> Murphy.

<sup>185</sup> Maryam Philpott, "Faustus – Etcetera Theatre, London", *The Reviews Hub*, October 2014, <http://www.thepublicreviews.com/faustus-etcetera-theatre-london/>.

<sup>186</sup> Thomas Larque, "Faustus 2005 – Etcetera Theatre, London", *RORD* 45 (2006), pp. 139–140.

## 2005 – Oregon Festival



Figure 4: “The set of Doctor Faustus at the 2005 Oregon Shakespeare Festival.” Southern Oregon University: Hannon Library Digital Collection. Metadata by: Kit Leary. <http://cdm15013.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15013coll3/id/310>

This production, performed in the Allen Elizabethan Theatre as part of the 2005 Oregon Shakespeare Festival, was directed by James Edmondson. Edmondson decided on a lavish and impressive production style for this particular production. Alan Armstrong wrote for the *Shakespeare Bulletin*, that: “From the outset the show’s technical demands taxed the resources of a repertory company even as large as OSF.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Alan Armstrong, “*The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus Review*”, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 24, Number 1, Spring 2006, pp. 77–80, DOI: 10.1353/shb.2006.0003.



Edmonson's vision of the play focused heavily on the display of magic. Armstrong also wrote that: "The production used its enormous, spectacular dragon to represent not Lucifer but Mephistopheles in his first hideous apparition, before he returned in the guise of a Franciscan friar."<sup>188</sup> Rather than being removed from the play to heighten the dramatic components, Edmonson and dramaturge Barry Kraft worked certain parts of the A-text and B-text together to play up the comic buffoonery. For Instance, Edmonson substituted Wagner for Robin's



Figure 5: "Jonathan Haugan as Doctor Faustus in the 2005 Oregon Shakespeare Festival production." Catherine Conway Honig, "Oregon Shakespeare Festival: Style Breadth and Imagination", <http://www.scene4.com/archivesqv6/nov-2005/html/infocushonignov05.html>

partner Rafe in the scenes of the stolen conjuring book and goblet. This tidying up of the low-comedy episodes created a coherent through-line.<sup>189</sup> I commend the decision made by Edmonson in dramaturgically combining the best parts of the two versions of the text in order to realise his artistic vision. In academic terms, the two texts represent different schools of thought, which must be studied separately. No such division need apply to those working in the theatre. It is very likely that neither text represents Marlowe's true text, so using the two texts as a combination should not be seen as dubious or disrespectful.

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<sup>188</sup> Alan Armstrong, "The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus Review", *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 24, Number 1, Spring 2006, pp. 77–80, DOI: 10.1353/shb.2006.0003.

<sup>189</sup> Armstrong.

## 2007 – West Michigan University

This most interesting university production that I uncovered in my research was an exercise in pushing boundaries of form, both Marlovian and generally.

In the interview article she published, discussing the show with director Leon Ingulsrud, Nicole Estvanik explained that the key feature of this production of *Doctor Faustus* was the use of “stereoscopic projection of computer-generated imagery, created with software (Autodesk's MotionBuilder7.5) typically used to develop video games.”<sup>190</sup> The concept being explored through this dynamic use of technology is explained on the University’s website: “The idea of a “digital puppeteer” supported themes found within the script while simultaneously allowing for the creation of larger than life characters”<sup>191</sup> This idea no doubt relates to Faustus’ situation within the narrative as the play thing of either Mephistopheles, Lucifer or God, or all of these, depending on the reading. The webpage is well worth a visit, as it features a clip of the technology in practice.<sup>192</sup>

The production was heavily musical, featuring a number of modern audio tracks which heightened the emotion of the play, both for depth and excitement. Faustus was featured less as a classical scholar and rather as a mad scientist of the modern age, which was fitting considering the technology that the production based itself around. Kevin Abbott, the production’s Digital Media Artist, offers explicit insight into the way in which the technology was used to carry out the design plan, giving the following example:

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<sup>190</sup> Nicole Estvanik, "'DOCTOR FAUSTUS' FOR THE DIGITAL AGE." *American Theatre* 24, no. 7 (September 2007): 14. *Literary Reference Center*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 28, 2015).

<sup>191</sup> Digital Media: West Michigan University, “Doctor Faustus”, 2007, <http://www.wmich.edu/digitalmedia/projects/dr-faustus/>

<sup>192</sup> <http://www.wmich.edu/digitalmedia/projects/dr-faustus/>.



The team wanted to use the new technology to reinforce the play's supernatural elements. This was clearly achieved during the conjuring of Mephistopheles, who appeared in virtual form as a demon with 25' articulated wings that were fully controlled by the mocap (motion capture) performer, making him feel undeniably alive.<sup>193</sup>

Ingulsrud's production had a clear focus in marrying Marlowe's early modern text with innovative modern technology. The outcome of the production was questionable, although the experimentation that Ingulsrud conducted was certainly a valuable contribution to the discourse around the modernisation of Marlovian and early modern theatre texts.

## **2009 – Stage on Screen**

In 2009, "Stage on Screen" produced the A-text at The Greenwich Theatre with the sole intention of filming the play during live house performances and releasing the play to the public in digital format.

An interview with Director Elizabeth Freestone, featured on the company's DVD release of the production, reveals her approach to the text. Decisions, says Freestone, about the way in which scenes and characters should be portrayed are based entirely on the evidence that can be found in the text. The cast and director worked as an ensemble to develop ideas in workshops, giving meaning to scenes where none was evident.<sup>194</sup>

Unfortunately, I found that Freestone's production lacked the vitality needed to keep the audience interested in the story. Opportunities which should be evident within the text for comic material are overlooked. Instead the play is presented in an altogether solemn fashion. The arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt is an opportunity for broad

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<sup>193</sup> Kevin Abbott, "Giving New Power To An Old Story." *Live Design* 41, no. 8 (August 2007): 36-41. *Business Source Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 28, 2015).

<sup>194</sup> Stage on Screen, Commentary Interviews.

sexual jokes, yet Freestone has opted for a scene entirely bereft of comedy, obviously identifying the “dead time of winter” as the focal point of the scene rather than playing on a prime opportunity for an awkward sexual liaison, between not only Faustus and a pregnant Duchess, but between Faustus, a pregnant Duchess and her dim-witted husband.

Visually, the creative team did an excellent job. The play is staged entirely in Faustus’ study, on a circular stage, backed by a semi-circle of bookshelves. The sparing use of lighting gives the play a dark foreboding sense, which is contrasted by sharp image projections, used practically in Faustus’ summoning scene and during discussions of “divine astronomy”.

The play is put into an Edwardian setting, which feels rather thoughtlessly decided upon. Neither being modern nor contemporary to the text’s composition, the production does not seem to want to make a statement about anything in particular, which unfortunately leaves a production which does not remark on the society to which it is being presented, nor does it provide a gripping spectacle in which audiences can lose themselves.

## **2009 – Atlanta Shakespeare Company**

The Atlanta Shakespeare Company’s 2009 production, directed by Jeff Watkins played everything in opposites. The audience sat on the stage of the Shakespeare Tavern with the action all taking place in the audience’s pit. Mephistopheles was played not as a male but as a female, who instead of Faustus, features as the lead role, or at least as the focus of the production.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Technique Staff, “Shakespeare’s Tavern Excites Audience with Devilish Faustus” *Technique*, January 30, 2009. <http://nique.net/entertainment/2009/01/30/shakespeare-tavern-excites-audience-with-devilish-faustus/>.

Alaina Jobe in her review of the production cited the much more fully developed nature of Mephistopheles as compared to Faustus.

Mephistophilis was a much more tragic figure, speaking with evident regret of the “unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer.” She threatened and cajoled Faustus towards damnation, but it seemed more out of dutiful necessity than true malicious evil.<sup>196</sup>

Played by actress Laura Cole, Mephistopheles assumed multiple roles throughout the production, not only those you might expect, the Seven Deadly Sins and the German Emperor, which may say something about the reality of Faustus’ actual experience, but also, strangely, the Good Angel.

Strange as it may appear on first analysis, Mephistopheles and the Good Angel do share some sentiments. “Sweet Faustus,” says the Good Angel, “think of heaven and heavenly things.”<sup>197</sup> Not unlike the advice given by Mephistopheles upon being summoned by Faustus, who then questions him about hell: “O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands, / Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.”<sup>198</sup>

This is the characteristic of Mephistopheles which Jobe notes in her analysis of Watkins’ production. “She threatened and cajoled Faustus towards damnation, but it seemed to be more out of dutiful necessity than true malicious evil.”<sup>199</sup> Jobe also points out the significance of Mephistopheles opening and closing the play. From the start to the finish, the play is dominated by this character who controls not only the scenes, but is made,

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<sup>196</sup> Alaina Jobe, “Doctor Faustus Review”, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 27, Number 3, Fall 2009, pp. 508-510, DOI: 10.1353/shb.0.0095.

<sup>197</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 83–84.

<sup>198</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, Act 1, Scene 2, lines 19–20.

<sup>199</sup> Alaina Jobe, “Doctor Faustus Review”, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 27, Number 3, Fall 2009, pp. 508-510, DOI: 10.1353/shb.0.0095.

by Watkins, into the play's initiator/ instigator and draws the curtain, or blows out the candles, when her show is over.<sup>200</sup> The play could be seen in this production, not to be a mortal summoning a devil, but merely a devil at work.

## 2011 – Bell Shakespeare



Figure 6: "John Bell, as Mephistopheles, appearing to Faustus in the 2011 Bell Shakespeare production of Doctor Faustus." Feeney, Katherine, "Faustus", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 6 2011, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/theatre/faustus-20110606-1focr.htm>

As in their approach to Shakespeare's plays, Bell Shakespeare, here working in conjunction with Queensland State Theatre Company, produced the Faustus tale in a modern setting. This production, directed by Michael Gow, was not a production of Marlowe's text, but a

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<sup>200</sup> Alaina Jobe, "Doctor Faustus Review", *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 27, Number 3, Fall 2009, pp. 508–510, DOI: 10.1353/shb.0.0095.

combining of both versions of Marlowe's play, as well as Goethe's eighteenth-century text *The Faust Book*, and new additions.<sup>201</sup>

This multimedia production was a blend of various texts, seeking to create a new whole from an elegant integration of various classical works, modified for modern audiences. Katherine Feeney, of *The Sydney Morning Herald* said of the production, that:

Though the mongrel script has been dolled up with opera, live-film, video and poetry, there's no embarrassing over-doneness. The elements are elegantly integrated, not slapped together like the gaudy get-up of a tarty show-off, as so often is the case.<sup>202</sup>

The action of the play took place behind a false proscenium arch, designed, along with many other aspects of the production, to ensure that the audience never forgot that they were watching a play. A similar tactic was adopted by Bell in the company's 2009 Production of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, on which the two companies had also joined forces. The off-stage wings were located on the stage, where set pieces and costume racks were stored, and where costume changes also took place (as in figure 7). Kate Foy wrote in her review for The Actors Green Room:

I so wanted to, but ended up caring little for the central human characters largely because we are not allowed to get close to them. They are masked or framed, screened and 'performed' rather than revealed in their humanity. Voices are distorted through a microphone and we remain always at an emotional distance.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Katherine Feeney, "Faustus", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 6 2011, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/theatre/faustus-20110606-1focr.html>.

<sup>202</sup> Katherine Feeney, "Faustus", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 6 2011, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/theatre/faustus-20110606-1focr.html>.

<sup>203</sup> Kate Foy, "Faustus – Queensland Theatre Company & Bell Shakespeare @ Brisbane Powerhouse" *Greenroom*, June 3, 2011, URL: <http://actorsgreenroom.net/archives/5585>

The play included a character not within Marlowe's own text, a love interest named Gretchen, a feature from Goethe's text. Foy considers that Gow wrote Gretchen into the script as a tool with which to expand the alienating nature of this production. Faustus and Gretchen share their final moments together behind a curtain, from which the scene is broadcast live onto a screen for the audience to view in a washed out, hazy projection. The effect is the obscuring and interruption of any opportunity for engagement with the emotion of the scene.<sup>204</sup>



Figure 7: "David Whitney, as Sire Epicure Mammon, and Georgina Symes, as Dol Common, in the 2009 Bell Shakespeare production of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*." Mckee, Jay, "The Alchemist by Ben Jonson", *Stage Whispers*, (accessed: August 10, 2015), URL: <http://www.s>

Foy also notes that at the end of the show, instead of beginning a desperate struggle to escape the inevitable, as Marlowe devised, Gow's Faustus merely shrugs his shoulders and exits the stage through the audience and into the foyer, leaving the entire play bereft of any kind of repentance.<sup>205</sup>

The production left many critics disappointed with the fact that the narrative and the production were not cohesive. Matt O'Neill, from *Australian Stage*, commented that:

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

What one ultimately witnesses throughout the work's entirety is the tragedy of experimentation without design. In crafting the work, **Gow** has thrown any and every possible idea at the stage.<sup>206</sup>

While the production could be seen as a post-modernist take on an early modern text, which is often used to comment upon modern society: it missed the mark and left audiences, certainly critics, unfulfilled.

## 2011 - The Globe



Figure 8: "Mephistopheles coming to claim Faustus' soul, featuring: Arthur Darvill and Paul Hilton. " Peter J. Smith, "THE 2011 SEASON AT LONDON'S GLOBE THEATRE." *Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal* 30, (August 2011): 68-75. Literary Reference Center, EBSCOhost (

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<sup>206</sup> Matt O'Neill, "Faustus | Queensland Theatre Company and Bell Shakespeare", *Australian Stage*, June 04, 2011. URL: <http://www.australianstage.com.au/201106044457/reviews/brisbane/faustus-%7C-queensland-theatre-company-and-bell-shakespeare.html>.

As part of the Globe's "Word of God" season, in 2011, Shakespeare's Globe Company staged a production of the B-text of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.<sup>207</sup>

The play was set in its original early modern period and took advantage of what was obviously a generous budget. For a play which is often cast with the most minimal of actors, Director, Matthew Dunster had a full cast of devils, papal staff, incarnate sins and actors posing as book shelves. His massive budget seems to have influenced his approach to the play, electing for a spectacle reminiscent of the court masques over the subtle psychological choice which is notable in other recent productions.

Dunster's choice did the play no discredit, enriching the text with the feeling of Faustus warring with God upon receiving his devilish powers, rather than wasting his time in buffoonery. The scene with the Pope was an excellent example of Dunster's depiction of this choice.

Additionally, Dunster's choice of the B-text afforded Faustus a reason to interfere with Holy Peter's feast, following the Roman Pope's abuse of his rival German Pope. The textual choice creates a Faustus who is not indulging in silly pranks, rather he is, apparently, distributing justice where he sees there is a need. If read this way, Dunster's choice adds a nobility to the play which makes Faustus' descent into hell all the more tragic, in that, he is a man challenging heavenly justice with his ill-gotten power, rather than a man indulging his cheapest fancies. Dunster's portrayal of Faustus' damnation could, therefore, be read as a symbolic end to a possible elevation of humanity. The textual choices made by Dunster

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<sup>207</sup> The full play is available online, at a fee, from [www.digitaltheatre.com](http://www.digitaltheatre.com)



presented the audience with a Faustus who is relatable, where he is often elsewhere ridiculous.

The Renaissance setting of the production did not create a divide between audiences and actors. Marlowe's writing is relative to human nature above all else. Indeed, the fact that the production was staged at Shakespeare's Globe meant that a lot of the groundwork was already done for the company. It is the expectation of The Globe's audiences to see early modern plays in early modern fashion. Dunster used the space dynamically, relying on minimal set, where, instead, actors appear in functionary roles, such as bookshelves or as demons with conveniently large cloaks with lots of storage space. The elimination of set pieces helped to reduce some of the stagnancy that the play, with its literary grounding, tends to carry with it.

An opinion I share with Warren Chernaik in his review of Dunster's production is the over acting of broad comedy in the second half of the play. The selection of the 1616 edition, over the 1604 edition, carries with it the expanded comic scenes. These add nothing to the dramatic and tragic meaning of the text, "all the scenes for nearly an hour are broad comedy. At the very least, some cuts might have improved matters".<sup>208</sup> While I do feel that it is necessary for the buffoonery to exist within the play, it belongs there to evoke a realisation at the end of the play that Faustus has sold his soul to carry out a series of cheap tricks. The extension of these scenes in the B-text, which Dunster decided to stage in full, serves only to detract from the play's tragic meaning.

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<sup>208</sup> Warren Chernaik, "Review of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus" *Shakespeare Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2013, 128\_131, URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2012.705875>.

Laura Grace Godwin, in her review in the *Shakespeare Bulletin* makes a valid observation of Dunster's play, which I had not myself realised:

the physicalization of psychomachia as a samurai sword fight offered a welcome change from the often static Angels scenes and suggested, as did other choices by Dunster and company, that the battle for Faustus's soul was an external rather than internal affair.<sup>209</sup>

Dunster's production, therefore, depicted an opposite choice to that made by John Barton, in his famous 1974 RSC production featuring Ian McKellen. Dunster actualised Faustus' struggle in a real world sense, staging the struggle for Faustus' soul as real time combat, starkly contrasting with Barton's production, which was "set entirely in Faustus's study in a book-lined set by Michael Annals that suggested the interior of a skull. The feeling would be that the action took place inside Faustus' head"<sup>210</sup>. Whilst certainly very visually impressive, Dunster's chosen action makes an important thematic statement, which contrasts with Barton's choice, that the struggle that Faustus faces is not simply within himself, but with the evils that surround him. Of course neither of these interpretations is wrong, they simply reflect the message that the directors have chosen to make.

## 2012 – Resurgens Theatre

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<sup>209</sup> Laura Grace Godwin, "Doctor Faustus and The City Madam (Review)" *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 30, Number 2, Summer 2012, pp. 221–231.

<sup>210</sup> Ian McKellen, "Ian McKellen Stage", 2003, Accessed, February 2015, URL: <http://www.mckellen.com/stage/faustus/>.

In what could be called the company's mission statement, Resurgens Theatre state that they aim to "rather than offer a museum piece constructed solely to satisfy academic curiosity, we look to engender a lively artistic engagement with the present moment."<sup>211</sup>

The setting of the 2012 production of the A-text of *Doctor Faustus*, directed by Brent Griffin, in an early modern context seemed to be unaligned with the company's mission statement. However, as Molly Hand notes in his review in the *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Griffin presented an edited version of the A-text which cut out the low comic scenes to draw the focus to the relationship between Faustus and Mephistopheles, who, in Griffin's production was re-gendered as a female.<sup>212</sup> In fact, every character, besides Faustus, was played by a female actor.

The effect was striking: Marlowe's patriarchal scholarly context in which the allure of evil is largely intellectual was transformed into a world in which the temptation toward diabolism is a physical compulsion.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Resurgens Theatre Company, "Resurgens Theatre Company", Accessed: April 10 2015, URL: [http://www.resurgentheatre.org/About\\_Resurgens.html](http://www.resurgentheatre.org/About_Resurgens.html).

<sup>212</sup> Molly Hand, "Doctor Faustus (Review)", *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Volume 31, Number 1, March 2013, pp. 132-136, , DOI: 10.1353/shb.2013.0007.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 9: "Faustus, Mephistopheles and the Dutchess of Vanholt in the 2012 Resurgens Theatre production." Resurgens Theatre Company, "Resurgens Theatre Company", Accessed: April 10 2015, URL: [http://www.resurgentheatre.org/About\\_Resurgens.html](http://www.resurgentheatre.org/About_Resurgens.html)

Interestingly, Griffin managed to modernize Marlowe's work not by modernizing the style of production, but by sub-textually and dramaturgically altering the production to allow the play to convey a message which is relevant to a modern audience, over and above the original message of the narrative. Griffin's production had been run earlier in 2009, and featured again in 2014, as a special feature.

## Chapter 5. Production Methodology

If we are to approach Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* as modern theatre practitioners, then it is important to define which textual theme, or message, we wish to be the focus of the production. Once we have done this, we can then begin to make decisions regarding the way in which we will communicate that theme/message as successfully as possible to our audience.

### Thematic Focus

Faustus is often seen in terms of his passion for knowledge. He seeks the spirits to "Resolve me of all ambiguities",<sup>214</sup> he spends a great deal of time exclaiming his mastery of various fields of thought in the play's opening scene. The Chorus tells of his scholarly achievement:

So soon he profits in divinity,  
The fruitful plot of scholarism graced,  
That shortly he was graced with Doctor's name.<sup>215</sup>

However, the first thing that Faustus asks Mephistopheles to do is:

I charge thee wait upon me while I live,  
To do whatever Faustus shall command  
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere  
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.<sup>216</sup>

Marlowe's Faustus is not in pursuit of knowledge, he is, rather, in pursuit of power, pleasure and wealth. Even when he speaks of his scholarly achievement, he condemns each field of study for the limits that it has in achieving physical reward. He says of Aristotle's analytics;

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<sup>214</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 1, Scene 1, line 82.

<sup>215</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Prologue, lines 15–17.

<sup>216</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 37–40.

Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?  
Affords this art no greater miracle?<sup>217</sup>

He later says of law, referring to Justinian:

His study fits a mercenary drudge  
Who aims at nothing but external trash –  
Too servile and Illiberal for me.<sup>218</sup>

In fact, Faustus is incorrectly attributing this quote to Justinian.<sup>219</sup>

Additionally, his following reference, to Jerome's Bible, is even more invalid. Faustus attains his justification for indulging in dark magic by omitting parts of different passages, giving them a different meaning. If correctly quoted, these passages would have presented no justification whatsoever.<sup>220</sup> Faustus only ever sees knowledge as a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. Lisa Hopkins points out that in fact, Faustus' ultimate desire is to possess Helen of Troy, the human embodiment of beauty in the classical world.<sup>221</sup> It is unlikely that Marlowe would have written this desire into Faustus' character without the intention of drawing a relationship between the fall of Troy, which was the result of men's desire for Helen, and Faustus' fall, which could be equally attributed to a desire for Helen. I suggest on these grounds, that Faustus should not be considered in terms of his scholarship, but in terms of his materialism. Faustus' materialism and self-indulgence at the expense of his immortal soul, and the tragic wastefulness of that behaviour, is the theme I believe to be

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<sup>217</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 8–9.

<sup>218</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 34–36.

<sup>219</sup> David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham, eds, Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus: The A-Text*, Nedlands, The University Of Western Australia Press, 1985, p 6.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, p 6.

<sup>221</sup> Hopkins, Lisa, *Christopher Marlowe: Renaissance Dramatist*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p 86.

most significant for modern audiences. Materialism and the consumer culture that has developed over the course of the last century is arguably the causer of the greatest problems facing the world in the twenty first century.

### **Modern Faustian Correlations**

Kenneth L. Golden explores the case of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* from a modern psychological perspective. He argues that Renaissance man is similar to modern man in his mutual disengagement from mythic or magical belief. This disengagement, Golden claims, became emphatic during the age of *Doctor Faustus*.<sup>222</sup> If we accept Faustus as an everyman of the Renaissance period, an individual who epitomises everything that the Renaissance movement represented, then he too suffers from the loss of supportive belief networks. Mankind, Golden argues, had always used its belief in magical or supernatural powers to aid itself in dealing with the depths of its own psyche. Faustus' belief in those Christian symbols which had, until the point the play begins, sustained him are no longer potent enough to mitigate Faustus' own psychological distress.<sup>223</sup>

The complexity of Faustus' own religious belief is confounding. Faustus sells his soul to Lucifer in plain terms:

I, John Faustus, of Wittenberg, Doctor, by these presents do give both body and soul to Lucifer, Prince of the east, and his Minister Mephistopheles; and furthermore grant unto them, that, four –and–twenty years being expired, the articles above-written inviolate, full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever.

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<sup>222</sup> Kenneth L. Golden, "Myth, Psychology, and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*", *College Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (Fall. 1985), 202–210, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25111667>.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

By me, John Faustus.<sup>224</sup>

Faustus has evidently gone to great pains to construct such a specific and obviously binding contract. Yet only a short while later he says to Mephistopheles, “Come, I think hell’s a fable.”<sup>225</sup> Golden suggests that Faustus is subject to “a splitting of the will”.<sup>226</sup> Faustus rejects Christian belief because it puts a limit on his desires, yet he is ultimately racked by his own Christian guilt due to his subconscious sense of sin. Therefore, Faustus goes into immediate denial following the forfeiture of his soul: “Faustus wants the boons he thinks hell can bestow but cannot contemplate the payment.”<sup>227</sup> The comparison Golden draws to modern man is the apparent need to possess nuclear armaments. The correlative danger of planetary destruction is either ignored in the name of military prestige or labelled as defensive, governments apparently cannot contemplate the cost.<sup>228</sup> I would argue that preoccupation with economic development, especially via means of resource acquisition, while denying the correlative environmental destruction is an equally valid comparison. We cannot comprehend the destruction of the planet that nourishes us in pursuit of wealth.

If Faustus is a complex psychological figure, then so too is his demonic counterpart. Mephistopheles represents everything that Faustus, up until the beginning of the play, is not. Faustus has spent his life in hard studious labour, mastering every discipline he sets his mind to. What Mephistopheles offers is greater renown than Faustus has already obtained

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<sup>224</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 106–114.

<sup>225</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 2, Scene 1, line 131.

<sup>226</sup> Kenneth L. Golden, “Myth, Psychology, and Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*”, *College Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 3, (Fall. 1985), 202 – 210, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25111667>.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*



and the fulfilment of all of his “frivolous demands” and “voluptuous pleasure”. Golden calls this the “Shadow Archetype”, representing, the opposing forces of the subject’s psyche.<sup>229</sup> If the pair are viewed in this manner, rather than looking at Faustus as the victim and Mephistopheles as the tempter, as we are so oft want to do, some of what Mephistopheles says to Faustus becomes a lot more explicable. When Faustus asks Mephistopheles how he came to be out of hell, Mephistopheles replies:

Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it.  
Think’st thou that I who saw the face of God  
And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven  
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells  
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?<sup>230</sup>

This very forthcoming expression of truth from Mephistopheles is not what one would expect to hear from the devil. However, if we do take Mephistopheles to be the shadow archetype, Faustus’ psychological opposite, then we can accept that while Faustus is acting as his own worst enemy Mephistopheles acts as the voice of reason. While I do concede that this component of Golden’s argument is an interesting analysis of the Faustus/Mephistopheles relationship, which a director might find useful in developing the characters, I do not believe that such an analysis carries a bearing on the narrative as a didactic text.

Douglas Schuler analyses what Faustus as an everyman figure says about humankind. The Faust myth, Schuler states, “provides a particularly insightful lens for examining humankind’s status, notably our devotion to knowledge and technology, and the possible

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 1, Scene 3, lines 76–80.

consequences of that seemingly unquestionable devotion.”<sup>231</sup> What the myth ultimately highlights is the decisions that we, as humans, make which inevitably drive us down a path of no return. For Schuler, Faustus in the twenty-first century is not an individual but a collective of people, and organisations, representing humanity. In Schuler’s version the stakes are a lot higher even than Faustus’ own soul, the choices and trade-offs made have global consequences. Schuler strips the soul of mysticism and sees it as people’s desire to do the right thing. Essentially, morals are bargained for personal reward and gratification.<sup>232</sup> Finding a direct correlation between Faustus’ original sixteenth-century setting and our own modern world is difficult because the two are significantly different. Society has become more complex, and “as society becomes more complex, it becomes more and more difficult to understand how it all works.”<sup>233</sup> This complexity, says Schuler, is also a vulnerability. During a time of crisis, Schuler states, the goal is to return the situation to the status quo: Faustus regrets his decision as the play reaches its final stages. He seeks redemption, to reverse the pact he has made with Mephistopheles:

Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make  
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but  
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,  
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!<sup>234</sup>

However, if we do not fully understand the situation in which we exist, how can we therefore restore our state of being to what it was before?

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<sup>231</sup> Douglas Schuler, “Doctor Faustus in the Twenty-first Century, A Mediation on Knowledge, Power, and civic intelligence”, *A&I Society*, Vol. 28, Issue. 3, August 2013, 257–266.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> *Doctor Faustus (A-text)*, Act 5, Scene 2, lines. 72–75.

If we take the soul to be our moral principles, what then is the pact? How can we decide where society went wrong and where would we wish to return to when we are finally in over our heads? So many factors have gone awry within our modern world: social asymmetry has developed beyond belief, environmental degradation has been a well understood, and relatively unaddressed, problem for decades. As far as Schuler is concerned, humanity signed its contract a long time ago, the twenty-four years are almost up. I believe that this is not necessarily the case, that there may yet be time to resolve the world's problems, if we only choose to repent.

## **Concept**

Some of the points made by Shuler and Golden, while interesting, are much more significant when approaching Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* as a study text. However, some points are very useful considerations for approaching *Faustus* as a performance text.

Schuler's consideration that Faustus cannot be thought of as an individual is not ground-breaking. Faustus himself descends, as was discussed earlier, from the traditions of the everyman morality plays. However, because the morality-play tradition is no longer a mainstream medium, we must synthesise a different way of communicating the fact that Faustus represents humanity as a group. I would suggest that this could be most effectively achieved by correlating Faustus with government. A country's government is, generally, wherever democracy is concerned, a reflection of the country itself. If we are to single out an individual to represent that body, then it might be considered a good idea to select the leader.

The human soul, with which Faustus originally barter, is no longer a universally recognised reality, therefore, correlating the soul to a much more tangible commodity, or possession, makes the play's meaning more universally accessible. On these grounds, I would advocate for demystifying the soul and, alternatively, regarding it in practical terms as moral principle.

If we are to consider the text, in this way, for Australian audiences, I suggest it might be best, for relevancy and insight's sake, to set the scene as close to home as possible. For the sake of this scenario, let us consider Faustus to be Australian Prime Minister, as was, Tony Abbott. The concept presented thus far might be justified by referring to Tony Abbott's moral ambiguity regarding his policy on immigration and Asylum seekers. Tony Abbott himself was in fact a migrant from the United Kingdom. One might infer that taking a hard-line on immigration is therefore somewhat hypocritical, and that denying others passage into Australia while he was offered free passage is morally questionable.

Once one's Faustus figure has been identified, one can proceed toward making correlations, by translating the text's other characters by means of their relationship with Faustus. Let us consider Mephistopheles: an envoy of Lucifer who comes to claim Faustus' soul. Initially Mephistopheles tries to warn Faustus that he himself has done just as Faustus is doing now, and that no good will come of his decision. He later speeds him into his damnation. If we are to translate Mephistopheles via his relationship with Tony Abbott, we might correlate him with John Howard, an earlier Liberal Party Prime Minister. John Howard instigated morally dubious policies, known as the "Pacific Solution", regarding asylum seekers during his term of office as Prime Minister, just as Tony Abbott has done.

If we consider Wagner, Faustus' errand boy: Wagner assists Faustus in his fall and tries to mimic Faustus' behaviour with Mephistopheles, with Robin. We might then translate Wagner into Federal Treasurer Joe Hockey. In his position as federal treasurer, the federal budgets which Hockey implemented catered to the policies and ideals of Abbott and his government.

If we turn to look at some of those characters whom Faustus does not affiliate with, on such amiable terms, we might consider the Pope and the Cardinal of Lorraine. The Pope and The Cardinal are the butt of Faustus' jokes. They represent the Catholic Church, the opposite to Faustus' Protestant beliefs. A correlative relationship may be represented by portraying these characters as past Labor Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.

For a suggestion of correlative translations of the play's other characters, please see the table below:

<i>Doctor Faustus</i> characters		Correlative characters	
<b>Valdes &amp; Cornelius</b>	Faustus confesses that Valdes and Cornelius have tempted him into black magic. They instruct Faustus as to how he should go about summoning the devil.	<b>Gina Rinehart &amp; Rupert Murdoch</b>	Representatives of Australia's big business. They use their wealth to pressure government into making certain decisions which generally benefit them, rather than the wider population.
<b>Robin</b>	Made to be the errand boy of Wagner, out of fear of physical injury. Ultimately undone by unknowingly invoking the wrath of Mephistopheles.	<b>working class Australian</b>	Regular member of the population, whose life is heavily dictated by the decisions of those in power.

<b>Raphe</b>	Made to be the errand boy of Robin, he is the unknowing victim of a chain of power plays which ultimately end in his and Robin's demise.	<b>Asylum seeker</b>	Helpless individual, at the mercy of those in positions of governance, and the opinions that those individuals imbue in the population they govern.
<b>Emperor of Germany</b>	Employs Faustus to entertain him at his court, calls on him to use his dark arts to show him Alexander the great. This, following Faustus' earlier claim that he "shall not live but by my leave".	<b>Hitler</b>	Historical German Leader. Committed countless atrocities and human rights violations.
<b>Knight</b>	Questions Faustus' legitimacy and is punished for it.	<b>Political Journalist</b>	An individual whose job it is to question the decisions of those in power and to enlighten the public about decisions which are made on their behalf.
<b>Duke &amp; Duchess of Vanholt</b>	Asks Faustus to indulge her in trifles of fancy. Faustus concedes and brings her what she desires. Often portrayed as a sexual relationship.	<b>Bronwyn Bishop</b>	Speaker of the House of Representatives. Was involved in scandals regarding the illegitimate use of tax payer funds for private purpose. For which she received the support of Prime Minister Abbott.
<b>Old Man</b>	Represents the opposite to Mephistopheles. The old man tries to help Faustus to change his ways before it is too late. He is ultimately ignored and punished by Mephistopheles, though his soul is untouched.	<b>Bob Hawke</b>	Historical Australian Labor Prime Minister, remembered and renowned for his contributions to services for the Australian people.

## **Design**

To a significant degree, the success to which the characters can be communicated as their correlated characters rests on the shoulders of the actors. Minute character traits in the way a person walks, the way that they speak, and the way in which they hold themselves must be finely tuned by the actor playing the characters. However, even the best actors require the support of a design team who can successfully complete the transformation from actor to character.

I believe that the most effective method of non-verbal communication is the use of symbols. If one can tap into the cultural meaning of a symbol, one can immediately and effectively communicate one's meaning to one's audience.

## **Character Design**

If we are to apply this theory of symbol to the physicalization of characters, then we must first discuss symbols appropriate to our characters. The following are a series of political cartoons which depict Tony Abbott:

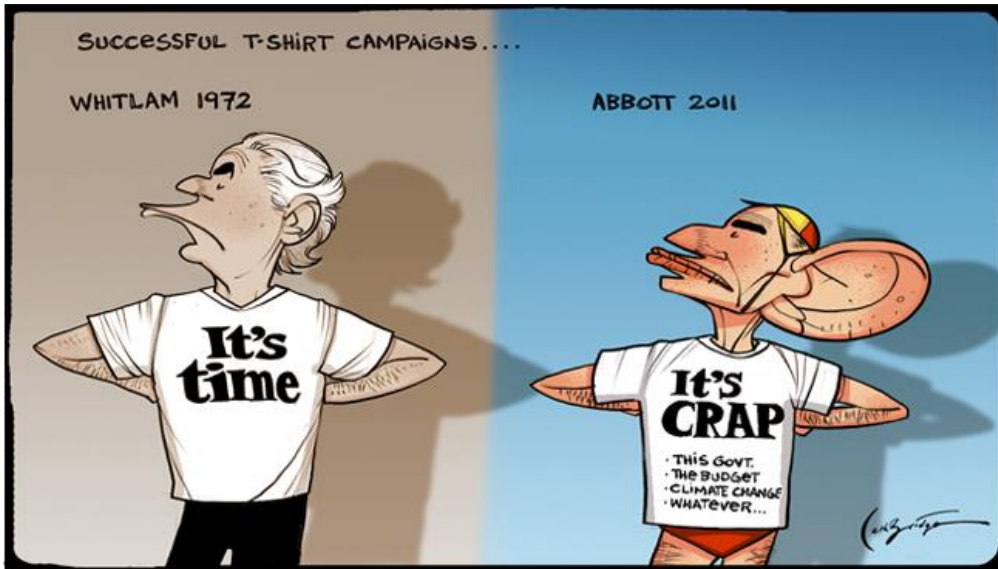


Figure 10: "Successful T-shirt Campaigns" sourced from the Courier Mail, August 2010. <https://cafewhispers.wordpress.com/2011/10/24/tony-abbott-demands-and-demands-and-demands/>

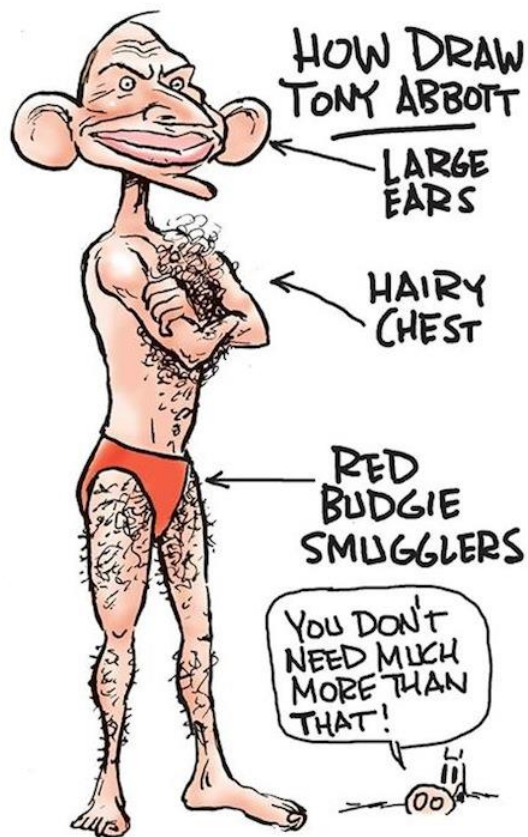


Figure 11: "How Draw Tony Abbott" by Mark Knight, August 2013. <https://99designs.com/designer-blog/2013/08/18/community-contest-design-political-caricatures-for-the-2013-australian-election/>





Figure 12: “Kim Carr Tony Abbott protectionism sell arse” by Peter Nicholson, August 30, 2011. <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/kim-carr-tony-abbott-protectionism-sell-arse.html>

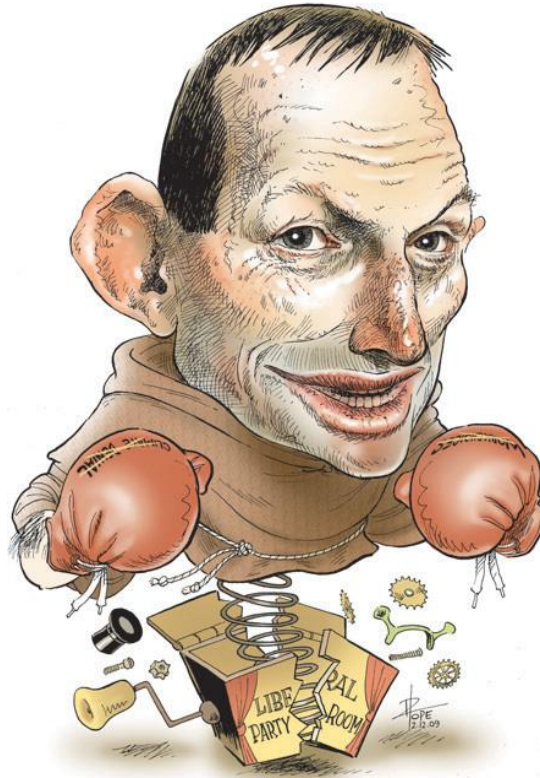


Figure 13: 'Tony Abbott' cartoon by David Pope, 2009. <http://www.nma.gov.au/collections-search/display?app=tlf&irn=180109>

Some of the key symbols which identify Tony Abbott across a number of the displayed, and other, cartoons are: his red “budgie smugglers” and swimming cap, his long nose, his wide mouth, large ears, slim or small stature and the use of boxing equipment. If I, as a director, incorporate these symbols into the characters make-up and costume design, I may effectively communicate the character of Doctor Faustus as Tony Abbott through non-verbal means.

The following is an example of how one might choose to design the character of Faustus if one was wishing to correlate him with Tony Abbott.



**Figure 14: "Faustus as Tony Abbott"**

If we are to consider another character, the Cardinal of Lorraine, being portrayed as Julia Gillard let us consider the identifiers from the cartoons below:

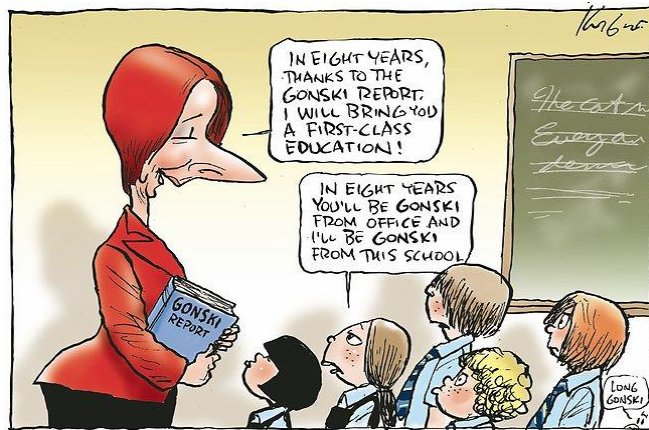


Figure 15: "Long Gonski" by Mark Knight, 04/09/2012.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/photos-e6frfhqf-1226462829603?page=26>

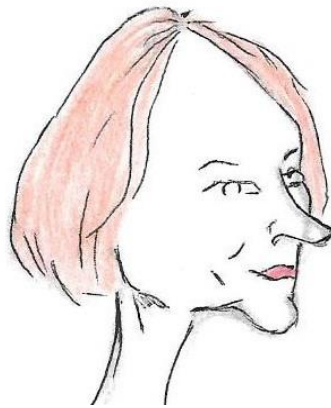


Figure 16: "457 visas and Julia Gillard staff appointments cartoon" by Peter Nicholson, 06/03/2013. <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/457-visas-and-julia-gillard-staff-appointments-cartoon-2013-03-06.html>



Figure 17: "Julia Gillard Labor launch 600", by Peter Nicholson, 17/08/2010. <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/julia-gillard-labor-launch-600.html>



Julia Gillard has some very simple, yet easily identifiable physical traits which make her instantly recognisable: Her large nose, red hair cut into a short bob, a large posterior and is usually drawn wearing long skirt suits. Without even considering her costume, employment of the symbols of her red hair and her large nose might resort in a character design such as this:



**Figure 18: "Cardinal of Lorraine as Julia Gillard"**

Without providing a detailed sketch of each character in my proposed method of production, the following table provides the key identifiers for the remaining topically relevant characters from the play:



Character.	Example comic.	Key identifier symbols.
<p>Mephistopheles / John Howard</p>	 <p>Figure 19: "Johnny's Garage Sale", by Jonathan Bentley, The Courier Mail, 08/09/2016.  <a href="http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/behind_the_lines_2006_the_years_best_cartoons/leading_the_way">http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/behind_the_lines_2006_the_years_best_cartoons/leading_the_way</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Short/ small stature</li> <li>- Large eyebrows</li> <li>- Large square frame glasses</li> <li>- "Australia" jogging suit</li> </ul>
<p>Wagner/ Joe Hockey</p>	 <p>Figure 20: "Hockey and Lambie 2014 Budget", Mark Knight, Herald Sun, 24 July 2014.  <a href="https://thisisaustraliatoday.wordpress.com/2014/08/09/on-le-lievre-and-cartoon-shorthand-saturday-9-august-2014/">https://thisisaustraliatoday.wordpress.com/2014/08/09/on-le-lievre-and-cartoon-shorthand-saturday-9-august-2014/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Smoking Cigar</li> <li>-Wearing business suit</li> <li>-Heavy build</li> <li>-Depicted as Shrek, or has Shrek ears.</li> <li>-Carrying cash.</li> </ul>

Pope/  
Kevin Rudd



- Round Face
- Bespectacled
- Blond / Grey side part
- Pursed Lips
- Business suit

Figure 21 " Change we can believe in" by Bill Leak, July 2013.  
<http://catallaxyfiles.com/2013/07/05/kevin-rudd-change-we-can-believe-in/>

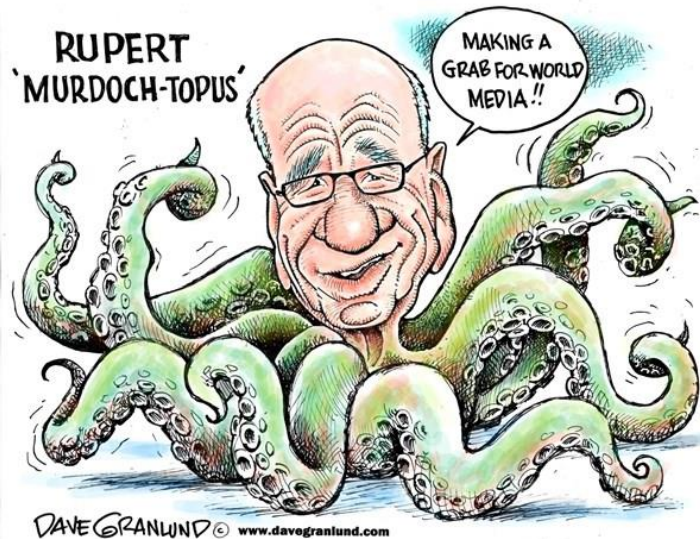
Valdes/  
Gina Rinehart



- Very large woman/ monster
- Wearing hard hat / high vis clothing.
- Messy long brown hair
- Often driving a land moving vehicle
- Usually featured with piles of money.

Figure 22: "Gina the Hutt" by Josh Radford, 19/09/2013.  
<http://joshybug.com/2013/09/19/gina-the-hutt/>

Cornelius/  
Rupert Murdoch



- Depicted as octopus, or with tentacles
- Glasses
- Bald / balding
- Large jowls
- Usually shown with newspapers
- Often correlated to an emperor / empire.

Figure 23: "Rupert Murdoch-topus" by Dave Grunland, 17/07/2014. <http://www.cagle.com/2014/07/rupert-murdoch-grabs-for-media/>


Duchess of  
Vanholt/  
Bronwyn Bishop



- Big blond hair
- Lots of jewellery (pearl necklace)
- Half-moon glasses
- Frequently featured with helicopters
- Face is pulled into a grimace.

Figure 24: "Bronwyn Bishop's career takes a nose-dive" by Peter Lewis, 18/07/2015. <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/2799397/peter-lewis-cartoon-gallery-2015/#slide=52>



<p>Old Man/ <b>Bob Hawke</b></p>	 <p>Figure 25: "Bob Hawke at the Cricket" by Peter Broelman, 07/01/2014. <a href="https://broelman.wordpress.com/2014/01/07/bob-hawke-at-the-cricket/">https://broelman.wordpress.com/2014/01/07/bob-hawke-at-the-cricket/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-quiffed grey/white hair</li> <li>-Often frowning</li> <li>-Bulbous nose</li> <li>-Pronounced chin</li> <li>-Middy of beer</li> </ul>
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If I use the key symbolic identifiers to develop the characters above, as was shown in the case of Tony Abbott and Julia Gillard, my audience can be made to understand, quickly and efficiently, to whom Marlowe's characters correlate in a modern Australian political forum.

Some of the play's smaller characters, may not translate into a specific individual, however, they must still be made to fit with the context in which Faustus exists. The Knight in the German Emperor's court, for example, criticises Faustus as a charlatan. I would propose to correlate The Knight with a member of the Australia press, calling out the politicians.

## Stage Design

### Set

The set is an important instrument in the theatre. It is not merely a tool with which to provide actors and action with a location. Set is a large-scale non-verbal device through

which to communicate with the audience. A stage set can be used to tap into social and cultural symbols with which the audience immediately identify certain ideas or concepts.

Flags are a strong cultural symbol, easily identifiable and highly emotive. Tony Abbott evidently identified the potency of the flag as an emotive symbol throughout the course of his Prime Ministership, putting it to particular use during his time in press conferences. As in the image below:



**Figure 26: Tony Abbott in the press gallery, 23/02/2015.**

<http://www.4bc.com.au/news/in-full-tony-abbott-press-conference-on-national-security-20150223-13mau9.html>

Abbott in fact used the flag to such an extent that it ceased to be a symbol of Australian pride and patriotism and instead became a running joke amongst media and cultural commentators. Charlie Pickering (pictured below) gave an astonishingly well-developed commentary of Abbott's use of the Australian flag, suggesting that Abbott adds flags to his press conference set every time he makes an announcement about successful national security measures. Pickering then proceeds strips the flags away as a penalty for each failure to achieve national security which has gone unannounced.



Figure 27: Charlie Pickering offers commentary on Abbott's flags on 'The Weekly'. By Alex Mckinnon, 09/07/2015. <http://junkee.com/charlie-pickering-goes-after-tony-abbotts-national-security-flag-rating-system-on-the-weekly/60867>

The following cartoon by Peter Broelman also comments on Abbott's use of flags, indicating that he hides behind them more and more as he begins to feel the pressure build.

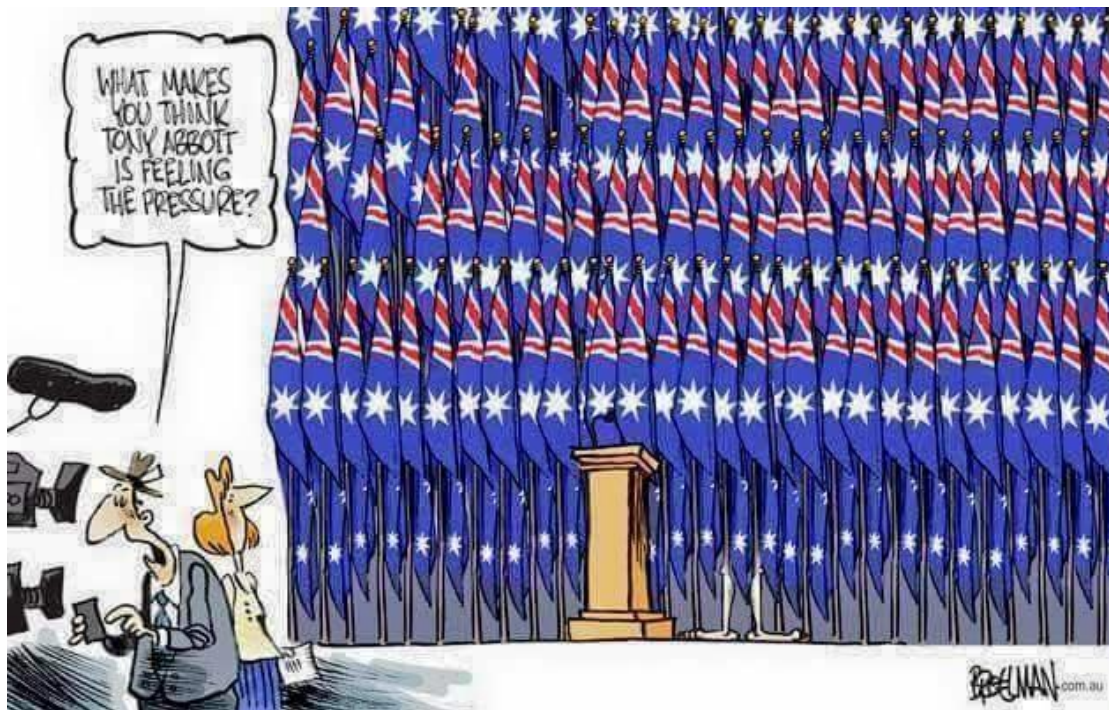


Figure 28: "What makes you think Tony Abbott is feeling the pressure", by Peter Broelman, 15/06/15. <https://broelman.wordpress.com/page/19/>

I suggest that by adopting, and engaging with, existing social discussion, such as the “Abbott’s flags” commentary, a more effective emotive response from the audience can be achieved, than if one tried to develop an entirely new concept and commentary.

I propose to progressively fill the stage with more and more Australian flags as the play progresses. In the same way that commentators, like Pickering, have identified the more prominent use of flags by Abbott, as his security in office became less and less stable, so too will it correlate with Faustus’ gradual fall from grace. I suggest that this method will provide a comic component, with which the audience can engage, but which also carries serious undertones of the association of Faustus with a figure who progressively became more and more untrustworthy. The ever increasing number of flags on the stage acts as a reminder for the audience, that Faustus is becoming more and more corrupt by the power that the Devil has given him.

### ***Multimedia***

The use of multimedia technology in theatre has become an accepted theatrical tool, that we can now use quite readily in unison with the set. Certain ideas, symbols and motifs simply cannot be conveyed with the traditional means of set and costume, this is where multimedia can be useful. One of the key identifying symbols of Bronwyn Bishop, for example, is her use of helicopters. Therefore, I suggest: When Wagner announces to Faustus that the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt have come to meet him, a film clip of a helicopter coming in to land can be projected onto a screen at the back of the stage. The sound of helicopter blades rotating will be played over the speaker system, at great volume, over which, Wagner must yell in order to make his announcement. It is images like this which tie the symbols of my chosen setting together with Marlowe’s text.

If we take these design factors and combine them together, the audience attending this production of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* will be watching Tony Abbott stating, at the beginning of the play, that he is bored with the knowledge he has already gained, as it does not satisfy his appetite for power and earthly goods. Tony sends Joe Hockey to fetch Gina Rinehart and Rupert Murdoch, who encourage him to practice dark arts to achieve what he wants. Tony proceeds to summon John Howard who, at first, attempts to dissuade him from his intentions, but who eventually decides that it is in his own nature to behave immorally. The two of them take a short trip to hell, before returning to Earth to throw food at Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard, serve the desires of Adolf Hitler, mutilate members of Australia's press and retire for some hanky-panky with Bronwyn Bishop, on her helicopter. Bob Hawke tries to dissuade Tony from committing himself to such a dangerous path, but Tony sends Howard to kill him. At the very end of the play, Tony is standing alone amid a horde of Australian flags when he realises that it is now the end and he has nothing but pain and torment waiting for him.

### ***Harnessing Non-Theatrical Devices to Theatrical Ends***

One of the biggest variables in theatre, as with any art form, is the observer. The audience will never have, as a collective, identical experiences. Art always has been and always will be interpreted differently by different observers, based on their individual experience. This is a particular problem in the instance of this project. The specific communication of Marlowe's characters as their intended correlative characters is absolutely imperative if the intended message of the production is going to be received by the audience collectively.

This is a problem which must be overcome sensitively and creatively. There is little that can be done on stage which will, with one hundred percent success, convey, precisely,

the intended characters to the audience. Short of stamping the name “Tony Abbott” onto the lead actor’s head, there is always going to be an opportunity for misinterpretation of symbol and gesture. Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet, in their text *Theatre and Performance Design* make the analogy of a drowning man at sea waving his arms in the air for help, while the people on the shore wave back in greeting.<sup>235</sup> Where communication is limited, as with theatre, and where there is an opportunity for misinterpretation, as with symbolic and gestural representation, steps must be taken to enforce the communication of the intended message. In order to achieve this enforcement, without compromising the integrity of the text, or interrupting the intimate bond between audience and character, non-theatrical production components must be effectively exploited.

Not being a marketing expert myself, I can see two obvious avenues through which the production’s message can be conveyed, or at least reinforced, non-theatrically. Print and digital marketing are an intrinsic part of modern theatrical practice. For a show to be financially successful, it must be promoted to a public audience. I suggest that this is the first instrument with which to convey the production’s message. By using the imagery and symbolism representative of what the play is about, one is simultaneously engaging an audience which is sympathetic to the message of the production, and initiating a dialogue with that audience, which they will bring with them when they attend the performance. If something like the following image were to be utilised, an idea of the play’s central motifs and connotations could be immediately recognised and understood.

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<sup>235</sup> Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet, *Theatre and Performance Design, A Reader in Scenography*, New York, Routledge. 2010, p, 307.





I think it goes without saying that the image itself is terribly executed, however, the utilisation of the image of Faustus summoning Mephistopheles, from the cover page of the 1620 production of the B-text, with Tony Abbott's face transposed over Faustus' and the Australian Liberal Party logo displayed in the background, a message is immediately conveyed to the observer, familiar with the combination of images, that we are here depicting Tony Abbott as Doctor Faustus, or vice-versa.

The second means by which one might directly convey meaning of the production to their audience is by means of the production programme. It is not unusual for the programme to contain a play synopsis which implies what the production has been developed to convey, rather than an explicit expression of what the play is actually about as

a classical text. One could take this opportunity to express the correlation in direct terms to the audience before the play even begins.

There is also an opportunity in the character/actor bio section of the programme, wherein the audience is typically provided with information about who the actors are and what their performance history has been. If this is used to describe and display the correlative individuals to Marlowe's characters, as though they were the actors themselves, the audience are given explicit details about who the Marlovian characters are and the characters that they are being made out to be. For an example, the following might be provided:



Role: **Valdes**. (Actress: Gina Rinehart)

Gina is the head of the multi-million dollar mineral exploration and extraction company, Hancock Prospecting. She is reputedly Australia's richest person.

Role: Valdes.

Valdes is an experienced Magician, intent on leading Faustus down the dark path on which she herself has embarked. Valdes is a malignant figure whose obsession with wealth, power and the dark arts have corrupted her and many others around her.

By combining multiple layers of communication a modern theatre practitioner can successfully ensure that the audience fully understands the correlation that is being made between Marlowe's characters, and the real world individuals that one wishes to translate them into, if that is what one wishes to do.



## Conclusion

There is no prescriptive manner in which a theatrical practitioner must produce the works of Christopher Marlowe for the stage. The argument that I have here presented is only intended to be suggestive. It is important that I specify possible ramifications of this thesis, and the methodology presented therein. The suggestion that Marlowe's text should be considered as a relevant tool for contemporary social critique might prompt a scenario wherein Doctor Faustus ceases to be conveyed as an historically embedded figure, whose narrative reflects the ideologies that Marlowe had originally intended to convey, and with which he imbued his text.

If the methodologies presented within this thesis are adopted universally, without recognition of other methods of production, the Faustus figure might cease to exist as Marlowe had originally intended. If this were the case, Faustus would cease to be the significant cultural figure that he currently is, and the meaning that his fall from grace represents might cease to maintain its significant meaning. In this scenario, Faustus would not thereafter represent a significantly important figure around which one might base a theatrical production, and other sources might have to be sought. Based on this theoretical outcome, the method that has been encouraged in this thesis can only successfully exist if it is adopted as either a novelty, or within fringes of the theatrical world.

As with any play text, if one means to produce a Marlovian play, one must properly understand the context from which it originated. Therefore, it is pertinent that one understands Marlowe as a man within his own context: who he was and how he came to create the piece of work that one is now using for one's own creative purpose. In regard to *Doctor Faustus*, I believe that Marlowe's scholarism was the most substantial influence in

the play's creation. As a result of this reasoning, the information provided in this text regarding Marlowe's progress, relates primarily to Marlowe's educational development.

Further to a practitioner's understanding of the playwright one must fully understand the text. A successful production of any text demands that the practitioner fully understand the text that he/she is producing. In the instance of *Doctor Faustus* this understanding hinges on the practitioner also understanding the complex social, religious and political context of sixteenth-century England in which it originated. This requirement is made even more difficult by the existence of two versions of the text, both of which originate from and convey entirely different messages which must be distinguished and understood independently from one another.

A rich understanding of a text such as *Doctor Faustus* will very likely lead a practitioner to recognise issues within the text which must be dealt with for the sake of production. Regardless of the fact that *Doctor Faustus* is an indisputable masterpiece of English literature, its antiquity presents problems for modern audiences. Such problems relate to a combination of play structure, conventions of character and topical reference, some of these issues I have briefly discussed within this text. There is no way of providing a definitive and lasting solution to any one of these contextual issues. Therefore the practitioner is responsible for recognising the issues that must be dealt with and must be expected to provide effective solutions for the sake of their audience.

One of the benefits in approaching a play such as *Doctor Faustus* is that it has an extensive stage history. Many of the problems that a modern practitioner may recognise within this text will very likely have been discovered provisionally and solved by other practitioners in the past. Recognising the work of these practitioners and looking to their productions for inspiration or advice can be a helpful method for developing one's own

interpretation. However, it must be stressed that if one is to look to the work of others for inspiration, it is essential that one does so after one has already gained a full understanding of the text in its own terms. It must also be advised, that he/she take a wide sample of productions and views them with a critical eye, gathering feedback from other observers and critics where possible.

The research that one carries out in preparation for one's production of any text will assist in making it relevant. Nevertheless ultimately the practitioners' own artistic vision and textual interpretation must prevail. Christopher Marlowe lived and produced works at a particular point in time. That context has become better understood as research continues in the field; for modern practitioners contexts will always continue to change.

Interpretations of the text will never stop developing as they are dependent upon the practitioner's own contextual interpretation of the text. There is no definitively right or wrong way to produce Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* for the stage. This socially, politically and religiously fecund text will maintain its relevance on the stage for a long time: it is the practitioner's job to determine how this is to happen.

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