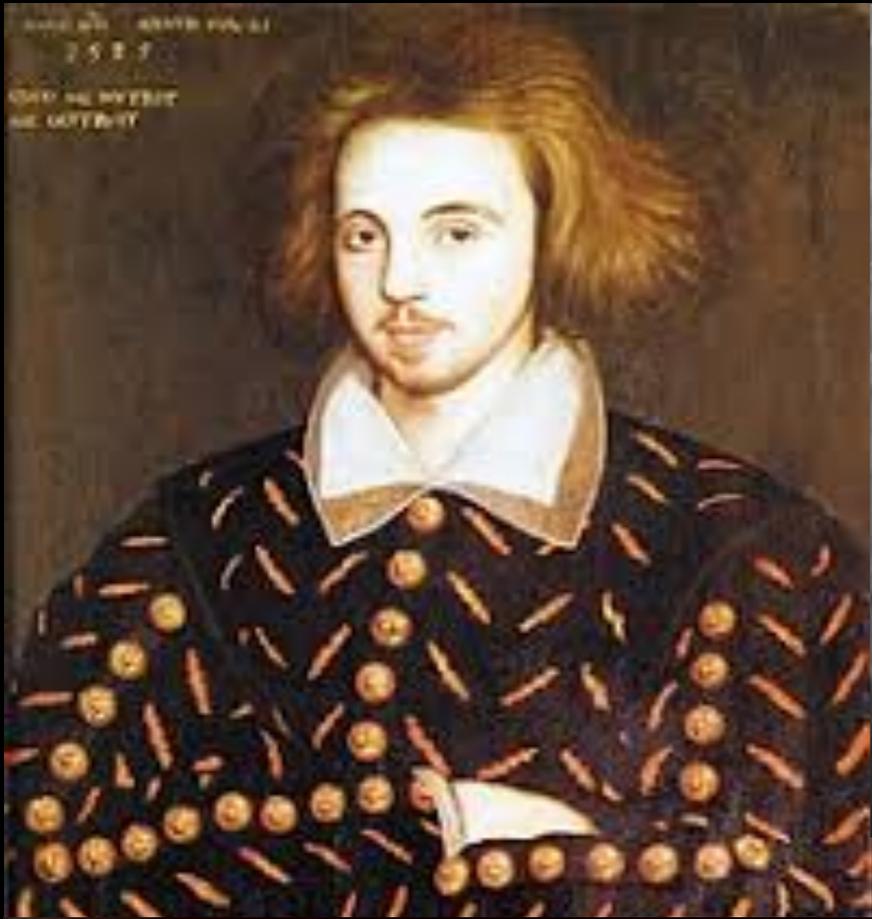


Dr Faustus

Christopher Marlowe (1592)



Christopher Marlowe

- Bap. 26 Feb 1564
- Canterbury Grammar School and Cambridge University
- MA Cantab. 1587 “faithful dealing” for Elizabeth I
- *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587-8), *The Jew of Malta* (1589), *Dr Faustus* (1592)
- Died. May 30 1593

“When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room”

Marlowe was “stabbed to death by a bawdy serving-man, a rival of his in his lewd love” [he loved to] “scoff at the pretensions of the *Old and New Testament*” such as, “Christ was a bastard and his mother dishonest [unchaste]”, “the woman of Samaria and her sister were whores and that Christ knew them dishonestly”, and, “St John the Evangelist was bedfellow to Christ and leaned always in his bosom” (cf. John 13:23–25), and, “that he used him as the sinners of Sodom” These thinges, with many other shall by good & honest witnes be approved to be his opinions and Comon Speeches, and that this Marlowe doth not only hould them himself, but almost into every Company he Cometh he persuades men to Atheism willing them not to be afeard of bugbeares and hobgoblins”

——Richard Baines (Informer for Francis Walsingham)

Themes

- The over-reacher (i.e. the man who knew too much)
- Magic (The Renaissance Magnus)
- Machivellism (Instrumental political thought)
- Power
- Corruption and hypocrisy
- Extreme violence

KNIGHT. [within] Sound a charge there!

[A charge sounded within: FERNEZE cuts the cord; the floor of the gallery gives way, and BARABAS falls into a caldron placed in a pit.

Enter KNIGHTS and MARTIN DEL BOSCO.

CALYMATH. How now! what means this?

BARABAS. Help, help me, Christians, help!

FERNEZE. See, Calymath! this was devis'd for thee.

CALYMATH. Treason, treason! bassoes, fly!

FERNEZE. No, Selim, do not fly:
See his end first, and fly then if thou canst.

BARABAS. O, help me, Selim! help me,
Christians!

Governor, why stand you all so pitiless?

FERNEZE. Should I in pity of thy complaints or thee, Accursed Barabas, base Jew, relent?
No, thus I'll see thy treachery repaid,
But wish thou hadst behav'd thee otherwise.

BARABAS. You will not help me, then?

FERNEZE. No, villain, no.

BARABAS. And, villains, know you cannot help me now.— Then, Barabas, breathe forth thy latest fate,

And in the fury of thy torments strive
To end thy life with resolution.—

Know, governor, 'twas I that slew thy son,—
I fram'd the challenge that did make them meet:

Know, Calymath, I aim'd thy overthrow:
And, had I but escap'd this stratagem,
I would have brought confusion on you all,
Damn'd Christian dogs, and Turkish infidels!
But now begins the extremity of heat
To pinch me with intolerable pangs:
Die, life! fly, soul! tongue, curse thy fill, and die!

[Dies.]

CALYMATH. Tell me, you Christians, what doth this portend?

• *(The Jew of Malta, 5)*

Till swoln with cunning, of a self-conceit,

His waxen wings did mount above his reach,

And, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow;

For, falling to a devilish exercise,

And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,

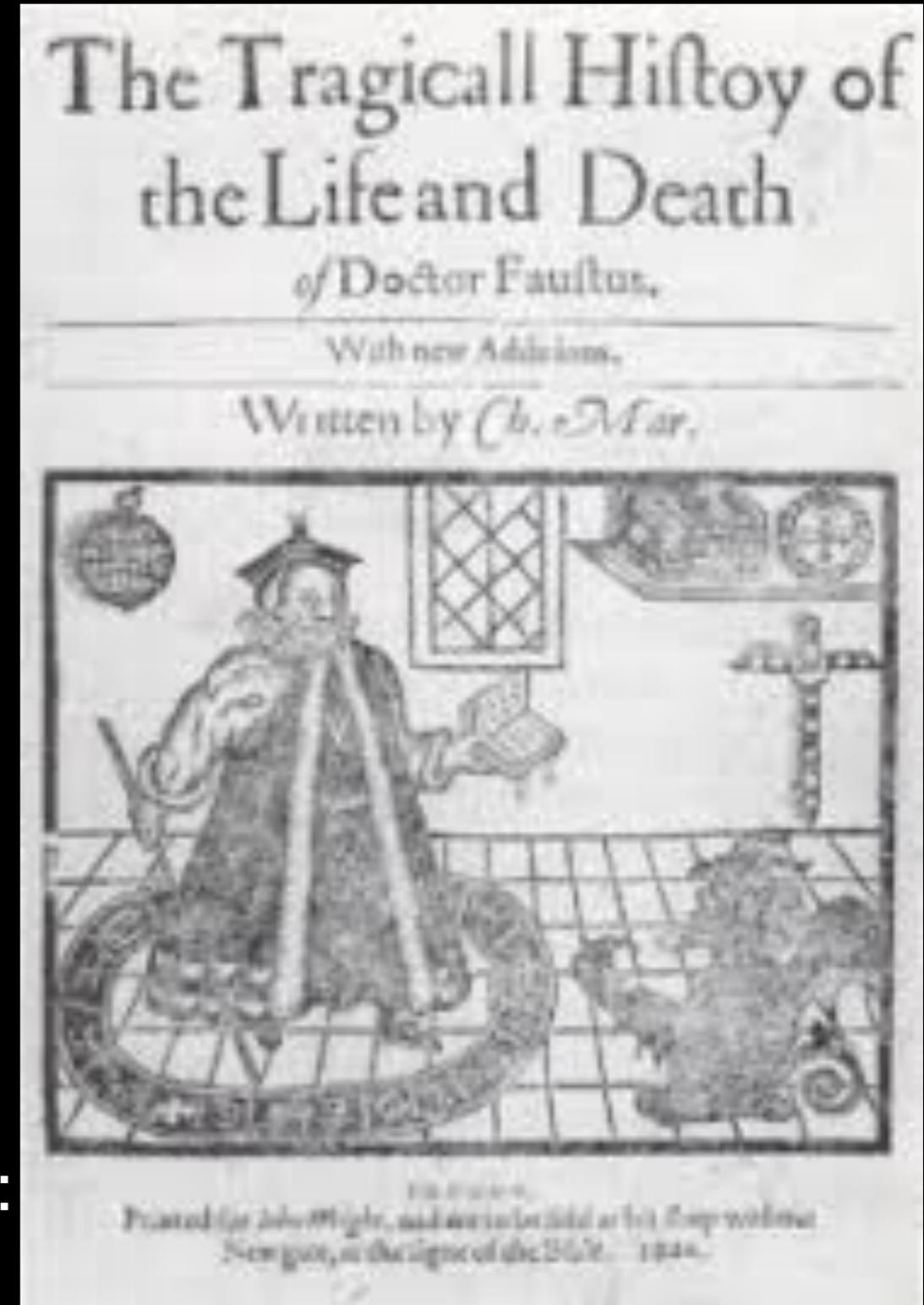
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy;

Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,

Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss:

And this the man that in his study sits.

—PROLOGUE, 5-10



If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and
there's no truth in us. Why, then, belike we must sin, and so
consequently die: Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
What doctrine call you this, Che sera, sera,
What will be, shall be? Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics of magicians,
And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, scenes letters, and characters;
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
Is promis'd to the studious artizan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity.

—*Dr Faustus* 1.

MEPHIST. Now, Faustus, what wouldst thou have me do?

FAUSTUS. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

MEPHIST. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave:

No more than he commands must we perform.

FAUSTUS. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?

MEPHIST. No, I came hither of mine own accord.

FAUSTUS. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? speak.

MEPHIST. That was the cause, but yet per accidens;

For, when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd.

Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.

FAUSTUS. So Faustus hath

Already done; and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub;
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word "damnation" terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium:
His ghost be with the old philosophers!
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord?

MEPHIST. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.

FAUSTUS. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?

MEPHIST. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God.

FAUSTUS. How comes it, then, that he is prince of devils?

MEPHIST. O, by aspiring pride and insolence;

For which God threw him from the face of heaven.

FAUSTUS. And what are you that live with Lucifer?

MEPHIST. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspir'd against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer.

FAUSTUS. Where are you damn'd?

MEPHIST. In hell.

FAUSTUS. How comes it, then, that thou art out of hell?

MEPHIST. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it:

Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
O, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul!

FAUSTUS. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate
For being deprived of the joys of heaven?

Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.

Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:

Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
Say, he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;

Having thee ever to attend on me,

To give me whatsoever I shall ask,

To tell me whatsoever I demand,

To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,

And always be obedient to my will.

Go and return to mighty Lucifer,

And meet me in my study at midnight,

And then resolve me of thy master's mind.

MEPHIST. I will, Faustus.

FAUSTUS. What might the staying of my blood portend?

Is it unwilling I should write this bill?

Why streams it not, that I may write afresh?

FAUSTUS GIVES TO THEE HIS SOUL:
ah, there it stay'd! Why shouldst thou not? is not thy soul shine own? Then write again,
FAUSTUS GIVES TO THEE HIS SOUL.

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with a chafer of coals.

MEPHIST. Here's fire; come, Faustus, set it on.

FAUSTUS. So, now the blood begins to clear again;

Now will I make an end immediately.

[Writes.]

MEPHIST. O, what will not I do to obtain his soul?

[Aside.]

FAUSTUS. *Consummatum est*; this bill is ended, And Faustus hath bequeath'd his soul to Lucifer. But what is this inscription on mine arm? *Homo, fuge*: whither should I fly?

If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.

My senses are deceiv'd; here's nothing writ:— I see it plain; here in this place is writ, *Homo, fuge*: yet shall not Faustus fly.

MEPHIST. I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind.

[Aside, and then exit.]

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with DEVILS, who give crowns

and rich apparel to FAUSTUS, dance, and then depart.

FAUSTUS. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?

MEPHIST. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,

And to shew thee what magic can perform.

FAUSTUS. But may I raise up spirits when I please?

MEPHIST. Ay, Faustus, and do greater things than these (*B-Text*, 1.3)

FAUSTUS. One thing, good servant, let me
crave of thee,
To glut the longing of my heart's desire,—
That I might have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen which I saw of late,
Whose sweet embracings may extinguish
clean
Those thoughts that do dissuade me from
my vow,
And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer.

MEPHIST. Faustus, this, or what else thou
shalt desire,
Shall be perform'd in twinkling of an eye.

Re-enter HELEN.

FAUSTUS. Was this the face that launch'd a
thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium—
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

—
[Kisses her.]
Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it
flies!—

Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wertenberg be sack'd;
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.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!
[Exeunt.]

Enter the OLD MAN.

OLD MAN. Accursed Faustus, miserable
man,
That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of
heaven, And fly'st the throne of his tribunal-
seat!