"I'll Leap Up to my God: Who Pulls me Down?" The theatrics of the Fall in Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*

Zied Ben Amor, Dr
Assoc. Prof - Dept. of English,
University of Sousse, TUNISIA

zied.benamor@flsh.u-sousse.tn

Abstract. The article underpins the theatrics of the tragic hero's fall in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Theological concepts related to sin and damnation are applied to interpret the ironic inversions leading to the downfall of Faustus. The choice of "spectacle of blindness" emphasises the link between theatricality and irony. The concept of metatheatre is used to portray the fall of Faustus. Irony reaches grandeur thanks to the interweaving of metatheatre and the carnivalesque. The research legitimises the existence of the concept of the theatrics of irony. The research delves into the intricate layers of irony woven throughout the play as the titular character embarks on a fateful journey from humanity to damnation. Faustus' relentless pursuit of perceived divine imperfections, his portrayal as a shrewd manipulator of thought, and his refusal to acknowledge the true nature of his transgressions are meticulously crafted into a dramatic spectacle by the playwright. Marlowe's adept use of irony is exemplified through intentional inversions and deviations from the play's source material, *The English Faust book*. Embracing irony as a spectacle of blindness, the analysis reveals the amalgamation of carnivalesque elements, comedy, burlesque, and metatheatre in the play's theatrics of irony. Faustus' tragic downfall unfolds as a nuanced interplay between serious, tragic consequences and moments of buffoonery or carnivalesque revelry. The analysis positions *Doctor Faustus* as a distinctive work, departing from traditional interpretations and venturing into new theatrical aesthetics, emphasising the spectacular and the metatheatrical.

Keywords: carnivalesque, damnation, irony, Doctor Faustus, metatheatre, theatrics of irony, the spectacle of blindness

Introduction

The idea of the fall in *The Tragical History of Doctor* Faustus[1] (1588) is not about the collapse of the body since the tragic force of the play is not derived from any physical suffering.

Doctor Faustus is a mental tragedy, even a tragedy of both mind and soul. Undoubtedly, Faustus is the pitiful victim of his proper ambitions and desires. The play's protagonist experiences agony because of damnation and not by the burning flames of hell. Additionally, the play is not only about irony but also about the theatricalised spectacle of blindness. Hence, one can use the expression of the theatrics of the fall to qualify the protagonist's tragic journey from glory to collapse. The term *theatrics* is related to playing and acting exaggeratedly. It mingles exaggerated action with a message to deliver beyond mannered, overacting, and parading performances. In theatrics, spectacles are enhanced, and a theatre within a theatre is performed. The downfall of Faustus is significant because it is ironic and theatrical. The intermingling of both concepts triggers the dynamics of theatrics in the play. The coming analysis will, consequently, investigate the manifestations of dramatic irony in the play in one separate section before demonstrating, in a second one, how irony is metatheatrical. The significance of the study resides in the departure from the idea that Faustus's suffering is physical. Most importantly, the research will attempt to demonstrate that the descent of Faustus is a metatheatrical spectacle intrinsically related to the notion of irony. Faustus's choices are of a performative dimension. Consequently, the use of the expression theatrics reinforces that the actions of Faustus are not the consequence of some supernatural forces but rather manifestations of an exaggerated performance.

Many interesting articles dwelled on the notion of irony in Marlowe's play. One of them is Tom McAlindon's "The Ironic Vision: Diction and Theme in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*" (1981), where he displays significant insights into Marlowe's use of irony and its impact on the tragic elements of the play. His article traces the dreadful trajectory of the protagonist and the symbolic dimension of his decisions and deeds, focusing on the idea of bondage to desire. Though McAlindon's analysis is text-based, his article did not explore the notion of dramatic irony in the play; his analysis is more focused on situational irony and some theological

concepts that point to the tragic flaw of Faustus. One can also mention "Irony and Privilege in Marlowe" by Richard F. Hardin (1989), which reflects the dual nature of irony in Marlowe's drama. The author concludes that Marlowe is a deliberate ironist who introduces ambiguity, misdirection, and threat to add complexity to his plays. However, Hardin does not explicitly explore dramatic irony or the theatricalisation of the concept; instead, he offers a broader examination of irony as a complex literary element in Marlowe's plays. Recent research on *Doctor Faustus* acknowledges the presence of irony in the play without thoroughly examining the matter while focusing on other issues, such as religion[2], or other areas of interest, such as magic[3], friendship[4], and trauma[5].

From another perspective, Faustus's moral choices and deeds have been dealt with from a diametrically opposite perspective, which is scepticism. William Hamlin's essay "Casting Doubt in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*" analyses the concept of scepticism through the lens of Early Modern England's historical context and proposes that this philosophical backdrop moulds the character of Faustus. As for metatheatre, playacting, and the comedic burlesque aspects in *Doctor Faustus,* Robert Ornstein's article "The Comic Synthesis in Doctor Faustus" (1955) investigates the comic elements in the play, challenging the interpretations that focus primarily on its tragic aspects. Ornstein displays the crude buffoonery in Doctor Faustus and suggests that the play implies several layers of comedy. His analysis concentrates on the comedic aspects of the play. However, he does not touch upon irony in his discussion of the play. Additionally, he does not explicitly focus on theatricality and playacting. One of the most brilliant acknowledgements of the metatheatrical qualities of Christopher Marlowe is the introduction to the *Shakespeare Bulletin special* issue in 2009 by Pierre Hecker and Roslyn L. Knutson[6]. The authors propose Marlowe as a "filthy playmaker" (2009, 2) and stress that the playwright is a man of theatre. They also introduce the essays included in the special volume, which cover aspects of Marlowe's plays and their influence. Further, there are discussed Marlowe's use of boy actors,

kinaesthetic theatricality, the properties of knives in his plays, and the continuation of his influence in the repertory of the companies that held his plays into the seventeenth century. The introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of Marlowe's identity as a playwright, contemporary reception, and lasting influence on theatre and performance. However, none of the articles discusses metatheatre in *Doctor Faustus* and its relation to dramatic irony.

One of the most pertinent articles dwelling on the role of the comic in *Doctor Faustus* is "Marlowe's Literary Double Agency: *Doctor Faustus* as a Subversive Comedy of Error" by Suzan Last (2000). Her research investigates the interplay between the serious and the comic aspects, emphasising the subversive dimension of the middle section that challenges the coherence of the tragic theme. The author suggests that the play's heteroglossic nature and metatheatrical elements, including magic, self-conscious theatricality, and parodic material, allow multiple interpretations, allowing the challenge of power orthodoxies. Despite focusing on comedic aspects, the article does not explicitly mention dramatic irony. Still, the analysis implicitly suggests that elements like self-conscious theatricality contribute to the play's overall sense of dramatic irony, enhancing its theatrical impact.

The insights provided in previous articles are pertinent and intriguing. Nevertheless, this present article distinguishes itself on several fronts. Primarily, the textual evidence derived from the play under consideration diverges significantly from that discussed in the works above. The in-text citations used in the research primarily differ from the textual evidence in previous research. Secondly, while the articles surveyed in the literature review broadly address irony, they fall short of a comprehensive investigation into dramatic irony. Furthermore, the focus on irony[7] and metatheatre in isolation is a noteworthy characteristic of the existing literature. However, this article seeks to fill a crucial gap by intricately exploring the intersection of dramatic irony and metatheatricality. The article does not claim to explore untrodden research areas; its significance and originality come from the combination of dramatic irony and

theatricality. The analysis presented herein will unfold across two principal sections. The first section will, consequently, scrutinise dramatic irony, delving into its various manifestations within the play. In the second section, the exploration will shift towards the theatricalisation of irony, establishing a critical link between dramatic irony and metatheatre.

Dramatic irony or "the spectacle of blindness" (Muecke 1982, 10), as D. C. Muecke calls it in his book *Irony and the Ironic*[8], is a notion that includes different definitions of Irony: Verbal[9], Situational[10], etc., within the realm of the theatrical and the dramatic. Defining irony with its ramifications is an arduous enterprise which has been undertaken by researchers like Douglas Colin Muecke, who, apart from his book mentioned above, published The *Compass of Irony,* where he affirms that he does not know "of any book or article [...] or of any European or American dictionary or encyclopaedia which presents a classification of irony one could regard as adequate" (Muecke 1969, 40). Working on the concept of Irony, Norman Knox has attempted in his article "On the Classification of Ironies" to build a taxonomy of ironies with a focus on four factors:

> In the classification of ironies, four variable factors are significant: (1) the field of observation in which irony is noticed; (2) the degree of conflict between appearance and reality, ranging from the slightest of differences to diametrical opposites; (3) an inherently dramatic structure containing three roles_victim, audience, author; (4) the philosophical-emotional aspect (Knox 1972, 53).

No matter how thorny and complex the definition or the taxonomy of irony is, the focal point of the present analysis will be dedicated to dramatic irony as a spectacle of blindness in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The link between the idea of dramatic irony and theatre is, thus, a necessity to demonstrate the spectacular dimension of irony. Patrice Pavis, in the *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* displays the idea of dramatic utterances in theatre with a focus on "primary obvious sense" versus the "deeper, different [...] opposite meaning (antiphrasis)" (1998, 189). Pavis ascertains that:

> Dramatic irony is often connected to the dramatic situation. It is perceived by the spectators when they can perceive elements of the plot that remain hidden from the characters and prevent them from acting with full knowledge of the facts. Dramatic irony is always perceptible to the spectators to the extent that the egos of the characters, who appear to be autonomous and free, are subjected to the central ego of the playwright (Pavis 1998, 189)[11].

Dramatic irony is central to the action of *Doctor Faustus*; it is expressed subtly and nuancedly. Irony is related to theological precepts of sin and damnation, which were familiar to the audiences of the period. In this vein, Lawrence Trudeau states that *Doctor Faustus*'s theme is "explicitly religious" (1991, 10), where sin and blasphemy are dramatised. Agnus Fletcher states, "Many of the play's key features—from the doctor's rejection of heaven to the comic garb of its stage devils—have suggested a robust doubt at orthodox Christianity" (2005, 188). Despite the importance of the religious dimension in the play, our focus will not be on singular, one-sided theological or metaphysical interpretations of the play, as several studies have opted to do so[12]. The choice will be directed to the spectacle of blindness in the play, which is explained by the importance of theatricality and the acknowledgement of a performance/audience binary while dealing with irony. From that perspective, the concept of metatheatre will be employed in combination with dramatic irony. Additionally, the study will explore the interweaving between metatheatre and the carnivalesque in the play and their connection to dramatic irony. The combination of modes reinforces irony and heightens the tragic fall of the protagonist.

False Rebellion and Half-Truths

The suffering of a damned soul contains implicit irony. Marlowe exploits it dramatically by building a coherent process that ends in Faustus' punishment. Once confronted with a moral choice of either yielding to God or rebelling against him, the sinner chooses

utter detachment from the divine power. His deeds distance him from the heavenly world and provoke damnation and eternal anguish. The damned soul of Faustus is punished; damnation causes his soul to remain in the very condition that the protagonist chooses. Christopher Marlowe uses irony as a quintessence of justice. He reinforces the theatrical dimension of irony by emphasising that Doctor Faustus deliberately chooses to abhor divine precepts and accepted morality codes.

The play displays a protagonist who is obstinate in his desire to shun God and court evil. His egotistical ambition to reach a divine standing is visible in all his declarations and deeds. In the opening scene of the play, the Chorus describes Doctor Faustus and his fatal choice:

> Till swol'n with cunning of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And melting, heavens conspired 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 to him,
> Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss. (*Chorus*, 1969, 20-27)

The allusion to Icarus, an Elizabethan self-destruction figure, symbolises Faustus' career. Marlowe, alongside eminent writers like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, drew inspiration from the fall of Icarus. Icarus' story, warning against complacency and pride, parallels Faustus' narrative, emphasising both the moral and emotional logic shared. Faustus must choose between "cursed necromancy" and his "chiefest" bliss, making a deliberate decision. The Chorus, a theatrical spectacle icon, opens the play, inviting the audience to witness Faustus' fall akin to Icarus'. Marlowe dedicates the first scene to Faustus' exhaustive exploration of various erudition disciplines, dismissing them all as they fail his expectations: philosophy, medicine, law, and theology.

Doctor Faustus harbours no quest for truth but seeks superhuman powers, aiming for absolute control over life and death. His core discontent echoes in the lament, 'yet art thou but still Faustus and a man' (1.1.23). He craves the eternalization of human lives and the resurrection of the dead, intending to parody Christian miracles. Rejecting divinity due to its association with sin and morality (1.1.39-48), he scorns God and pledges allegiance to Satan with the declaration, 'What will be, shall be, Divinity adieu' (1.1.48). Despite ostensibly prioritizing his will, Faustus' choice leads him ironically to damnation. The syllogism's sophistry, 'if we say that we have no sin/we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us' (1.1.43), serves as a fallacious pretext for Faustus to pursue his true aspirations.

> Oh, what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
> Is promised to the studious artisan!
> All things that move between the quiet poles
> Shall be at my command. (1.1.52-56)

Marlowe's use of dramatic irony here pertinently enables the Elizabethan audience to see that the hero's future differs from his claims. The audience also knows that Faustus' speech is taken from the *Geneva Bible*[13] (1 John 1: 8) and that it is followed by:

> If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (1 John 1: 9-11)

The playwright reveals that his protagonist, at this stage of his career, only perceives divine imperfections without acknowledging any chance for redemption. Faustus' self-imposed blindness resembles the argumentation used by the devil to lure the knight in Thomas Becon's *The Christian Knight and an Homily against Whoredom* (1546)[14]. It resembles Despair's display in his efforts to tempt the Red Cross Knight in Edmund Spenser's *The Faery Queene* (1590)[15].

Doctor Faustus rejects divinity due to his witty manipulation of reason and partial interpretations of theology. John Calvin divides human knowledge into earthly matters and heavenly ones[16]. Faustus uses Calvin's distinction to glorify human reason solely. He forgets that Calvin argues that reason without God's grace is imperfect. Considering this idea, one can assert that Faustus' syllogism is superficial. Marlowe's power of irony lies in how he depicts, in the play's opening, a Faustus who manoeuvres thought and reason, a Faustus whose knowledge is to serve sin. Indeed, Faustus aims to be more than human:

> A sound magician is a demi-god.
> Here, tire my brains to get a deity. (1, 1, 61-62)

One can conclude that Doctor Faustus willingly forges the link between himself and Lucifer. By aiming at being a God, he chooses the non-god. The irony of sin is fundamental in the play. Faustus rejects the Scriptures to study his magic books. Marlowe reiterates Faustus' choice by crystallising the ironic nature of his deliberate preference. Good and evil angels are introduced; their dramatic presence embodies the conflict between two diametrically opposite alternatives that continue to assault Faustus. At the same time, they theatricalise and make the competition within Faustus a staged one. Again, the main protagonist wilfully opts for material power. He is blind to the extent that he ignores the evil angel's presence; therefore, he confirms again that his choice depends on his own will.

One could even claim that the angels in the play have the same role as the Ghost in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599) and interpret their dramatic presence as a product of Faustus' internal debate, which leads to his ultimate choice of evil over good the same way the Ghost of Caesar was just the fruit of a Brutus in agony in the Shakespearean play. Faustus' desires are soon exalted by the visit of Cornelius and Valdes, who embellish a marvellous and exotic future in which they see themselves "canonise [d]" (1.1. 119) by all nations.

Marlowe emphasises Faustus's obstinate, ungracious willingness to admit the nature of his sin and its consequences. Unlike the *English Faustbook* (1592)[17], the discussions between Mephostophilis and Faustus occur before the pact's signature (1.3.65-86). Marlowe confers a powerful ironic effect on the dialogue (verbal irony). Hence, the devil's warnings are more potent than the good angel's admonishments. It seems surprising to see what is acknowledged by Christians as the thief of souls, the devil, exhorting Faustus to save his (soul). Nevertheless, the protagonist's arrogance leads him to mock such warnings. The paradoxical nature of the dialogue between Faustus and the Angels illustrates how the central character consciously rejects the Christian moral codes taken for granted by believers. Hence, from a Christian perspective, his tragedy becomes a "spectacle of blindness" since his fall is theatrical. Faustus refuses to see the demonic appearance of the devil; he asks Mephostophilis to parodically disguise himself in the clothes of a monk. Undoubtedly, the demonic nature of the pact seems challenging to bear for Faustus. These two examples underscore Faustus' moral myopia from a religious Christian perspective. They also accentuate his responsibility for the transgression and his ethical blindness[18], which has become a natural spectacle in the play.

Inversions and the Spectacle of Blindness

In theatre, inversions and parody significantly influence the dramatic experience. Through inversions, the playwright introduces a deliberate overturning of conventional roles and expectations, injecting a sense of tension and curiosity into the narrative. The departure from the expected prompts the audience to reevaluate familiar themes and characters in a fresh and thought-provoking manner. Concurrently, parody allows for a clever mimicry or exaggeration of established genres, characters, or situations, often infused with humour. In theatre, comedic situations entertain and serve as a vehicle for critical commentary on the original material.

In Doctor Faustus, Christopher Marlowe's employment of inversion and parody challenges prevailing notions of morality, divinity, and the human condition. The play unfolds as a dynamic spectacle by subverting expectations and humorously referencing established ideas. The irony unfolds during the ceremonial signing of the pact. It resides in great dramatic inversions of Christian values acknowledged by the playgoers of the age. Christopher Marlowe intends irony to function on stage during the performance via the audience's reaction to Faustus's deeds and utterances. The playwright deliberately implemented inversions to create audience/actor dynamics; they are meant to set the rules of the spectacle, involve the audience, and, thus, break the fourth wall. In Act 1, scene 5, Faustus' soliloquy becomes an ironic inversion and a possible parody of the conventional soliloquy of the Renaissance. The soliloquy fails to elicit sympathy or infuse human depth into Faustus, lacking the cathartic impact typical of Renaissance soliloquies. Irony emerges as Faustus, anticipating canonisation, paradoxically worships Beelzebub, revealing his dedication to the devil. Blinded, Faustus unwittingly admits his enslavement to the deadly sin of appetite, praying solely to Beelzebub, a truth escaping his awareness. This stark revelation unfolds as the audience witnesses Faustus's ironic descent into devilish devotion, a testament to his misguided pursuit of power. Ironically, Faustus' soliloquy before Mephostopheles' appearance evinces how the protagonist is ready to worship the devil the same way a pious Christian individual worships God. Faustus is so blinded that he expects "canonisation" but ironically worships Beelzebub, the devil and promises him devotion and pagan sacrifices. At the same time, Faustus recognises that his appetite is the only God he serves. The audience could easily perceive that Faustus is not even aware that he utters the harmful truth of being a slave of a deadly sin, which is appetite, and that his total concentration and sole prayers are directed to Beelzebub:

> The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite
> Wherein is fixed the love of Beelzebub.

> To him, I'll build an altar and a church,
> And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes. (1.5. 11-15)

When Mephostophilis appears on stage, Faustus extols his virtues and praises his words as celestial. Ironically, by rejecting God in his attempt to be divine, Faustus reduces himself to the devil's slave. He subverts the Christian God and undermines his power only to become the devil's slave. Faustus' transformation is not emancipatory; it is instead a path towards servitude and dependence. Ironic inversions become more evident at this level: all that is "backward" (1.5.5) to him is forward to a devout Christian:

> What boots it then to think on God or heaven?
> Away with such vain fancies and despair,
> Despair in God and trust Beelzebub.
> Now go not backwards/ No, Faustus, be resolute. (1.5.1-4)

Inversions continue, Faustus calls the demons to bring him good news from Lucifer like the Biblical Magi Kings in the *Gospel of Matthew* brought presents and the good news of Jesus's birth. By doing so, he inverts the *New Testament* angels' terms when they announce Christ's birth. As Mephostophilis goes off stage to bring a chafer of coal to clear the hero's congealed blood, Faustus is given one last chance to repent. Instead, he blasphemously utters the Latin phrase "*consommatum est*: this bill is ended" (1.5.73)[19], which is the exact phrase that Jesus Christ uttered before his crucifixion.

The diabolical pact with the devil is the culmination of the central character's moral and physical blindness; it is also the fundamental turning point of his life. The discrepancy between his aspirations and his present position is massive. Marlowe's use of irony at this level of the play exhibits a highly impotent Faustus. Once the contract is signed, the play's hero asks for sexual pleasure with women since he is "wanton and lascivious" (1.5.145). One may wonder how he can be a demi-god when he cannot be well-established emotionally and sexually. After the pact's signature, Faustus becomes trapped; the devil is neither ready to bring him a

sexual partner nor able to give him satisfactory answers about astronomy. A mixture of fear and vain pleasures henceforth characterises his life. Anti-Christian spectacles that parody morality plays, such as the Seven Deadly Sins, are displayed to assuage his desires. Impiously, Faustus compares his joy to Adam's at his first sight of Paradise: "That sight will be as pleasant to me as paradise was to Adam the first day of his creation." (2.1.108).

THE THEATRICS[20] OF IRONY. THE CARNIVALESQUE, METATHEATRE AND PARODY

In *Doctor Faustus*, carnivalesque elements, metatheatre, and parody collectively heighten theatrics and enrich the audience's engagement. The carnivalesque, characterised by its subversion of norms and celebration of chaos, manifests in Faustus' rebellion against conventional morality. Metatheatre, evident in scenes where characters acknowledge their performative roles, adds layers to the theatrical experience. It encourages the audience to reflect on the nature of the play and its implications. They are often employed through Faustus' actions that mock religious and moral conventions; parody introduces a comedic dimension, creating a dynamic interplay between tragedy and humour. Theatrical devices entertain and serve as tools for Marlowe to challenge values, inviting the audience to participate in a thought-provoking exploration of morality, power, and the consequences of unrestrained ambition.

Given the incongruity between Faustus' aspirations and his current situation, one may acknowledge his destiny's ludicrous nature. The playwright incorporates burlesque scenes to accentuate this effect, closely tied to irony within the play. These serve as reminders of Faustus' illusory magical abilities and highlight the ultimate decay and ruination of his once grandiose dreams. Instead of being the world's master, Faustus becomes a simple court jester. The fervent scholar limits himself to playing tricks on the Papal court. The man who wishes to control life and death is reduced to a

magician who builds castles in the air and puts on spirit performances in the form of significant historical figures[21]. The scholar who desired spirits "fly to India for gold/Ransack the Ocean for Orient pearl" (1.1. 81-82) begs them to bring grapes to the Duchess of Vanholt. The man who wanted to "levy soldiers/and chase the Prince of Parma/And reign sole king of all provinces" (1.1. 91-93) uses his fake power to grow horns on knights' heads and strike dumb innocent peasants. Ironically, Faustus' life becomes full of buffoonery and foolishness; it has nothing to do with his original claims, his desires are masturbatory, and the knowledge he had after the pact has become chimaera that he will be even trapped by demoniality[22] later in the scene of Helen of Troy. W. W. Greg suggests in "The Damnation of Faustus" that the sin of demoniality occurs from the moment Faustus longs to have intercourse with the spirit of Helen, who is nothing but a devil (106)[23]. Marlowe graphically draws a repulsive unison between Faustus and the devil, pointing to bodily intercourse between both: "Her lips suck forth my soul: See where it flies" (5.1.100).

Marlowe does not limit himself to tainting Faustus' actions with irony; simultaneously, he refines and exudes his use of this concept through the intermediate scenes. Some seemingly surprising dramatic carnivalesque scenes undermine Faustus' apparent greatness despite their contrast with the play's tragic nature. As Bakhtin has coined, the carnivalesque is a literary mode that subverts the world and turns it upside down; truths are tested and contested, opposites are mingled grotesquely, and assumptions of dominant figures are mocked through humour and chaos. Bakhtin emphasises the idea in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1963) that within the carnivalesque mode, opposites mingle, and solemnities and pieties are profaned. The presence of the grotesque and the carnivalesque serves irony in *Doctor Faustus*. It enhances dialogic and heteroglossic overtones and voices of endless diversity. It serves comic relief by injecting the text stock characters with melodious, farcical and rich folk stories, idiolects, dialects and swear words. Hence, the carnivalesque treats the antinomies of life and death in a light-

hearted and grotesque mode. *Doctor Faustus* has a magnificent intermingling between the carnivalesque and "theatricality"[24]. Wecan talk about the theatrics of irony through play-acting and metatheatre. At the same time, the carnivalesque heightens the tragic retribution that Faustus will experience by the end of the play and gives irony a more profound impulse.

The irony is reinforced thanks to the combination of the carnivalesque and the metatheatrical. The Parade of Vulgar Demons is a reminder of the famous Renaissance Pageants. The daring sexual overtone of the scene amplifies laughter. Audiences are introduced to a staged farcical spectacle where farcical demonic characters not only point to the vanity and the hollowness of the values of Faustus and his world but also heighten metatheatre and emphasise the power of performance in staging irony. During these carnivalesque scenes, irony becomes a spectacle of blindness since the buffoons of Marlowe and their mimicry not only point to the vanity and hollowness of Faustus but also accentuate the illusory nature of theatre and the world it presents. Phyllis Gorfain, in "Towards a Theory of Play and the Carnivalesque in *Hamlet*", introduces how mixtures between forms, registers and modes in a dramatic work undermine dogmatic and overconfident discourses. She asserts that:

> Through stories, role-playing, parodying discourses of others, performing a play (including a dumb show) and a speech extracted from a play, songs and other prefabricated forms of speaking, citational texts and scripts, characters find speech and performance genres with which to express, displace and reshape their anger, griefs [...] subversions and containment of others. (Gorfain 1988, 156)

In *Doctor Faustus*, carnivalesque manifestations take a form either at the level of characters as theatrical beings, as agonising souls, or at the text level. Concretely, the absurdity of both the clownish devilish characters and Faustus points to his illusory aspirations in his quest for fame and eternity and reminds the audience how he has forgotten the cruel reality of death and damnation awaiting him. Metatheatre, thus, as a spectacle, acquires a powerful dimension

from the moment it intertwines with the carnivalesque. The Demonic parading devils mock the dogmatic Faustus, underly his vanity but also that of humans and bring to the fore a brilliant combination of the grotesque and the theatrical in a comic, burlesque and ironic spectacle.

The intermediate ironic scenes, parades or pantomimes on stage are manifestations of metadrama[25] or metatheatre. The expression metatheatre maintains that the intermediate comic demonic parades in the play put forward a particular mode where actors, playwrights and audiences share a perception of drama as a fictional and theatrical construct. The awareness of the scene as a theatrical construct accentuates Doctor Faustus's illusory absurdist and ironic fate. The demonic Parade heightens the metatheatre and emphasises the power of dramaturgy[26] and performance. The Parade of the Demons is an autonomous performance which displays a theatrical reality, a form of anti-theatre[27] that lays bare the absurdity of the outcome of Faustus' pact with the devil. Consequently, anti-theatre in *Doctor Faustus* is a counter-performance, a parodic one that aims to show that Faustus has become a laughable puppet who takes himself for a hero, and that is how irony functions in the play. All in all, metatheatre puts the accent on the illusory and the chimerical; it stresses not only the idea of the reflexivity of theatre but also its artificiality and, consequently, the triviality of life and humans as Lionel Abel stresses in his book *Metatheatre*:

> Metatheatre is a convenient name for the quality of force in a play which challenges theatre's claim to be simply realistic, to be nothing but a mirror in which we view the actions and sufferings of characters like ourselves [...] It may end by making us aware of life's uncanny likeness to art or illusion by calling attention to the strangeness, artificiality of the life we live. (Abel 1963, 133)

Consequently, the absurdity of clownish characters points to the illusory aspirations of Faustus and his artificiality. Metatheatre, as a spectacle of blindness, acquires a powerful dimension since it intertwines with the carnivalesque. Silenced voices from the margin

mock; thus, Faustus underlies his vanity and brings a brilliant combination between the grotesque and theatrical in a remarkable spectacle of blindness. Rafe, the clown who steals Faustus's magic books, is not less lascivious than his master since he is eager to make maidens "dance stark naked before [him]" (3.4. 3-5). Many other examples, such as the fourth scene of the first Act and the comic episodes performed by Robin and Dick, can be given. Common characters speak in blank verse in those burlesque scenes: "What Robin, you must come away and walk the horses" (2.2.4).

In these sequences, simple-minded characters can play the same tricks as Faustus by vulgarly using a stolen magic book. They also need prostitutes; the same way Faustus wants courtesans. For example, Nan Spit takes the place of Helen of Troy. These comic low marginal characters steal things from the tavern as Faustus did from the Pope's banquet, and like Faustus, they are tyrannised by the devil. Those secondary satires complete the most sophisticated irony touches in the play. They also accentuate the vanity of magic. The Parade of the Seven Deadly Sins mentioned earlier is another grotesque example where we have a metatheatrical scene par excellence that exposes the atrocity and the absurdity of Faustus' sins in a vulgar and blatant way. Faustus himself, for a while, becomes aware of the bitter taste of his "damned art" (5.1.35). Dramatic tension heightens with Faustus' possibility of repentance. However, he does not appeal for God's mercy; he instead asks for Lucifer's:

> I do repent I e'er offend him.
> Sweet Mephostophilis, entreat thy Lord
> To pardon my unjust presumption,
> And with my blood again, I will confirm
> The former vow I made to Lucifer. (5.1.75-79)

Thus, Faustus renews his contract with the devil. In his plea for Lucifer's mercy lies an ironic inversion. The three-fold structure of Faustus' beseeching of pardon is a parody of the three-step procedure of Christian repentance: Faustus recognises his sin, begs

pardon and renews his vow not to offend his Lord anymore. Mephostophilis becomes, accordingly, the demonic substitute of the Father Confessor. One should remember that he is already disguised in the clothes of a monk.

Marlowe's ironic inversions are demonstrated further when Faustus asks Helen of Troy to be his lover. Paradoxically, he considers her a divine celestial figure: "that heavenly Helen I saw of late" (5.2.91). The allusion to Helen is of paramount importance both owing to its poetic effect and because it gives a lie to Faustus' dreams. The passage in which Faustus describes his zeal for Helen is one of the most ironic records of dramatic literature. It is worth noting that Elizabethan writers considered Helen of Troy a symbol of lethal beauty and forbidden pleasures. As usual, Faustus appreciates all that is satanic. Helen comes to crown his illusory bliss:

> To glut the longing of my heart's desire,
> [...]
> Whose sweet embraces may extinguish clear
> Those thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow. (5.1.89, 92-93)

What Faustus sees in Helen differs from what the audience may see in her. The scene's context, imagery, poetic style, and absolute tone of felicity betray Helen's perverted reality and Faustus's worthless passion. Helen's beauty that causes Troy's destruction will also cause Faustus's. The immoral kisses of a demonic lover are not tokens of demonality; as previously mentioned, they guarantee eternity in hell and not in Paradise. The soul sucked by the devil will not be given back. It is a hell that offers its lips and not Paradise. The flames of Jupiter that dazzle Semele are the very flames of Helen's last resting place and the ones that will destroy the unfortunate Faustus. Like Arethusa, the wanton Faustus would hold the burning bright sun without being burned (5.1.97-116). The imagery of the above passage is not arbitrary. Marlowe's skilful manipulation of language conveys powerful theatrical allusions. The cutting-edge blade of irony performs very sharply in this passage. Like the simple but

ironic references to fire that characterise Dido's speech at the pinnacle of her glory in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (1593)[28], those more complex images pave the way for the protagonist's final destiny. The scene in which the satanic Faustus kisses the demonic Helen is the summit of the disordered union between Faustus and hell. The consummation of such a union is short in coming.

The Fall and Irony

Even in his last hours, Faustus remains arrogant; he refuses to acknowledge the possibility of mercy:

> But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned,
> The serpent that tempted Eve may be saved,
> But not Faustus. (5.2. 43-45)

Faustus' hyperbole conveys the degree of his despair. Hell is no more "a fable" (1.5.130) for him, as he claimed in Act 1, scene 5. Despite his suffering, which is a mental one, he does not change his behaviour from the beginning till the end of the play. In the first scene, he is staged alone in his study, complaining about the time limits, and so does he at the end of the play. Instead of praying, he desperately begs the stars to "stand still that time may cease and midnight never come" (5.2.146). His sighs and screams are more ironic and desperate than ever: "*O lente, lente, currite noctis equi*" (5.2.152) (O slowly, slowly run, ye horses of the night). This quotation from Ovid's poem *Amores* (16 BC) seems displaced in such a grave sequence; in the quoted verse, the lover wishes Aurorus, the goddess of dawn, never to come so that he could stay with his mistress forever. However, the connotations of love that the lines of Ovid bear add an ironic dimension to Faustus' speech. This dimension contradicts the last line, "Faustus may repent and save his soul" (5.2.151).

Faustus' appeal to nature is, as usual, impossible to accomplish. When he finally realises that his bids are fruitless, he desperately

moves to God and sees Christ's blood: "Oh, I'll leap up to my God: who pulls me down?" (5.2.158) Doctor Faustus, who refuses to learn from the warning of his congealed blood and who has previously spoken Christ's words "*consummatum est*" to conclude his Act of damnation, belatedly understands the message of redemption. When the devil "pulls him down" (5.2.155), he repeats the incomplete repentance phrase. He calls Christ, but the devil tears his heart: "Ah, rend not my heart" (5.2.158), and his last imploration is for Lucifer's mercy: "Oh, spare me Lucifer" (5.2.159). Undeniably, the final ironic downfall of Faustus will serve other Renaissance playwrights, namely John Webster, who, in the *Duchess of Malfi* (1612-1613)[29], uses the same logic through the words of the Cardinal[30], who, in Act 5, shows his total incapacity and his ironic dependence on the devil:

> On God, whom Faustus hath abjured? On God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed? Oh my God, I would weep, but the devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears, yea, life and soul. Oh, he stays my tongue. I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them. (5.2.58-62)

Faustus does not succeed in creating a transcendent or healed new self like Prince Hamlet or King Lear[31]. His fall is ironic; it goes beyond a blatant plain reading that follows the religious paradigm of damnation and perdition with a preview of Faustus fasting in fires as the Satan of Milton does. After his death, Faustus is nicely remembered by scholars who intend to hold a convenient burial for him. In Act 5, scene 3, the Second Scholar announces the following:

> As every Christian heart laments to think on,
> Yet, for he was a scholar once admired
> For wonderous knowledge in our German schools,
> We'll give his mangled limbs due burial,
> And all the students clothed in mourning black
> Shall wait upon his heavy funeral. (5.3. 15-20)

It is undeniable that Doctor *Faustus* addresses the hero's wish to see time stop so that he can save his soul; it is also clear that Marlowe,

for religious reasons, presents on stage with blood, pain and suffering and even the desire of the protagonist to see his body disintegrate, melt and dissolve as the Hamlet of Shakespeare does. However, the irony in the last moments accompanying the fall of Faustus serves the purpose of the spectacular, the theatrical and the cathartic. Whether the soul of Faustus is damned or not, he remains cherished by his fellow scholars.

While dealing with the tragic fate of Faustus, Christopher Marlowe gives a challenging twist to the concept of irony and makes it a spectacle by implicating the audience. Indeed, the positions and utterances of Faustus in his interweaving with the devil are dialectically related to the audiences' response and reinforced by their knowledge of his choices' ethical and religious implications. D. C. Muecke insists on the importance of the audience's position while dealing with irony. He claims that:

> In the theatre mainly, the quality of the irony depends very much on whether the audience already knows the outcome or actual state of affairs or learns of these only when the victim learns. In the former case, the irony is a spectacle of blindness. It can be further enhanced if the victim's utterances are applicable not only to the situation as he sees it but also to the situation as the reader or audience knows it to be (1982, 54).

Muecke also borrows the term "discrepant awareness" (54) used by Bertrand Evans in *Shakespeare's Comedies* (1960) with a description of different situations where either the audience or some characters on stage can grasp "the full import of what is said" (1982, 54). The definition of Muecke corresponds exactly to *Doctor Faustus* since the audiences have a "discrepant awareness" and know the outcome of Faustus' absurd choices and his involvement in a complete spectacle of blindness since the audiences' religious background enables them to know in advance the result of the hero.

CONCLUSION

Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* unfolds as a captivating exploration of irony, theatrics, and the spectacle of blindness. Marlowe challenges conventional notions of morality, divinity, and the human condition through deliberate inversions and parody. The dramatic spectacle created by Faustus's ironic descent into devilish devotion, the carnivalesque elements, metatheatre, and the interplay between tragedy and humour contribute to the richness of the audience's engagement. Faustus's journey, marked by ironic inversions and a pact with the devil, is a powerful commentary on the consequences of unrestrained ambition. The juxtaposition of Faustus's aspirations with his ultimately futile and absurd fate highlights the discrepancy between desire and reality. Theatrical devices, such as burlesque scenes and metatheatrical elements, emphasize the illusory nature of Faustus's grandiose dreams, reducing him from a world master to a simple court jester.

The carnivalesque and metatheatrical aspects heighten the dramatic tension and serve as a means for Marlowe to challenge prevailing values. The Parade of Vulgar Demons and other ironic scenes expose the vanity and hollowness of Faustus and his world, adding layers to the overall dramatic experience. The intersection of carnivalesque elements and metatheatre underscores the artificiality and triviality of life, contributing to the overall irony that permeates the play. Faustus's ironic downfall, refusal to repent, and final moments of despair add a cathartic dimension to the theatrical experience. The audience, equipped with "discrepant awareness", witnesses Faustus's tragic fate, emphasising the spectacle of blindness. Even in his last moments, Faustus remains a complex and intriguing character, challenging the audience to reflect on the broader themes of morality, ambition, and the consequences of one's choices.

The present inquiry has sought to delineate the manifold expressions of irony across the various phases that Faustus traverses in his trajectory from humanity to damnation. Faustus' dogged

proclivity to apprehend nought but divine imperfections, his depiction as a sagacious manipulator of thought, and his ungracious obstinacy in recognising the true nature of his transgression are meticulously orchestrated in a dramatic spectacle by the playwright. Christopher Marlowe's adept handling of irony is showcased through his deliberate utilisation of inversions and intentional deviations from the play's source, *The English Faust book*. Primarily, Marlowe treats irony as a spectacle of blindness, intertwining elements of the carnivalesque, comedy, burlesque, and metatheatre. This constitutes the demonstration of the theatrics of irony. In his quest to ascend to godhood, Doctor Faustus inexorably paves the way for his demise and damnation by choosing the non-divine. The tragic narrative unfolds as a spectacle of blindness, entailing a discernible interplay between the overt and the covert—an artful fusion of grave, tragic consequences and retribution and moments of buffoonery or carnivalesque revelry on the other. The profundity and lucidity of these thematic explorations render *Doctor Faustus* distinctive among its contemporaneous tragedies. In a departure from conventional interpretations of the play, Marlowe transcends the classical ecclesiastical pattern of medieval morality plays. Instead, he pioneers new theatrical dynamics and aesthetics with a dedicated emphasis on the spectacular and the metatheatrical.

NOTES

1. Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*(Penguin et al. Library, 1969).
2. See Parker, Barbara, L. 2011. "'Cursèd Necromancy': Marlowe's *Faustus* as Anti-Catholic Satire".
3. See Jandl, Ingeborg, Susanne Knaller, Sabine Schönfellner, and Gudrun Tockner, ed. 2017.
4. See Hunt, Maurice A. 2016. "Friendship in Marlowe's 'Dr. Faustus' and 'The Jew of Malta' ".
5. See Scott, Mark James Richard. 2020.
6. Hecker, P., & Knutson, R. L. 2009. "Introduction: Marlowe the Play-maker". *Shakespeare Bulletin*.

7. As an example, Zied Ben Amor, in his article "When Doctor Faustus Fails, Irony Prevails: The Spectacle of Blindness in Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*" (2003), explores uniquely dramatic irony without combining it with metatheatre. Moreover, in another article titled "They willfully themselves exile from Light" (2023), the same author discusses the use of metatheatre in comedy plays without focusing on the link between metatheatre and dramatic irony.

8. Douglas Colin Muecke, in *Irony and the Ironic*, dwells on different variations of irony, including "irony as rhetorical enforcement" (Muecke 1982, 8), "ironic naivety", "unconscious irony", "self-betraying irony" (10), "romantic irony" (18) among others; he also uses the phrase "dramatic irony, or the spectacle of blindness" (10) concerning the Shakespearean play *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*(1593) and precisely from (3. 2. 62-67), (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2008).

9. While dealing with verbal Irony, Muecke claims that "the simplest form of 'high relief' verbal irony is the antiphrastic praise for blame, for example, the 'Congratulations!' we offer to the 'smart Alec' who has let the side down" (Muecke 1982, 56).

10. Muecke compares situational and verbal irony by advancing the idea that "verbal irony implies an ironist, someone consciously and intentionally employing a technique. Situational irony does not imply an ironist but merely a 'condition of affairs' or 'outcome of events' which is seen and felt to be ironic" (Muecke 1982, 42).

11. The definition of Pavis is interesting since it focuses on the position and the attitude of the spectators who know more than what happens on stage. Pavis also focuses on two types of communication: an on-stage communication between characters and an offstage one, which is linked to audiences and contributes to the transgression of the fourth wall principle (Pavis 1998, 189).

12. The religious dimension of the play takes its roots from the long tradition of medieval morality plays. Aspects of total depravity, sin and damnation, making a pact with the devil, hope, perdition, and despair are at the play's heart. The literature review has focused intensely on the matter. To investigate the religious dimension of the play, see Webb, David C. 1999. "Damnation in *Doctor Faustus*: Theological Strip Tease and the Histrionic", Heroand Kiessling, Nicolas. 1975. "Doctor Faustus and the Sin of Demoniality", and Webb, David C. 1999. "Damnation in *Doctor Faustus*: Theological Strip Tease and the Histrionic Hero".

13. *The Geneva Bible* states: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8). (Greydon Press, 1998).

14. "Wherefore goest thou so oft unto the church? Why hearest thou so many holy sermons? For what cause prayest thou so fervently? In all these things thou labourest in vain; for 'God heareth no sinners' ". (Beacon 2005, 5).
15. In Book 1, canto 9, Despair skillfully uses his power of persuasion and tries to convince the Red Cross Knight that life is not worth living and that death ends a life of sin.
16. Calvin, John*, Institutes of Christian Religion*, trans. John Allen, 7th American ed., (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1963).
17. The British Library collection items online give an account of *The English Faust Book* on the following link: https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-english-faustbuch-1592.
18. Ethical blindness from a Christian religious perspective.
19. "consummatum est" means "it is finished". The Penguin Classics edition of *The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe*states that these words are "the last of Christ's words from the cross. John, XIX, 30." (281), (London: Penguin English Library, 1986).
20. Zied Ben Amor defines the term "theatrics" in his article "Staging violence in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: From the theatrics of the mind, the image and the stage to the creation of the meta-self" (2023) as follows: "The term theatrics refers to the various techniques, conventions and elements used to create a dramatic performance, such as acting, stage design, costumes, lighting and sound. Theatrics includes the use of gestures, facial expressions and body language to convey emotions and actions; the use of stage design and props to create a believable environment; the use of costumes and makeup to create believable characters; the use of lighting to create mood and atmosphere; and the use of sound to enhance the overall experience of the performance" (Ben Amor 2023, 41).
21. At this level of the play, Faustus is still blind since he unwarily tells truths: "These are but shadows" (4.2. 55). (London: Penguin English Library, 1986).
22. Nicolas Kiessling advances in "The Sin of Demoniality" that "Faustus commits the sin of demoniality, that is bodily intercourse with demons" (206), *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900 15, no. 2 (1975): 205–11.
23. "Helen then is a spirit, and in this play, a spirit means a devil. In making her his paramour Faustus commits the sin of demoniality, that is, bodily intercourse with demons" (106)., (1946), 97-107.
24. Pavis defines theatricality as follows: "Theatricality is that which is specifically theatrical, in performance or in the dramatic text" (395). Theatricality, according to this definition, enhances the role of the audience and lays bare the importance of the spectacular during performances. (Pavis 1998, 395).

25. In *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception* (1986), Richard Hornby enumerated six types of metadrama. He has mentioned sub-components of dramatic performances: the play within the play, the ceremony within the play, role-playing within the role, references to literature and real life within the play and self-references within the play. In that vein, the Parade of the demons included in *Doctor Faustus* could fit with the classification of Hornby since we have the fake ceremonial in the Parade with demons dancing and the concept of role-playing within a role with a devil playing the role of Helen.
26. The link between dramaturgy and performance at this level of the analysis is necessary since, as Patrice Pavis mention: "Dramaturgy is based on an analysis of actions and their actants (the characters)" (125). In *Doctor Faustus*, the link between the playwright, his art of composing the play, and the characters of his play is sealed thanks to irony and the injection of metatheatrical stances.
27. Patrice Pavis defines anti-theatre as a "term used to designate a dramaturgy and an acting style that negate all the principle of theatrical illusion [...] anti-theatre is characterised by a critical and ironical attitude toward artistic and social tradition" (26). (Pavis 1998, 26).
28. Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Plays*., (London: Penguin English Library, 1986).
29. In *The Duchess of Malfi* the last words of the Cardinal in Act V show his total incapacity: "I would pray now: but the devil takes away my heart / For having any confidence in prayer." (5.4.31-32); they are reminders of the Faustus of Marlowe: "Oh, I'll leap up to my God: who pulls me down?" (Marlowe 5.2.158) or: "Oh my God, I would weep, but the devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears, yea, life and soul. Oh, he stays my tongue. I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them." (5.2.58-62) In the same fashion as the Faustus of Marlowe, who, in his last moments, invokes Lucifer instead of God "Oh, spare me Lucifer" (5.2.159), does the Cardinal of Webster evoke demons: "I am puzzled in a question about hell, / He sales, in hell, there's one material fire. / And yet it shall not burn all men alike" (Webster 1900 5.5.1-3)., (New York: Dover Publications, 1999).
30. For further details about the comparison between Marlowe and Webster, see Ben Amor, Z. (2022). Demonism, damnation, and Salvation in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*: Christian and Manichaean manifestations. *The International Journal of Literary Humanities*, *20*(2), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7912/CGP/v20i02/.
31. Zied Ben Amor develops the notion of the *transcendant* meta-selves for the above-mentioned characters in his article "From Illness to Meta-selves in William Shakespeare's Hamlet and King Lear: New Identities in the Time of Disease" (1923).

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

1560 Geneva Bible. 1998. Colombus, Ohio: Greydon Press.

The English Faust Book https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-english-faustbuch-1592 Web.

Beacon, Thomas. *The Christian Knight and an Homily Against Whoredom*. Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2005 .

Logeman, Hendrik, ed. *The English Faustbook of 1592*. Gand: Gand University Press, 1900.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. London: Penguin English Library, 1969.

---. *The Complete Plays*. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin English Library, 1986.

Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

---. *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Webster, John. *The Duchess of Malfi*. New York: Dover Publications, 1999.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Abel, Lionel. Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form. New York: Hill & Wang, 1963.

Bakhtin, M. M. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. Austin: University of Texas, 1981.

Bakhtin, M. M. Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics. Translated by Emerson, C. Vol. 8, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Ben Amor, Zied. "When Doctor Faustus Fails, Irony Prevails: The Spectacle of Blindness in Christopher Marlowe's The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus." English Studies Series 3. (2003): 116–126. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.17145752.v1

Ben Amor, Zied. "Demonism, Damnation, and Salvation in John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi: Christian and Manichaean Manifestations". The International Journal of Literary Humanities, 20 .2. (2022): 1-15. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7912/CGP/v20i02/1-15.

Ben Amor, Zied. "From Illness to Meta-selves in William Shakespeare's Hamlet and King Lear: New Identities in the Time of Disease". INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION & PHILOLOGY. 3. 2. (2022): 56–75. https://www.ibu.edu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/IJEP-JOURNAL-VOLUME-3-ISSUE-2_2022-1-1.pdf.

Ben Amor, Zied. "Staging Violence in William Shakespeare's Hamlet : From the Theatrics of the Mind, the Image and the Stage to the Creation of the Meta-Self". Ars Aeterna, 15. 1 (2023): 39-60. https://doi.org/10.2478/aa-2023-0003.

Ben Amor, Zied. " 'They willfully themselves exile from light': Exile in Space, Stage and Metatheatre in William Shakespeare' A Midsummer Night's Dream". Theatre Academy, 1.2 (2023): 93–115.

https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/theatreacademy/issue/79961/1299236

Calvin, John. Institutes of Christian Religion. Translated by John Allen. 7th American ed. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1963.

Evans, Bertrand. Shakespeare's Comedies. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.

Gorfain, Phyllis. "Towards a Theory of Play and the Carnivalesque in Hamlet." Shakespeare and Carnival After Bakhtin, Edited by Ronald Knowles, 152-177. London: Macmillan, 1988.

Greg, W. W. "The Damnation of Faustus." The Modern Language Review, vol. 41. no. 2 (1946): 97-107.

Fletcher, Angus. "Doctor Faustus and the Lutheran Aesthetic". English Literary Renaissance 35. 2. (2005) : 187-209. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24463679.

Hamlin, William M. "Casting Doubt in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus". Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 41. 2. (2001): 257-275. https://doi.org/10.2307/1556188.

Hecker, Pierre, et Roslyn L. Knutson. "Introduction: Marlowe the Play-maker". Shakespeare Bulletin 27. 1. (2009): 1-4. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26347711

Hornby, Richard. Drama, Metadrama, and Perception. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986.

Hunt, Maurice A. "Friendship in Marlowe's Dr. Faustus and The Jew of Malta" Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England .29. (2016): 103-29. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44505217.

Jandl, Ingeborg, Susanne Knaller, Sabine Schönfellner, and Gudrun Tockner, ed. Writing Emotions: Theoretical Concepts and Selected Case Studies in Literature. Transcript Verlag. 2017. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1wxt3t.

Kiessling, Nicolas. "Doctor Faustus and the Sin of Demoniality". Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 .15. 2. (1975): 205-211. https://doi.org/10.2307/449667.

Knox, Norman. "On the Classification of Ironies". Edited by D. C. Muecke et Charles I. Glicksberg. Modern Philology. 70. 1. (1972): 53-62. https://www.jstor.org/stable/436505.

Last, Suzan. "Marlowe's Literary Double Agency: Doctor Faustus as a Subversive Comedy of Error". Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme. 24.1. (2000): 23-44. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43445275.

McAlindon, T. "The Ironic Vision: Diction and Theme in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus". The Review of English Studies 32 (126): 129-41. https://www.jstor.org/stable/514131.

Muecke, Douglas Colin. 1969. The Compass of Irony. London: Methuen, 1981.

Muecke, Douglas Colin. Irony and the Ironic. London: Methuen. 1982.

Ornstein, Robert. "The Comic Synthesis in Doctor Faustus". ELH 22. 3. (1955): 165-172. https://doi.org/10.2307/2871873.

Pavis, Patrice. Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Scott, Mark James Richard. "'That's hard': Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and the Trauma of Reprobation". Early Theatre. 23. 2. (2020): 9-30.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/27088219.
Parker, Barbara, L. " 'Cursèd Necromancy': Marlowe's Faustus as Anti-Catholic Satire". Marlowe Studies. 1. (2011): 59-77.
Trudeau, Lawrence, ed. Drama Criticism. 1. Detroit: Gale Research, 1991.
Webb, David C. "Damnation in Doctor Faustus: Theological Strip Tease and the Histrionic Hero ». Critical Survey .11. 1. (1999): 31-47.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556876.