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In memory of Clifford Leech

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9

JULIA REINHARD LUPTON

The Jew of Malta

It is the fate of Marlowe's Jew of Malta to find himself forever lurking a few steps behind Shakespeare's Shylock. Barabas is Shylock's evil twin and nasty precursor – a rougher, meaner, and more starkly stereotypical stage Jew whose exorbitant antics bring into relief that glimmer of humanity that partly illuminates Shakespeare's achievement. Yet it is the task of criticism to try to encounter the play on its own terms, though ever attuned to the sequence of literary events that the play will set into motion. Readings of *The Jew* have approached the work from three basic angles: in relation to the formal development of English theatre and poetry (Eliot, Bevington, Cheney); as a key contribution to European representations of the Jews (Hunter, Greenblatt, Shapiro); and as an exploration of the larger Mediterranean cultural and political landscape in the English imagination (Bartels, Cartelli). This chapter takes the Jewish question as its central focus, but with an eye to the theatrical medium that displays that world for us. The play, I argue, stages different forms of fellowship – of social, religious, and economic association – that configure and reconfigure the different characters of the play in tendentious and fragile alliances.

The word 'fellowship', prominent, for example, in the New Testament but borrowed from the language of Greek social life, is a term that evokes forms of social affiliation that occur outside of or in dialogue with more official modes of civic participation such as citizenship. In a play so dominated by the survivalist egoism of its central character, the focus on fellowship may seem counter-intuitive – unless, that is, we think about social relations in terms of the liquid play of self-interests in tandem with the strange attractors of religious identity. By looking at intersecting circles of fellowship in the play, we may avoid simple oppositions between Self and Other in favour of a template of multiple memberships and shifting allegiances in a public sphere characterized by ethnic, religious, and economic fragmentation and by a complex layering of legal, political, and social institutions. These circles expand to include not only the different groups represented in the play, but

also those involved in the production and enjoyment of the drama itself, since the public theatre of Marlowe's day was a space in which new forms of fellowship, of social, sexual, and economic fraternization were emerging with striking vitality and punch, and on ground cleared both physically and symbolically by the reformed Church.

The Jews of Malta

Malta is a small island located off the coast of Sicily, which had some jurisdiction over it; Sicily in turn answered to Spain during the sixteenth century. The Turks had attempted to conquer Malta in 1565, heightening England's interests in helping to maintain Christian control of the strategically sensitive island. Although Malta was part of the dominions of Spain, it was under direct rule by the Knights of St John (also called the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights of Malta), a militant Catholic order with its roots in the Crusades.¹ In Marlowe's play, the rule of the Knights appears to co-exist with a secular system of magistracies, represented by the Governor Ferneze (presumably not himself a Knight of St John) and a 'senate-house', indicating some form of constitutional government inherited from Roman law. Marlowe adds to this scenario fealty to the Turks, whom he represents as having succeeded in their Maltese offensive.

Lodged within these overlapping and often conflicting Spanish, Turkish, Papal, and Maltese political orders sits still another institution with its own limited jurisdiction, namely the Jewish community that had existed in Malta since Roman times. Like other such communities in Christian Europe and the Mediterranean, the Jews of Malta functioned as a semi-autonomous, self-regulating body within the larger political order of Malta. Excluded from the official life of the city and subject to special taxation, the Jews of Malta nonetheless pursued their own forms of social and religious congregation. In Malta, the Jewish community bore the formal title *universitas judeorum* (university of the Jews) with *universitas* naming 'the whole', the corporate unity formed by a group of people living in a host state. When the Jews were expelled from Spain and its dominions in 1492, the Maltese community was also officially dissolved, although its inhabitants were offered the choice of conversion, which some took, often leading to intermarriage.² (We see echoes of this path in the romance and conversion of Barabas's daughter Abigail.) In Marlowe's Malta, the Jews have not yet been exiled (though they had been expelled from England much earlier, in 1289). Instead, they engage in trade and money-lending, and we also see them consulting among themselves concerning matters financial and political. A community apart, bound by their own peculiar laws and customs, they are also capable of interchange

with Christians on matters exegetical and sexual as well as economic, as seen in Barabas's offer of commentaries on Maccabees to young Mathias, Christian suitor to his daughter.

As Greenblatt has argued, Barabas, like Shylock after him, flourishes in the realm of pre-political association and exchange that make up what political theorists and social scientists call 'civil society' – the modes of informal affiliation and negotiation that shape the give and take of the stock market and the coffee house, the university and the brothel, the trade union and the country club.³ Excluded from *civic* life, Barabas, like Shylock after him, flourishes in the realm of *civil* society. Although both words pertain to the life of the city, and often function interchangeably, the *civic* refers more precisely to the political participation of citizens in the official rule of the polis, whereas the *civil* refers to those social, economic, and domestic associations, *civilian* rather than properly *civic*, that exist outside the operation of the political per se. It is within the civil space of economic and social exchange that Barabas engineers, manipulates, and falls out of different forms of private association with Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Grouped in their own communities and furthering their economic interests, the Jews became symbols of both *self-interest* and *special interests*, giving a recognizable face and a social body to the dynamic yet disintegrative effects of capitalism on the traditional fabric of communal life.

The identification of the Jews with the atomizing aspects of civil society, however, is not a purely secular phenomenon, but occurs as the result of a theological quandary. The Jews occupy a troubled place in Christian historiography and political thought. They represent the foundation, the 'Old Testament', of a Christianity seen to flow naturally from the promises and prophecies of the Israelites. The hermeneutic practice of 'typology', in which characters, stories, or images from the Old Testament are read as prefigurations of the great events of Jesus' life (e.g., Isaac = Christ), was an organizing principle not only of sermons and religious commentaries, but also of the visual arts and sacred theatre. Yet, if Judaism was simply a foundation designed to support the soaring edifice of the Church, why did the Jews continue to persist as a distinct religion and people? The problem with Judaism from the Christian perspective was its ongoing resistance to the universal invitation of Christianity, a resistance evidenced by the Jews' continued allegiance to such group-defining rites as circumcision and dietary laws.

Barabas, as Greenblatt first noted, is the consummate figure of civil society's uncivil core. Early in the play, Barabas disengages his ambitions from anything political, declaring of himself and his fellow Jews that 'we come not to be kings' (I.I.I28). Proclaiming himself his own neighbour, he firmly

separates his destiny from that of Malta: ‘*Ego mihimet sum semper proximus* [I am always nearest to myself], / Why, let ’em enter, let ’em take the town’ (1.1.189–90). When Barabas is finally made Governor of Malta by the Turks at the end of the play, he negotiates the former governor’s return to office as quickly as possible, in favour of the clearer and more comfortable good of financial gain. Moreover, even within the limited borders of the Jewish community itself, he refuses to cast in his lot with a common good. As he tells his fellow Jews on their way to the senate-house, ‘If anything shall there concern our state, / Assure yourselves I’ll look – [*Aside*] unto myself’ (1.1.171–2). In Marlowe’s Malta, the organized Jewish community is dysfunctional at best; separated from the larger body politic, the purely civil body residing within it is in turn subject to internal dissension and fragmentation.

Barabas’s renunciation of political ambition in favour of economic gain reflects the actual position of the Jews in the state. When the Jews are called before the senate-house, an at least nominally representative body, they find no representation in it, no formal political place. When Ferneze first asks the Jews for aid, Barabas responds, ‘Alas, my lord, we are no soldiers’ (1.2.50). The Jews, he is telling us, are permanently and professionally *civilians*, exempt from military and political obligations by their status as resident aliens. The further interchange alternates among civil, civic, and theological definitions of membership and obligation:

Barabas: Are strangers with your tribute to be taxed?

2 *Knight*: Have strangers leave with us to get their wealth?

Then let them with us contribute.

Barabas: How! equally?

Ferneze: No, Jew, like infidels.

For through our sufferance of your hateful lives,

Who stand accursèd in the sight of heaven,

These taxes and afflictions are befall’n. (JM 1.2.58–67)

Barabas links taxation to political membership – why, he asks, should non-citizens be taxed? The Second Knight counters that although the Jews are denied civic participation, they are nonetheless allowed to pursue their economic interests in the civil realm and thus owe some of their wealth to the state. Barabas protests against equal contributions – ‘How? equally?’ – a response that presumes equity among citizens and resident aliens with respect to taxation. Yet equality by definition pertains only to those included within a legally defined set (whether that of a specific community or of humanity itself), and Barabas will soon discover that the Jews, residing outside the field of formal citizenship, will be taxed quite a bit more than equally.

The grounds for such exclusion are theological, we are told. Because the Jews are ‘accursèd in the sight of heaven’, Ferneze argues, they must be taxed above and beyond the Christian citizens by the political body that suffers their existence. The scandal of the Jews’ survival into the Christian era requires their political exclusion, while their consequent habitation of the purely economic domain of social life justifies their exorbitant taxation. Conversion, however, remains a solution during this phase of Jewish–Gentile relations (distinguishing it, for example, from the race-based Nuremburg laws of the Nazis). The articles read by Ferneze’s Officer state that ‘Secondly, he that denies to pay shall straight become a Christian’ (1.2.72), implying that converted Jews will become naturalized citizens or subjects, cancelling their ties to Judaism in order to enter into the body politic. Political membership, here and throughout the Western tradition, occurs at a cost, requiring the renunciation of local, familial, tribal, or ‘particular’ allegiances in exchange for more general or universal ones.

The Jews of Malta, however, prefer to maintain their ‘hateful lives’ – their continued existence as Jews, as well as their economic livelihoods. In this scene and elsewhere in the play, the ‘life’ of the Jews is a code word for the particularism that they instantiate. Belying the typological pattern of Christian hermeneutics, the Jews have persisted as a religious group; surviving past their due date, an uncanny, even undead quality colours the weird vitality they embody in the Christian imagination. Survival, moreover, implies compromise and pragmatism, a less than strict adherence to heroic or moral codes. We might recall here, for example, the ethos of survival exemplified by Odysseus, who lives into middle age thanks to the deftness of his intuitions. In a different historical register, think as well of the moral and emotional ‘gray zone’ inhabited by survivors of the Holocaust, faced with the horror of impossible choices; for this generation, and even for their descendants, to live is not-to-have-died with the others.

Barabas derives his name from Barabbas, the Jewish prisoner who was released by the Roman authorities in place of Jesus at the behest of his Jewish accusers:

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?’

(Matt. 27: 15–17; cf. Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18)

In the scene before Pilate, the Jews choose to pardon Barabbas, not Jesus, forever marking the former as the one-who-did-not-die-in-the-place-of-Christ, the one who was not substituted for Jesus. To gain this life, however, is to

accrue a historical debt: when Pilate washes his hands, the Jews reply, “His blood be on us and on our children” (Matt. 27: 25). Released by Pilate on behalf of the Jews, the survival of Barabbas at the expense of Jesus will be irrevocably linked to the formal exclusion of the Jews from political life, their subsequent identification with fiscal dealings and misdealings, and their pursuit of alternative forms of social organization and self-regulation within the commonwealths that host them.

In the trial scene of *The Jew of Malta*, Ferneze, washing his own hands of responsibility for the Jews, explicitly evokes the debt earned by the Jews in the court of Pilate:

If your first curse fall heavy on thy head,
And make thee poor and scorned of all the world,
'Tis not our fault, but thy inherent sin.
(JM 1.2.110–12)

When the Jews of Malta are asked to give up their wealth for the greater good of the state, Barabas refuses. As he declares to Abigail in the development of the scene, ‘No, I will live; nor loathe I this my life’ (1.2.267). *This my life*: the phrase names the particularized field of religious survival and economic livelihood that places the Jews both in and out of Malta, as a tolerated, semi-autonomous body of resident aliens carrying out economic functions for the larger civic order.

Marlowe fashioned Barabas out of the allegorical figure of the Vice, an archetype of villainy inherited from the stage devils of sacred drama and developed in the minimally secular morality plays of the sixteenth century.⁴ As Greenblatt and others have noted, Barabas loses rather than gains in individuality as the play progresses, falling back into his allegorical origins (Greenblatt, p. 150). His infamous autobiography of crimes (‘As for myself, I walk abroad a’ nights . . .’ (2.3.177–201)) gathers together a poisonous bouquet of generalized anti-Jewish stereotypes interwoven with Machiavelian motifs of policy and self-interest. During this period, the writings of the Italian political theorist were seen as the embodiment of corrupt political pragmatism and devious atheism; Marlowe famously begins his play with a prologue speech by ‘Machiavel’, resolutely inserting the theological discourse of anti-Judaism into the frame of modern politics, a fusion continued here in Barabas’s allegorical autobiography.⁵ The speech ends with Barabas’s triumphant self-accounting: ‘But mark how I am blessed for plaguing them; / I have as much coin as will buy the town’ (2.3.202–3). The infinite riches of the biblical concept of blessing have been contracted to the little room of self-interest, which in turn becomes an echo-chamber that traps, redoubles, and caricatures the history of Jewish survival in and as civil society.

The new Jews: from Israel to Islam

Barabas delivers his mythic autobiography in the profane setting of the slave-market, where he will purchase his side-kick, the Turkish Ithamore. The speech functions as a down-payment in the relationship between the Jew and the Turk, who responds in kind with his own briefer but no less vivid accounting of Muslim crimes. Barabas represents his new association with Ithamore as a *fellowship*, an informal alliance based on mutual interests: 'make account of me / As of thy fellow; we are villains both; / Both circumcised, we hate Christians both' (2.3.225-7; emphasis added). Barabas founds their fellowship on the mark of circumcision borne by each partner in the new relationship. Circumcision, a sign of covenantal belonging for the Jewish community, becomes a means of linking the Jew to the Muslim, significantly expanding the kinds of pre-political association possible in Malta to include an alliance between members of two distinct non-Christian groups.

Circumcision is a key symbol in biblical typology. In Judaism, circumcision had functioned as a rite of civic initiation linking the members of the Abrahamic covenant to each other and to God. St Paul, in his efforts to build mixed congregations composed of both Jewish and Gentile Christians, transmuted the covenantal signature of circumcision into an interior symbol, a 'circumcision of the heart', that would no longer require a physical cut as the means of initiation.⁶ In the post-Pauline world of official Christianities, circumcision became a mark of Jewish obdurance. Moreover, by the time that Marlowe writes his play, the ranks of the circumcised have grown to include the Muslims, bearers of the world-view most immediately at odds with Christian moral and territorial claims. Represented first by the Arabs and then by the Turks, Islam dangerously combined the circumcised legal separatism of the Jews with the universal mission of the Christians. Islam, like Judaism, was a religion living not far away but close at hand, which, far from worshipping many gods, ascribed to monotheisms at least as strict as Christianity's own. Moreover, Judaism and Islam stem from the same Abrahamic lineage as Christianity; the three groups are, in the Muslim phrase, 'People of the Book', neighbouring religions organized around revealed Scriptures that share many of the same prophets and patriarchs. The knowledge of the Law epitomized by Jewish and Muslim monotheism meant that these groups had both more affinity with and more resistance to genuine Christian conversion than their pagan counterparts.⁷

Islam, the youngest of the three Abrahamic religions, came to represent to Christianity a kind of Judaism after the fact, a redoubling of Jewish intransigence to the Christian revelation. As such, Islam executes a second, even

crueller blow to Christianity's historical vision, since modern Judaism (from the Christian perspective) is a stubborn carry-over from an earlier moment, but Islam from its very inception administered its proselytizing mission in full knowledge of Christian teachings. The rapid expansion of Islam throughout the Levant, North Africa, the Far East, and the Balkans, however, presented the inverse of Judaism's dispersed, sequestered, and inward-looking communities. The third Revelation announced by Islam rejected Jewish particularism in favour of Christian universalism; like the rulers of European Christendom, the Arab and then Turkish powers used the theme of spiritual equality among the nations to support their missionary, imperial, and commercial projects.⁸ For Renaissance Christendom, Islam represented a double scandal, the catastrophic bastardization of both Christian universalism and Jewish particularism.

In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe exploits these linkages between Judaism and Islam. The name 'Ithamore', for example, is a variant of the biblical 'Ithamar', the youngest son of Aaron and hence part of the priestly line of the Levites, professional upholders of Jewish ritual law. Islamicizing '-mar' into '-more' (which sounds like 'Moor'), Marlowe signals the fellowship between Jewish and Islamic legalisms signed by circumcision. Ithamore's legal status as a slave also picks up a theme long associated with the Jews, the motif of enslavement to the law. According to Paul, the Jews under the law were like a child-heir, 'no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father' (Gal. 4: 1-3). In Paul's thinking, the law is a necessary but transitional stage in both the history of world religion and the spiritual development of each individual. Just as a child comes of age and leaves the slavish jurisdiction of his father, so Judaism (and later Islam) should leave behind its laws and enter into the freedom of Christian grace.

Ithamore is a slave who will be manumitted at the time set by his adoptive father, Barabas – he will be emancipated, however, not into Christian freedom but into further fellowship in villainy with the unconverted Jew. When Barabas disinherits Abigail on the occasion of her conversion to Christianity, he adopts Ithamore as his heir and proceeds to poison not only his daughter, but all the nuns with whom she now resides. Moving from Judaism to Christianity, Abigail is a positive instance of the proper typological progression from Old to New Testaments. The doubling of her conversions, like the doubling of her boyfriends, sours the sentimental seriousness of Abigail's turn to Christianity. Nonetheless, Abigail's civic ventures lay out the key exit strategies from Judaism – marriage and conversion – that demarcate the limited forms of openness that Christian commonwealths entertained in relation to their Jewish populations (Wettinger, p. 128).

For Barabas, in keeping with Jewish law on this matter, a Christian daughter is no longer alive for him. In her place, he adopts Ithamore: 'O trusty Ithamore, no servant, but my friend: / I here adopt thee for mine only heir, / All that I have is thine when I am dead, / And whilst I live use half; spend as myself' (3.5.39–43). They then proceed to poison the nunnery with a pot of rice. The adoption of Ithamore, a legal transfer of affect and property conducted in relation to a pot of soup, parodies the biblical story of Esau and Jacob, a favourite topic of typological interpretation. In Genesis, Esau is older brother to the younger Jacob, who will inherit the blessing of their father Isaac through a trick arranged by their mother Rebecca, who sends the younger twin to their blind father with a pot of lentils and a hairy disguise (Gen. 27). In the Jewish tradition, the story narrates the founding line of the twelve tribes of Israel (the name that Jacob will later receive), while Esau becomes a type of various neighbouring groups hostile to Israel. St Paul, on the other hand, takes this and other stories about younger brothers ascending over older brothers as an allegory of the supersession of Christianity over Judaism (e.g., Rom. 9: 10–13). Whereas for the Jews, Jacob is to Esau as Israel is to her enemies, for Paul, Jacob is to Esau as Christianity is to Judaism – a transvaluation and partial reversal of the story's original meaning.

In Marlowe's replay of the story from Genesis, Ithamore delivers the soup that will kill Abigail. He in effect assumes the role of Jacob, receiving the blessing of Barabas / Isaac in the place of the more legitimate sibling. In this allegory, the Muslims are the new Jews, inheriting in the place of the legitimate child (who has sensibly converted to Christianity). If Abigail has made the proper typological transition from Judaism to Christianity, Ithamore travels in the reverse direction, from the second-order Judaism of Islam to the inveterate Judaism that it mimics. The fellowship of Jew and Muslim represents the double negation of the positive conversion effected by Abigail, who becomes their sorry sacrifice.

As such, it is, like all of Barabas's alliances, a fellowship bound to fall apart. The legal formalism of the adoption indicates that their relationship remains one of merely civil association, and will never attain the pathos of a genuine blood tie, a national identity, or a new faith. If circumcision is the initial signature of fellowship for Ithamore and Barabas, it is soon devalued in Ithamore's dismissive remarks once he has fallen under the spell of the courtesan Bellamira. He mocks the Jew's dietary laws, and then links Barabas's poor hygiene to his circumcision: 'He never put on clean shirt since he was circumcised' (4.4.72). What before had bound the two together in mutual enmity against Christians has now been absorbed into a battery of anti-Jewish images that Ithamore glibly recites in his bid for inclusion in Malta's brothel culture. Ithamore closes the scene (and the door on Jewish

fellowship) with the cryptic saying, 'The meaning has a meaning. Come, let's in; / To undo a Jew is charity, not sin' (4.4.91-2). Ithamore has learned to speak the language of the Christians, who cynically use the language of typology to oil the economy while keeping their hands clean.

Rezoning

All of this takes place not in the margins of scriptural commentaries, but in the space of the new public theatre. Marlowe's stage would have consisted of the main platform, an inner stage at the back, and a gallery above, regions easily refigured throughout the drama to represent different locales in Malta (the houses of Barabas, the senate-house, the marketplace, the brothel). These rapid scenic remappings, the staple of Elizabethan theatre, are symbolic as well as pragmatic, since each shift rezones Malta's civil and religious sectors not only within the represented world of the play, but also ultimately in relation to the conditions of English theatre itself.

Act 1, scene 1 opens with Barabas 'in his counting house' – perhaps positioned towards the back of the main stage, more likely discovered in its inner stage. The enclosure effectively frames Barabas as a type of Avarice, identifying the Jew with the mercantile economy and with a long line of allegorical Vice figures (Lunney, pp. 107-8). Yet this narrow space soon opens outwards; Cheney imagines Barabas gesturing expansively to encompass the whole stage, 'thereby identifying the room of the counting-house with the room of the theatre' (p. 145). The sweep of the hand locates both Barabas and Marlowe at the crossroads of sacred and civil orders of representations.

Barabas will, however, soon lose this house. The appropriation of Barabas's property and its conversion to a nunnery recalls another familiar typological theme, the transformation of the Synagogue into the Church. For example, in Renaissance art the Virgin Mary is often depicted in front of a building in ruins, alluding to the decline of the Synagogue and its renovation as the Church, of which Mary herself was a favourite symbol.⁹ Like Mary, Abigail passes from the Old to the New Testament, a consummate figure of Judeo-Christian womanhood; and like Mary's ruins, her calling takes place in relation to a building that has undergone radical conversion. Shortly, Abigail will appear on the balcony of the new nunnery, habited as a nun, while her father frets beneath her window like a ghost of Passovers past. With the daughter above and the father below, the scene visually schematizes the positioning of superstructure over foundation, Church over Synagogue – the architecture of typology itself.

Yet Barabas has secreted some of his wealth in this typological edifice. Hidden 'close underneath the plank / That runs along the upper-chamber

floor' (I.2.297–8), the stash of jewels is an insurance plan, a pocket of movable property that will protect his household against the whims of the state and the Jews' uncertain claims to real estate, depositing the chance of Jewish survival in the crawl space of Christian history. Barabas will use the wealth, as Garrett Sullivan observes in this volume, to 'buy *another* house' – to cultivate another place where the identification of Jewish survival with civil society can continue to unfold. The *converso*, Abigail, is no Virgin Mary; Barabas remains true to his namesake Barabbas, refusing to die into history, and the theological rezoning of Malta remains incomplete.

The play's architecture of conversion and its discontents takes place on the stage of the public theatre. Mobilizing the iconography of the Judeo-Christian turn, the expropriation of Barabas's property has a more contemporary reference as well, namely to Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, including the urban and suburban monastic liberties on which many of London's public theatres now stood. The monastic holdings had always carried the special legal status of 'liberties', not subject to royal and municipal jurisdictions and governed by their own ecclesiastical courts that answered to Rome. When the Church's lands passed to the Crown, the tie with Rome was of course broken, but the lands remained legal 'liberties', free from municipal control. The liberties could thus be leased for various forms of unregulated economic and social activity, including brothels, taverns, and theatres. Blackfriars and Whitefriars, theatres built on liberties within the city of London, retained in their names a reference to their monastic origins.¹⁰

Like the Jewish community of Malta, the liberties of London isolate civil society as a set of phenomena separate from official civic life – a jurisdiction unto themselves, defined at least initially by religious law, and animated by the free flow of capital, where various forms of fellowship take root in a volatile microclimate potentially at odds with that of the commonwealth that houses it. Moreover, the evacuation of this space for use by the theatre is linked to a complex juridical, political, and theological operation, that of the dissolution of the monasteries. The public theatre is given a Protestant frame – the same frame that allows Marlowe to couch his corrosive representation of Christian hypocrisy under the neutralizing rubric of anti-Catholic satire. These Christians may be nasty, but after all, they are Spanish Catholics, not English Protestants; indeed, the theatrical space we are currently occupying exists thanks to the break with Rome. But – the public theatre is not a church; in fact, it may even be an anti-church, an underworld of carnal, criminal, and economic rather than genuinely spiritual congregation. In this, it shares something with the community of the Jews.

In *The Jew of Malta*, the architecture of the stage discovers within itself a series of real and symbolic transformations – of synagogue into nunnery, of

Catholic monastery holdings into Protestant royal property, and of the old monastic liberties into new theatrical ones. If the Jew is a figure of uncivil society, so too is the actor: each ‘congregates’, engaging in forms of affiliation and transaction, of dangerous fellowship, that exist with some degree of liberty in relation to the political jurisdictions of city and state. Cheney has noted the mounting equation between Barabas and theatre in the course of the play, culminating in his appearance as an actor–poet–musician in the house of Bellamira in Act 4 and his building of the final stage set in Act 5 (pp. 154–6). Designing and installing a trap for Calymath, Barabas meanwhile plans a bloody end for the Turkish troops in a ‘monastery / Which standeth as an outhouse to the town’ (5.4.36). Barabas’s urban theatre of cruelty finds its suburban counterpart in the liberties just outside the city, the same region ‘o’er the walls’ of Malta where his body is thrown for a few moments of feigned death and mock resurrection (5.2.58; Mullaney, pp. 58–9).

While the Turkish soldiers are being cooked alive at their own banquet, Barabas hosts their leader Calymath along with Ferneze, Del Bosco, and the Knights of St John in his ‘homely citadel’. This final feast is Barabas’s literalization of the universal dream of the New Testament, where the sharing of food among Jewish and Gentile Christians is a key feature of the new fellowship in Christ (e.g., Gal. 2: 11–13). Barabas sets a table where Jews, Christians, and Muslims will eat together, abrogating the dietary laws that have kept both Jews and Muslims from the common table of the nations – but his plan, of course, is to drown the Turkish Selim in the soup pot in order to serve him to the Christian governor in exchange for a hefty tip. Moreover, his reward will be collected *from the citizens of Malta* (5.2.29) – from the very legal group that has excluded Barabas from its ranks based on his non-conversion.

The opposite will in fact occur: the bustling stage-engineer, ‘*very busy*’ on his ‘dainty gallery’, will be cooked in his own pot of soup, cursed by his own blessing, as he falls from the balcony into the inner stage below. This is the play’s final rezoning. In a classic set of reversals, the bearer of bad soup is now stewed in his own cauldron, materializing the Hell’s Mouth of sacred drama. The inner stage, once cast as the Jew’s counting house, is now his coffin. This interior frame discloses our first and last visions of the Jew: from this box he issues, and to this box he shall return. Between these two tableaux, a series of typological remappings has occurred that reflect on the congregational space of the new public theatre. Insofar as Marlowe connects the libertine grounds of the theatre to the civil society of the Jews, the playwright begins to imagine a universe, or at least a *universitas*, a restricted sphere of limited autonomy engaged by a collectivity, in which social, artistic, and religious

experiment might take place in some degree of separation from state control and supervision. Marlowe's point is not that the artist, like the Jew, is the Other to the Self projected by a normative and exclusive political order, but rather, more generously and more broadly, that artists, like Jews, can recreate, reinhabit, and remap the civil spaces left over by the incomplete transformations and uncanny survivals of religious forms in modernity. As such, the play constitutes an invitation to think outside the box – the very box of traditional dramatic closure into which Barabas falls with such ferocious style – precisely by making its infinite space echo so deeply from within.

NOTES

1. Emily C. Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 88–9.
2. Margaret Williams, *The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 27, 31; Godfrey Wettinger, *The Jews of Malta in the Late Middle Age* (Malta: Midsea Books, 1985), pp. 116–39.
3. Stephen Greenblatt, 'Marlowe, Marx, and Anti-Semitism' (1978), in Richard Wilson (ed.), *Christopher Marlowe* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), pp. 140–58.
4. On Marlowe and the morality tradition, see David Bevington, *From 'Mankind' to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama before 1595* (Manchester University Press, 2002).
5. On Marlowe and Machiavelli, see Cheney, *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood* (University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 136–56. On Machiavelli and the Renaissance political and literary imagination, see Wayne Rebhorn, *Foxes and Lions: Machiavelli's Confidence Men* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); and Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton University Press, 1994).
6. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977); Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Mikael Tellbe, *Paul between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2001).
7. Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'Othello Circumcised: Shakespeare and the Pauline Discourse of Nations', *Representations* 57 (1997), 73–89.
8. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Color in Islam* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 1–28.
9. Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), I: 133–40.
10. Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (University of Chicago Press, 1988).

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II

THOMAS HEALY

Doctor Faustus

Enter with Devils, giving crowns and rich apparel to Faustus, and dance and then depart.

Faustus: Speak, Mephistopheles. What means this show?

Mephistopheles: Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal
And to show thee what magic can perform.

(*DF* 2.1.83–5)¹

From the mid-eighteenth century when interest in *Doctor Faustus* revived, critical attention on the play has largely focused on what may be termed its metaphysical concerns. Is Marlowe challenging conventional Christian perspectives on hell and heaven, or does his play ultimately conform with them? Is Faustus a tragic hero or a misguided sinner? Though scholarship on *Doctor Faustus* has increasingly complicated issues surrounding the origin and status of the play's two main versions, ideas of what may be termed high seriousness have dominated debate about its content. For both readers of a text and spectators at performances, attention is commonly concentrated on those scenes that engage most thoroughly with a tragic dimension. The scenes of farce attract much less attention. But what type of play engaged early spectators? How might *Doctor Faustus* have been performed in the theatres of Elizabethan England? This chapter seeks to re-examine the modern preoccupation with *Faustus* as metaphysical tragedy by thinking about it in the cultural milieu from which it first arose. Interestingly, many of the issues raised by the place of the stage in early modern London still seem to resonate strangely within current critical debates about *Doctor Faustus*.

At the start of the Reformation in England, the new Protestants celebrated players along with printers and preachers as crucial conduits through which the reform movement could spread its ideas.² By the 1580s, though, some of the more strident elements within the now dominant Protestant Church of England orchestrated a series of pamphlet attacks on the London theatres as sinful places that directly conflicted with the efforts of the godly to win souls to religion. For the city's civic and religious authorities, the theatres were now 'a great offence from the church of God and hindrance to his gospel'.³ But the court would have none of it; the theatres remained open. Nor did

such attacks appear to affect the conduct of thousands of Londoners who regularly flocked to Southwark on the south bank of the Thames to witness performances in the new commercially run theatres being built there. Indeed, by helping to make theatrical distractions seem a questionable activity, such attacks may have helped to heighten the playhouses' attractions.⁴

For the godly, the new commercial theatres of the 1580s had chosen entertainment over edification; they had become places disorderly and unstable. Ideologically, they now exemplified Calvin's fears about 'theatres of the world' where humanity might be stunned, dazzled, and blinded by the world's allurements that falsely promised grace and sweetness.⁵ Practically, the playhouse appeared to be in direct competition with the pulpit, with many Londoners choosing the pleasures of the players over the instruction of the preachers. But, for some at least, the stakes were higher than what might simply appear to be a 'ratings war' between Church and playhouse vying for audience share. The Corporation of London argued: 'to play in plague time is to increase the plague by infection; to play out of plague time is to draw the plague by offendings of God, upon occasion of such plays'.⁶ The city's ostensible moral health might be directly equated with its physical and commercial health.

Significantly, a number of these contemporary attacks on plays distinguish the drama in textual form from it in performance. While allowing a didactic appropriateness in reading certain plays, when drama was performed it became part of a satanic opposition to the Word of God. Even when a performance might seem to be edifying for its spectators, it was merely the devil's attempt, 'perceiving his comedies begin to stink', to sweeten its moral corruption.⁷ Countering this, others defended the drama by arguing that theatrical spectacle was effective in helping to restore moral order, claiming instances when those witnessing performances of murders found themselves drawn to confess similar crimes.⁸ Dramatic spectacle, therefore, could also be perceived as an effective vehicle to root out sin and help preserve the godly English. Despite vocal Puritan criticism, English Protestantism never abandons its interest in the drama as an instrument for reform.⁹

Was *Doctor Faustus* originally designed to challenge or subvert such criticisms directed against the stage by deliberately performing the opposite of a traditional morality play, one in which the norms that govern moral certainties about good and evil are displaced and ridiculed?¹⁰ Conversely, was it attempting to marry a dramatic morality tradition inherited from the early reformed Church with the new demands for spectacle and variety in the popular commercial theatres: seeking to prove that entertainment and edification could be successfully conjoined? The difficulties inherent in approaching

such questions may be exemplified by considering *Doctor Faustus's* opening and closing choruses (effectively the same in both the play's main existing versions). The play opens:

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.

(*DF* Prologue 1–7)

This seems to propose that the play will meet the expectations of the popular theatre. While indicating that it will not be about famous wars or sex and revenge scandals, it is raising expectations about performing something that will conform to these types of plays (Marlowe still intends to 'daunt his heavenly verse'). There is ambiguity of course; Marlowe may be being ironically literal, indicating that *Doctor Faustus* is genuinely *not* going to be similar to these other types of plays. However, though this chorus proceeds to introduce a standard morality *exemplum*, comparing Faustus with Icarus who flew too close to the sun and consequently drowned, Marlowe employs a language of abundance that promises audience gratification in the excess of what we are about to see performed rather than suggesting controlled moral exposition:

For, falling to a devilish exercise,
 And gluttoned more with learning's golden gifts,
 He surfeits upon cursed necromancy;
 Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
 Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss.

(*DF* Prologue 24–8)

In apparent contrast, at the play's conclusion the final chorus seems to be attempting to extract a more conventional morality summary of its events. What we have beheld is for the audience's edification:

Faustus is gone. Regard his hellish fall,
 Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
 Only to wonder at unlawful things,
 Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
 To practise more than heavenly power permits.

(*DF* Epilogue 4–8)

The difficulty is that what an audience has witnessed does not generally correspond with conventional morality instruction. Faustus's rhetorically charged final speech, for instance, is a wonderful piece of theatre that builds to a crescendo of fear and dramatic expectation; it does not provide a sober assessment of his mistaken actions and a reasoned recantation of a mis-spent life. Richard Proudfoot recently describes how, having initially read this speech in a book of verse, he was keen to see its potential released in performance.¹¹ But several excellent productions later he is still waiting: what lingers for him is the visual images at the end.

In fact, this speech's dramatic function seems precisely to promote the final spectacle. With increasing energy and pace it helps develop audience suspense around what is going to happen at its conclusion. It collects a series of fragmentary utterances, some or all of which may have religious and philosophical intelligibility for the spectators, but expressed through a rhetoric that is designed to hurry momentum in delivery. In performance, audiences principally respond to the dramatic atmosphere the words enhance, not the speech's intellectual propositions. Intensifying the theatrical thrill over what we are going to see, Faustus's language promotes immediate sensation rather than reflective judgement. This helps explain why following this scene with a chorus that supposedly provides a moral summary of what we have witnessed is frequently experienced as somehow inappropriate – particularly in the earlier 1604 version of the play, which advances immediately from this scene to the Epilogue.

This last chorus, too, might easily be argued as further provoking its listeners to illicit desires rather than cautioning them through moral orthodoxy. A proper godly summary would try to emphasize that Faustus's necromancy was illusionary, a false prop through which Satan catches souls. Here, though, the chorus alluringly proposes that it possesses real force: it does enable a 'practise' of more than is permitted by heaven. We are invited to 'wonder at unlawful things' that have a deepness that 'doth entice', not to exercise reason to dismiss Faustus's choices. Magic continues to be a source of awe; its depths may be sinister but they continue to tantalize. Claiming to warn the curious, the chorus can easily be imagined as tempting a further pursuit of the very things it counsels against.

Thus, merely examining the choric channels that are ostensibly helping to direct audience understanding, we find that Marlowe employs a language that apparently allows him both moral edification and unconstrained spectacle. We might revel in entertainment with at least a vague sense that the play is fundamentally propounding a conventional morality. Conversely, we may sense that *Doctor Faustus* remains dramatically confused because it is neither instruction nor amusing diversion. Rather than successfully marrying

the apparent polarities of education and entertainment, Marlowe's language compromises the demands of both, providing no secure understanding of what the play is attempting to achieve.

The performance of the material these choruses frame will, of course, determine our understanding of their accuracy in interpreting the action. But with *Doctor Faustus* what should be played between them remains a vexed question for students of Marlowe and directs us to the difficult issue of text and performance during the Renaissance. What we debate *Doctor Faustus* is about is largely predicated on an inscribed textual document, the play we read. Marlowe, though, almost certainly conceived *Faustus* for theatrical performance. It is highly unlikely that he – and/or others who worked on the play – would have imagined readers studying a text of it. Among current readers carefully analysing its language, pursuing its allusions and contextualizing its philosophical and theological reflections, Faustus's final speech, for instance, can appear to be employing its potent poetic images in the interests of emphasizing their content, a process which helps promote critical debate about the ideas expressed. But in performance it is the emotive effects these images confer that take precedence, helping to build dramatic suspense. Textual stability allows moral pedagogy or other critical models about content to dominate considerations of what a play is intellectually trying to express; performance complicates such issues.

It was about midpoint during the first phase of commercial theatre in London (the period *c.* 1580 to *c.* 1640) that Ben Jonson published his 1616 *Workes*. Presenting some of his plays alongside his poems and masques in the expensive format of a folio volume with a title that conveyed high cultural esteem, Jonson unambiguously signalled his desire that his drama should be examined with the seriousness accorded other elite forms of writing. It was probably the success of Jonson's enterprise that prompted Heminge and Condell to edit a folio of Shakespeare's plays in 1623: *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies. Published according to the true Originall Copies*.

From these powerful instances, a subsequent editorial practice developed that envisages that the period's dramatists wrote their plays with a sense of them as literary texts, even though the initial printed production of their drama was haphazard in cheap octavo or quarto editions over which they had no control and often seemingly no interest. As the Shakespeare First Folio title proposes, the original copy of the author's play-text might be salvaged and reconstructed, indicating that (more or less) contemporaries of Shakespeare, who died in 1616, wanted to read his drama as he wrote it. Subsequent editorial practice with all Renaissance drama has largely operated to support a view of authorial recovery: emending corruption and returning us as far

as possible towards a text that reflects what emerged from the dramatist's hand. It is true that current editors realize that plays of the period often exist in different versions and, thus, that a quest for such an authentic text is never going to be wholly possible; yet the understandable editorial imperative to establish the 'best possible' text is still firmly founded on a premise about an 'authorial' text. While it is the case that numerous seventeenth-century playwrights appear to have taken care to preserve an authorial copy of their plays with a view to their dramas having some life on the page as well as the stage, this does not appear the case in the 1580s and early 1590s when *Doctor Faustus* was first performed.

Doctor Faustus was probably originally produced in 1589 by the Lord Admiral's Company. It was revived by the same company under the owner of the Rose theatre, Philip Henslowe, between 1594 and early 1597 when at least twenty-four performances were given. It was again revived late in 1597 and there are indications of other performances during this period. In early 1601, Thomas Bushell entered an edition called 'the plaie of Doctor ffaustus' for publication, but, if printed, no copy has survived. In late 1602, Henslowe paid William Birde and Samuel Rowley four pounds for 'ther adicyones in doctor fostes'. In 1604 a quarto called *The Tragicall History of D. Faustus* was issued for Bushell, indicating the play was 'Written by Ch.Marl.'. In 1616, John Wright, who had purchased the copyright, published a new edition adding 676 lines to the earlier text, dropping 36, and making numerous minor changes. Yet another version appeared in 1663. It has been notably influenced by *The Jew of Malta* and is generally agreed to have no early authority. A further version again was published in 1697 (acted about a decade earlier) called *The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, made into a farce, by Mr Mountford etc.* Thus, *Doctor Faustus* continued to attract 'adicyones' for about a century after its first publication. But if Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is to be recognized in all these editions as a single play, it is only in the sense of it being a compendium of theatrical possibilities: these seventeenth-century texts illustrate how traditions of performance from the inception of the commercial theatres show no reverence for an author's original vision.

One of the best recent scholarly editions of *Doctor Faustus*, by Bevington and Rasmussen, prints two different versions of it (the 1604 'A' text and the 1616 'B' text) and proposes the author as 'Christopher Marlowe and his collaborator and revisers'.¹² Modern editorial debate about *Doctor Faustus* has centred around which of the two early versions of the play more successfully represents Marlowe's design. The dominant view of the mid-twentieth century was that it was the 1616 edition: most editors of this period follow W. W. Greg's position that the earlier 1604 quarto was defective.¹³ But the prevailing recent view has been to prefer 1604.¹⁴ Bevington and Rasmussen

believe their editorial work has now established that the 'A' text was set 'from an authorial manuscript composed of interleaved scenes written by two dramatists': Marlowe and a collaborating playwright (Revels edition, p. 64). The 'B' text represents a revised edition.

While elaborate and cogent arguments are advanced by these editors to claim that it is possible to see a somewhat 'rearranged' 1604 text as emerging simultaneously from the pens of Marlowe and an independent collaborator, the rationale behind these claims seems overly dependent on what the editors assume *Doctor Faustus* is dramatically trying to achieve. Under the influence of two centuries of critical tradition, the dominant supposition is that it was originally designed to accomplish the promises implicit in its earliest (surviving) printed title: *The Tragicall History of D. Faustus*. Working on the premise that Marlowe was seeking to emphasize the tragic, most editors and critics assume that the comic scenes were envisaged as diversions or interludes between the more serious actions. There is, though, an overall burlesque-like element to *Doctor Faustus*, and the play does not seek to separate rigidly its moments of comic farce from its moments of high seriousness. There is no evidence that the title *Tragicall History* was used before 1604. In fact, investigating editorial principles for selecting a supposed authorial text with virtually all the plays ascribed to Christopher Marlowe – *Edward II* is the exception – we usually find that they are substantially based on conjecture, often determined by later critical perspectives about what is typically 'Marlowe'. Attribution to an author – one of the central organizational and critical categories we operate by – is actually not a particularly useful method for examining most plays from the Elizabethan period. Unlike Shakespeare and Jonson, the first collected edition of Marlowe's work dates from 1826. It does not claim to be prepared from 'original copies'.

One of the most difficult questions surrounding *Doctor Faustus* is whether the 'A' version of the play offers a demonstrably different understanding of Faustus's 'history' from the expanded 'B' version. Why did Henslowe pay a substantial fee to enlarge the play? There is some evidence to suggest that the revival of late 1597 was not financially successful. Did he want a different type of play or merely a longer one? Was the play performed in the 1590s the short 'A' text (1,485 lines) we possess, or did it exist in a now lost longer version?¹⁵ Crude farce, tragic seriousness, and scenes that might be one or the other (or possibly both together) are developed in the 'B' text. It is not the case, as is sometimes assumed, that expanding comic high-jinks is the only impetus to the longer 1616 text. The problem of interpretation, though, ultimately comes back to performance. It may be that Rowley and Birde (if it is their 'adicyones' in the 'B' text) believed that they were expanding material that sat sympathetically with their understanding of the play in the

light of its theatre history. That is to say, the longer text compared to the shorter might help to give us some idea of how *Doctor Faustus* was played on the stage.

What little hearsay evidence we possess about early audiences' responses to *Doctor Faustus* suggests that theatrical *frisson* was enjoyed. Thomas Middleton proposed that 'the old Theatre cracked' during a performance and 'frighted the audience': that is the wooden construction of the Theatre (an early playhouse in London; it burnt down in 1598) must have shifted a little and given off a cracking sound.¹⁶ At a performance in Exeter, an additional devil (i.e., supposedly a real one) was reported discovered on the stage, causing cast and audience to scatter; while William Prynne writing in 1635 claims there was a visible apparition of the devil on the stage of the Belsavage playhouse during a performance.¹⁷ Henslowe's Diary for 1598 lists among its stage properties a 'dragon in fostes' which no doubt helped 'the scary business that spectators paid for' (Revels edition, p. 50). Seeing *Doctor Faustus* on the early modern stage was probably closer to the experience of a current audience going to a comic horror film than a sophisticated encounter with dramatic tragedy, though, as with some horror films, this does not mean features associated with serious drama might not also be present.

These early accounts remind us, however, that the first audiences would have accepted as unquestionably valid the premise that heaven and hell were locked in a contest for gaining souls, that the supernatural readily impinged on the natural, and that traditionally accepted views about Satan and his kingdom – and about God and his – were largely issues of fact rather than opinion.¹⁸ Faustus's debating proposition to Mephistopheles that 'I think hell's a fable' would have seemed either chillingly naïve or comically preposterous (2.1.115–41). Mephistopheles's response 'Ay think so still, till experience change they mind' would have been generally greeted as a prosaic expression of certitude. Faustus's sophistry during the 'hell's a fable' disputation is intellectually and argumentatively clever but would almost certainly have had no persuasiveness with contemporary audiences. Previously, Mephistopheles has haughtily claimed that he is always in hell because he has seen the face of God and is now eternally deprived of it (1.3.70–87). It is this divine absence that constitutes his continuous torment: a vivid illustration of the negative pride that the satanic traditionally manifests. Faustus counters to suggest that, if this is so, then he will never truly be 'damned' because he is content with his present circumstances: he has no memory of such an encounter. He will 'willingly be damned' and thus not damned in any respect but a technical one. This allows Faustus to express his own pride: 'Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude, / And scorn those joys thou never shall possess' (1.3.86–7). Yet, such argumentative dextrousness is not really

the point. Witnesses to these exchanges would have no serious doubts about hell as a dangerous place. Faustus's confident assertion that 'Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond / To imagine that after this life there is any pain?' (2.1.133-4) would not be part of a rationale shared by the spectators. It is not simply that his logic is flawed; he is just not recognizing reality as it was then perceived.

The expanded end-scenes of the 1616 text help emphasize that Faustus is not some clever 'Humanist' or 'Renaissance' hero who is undermining old-fashioned preconceptions about heaven and hell.¹⁹ One addition allows the good and bad angels to present apparently 'objective' views of the heavenly and hellish. The good angel announces that she is leaving Faustus and shows him the heavenly throne he has lost: 'O thou has lost celestial happiness, / Pleasures unspeakable, bliss without end (5.2.105-6). After this the bad angel shows him a very conventional hell where she gloats that Faustus 'shall taste the smart of all':

Now, Faustus, let thine eyes with horror stare
 Into that vast perpetual torture-house.
 These are the furies tossing damned souls
 On burning forks; their bodies boil in lead.
 (DF 'B' text 5.2.115-18)

Earlier in the scene, Lucifer, Beelzebub, and Mephistopheles appear independent of Faustus to watch his downfall and 'how he doth demean himself'. Mephistopheles retorts:

How should he, but in desperate lunacy?
 Fond worldling, how his heart-blood dries with grief;
 His conscience kills it, and his labouring brain
 Begets a world of idle fantasies
 To overreach the devil. But in vain.
 His store of pleasures must be sauced with pain.
 (DF 'B' text 5.2.111-16)

This scene leads to Faustus's final speech, his 'desperate lunacy'. There is no doubt that Faustus meets a gruesome end in the 1616 version and this text adds a further scene (5.3) in which the scholars, having heard 'fearful shrieks' in the night, find Faustus's limbs 'all torn asunder'. The expanded text reinforces conventional orthodoxy: Faustus is punished; the satanic operates in the world specifically to capture humans vain enough or short-sighted enough to lose sight of the fundamental order that governs the universe. There may be critical argument over whether the 1616 play questions or supports the justice of this order, but there is no doubt that it acknowledges it.

In contrast, there is a great deal more potential ambiguity in the 1604 version. Faustus's final speech stays the same, but what frames it is less directive, making his final cry of 'Ah, Mephistopheles' (5.2.115) and what follows less obvious: fulfilment of terror, relief at seeing a recognized face; a conventional or unconventional damnation? Prior to this scene in both the play's versions we have Faustus's encounter with the old man who urges repentance and Helen who kisses him – 'Her lips sucks forth my soul' (5.1.94). The Christian morality of the scene is straightforward: Faustus is a victim of the sweet allurements that religion warns against. Yet, in all the productions I have seen Helen has been performed as strikingly attractive (the most beautiful was in an all-male production). Even if you agreed with the old man's endeavours, visually, when placed beside Helen, the emotional and aesthetic sympathy was with her. Was it the same in early modern productions, or was Helen presented as an obvious devil in disguise? Regardless, employing the shorter 'A' text it is possible to imagine a spectacle that might leave some feeling that Faustus 'confounds hell in Elysium' (1.3.60) because the absolutes of what hell and heaven consist of are less clearly delineated.

In part, the less directive 'A' text has gained critical favour because it can be read against the grain of orthodox Christian beliefs about heaven and hell. Challenging convention, the play's vision can be more easily related to a popular biographical view of Marlowe that celebrates his heterodoxy – was it not claimed the author had said 'that the beginning of Religioun was only to keep men in awe'?²⁰ Indeed, for some, Faustus becomes a version of a fatally overreaching Marlowe. But even without the pseudo-biographical link, the 'A' text seems potentially to be questioning what is now largely accepted as superstition, and for many this makes it feel like a more proto-modern play-text, not one linked to the Middle Ages.²¹

Yet, the more likely scenario of the 'B' text's additions is that they were principally conceived to expand and clarify what the companies already felt they possessed in the 'A' text, not to recast or censor the play (this is assuming the printed texts are close to what was performed before and after 1602 when the additions were commissioned by Henslowe – a big assumption!).²² There is nothing in the 'A' text that dramatically indicates that it needs to be performed differently from the 'B' version. The potential ambiguities about Faustus's end in the 'A' text's last scenes that has caught recent critical and theatrical imaginations, for instance, were probably not seen as ambiguities at all by the companies first acting it. Devils probably rushed on stage at the end, indicating that Faustus was going to be torn asunder in the 'A' text as in the 'B' version. Helping to intensify expectations about the final fiendish spectacle it was understood the 'A' text, too, was leading towards, the 'B' text additions in the last scenes were probably felt to be

dramatically sympathetic with the earlier version. On balance, it appears that the 'B' text helps clarify how the 'A' text was previously performed. It is doubtful the additions were an attempt to restrain a more dangerous 'Marlowe' play by redirecting it into more conventional frameworks.

One of the significant expansions in the 'B' version of *Doctor Faustus* is Faustus's encounter with the Pope (3.1). Although this longer scene in the 'B' text ultimately concludes as in the 'A' version, in other respects it well illustrates the dilemma about establishing what either version of *Doctor Faustus* may be trying to accomplish overall. It suggests, too, that for the early revisers this scene's implications were not clear. In the 'A' version, it opens with Faustus recounting the European cities and antiquities that he and Mephistopheles have just visited. They have arrived in Rome and are in the Pope's chamber. Faustus proposes 'that I do long to see the monuments / And situation of bright splendent Rome', rhetorically employing a type of conjuring appeal designed to testify to the strength of his wish (3.1.44–9).

Despite the apparent urgency of this request, though, Mephistopheles proposes that they play some games on the Pope and attending clergy. Faustus readily agrees. What follows is a mocking of the papal court with low comic pranks (upsetting food and wine, roughing up the Pope). The clergy attempt to exorcize Faustus and Mephistopheles with the traditional bell, book, and candle but, the stage direction tells us, they: 'beat the Friars, and fling fireworks among them, and so exeunt'. This is the sum of Faustus's Roman holiday in the 'A' version. In the 'B' text, the scene begins the same up to Faustus's expression of his desire to see Rome. Mephistopheles's proposal to stay to see the Pope, though, stresses the pomp and glory of the papal pageant, making it one of the 'splendent' sights of Rome:

I know'd you see the pope
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
The which this day with high solemnity
This day is held through Rome and Italy
In honour of the pope's triumphant victory.
(DF 'B' text 3.1.52–6)

What they witness is the exhibition of the captured Saxon 'Bruno', a rival Pope who the Holy Roman Emperor attempted to set up. Faustus and Mephistopheles contrive to free Bruno and convey him to Germany. The additions present a more emphatic Protestant context to Faustus's actions: the papal courts declare Bruno and the Emperor 'Lollards' (i.e., of Protestant inclination). The Pope is presented as a largely temporal tyrant interested in his own power. The 'B' text, therefore, contrives to offer a different style to this scene from the 'A' version. Faustus's initial desire to see the great

sights of Rome is not immediately abandoned for farce; instead the main preoccupation is with a serious Faustus being anti-papal, pro-German, and favouring Protestantism.

In either version the scene is unique in a post-Reformation English play as the sole instance where the devil acts to chastise the Pope.²³ During the 1580s and 1590s anti-Roman sentiment reached its greatest pitch in England (a combination of the Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth and offer of pardon to any assassin of her – an issue raised in *The Massacre at Paris* – and the circumstances around the Spanish Armada, proclaimed by Philip of Spain as a holy crusade). The English Church promoted the view that Roman Catholicism had become the province of the Antichrist: Satan and the Pope were understood as virtually identical. *Doctor Faustus* is clearly not promoting Catholicism as a desirable or potent religion (the attempt at exorcism shows it has no power, for instance, and the Pope is thoroughly ridiculed), but it is also clearly not associating this religion with the devil. The 'B' version attempts to restore some of Roman Catholicism's sinister temporal power by presenting the Church as anti-Protestant, a negative and corrupted force. It tries to deflect some of the burlesque farce that dominates the scene in the 'A' version by introducing more weighty issues.

In the 'A' version, however, this scene's exaggerated comedy illustrates a quality present throughout the whole of *Doctor Faustus* – one we might term Faustus's and Mephistopheles's adolescent tendency. A feature that occurs regularly in *Doctor Faustus* is that serious issues are suspended or interrupted so that comic spectacle can occur. Some of these instances seem to parallel the more sober actions, such as the antics of Robin and Rafe; others, such as the horse-courser scenes, might be claimed as acting to confer a dramatic sympathy on a mischievous but not evil Faustus – i.e., he doesn't turn into the depraved potentate that he initially announces he wishes to be (e.g., 1.3.105–212). But with the 'A' text's Roman visit, game playing completely displaces any attempt at serious drama. The Faustus of high learning who introduces the scene is readily abandoned for the Faustus of irreverent antic and cheap spectacle. Similarly, at one of the few moments in the play when Faustus genuinely seems on the verge of repentance, Lucifer appears (2.3.70–82). Faustus assumes he is being threatened and is about to die, but Lucifer assures him he has appeared to remind Faustus of his promises and to show him some 'pastimes'. He presents the seven deadly sins, and in response to his question about how he likes the show, Faustus replies 'O this feeds my soul' (2.3.157). The sins are a wonderful piece of circus-like frivolity that it is difficult to imagine any production playing as sinister let alone as weighty. Faustus's response seems in an inappropriate register. As with his happy abandonment of either the past or present glories of Rome for

tomfoolery and firework throwing, this scene, too, shows Faustus ready to forsake introspection for pranks and farcical spectacle.

Are these examples principally supposed to illustrate humanity's sinful culpability, prepared to abandon godly salvation for cheap diversions, thus confirming the play's conformity with a morality tradition? Or is *Doctor Faustus* a good illustration of what Mikhail Bakhtin identified as the carnivalesque quality of Renaissance culture, where powerful abstract issues – such as heaven and hell – can be reduced to some form of grotesque material representations, as in the seven deadly sins, allowing them to be laughed at?²⁴ As Bakhtin argues, the use of carnival de-centres fixed orders, allowing other possibilities and revealing the relativity of established authorities' claims to know how the world is structured. There are certainly scenes in *Faustus* that sustain a Bakhtinian analysis, such as those with the clownish ostlers, Rafe and Robin, conjuring (2.2 and 3.2, but originally printed as one scene placed after the popish escapade). These two see the benefits of magic as free drink and sex with the maid Nan Spit. They summon Mephistopheles, an act that comically deflates the high magic of Faustus. Indeed, their nonsense incantation – they are of course illiterate – is the only conjuring within the play that appears to possess actual power. Mephistopheles claims to Faustus that he responded to his conjuring only because he could obtain Faustus's soul, not through the magic's inherent power (1.3.45–54). While it is likely that this claim would be mistrusted as the devil traditionally lies, the play also shows that the exorcisms of the Roman Church, too, have no effect on Faustus and Mephistopheles.²⁵ Mephistopheles is incensed 'by these villains' charms' that have brought him from Constantinople, and he transforms them into a dog and an ape. The ostlers, though, are delighted for they will now be able to get hold of food more easily. Mephistopheles's punishments are experienced as rewards. The satanic quest to reduce higher beings to lower ones, here turning them to literal beasts, is ridiculed by the condition of the ostlers who imagine themselves below the level of the beasts they serve. The traditional hierarchies of heaven and hell are confronted in the debasement and consequent ridiculing of supernatural powers by these clowns who propose different conditions of life from the ones supposedly present in the more serious playing for souls.

Yet, a Bakhtinian perspective applied to the whole play loses sight of the fact that all the characters, socially elite and socially marginal, seem obsessed with showmanship, both in mounting 'plays' and with playing roles within them. Even Lucifer's dismissal of Faustus's terror before he launches his 'production' of the seven deadly sins seems to indicate the devil's own

abandonment of satanic gravity because it would interfere with his comic show. The play within a play is a standard device of Renaissance drama, but there can be few instances of dramas so obsessed with constructing plays within plays as *Doctor Faustus*. And, importantly, such play-making is focused around entertainment, with characters wanting to occupy roles that excite spectacle and provide the opportunity for amusement. As Faustus's 'history' develops, the principal use of his powers is to gain a reputation for his conjuring (e.g., the scenes with the Emperor, the Duke of Vanholt, and the students). In the scene with Charles V, despite Faustus's firm instruction that he is only raising spirits that resemble Alexander and his paramour, the Emperor is completely mesmerized by Faustus's illusion: 'Sure these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes' (4.I.65–6). If Faustus is a victim of illusion, many of the play's characters, including the Emperor, also prefer Faustus's illusions to reality. Such a general preoccupation with artifice and fantasy compromises a specific moral warning around Faustus. The Duke of Vanholt's pregnant wife consuming the grapes of India, or the scholars witnessing the first appearance of Helen, are not played as being at mortal risk for benefiting from Faustus's organized performances. They celebrate his courtesy, praise and bless his 'glorious deed' (5.I.32–3). Faustus comes increasingly to perform what the commercial drama generally was seeking to offer its spectators – that which produces contentment and wonder.

Faustus's desire for role-playing reaches one of its most accelerated moments in the Helen scene. Responding to her he decides, appropriately, that he will be Paris and play out his version of the Trojan War:

I will be Paris, and for love of thee
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel
And then return to Helen for a kiss.

(*DF* 5.I.197–202)

But this is insufficient and Faustus changes tack. Helen now is

Brighter . . . than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azured arms.

(*DF* 5.I.105–8)

Faustus is ready to change both Helen's and his own sex (she is the overwhelming Jupiter, he the feminine Semele) and to invite his complete extinction at her hands – Semele insisted on seeing Jupiter in his omnipotence as he appeared to his wife Juno, a guise no mortal can withstand. Faustus seems equally ready to abandon scholarly exactness for inventiveness: Arethusa was transformed to a fountain to protect her chastity from the pursuing Alpheus; she is neither wanton nor a lover of Jupiter in classical mythology. What is revealed in these and the Trojan War images is that Faustus does not want to possess Helen for simple sexual gratification. She stimulates his excitement about role-playing; she feeds his imagination for theatre.

Plays within plays bring attention to a performance as contrived theatre. Aware of 'an audience' on stage watching the play within the play, spectators also become aware of themselves watching 'both' plays. In Renaissance drama, various devices are employed to remind the audience of its 'role' as spectators and, consequently, of their participation in the drama rather than only passively witnessing it. Prologues and epilogues, for example, frame the action within them, but they are also part of the play. As a painting is influenced by what frames it, so the effect of the 'picture' overall includes the frame. In the drama such mechanisms contribute to a difficulty in saying where a play begins and where it ends.

These questions of beginning and ending loom over *Doctor Faustus* because they profoundly affect an understanding of what occurs. Does *Doctor Faustus* end in the 'A' text with him being dragged off to hell, or in the 'B' version with the scholars discovering his dismembered body? Is the final chorus a post-play commentary? What are the implications of the 'scene' where the actors reappear on stage – including presumably a 'restored' Faustus – to take the applause? The appearance of the cast at *Doctor Faustus*'s conclusion helps register that the whole play has been about role-playing, a performance that has as its main endeavour the staging of theatrical opportunities. Faustus is reborn to play another day: twenty-four years on stage, a day in the life of the theatre.

Doctor Faustus is a play designed to facilitate theatrical opportunity: but to what end? As noted above, the commercial theatre of the 1580s and 1590s was seen by some as morally dangerous, by others as morally sound, with seemingly little critical middle ground between defenders and detractors. Yet, it was likely that it was such mixed positions that drew crowds to plays: the simultaneous experience of the comic and the horrific, the blending of pathos and farce, the presence of the exaggerated with the familiar, the edifying and the entertaining – the very features we associate with Marlowe's drama. The play's success on the stage manifestly demonstrates that the companies

profitably negotiated the various cultural implications of its shows of delight and magic in their productions.

Ruth Lunney argues that Marlowe's plays break the link between visual signs and traditional perspectives and values.²⁶ Their signs and characters embrace a 'rhetoric of contradiction' that enables audiences to debate the nature of figures and events. The audience is no longer compelled to approve an intrinsically didactic understanding within well-established frameworks. The result is a new relation between spectator and play where, as the Prologue to *Tamburlaine, Part One* makes clear, we are invited to applaud 'as we please', not as we should.

Should we reconsider how *Doctor Faustus* was contrived? Rather than imagining some authorial ur-manuscript that articulated a precise intellectual vision, might we instead posit that Marlowe and/or his collaborator conceived of *Doctor Faustus* as a play that would be manipulated in performance? Their design was to create a series of scenes that might be linked in different ways in different performances, ones that reflected on ideas of illusion, role-playing, and theatricality around humanity's imagined identities in relation with the supernatural and natural worlds. Performing 'the form of Faustus's fortunes good and bad', this drama was envisaged neither as distinct tragedy nor comedy. A presentation of 'all the world's a circus' rather than 'all the world's a stage', the play proposes that the characters and the spectators share a desire for spectacle that does readily exceed edification. This is a drama that seems constantly to defer clarifying its philosophical or metaphysical speculations while it pursues its various self-generated performances.

For early Protestant reformers, the drama was in the service of religion. For the 'Puritan'-inspired antitheatrical writers from the 1580s, the theatre was 'the chapel of Satan', plays 'the very butchery of Christian souls'.²⁷ *Doctor Faustus* refuses to acknowledge the determining agency of either of these perspectives because it celebrates the ascendancy of the theatre's own prerogative as a place for playing. The play in either version resists offering a coherent intellectual vision on magic and its relation to religion, or on salvation and damnation. While there is no doubt that it is contrived around a more or less traditional morality vision – Faustus *is* damned – the play's moral structure is constantly being displaced by comic incident. Faustus's faking dismemberment in the horse-courser scenes, for instance, confuses and deflects the horror of his possible dismemberment by the devils. The latter becomes potentially as much a parodic burlesque of the former as vice versa. The play's preoccupations with creating theatre, with organizing performances, may come to seem its ultimate rationale.

NOTES

1. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* ('A' Text) in David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (eds.), *Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 1995). In this chapter all citations are to this version of the play and the 'B' text in the same edition.
2. See Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1–11.
3. 'Lord Mayor to the Privy Council 3 July 1583' in E. K. Chambers and W. W. Greg (eds.), *Dramatic Records of the City of London, The Remembraxia* (London: Malone Society, 1907), p. 69. See also Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 425–520.
4. Stephen Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (University of Chicago Press, 1988).
5. See Houston Diehl, 'Dazzling Theatre: Renaissance Drama in the Age of Reform', *JMRS* 22 (1992), 211–36.
6. 'An answer of the Corporation of London to a petition to the Privy Council from the Queen's Men, c. November 1584', in E. K. Chambers and W. W. Greg (eds.), *Dramatic Records from the Lansdowne Manuscripts* (London: Malone Society, 1908), p. 173.
7. See Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (London, 1582), sigs. G3^v, C4^v–5^r, cited in Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, p. 500.
8. See Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (New York: Garland Press, Facsimile rpt of 1612 edition, 1973).
9. See Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Donna Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992).
10. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 193–221; Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), pp. 109–19.
11. Richard Proudfoot, 'Marlowe and the Editors', in J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell (eds.), *Constructing Christopher Marlowe* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 45–6.
12. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (eds.), *Doctor Faustus 'A' and 'B' Texts* (1604, 1616), *Revels Plays* (Manchester University Press, 1993). Hereafter Revels edition. See also Eric Rasmussen, *A Textual Companion to Doctor Faustus*, *Revels Plays* (Manchester University Press, 1993). See also C. F. Tucker Brooke (ed.), *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford University Press, 1910); and the facsimile reprint *Doctor Faustus 1604 and 1616: A Scholar Press Facsimile* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970).
13. W. W. Greg (ed.), *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe: A Conjectural Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 1950).
14. See David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham (eds.), *Christopher Marlowe, Dr Faustus: The 'A' Text* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1985);

- Michael Keefer (ed.), *Doctor Faustus: A 1604 Version Edition* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1991).
15. Using the line numbers from the Tucker Brooke edition, Bevington and Rasmussen's Revels edition proposes that the shortness of the 'A' text may be the result of lost manuscript material (p. 65).
 16. Cited in E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 2: 423. See also Julian M. C. Bowsler, 'Marlowe and the Rose', in Downie and Parnell (eds.), *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 30-40.
 17. See Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 3: 424; and Bevington and Rasmussen, Revels edition, pp. 49-50.
 18. See Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 1997).
 19. See Roma Gill (ed.), *Doctor Faustus*, New Mermaids (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), pp. xviii-xix.
 20. The claim was made by Richard Baines after Marlowe's death and is not reliable. See my *Christopher Marlowe, Writers and their Work* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1994), esp. pp. 10-21.
 21. Greenblatt illustrates how critics come to favour the 'A' text on the basis of their own reading of the content (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 289-90n2). See also Gill, New Mermaids edition, p. xviii.
 22. William Empson, *Faustus and the Censor: The English Faust Book and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987). See also Keefer, *Doctor Faustus*, pp. lx-lxix; and Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, p. 119.
 23. John D. Cox, *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350-1642* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 114.
 24. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, H. Iswolsky (trans.) (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968). See also my *Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 28-9 and pp. 58-60.
 25. Gareth Roberts, 'Marlowe and Metaphysics of Magicians', in Downie and Parnell (eds.), *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, pp. 55-73, discusses the inconsistent use of magic throughout the play.
 26. Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama before 1595* (Manchester University Press, 2002).
 27. Antony Munday, *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and Theatres* (London: 1580), p. 89; Stephen Gosson, *The Epermerides of Phialo* (London, 1586), p. 88. Cited in Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, pp. 450-9.

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