

Doctor Faustus as an Anti-Religious Play

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Abstract

Doctor Faustus is a play by author Christopher Marlowe. During the 16th century Renaissance English Literature monarchy this play is considered to be a moral play. The play starts at the height of success with the play character, deceived by the idea of necromancy, and sells his soul to Satan for strength and wisdom and concludes with his descent into torment, death and damnation. In the play Good Angel stands for the conscience which is the soul's speech and Bad Angel stands for the cap of human lust in favour of the devils Lucifer, Belzebug, and Mephistophilis. Even the play fulfills the function of playing morality. One of the main aspects of morality play is the presence of the seven deadly sins. By the end of the day, Faustus appears to apologize and lament his deeds, but it may be too late or simply meaningless, because Mephistophilis collects his spirit, and it is clear that Faustus goes to hell with him. The play is an externalisation of the spiritual secret battle. Marlowe is well known for his blank verse; he used it and rendered it special in this story. In any human being with free will, Marlowe portrays life as protagonists and the dilemma between selecting good and bad remains. By *Faustus* Marlowe represents religion as spiritually powerless yet politically dangerous, a theme that appears in other Elizabethan period literature. *Doctor Faustus* also contains anti-religious language and images showing layer of representation of the Elizabethan period religious ambiguities.

Keywords: religion, anti-Catholic, atheist, spirituality.

Introduction

“Discourse, meditation, repentance: Are they all?” *Faustus* queries and Marlowe’s request about his part reflected the confusion that much of Queen Elizabeth’s subjects had

regarding moral beliefs and rituals. Nevertheless, Marlowe articulated in writing *Doctor Faustus* the increasing dispute between Protestants at his university there during his years, which became ever more intense. Unlike Oxford, the frontline on which the Calvinist and anti-Calvinist advocates conducted their efforts was Cambridge in the later 1580s, and the young Marlowe was undoubtedly an exemplary witness.

In early December 1580, in this scene of religious controversy at the University of Cambridge, Marlowe started his career as a divinity student at Corpus Christi School. His first year training would entail lecturing in the philosophy (Quintilian, Hermogenes, and Cicero), preparing lectures with his tutor, studying the Old and New Testaments, and hearing sermons in the chapel. The portrayal of Dr. Faustus can also be seen as a mouthpiece of Marlowe's cynicism.

Faustus rejects nearly all sorts of institutionalized belief structures, even before our first contact with him, he states in one of Christopher Marlowe's important quotes from *Doctor Faustus*, "Theory is odious even enigmatic, / Both philosophy and science are for pure thought, / Religion is the lowest of the three." (Scene 1, lines 107-109) Faustus is looking for something more fundamental. This, which is one of the important quotes from the *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, may be viewed as Faustus' "reading" by Marlowe, describing his denial by divine life and instead discovering something else (in his case, writing functions, in Faustus' case, calling the devil). By this, it suggests, Faustus was punished for his desire to embrace hell as a "lifestyle," this "hell" could be related to Marlowe's choice to drop out of college for what was deemed a much less rewarding and virtuous existence that ended in catastrophic early death and a rough-and-tumbling infancy. So Faustus' character expresses Marlowe's frustration with the absolute impossibility in the quote above of having an imaginative life outside the university setting.

While it may be a bit of a jump as well as maybe a misguided attempt to reconstruct Marlowe alone from scant biographical facts and conjecture, if we continue to operate on the premise of this alleged "mouthpiece," we may find any further allusions to the rejection of Christianity and Faith by Marlowe / Faustus, and in particular the rituals associated with such convictions. Throughout *Doctor Faustus*' (Scene 3, lines 8-10) Faustus first summons a devil and

states, before he finishes his incantation, what, if anything, is this but a direct assault on Christian rituals? Indeed, as this declaration of paper for “Doctor Faustus” suggests, is the friendship between the two, but it shows that they are neither free from evil nor protected by God.

Nevertheless, in certain respects, Christopher Marlowe’s Mephistophilis in “*Doctor Faustus*” may also be seen as a mouthpiece for Marlowe as he argues against all that the framework of Marlowe’s community believes in (strong faith in lack of facts, modern culture that seems servile to the Church, etc.). Nonetheless, Faustus himself is the closest chance to discover that Christopher Marlowe has the contemporary universe and to see the position of Faustus as his mouthpiece gives credence to the idea that Marlowe was, in fact, an atheist and tried hard to integrate these ideas into his narrative.

Dr. Faustus, by Marlowe, specifically tackles certain disagreements. His storyline is loosely pursuing the story-line of the English Faust book, but this article doesn’t address the problems it presents. Maybe the metaphysical sense of Dr. Faustus’ decisions may be understood by referring at what Perkins himself wrote in a study that grew out of sermons in the 1590’s, when a fresh outbreak in popular interest in discovering and catching witches will render it a very topical treat. According to Perkins, the practice of witchcraft is like the sin in Eden of desiring to become a deity, either inspired by a wish to gain “respect and countenance of people” or “not content with the measure of inner gifts obtained, such as intelligence, wisdom, comprehension, memory and the like, Deity should have held secret to finding things.”

Are but obeyed in their several provinces:

But his dominion that exceeds in this,

Stretched as fare as doth the minded of man.

A sound Magician is a mighty god:

Here Faustus tires thy brains to gain a deity. (Lines 88-93)

Faustus, of Marlowe, is “not pleased” about his professional accomplishments. For starters, if he had been a pupil at Cambridge, his program of study-divinity disagreements over

topics such as free will, guilt, and grace; rigorous and empirical sermons on biblical passages; and the introduction and protection of theses-would not have kept him hidden from us in matters such as God did. In the undergraduate curriculum during the third and fourth years that Marlowe taught at B.A., reasoning or dialectical interpretation was proposed for performing these disputes, analyzes and defenses. The text needed was Aristotle; the works of Aristotle, as Faustus states, should “live and die.”

Yet in his very next terms, Faustus cites a rule from the notorious French reformer, Peter Ramus, who supported modification of the university curriculum’s conventional scholasticism, which combined Aristotle with St. Thomas Aquinas. Comparing Marlowe’s Cambridge years with Faustus’ studies and profession, Faustus is indeed a Divinity professor, he too has taught Plato, philosophy, and quite well argued. We see part of autobiography in the text here.

Sweet Analytics ‘tis thou hast ravish’d me!

.....

Is, to dispute well, logic’s chiefest end?

Afford this art no greater miracle? (lines 6-9)

And instead we see Faustus striving for greater wisdom, since worldly studies don’t fit his position, he shuns Divinity believing “Compensation of sin is destruction” and no man is without sin.

What will be shall be? Divinity, adieu!

These metaphysics of Magicians,

And necromantic books are heavenly;

.....

Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires,

O, what a world of profit and delight,

Of power, of honour, of omnipotence, (line 46-52)

This paper specifically shows scene quotation that Faustus wishes more than he has, he wants to be more of an all-powerful God. He would not want divinity or the Scriptures, just a mystical book to serve his intent, and thereby to be a devil's accomplice. So we see how skepticism is beginning to work at the center of this play which challenges the power of God to magic. Even Marlowe was not a hard-core Believer from moral education but more a Faustus-like outlaw. We see the writer speaking his feelings very plainly from the voice of Faustus.

In his essay Kocher (1940) states that Richard ore Marlowe was stabbed to death on 30 May 1593 in a paper he took to the Privy Council at a period shortly before Marlowe was stabbed to death on 30 May 1593, Richard Baines claimed a number of blasphemies that the playwright had proclaimed. While most researchers today appear to accept the claims are real, their underlying circumstances remain mysterious. Therefore, by reviewing the Baines text itself, it might be of some advantage to show that it is nothing more or less than a summary of Marlowe's share of a single discussion in which Baines himself or some of his informants may have been involved.

A look at the text would show that even slight transpositions are made in the order of statements attributed to Marlowe, indicating the development and progress of concepts that clearly imply following the path of a single discussion. The thoughts accompany one another with a natural connection which, on a number of scattered occasions, seems to avoid either being merely manufactured by Baines or even collected by him from Marlowe's actual speech. Transpositions are needed when Baines recognizes a sentence, establishing the format of conversation from memory after going on from the topic to which it specifically relates.

This paper here in full the Baines document which shows before the different claims the order in which I think Marlowe created them: "A notice containing Christopher Marlowe's opinion on his damnable view on faith and contempt for the word of God.

Because the Vikings and other historical writers certainly wrote more than 16,000 years ago, whereas Adam is known to have existed only 6,000 years ago. He believed that Moses was just a Juggler, and that no Heriots being Sir W Raleigh's guy could do more than he was. Since

Moses had forced the Jews to walk in the desert for many years (which Id Travel would have completed in less than a year) until they came to the promised land in a tiny tent, so anybody deprived of all of his subtitles would perish, and hence a lasting superstition.

The first step of Religion was clearly to keep citizens in terror. So for Moses to be brought up with all the arts of the Egyptians to exploit the Jews as a rude & gorse individual was a clear matter. Although he was a relative of the Carpenter and while he was crucified by the Jews of whom he had been born, they knew him better and from whom he came. The Christ needed to die worse than Barabbas, and so the Jews made a good judgment, since Barabbas was both a thief and a killer. And if there is any deity or any decent faith, it is in the parishes as there are more rituals conducting the duty of Christ, such as mass raising, drums, singing people, shaven crowns, etc. Asked why we those negative cynical balls.

Even though Marlowe made those remarks at one stage, they simply cannot be an invitation to give a moment's chance. Some of them could be traceable to a lost, unpublished, "atheistic" essay composed by Marlowe himself, and certainly too all the general scheme. There are several, maybe many more, references to the existence of this kind of paper. In 1640 Simon Aldrich, a Cambridge scholar and fellow from 1593 to 1607 and, in short, a man of fair and educated mind, a most creditworthy witness told the Kentish poet Henry Oxinden "that Mario who wrote Hero & Leander was an Atheist and wrote a book against the Bible, because it was all formed by one god, and should have printed it, but could not live".

Comparing such blasphemous lines in the plays of Marlowe in which Christianity, Jesus Christ, and religious figures are ridiculed by Faustus' blasphemous dialogue with the Devil, and his playing games with the Father, ludicrous friars show that Faustus is simply the mouthpiece of Marlowe. When observed by Marlowe, Faustus displayed creativity, greed and an insatiable appetite for influence and participation in anti-religious practices.

During Act 1scene 1, when Faustus asks Valdes and Cornelius to help him conjure together, he tells them, that:

"Both law and physic are for petty wits;

Divinity is basest of three” (lines 95-96)

It is discovered throughout Act 1 scene 3 that by making incantations from holy books, Faustus conjures up the Demon, draws a circle on the stone, and says:

“Within this circle is Jehovah’s name,

Forward and backward anagrammatized,

The brevetted names of holy saints,”

When he appears when playing up the saints' names, he calls Mephistophilis hideous and tells him to turn himself into a “Franciscan friar,” since the saintly look is best suited to the Devil. Marlowe humiliates the monks intentionally, and here explicitly reveals an anti-religious mentality. Mephistophilis informs him he heard Faustus “raid Christ’s name, abjure the scriptures,” and he flew here to bring his soul in. By comparison to Marlowe’s atheistic doctrines and blasphemous texts, Faustus’ statement of arbitration with the devil thereby suggests rebellion towards God and rejection of obedience to the Holy Scriptures.

Yet Faustus continues reminding himself internally aware of his sin:

“Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub:

.....

The God thou serve’s is thine own appetite,

Wherein is fix’d the love of belzebub:

To him I’ll build a church and an alter”

Several other details from the text exposes atheistic and anti-religious beliefs which Faustus adopted and articulated in vague ways to Marlowe himself, rendering this play controversial and mysterious throughout his life.

Conclusion

Nevertheless, this paper argues that *Doctor Faustus* is an atheistic experiment with many indications of the anti-religion agenda. Marlowe's Cambridge years, his childhood in mystery. He is no doubt a dramatist with magnificent talent and imaginative ability; he will also be known for his literary excellence, leaving his atheism aside. The age of Marlowe was an era of progress, exploration and technological research and innovation, which is what Faustus, wants. He aspires to gaze through the skies above this earth, if not by faith than through sorcery, for the best of wisdom and power. The mindset of Faustus that ready to accept the evil side shows his atheistic nature and a hatred towards Christianity.

According to the mainstream Christianity, such an individual is damnable belongs to the eternal Hell, but also worth sympathizing with. If faith instead struggles to supply man with answers to his questions, man seeks a way to then stop his fascination. Elizabethan England may be terrified of the zeal of Faustus but they cherished the human in him, a hero in the true meaning of the term. Marlowe is only second to Shakespeare as his portrayal is of absolute quality and this play's autobiographical aspect makes him much more fascinating. Atheism, agnosticism will still dominate in a society full of hypocrites who consider themselves religious, at least Marlowe did not show himself as a monk while he was in an atheist.

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