Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*: A Postcolonial Reading

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Abstract

This paper argues that Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* incorporates multiple degrees of domination that include the acquisition of subjectively intentional knowledge closely connected to colonialism. The dramatic text reveals the imperialist, colonialist tendencies in their beginnings. Four shades of imperialism are discerned in the play: historicism, knowledge as possession, economic exploitation and actual colonization. The depiction of the East in the play is investigated following Edward Said’s analyses, deducing that the magnitude of Renaissance Marlowe’s project is of a different nature: it is global, appropriating European countries as well. The Orient, though historically targeted by British expansionist inclinations, is more connected with Faustus’ quest for knowledge. Another assumption presented is the interpretation of magic as a metaphor for alien knowledge imported from the East and declared heretic by the Church, which may throw more light on the paradoxical convergence of magic and empirical science in Faustus’ dilemma.

Keywords: Faustus, Marlowe, Imperialism, Postcolonialism, Edward Said.

Introduction

Edward Said distinguishes between two stages of Europe’s dealing with the Orient: the ‘pre-colonial’ and the ‘colonial’; the first refers to the kind of awareness demonstrated in the works of Dante and d’Herbelot; while the second, defined as “modern Orientalism”, embodies the process of systematic accumulation of human beings and territories (Said 2003, 123). Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (1592) is one of the earliest English literary works that reveal the actual imperialist, colonialist tendencies at their dawn. *Doctor Faustus* incorporates multiple degrees of the domination of the other that include geographical exploration which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge - intentional knowledge which ultimately leads to colonisation. Knowledge and power are dialectically connected; Faustus, the over-reacher, emerges as a Nietzschean superman¹ in whom the will to power is first transformed into the will to know and then vice versa.

This study is a construct founded on Edward Said’s conjecture that imperialism and colonialism are pathologies of power. It investigates the references in the play to the East, among other regions, basically following Said’s assumptions in *Orientalism* (2003), with the aim of contributing to his project by interrogating one of the influential texts in Western literary canon and
attempting to trace the symptoms of Orientalism diagnosed by Said: the academic discipline, taught and practised at academic institutions in the West, the more general sense of the mode of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and "the Occident", and Orientalism as "the corporate institutions" for dealing with the Orient (Said 2003, 2). The effort made here is to discern how the Orient is projected in this highly representative text. In a somewhat Freudian way the ‘unaware’ hints in the text are expected to reveal the stance referred to; unconsciously, hence more truthfully.

The spirit of Faustus’ multifaceted ambition was common enough in Europe to induce an English playwright like Marlowe to wear the mask of a German scholar. But when Faustus descants upon power and how to capitalize on it, he more likely vocalizes the specific aspirations in his own space, Elizabethan Britain: to conquer the world, encouraged by the great discoveries, military build-up and scientific possibilities already in progress. Even Lucifer endeavours in his anxious possessiveness to “enlarge his kingdom” (II.1.40).²

Chronologically, Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus lies outside the scope of Said’s Orientalism in the third sense, for he sets its origination in late seventeenth century and judges it to be strongly allied to the imperialist and colonialist process. As a work of drama and not academic discourse, the text is left solely with the possibility of dialogically displaying symptoms of Orientalism in the second sense, i.e., the more general view of the Orient as held by the common majority of Europeans at that time. As the Orient in Doctor Faustus does not constitute a conspicuous part of its subject matter, unlike Tamburlaine, which is mainly and explicitly about the East, the assumption proposed here is that whatever casual references to the East exist in the text can be treated as signification of the text’s historical context, its Zeitgeist.

Despite Marlowe’s radicalism, or maybe because of it, he does epitomize the new spirit which will dominate the subsequent few centuries:

He is less an individual than the epitome of Renaissance aspirations. He has all the divine discontent, the unwearied and unsatisfied striving after knowledge that marked the age in which Marlowe wrote. An age of exploration, its adventurers were not only the merchants and seamen who sailed the world, but also the scientists, astronomers who surveyed the heaven with their ‘optic glass’ (Gibbon 1965, xix).

Historically, Marlowe is situated in a period witnessing a balance of power, though not peace, between Europe and the Muslim East, where the fall of Muslim Spain synchronized with the fall of Christian Byzantium; the ascendance of British power with those of the Ottomans and Spain. Europe, however, had the advantage because "the penetration into the 'treasure-chests' of learning in northern Spain brought about the excited discovery that it was the Arabs who were the true representatives of classical knowledge and the giants on whose shoulders Latin science and philosophy had to be placed" (Metlitzki 1977, 6). The conflict in Doctor Faustus portrays the resistance to this new wave diagnosed as “epistemophilia”. Knowledge was discovered as definitely a doorway to power, compelling the resolute seeker to defy first the norms of his society, then the received views of cosmic order, with the belief that with scientific knowledge nothing is beyond reach; precisely what Faustus perceived.
The problematic issue that confronts the reader is the glaring contradiction between Faustus’ eager pursuit of scientific knowledge and his faith in necromancy; hence the argument presented here: magic is a metaphor for all types of knowledge extant outside the Church, unsanctioned by it and falling beyond its authority. Subsequently and because the source of the new knowledge was mainly from the East, written or translated by Arabs or Jews, it was firmly judged by the Church as unchristian; rather, it was seen as satanic witchcraft. “To them, Muhammad was a learned magician and astronomer who accomplished his evil ends by his skill in forbidden lore” (Smith 1977, 5; italics added). Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1980) is a postmodern commentary on the subject, depicting the strong resistance to the newly discovered non-Christian systems of knowledge. Astronomy, obviously related to the Arabs and posing as the central fascination for Faustus, was considered particularly more dangerous than any other discipline.

Would I have a book where I might see
All character and planets of the heavens,
That I might know their motions
And dispositions. …
Wherein I might see all plants, herbs,
And trees that grow upon the earth.

(I.i.552–558)

Significantly, it is Mephistopheles the devil (satanic source) that hands him such a volume on the natural sciences. Besides, the first emolument Faustus earns of his pact with the devil is to get answers to some problems of astronomy, information at that time beyond human reach. The forbidden and deadly book of Eco is the damned book of Faustus:

O Faustus, lay that damned book aside,
And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God’s heavy wrath upon thy head;
Read, read the Scriptures; that is blasphemy.

(I.i.197-100)

This juxtaposition of the two systems of knowledge: the ecclesiastical, adumbrated as the “superstitious books of the cardinals” (III.i.892-893), and that drawn from newly acquired manuscripts, along with the images of Copernicus and Galileo looming in the background, stresses the inevitable condemnation of books on the natural sciences. Another echoing view is offered by the Evil Angel: “Go forward Faustus in that famous art / Wherein all nature’s treasury is contain’d” (I.i.101–10). “Nature’s treasury” is undoubtedly a subject more suited to scientific manuscripts than the practice of magic and metaphysics.³

On the other hand, knowledge in *Doctor Faustus* is not innocent. It is a means and not the end, a pathway to the acquirement of wealth: "Hold, take this book, peruse it thoroughly: / The iterating of these lines brings gold" (II.i.543-544). It is also an enabling device to control and enslave other human beings: "Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself, / And men in armour shall appear to thee, / Ready to execute what thou desir’st" (II.i.547-549). It even allows its possessor overwhelming power and dominance over cosmic forces:

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;  
(I.i.83–88)

Proudly and unashamedly declared, this imperialist intention, established through the  
subjugation of spirits is materialized in geographical names, such as India and Saba, “such  
countries that lie far east, where they have fruit twice a year” (IV.vi.1582–1485). In his article titled  “Solomon, Gender, and Empire in Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus”, William Tate argues that the allusion  to Saba suggests that Marlowe identifies Faustus with Solomon, whose empire, according to the  Bible extended south to Saba with the facilitation of demonic services. Tate expounds how  Renaissance hopefuls utilized these elements of the Solomon narrative to validate and encourage  English efforts to establish trade dominance over European rivals in the competition for wealth and  land of the New World (Tate 1997, 259).

Yet, unlike ‘high colonialism’, colonialism at its heyday, this early form of imperialist ‘wishful’  thinking declares its intention unambiguously while later actual colonial voices can only  apologetically be raised to justify their “civilizing” enterprise, portraying their charges as ignorant  and savage. Conversely, the East to Marlowe is full of riches ready for appropriation and  accumulation: “I’ll have them fly to India for gold” (I.i.109), and of wondrous things worth the trouble  of shipping across the Mediterranean: “high pyramids / That Julius Caesar brought from Africa”  (III.i.823-824); Julius Caesar, like Alexander the Great, is obviously a prototype and an emblem of  past imperialist orders.

Thus in the late 1580’s and early 1590’s, an epoch of rising empires and falling  dynasties, Marlovian tragedy voiced aspirations which were collective as well as  individual. It looked to the east, through the Near East … as Western Europe  traditionally did for its sources of richness and strangeness (Levin 1961, 55).

Marlowe introduces a model to be copied: “As Indian Moors obey their Spanish lords” (I.i.148),  frankly spelling out the desire to dominate, mixing ‘Indian’ (the natives of the Americas) with  ‘Moors’, nations devastated by Spanish colonialism, in a racially structured image.

Marlowe’s imperialism does not exactly coincide with Said’s definition; it certainly goes  beyond the lands that came to suffer under colonialism. Faustus’ ambition reflects the contention  for power in Europe and includes the exploitation and the possible subjugation of European  enemies, specifically, Rome and Spain.

From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,  
And from America the golden fleece  
(I.i.157-158)

I’ll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,  
And make that land continent to Spain,  
And both contributory to my crown.  
(I.iii.335-337)

Besides, Marlowe’s east is not all one entity, and not yet victim to the wholesale stereotyping Said  describes, in which “‘Islam’ is made to engulf all aspects of the diverse Muslim world, reducing  them all to a special malevolent and unthinking essence. Instead of analysis and understanding as  a result, there can be for the most part only the crudest form of us-versus-them” (Said 1981, 8).
Marlowe views the East as consisting of several different political, historical and geographical realities. What Faustus has to say about India or Saba differs from what he says about Constantinople. When taking Faustus on an international tour and before his meeting with the German emperor, Mephistopheles accompanies him to Constantinople to visit the Turkish Sultan: "I'll wing myself, and forthwith fly amain / Unto my Faustus, to the great Turk's court" (III.iii.1136-1137). Though Mephistopheles as a devil seems too familiar with the Turkish side of the globe, we hear him complaining: "From Constantinople am I hither come, / Only for pleasure of these damnèd slaves" (III.iii.1119-1120). Although there is no elaboration concerning the nature of the visit, respect and admiration can be sensed not just from the use of the word ‘great’ but also from the mere fact that he is visiting the Sultan's court with no practice of foolery as in the Pope's palace for example. Historically, England and the Ottoman Emperors were forging close ties at that time; the Turks were becoming “increasingly England's firm allies” (Dimmock 2005, 120).

Marlowe's ridicule of the Pope has been read in many ways, of which the political is not the least important. Confronting the strong alliance between Spain and Rome, England found itself on one side with Constantinople, the Pope's archenemy. Despite the pleas of the Pope, the British traded to the Turks military supplies. As one later Catholic propagandist tract suggests, “the English had found 'new confederates' in the great Turk, the kinges of Fesse, Morocco, and Algiers, or other Mohametains and Moores of Barbarie, all professed enemies to Christ” (Dimmock 2005, 122; italics added). Relations between the two countries, Elizabethan England and Ottoman Turkey, were further spurred in 1580 when the Ottoman Sultan granted the Capitulations (trade privileges) to Britain (Turhan 2003, 12; Vitkus 2003, 59).

The East is also a possible source of exotic language. The way Mephistopheles articulates his eagerness and readiness to serve his temporary master is probably not Marlowe's coinage as suggested by Levin:

Mephistopheles produces [Helen] ‘in twinkling of an eye’ [V.i.1767];
and the glamour of the subsequent lines has obscured this interesting verbal coinage of Marlowe’s, an apt phrase for a magician’s assistant engaged in bringing off his employer’s most spectacular trick (Levin 1961, 147).

This coinage may be a borrowing from the Qur’anic verse, “The one who had knowledge of the book said: [to Solomon when he commanded the Queen of Sheba’s throne be brought to him] ‘I can fetch it for you before your eye blinks’” (The Qur’an XXVII, 40). Another curious expression phrased by Marlowe in one of the early soliloquies by Faustus: “The god thou servest is thine own appetite,” (II.i.399) echoes the Qur’anic question: “Seest thou such a one as taketh for his god his own desire?” (Qur’an XLV.23). The Qur’an was already accessible to European intellectuals like Marlowe; history books document that the first translation of the Qur’an into Latin was completed in 1143 (Smith 1977, xvii). We also learn that the year 1312 marks the end of a two-century long surge in academic Orientalism characterized by the translation of a large number of different types of texts into Latin from Arabic. Texts translated include the works of Aristotle and his Muslim commentator Averroes, as well as other Islamic and Jewish
philosophers; astronomical, medical, and other scientific texts; and works of Muslim theology and history; not least the Qur'an (Pick 1999, 266).

Almost at the same time chairs of Arabic and other languages were established at Oxford and other universities in Europe (Said 2003, 50). The European imagination, Said asserts, was nourished extensively from its contact with the cultural heritage of the Orient: between the Middle Ages and the eighteenth century such major authors as Ariosto, Milton, Marlowe, Tasso, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and the authors of the Chanson de Roland and the Poema del Cid drew on the Orient's riches for their productions, in ways that sharpened the outlines of imagery, ideas, and figures populating it (Said 2003, 63).

It is worth noting here that the Qur'anic version of Solomon's story conveys a theme of the contrast between true knowledge and relativity of perception, a major theme in Doctor Faustus. Solomon, who is praised for his superiority in knowledge and penetrating vision (The Qur'an XXLII, Surah of the Ants), puts the Queen of Sheba twice to the test of perception. In the first she passes, recognising her own throne and the proximity of her power of recognition imbues her with self-confidence and she retains her pagan beliefs. However, she fails the second test, trying to wade in a pool of crystal-clear water, which is, in reality, a glass floor. Solomon's thoughts, as narrated in the text, are centred on the concept of true knowledge. To fall a victim to optical illusions, as in her case, implies lack of discerning ability. This constitutes another analogy between Faustus and Solomon: their wishes to confront and impress their company with strange sights, mostly visual. Jürgen Pieters touches on this analogy in his discussion of Faustus' endeavour to provoke a feeling of wonder in his audience (Pieters 2001, 106).

Realizing that the East is the source of knowledge that Faustus is after, one begins to comprehend the unavoidable antagonism between medieval Church and intellectuals like him, which leads him to renounce its strict rulings concerning knowledge and science. At many points in the text Marlowe asserts that what Faustus is really after is the acquisition and subsequently the service of scientific knowledge. Not just Faustus and his author Marlowe, groups of intellectuals were secretly circulating and propagating the alien knowledge abhorred by the Church. Walter Raleigh and his School of Night were the target of "dangerous rumours" that began to spread about their "free thought and heretical opinions, they think of heaven and hell as the heathen philosophers" (Henderson 1952, 40; italics added). The 'heathen' may well be Greek and Muslim. It is significant in this context that a biography of Muhammad is attributed to Raleigh (Smith 1977, 13); and at that School they are reported to have held scientific and philosophical discussions "with a certain necromantic astronomer as tutor," "being particularly eager to learn the reason for the movement of the earth" (Henderson 1952, 42; 45). "Sir Walter Raleigh and his friends, meeting together to discuss philosophy, to debate religion and to gaze at the stars through Thomas Heriot's new telescope, attracted much popular and unwanted attention. They were accused of witchcraft and devil-worship" (Gibbon 1965, xx). In an age of religious fanaticism, these men stood for religious toleration and intellectual freedom (Henderson 1952, 43).

The connection between the new knowledge and magic in the popular minds deemed it impermissible by 'heavenly powers':
Chorus: Only to wonder at unlawful things;
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits,
To practice more than heavenly power permits.

(Epilogue 2007-2009)

Beelzebub himself, king of burning hell, is an essence from the East “Prince of the East” (I.iii.245), so is Lucifer (II.1.494). In biblical terminology, Beelzebub’s name is translated as ‘lord of the flies’ and is sometimes identified with Asmodeus, who is associated with Solomon (another significant connection), but nowhere is he nicknamed ‘prince of the east’. (Is he the only biblical figure from the East? Is the whole Bible not ‘Eastern’ in a geographical sense?) The East has been subjected to all sorts of thwarting metamorphoses; the result is this dark and evil representation. Nevertheless, it is Beelzebub and Lucifer who facilitate the services of Mephistopheles for Faustus in his ambitious adventure, away from the Church and deep into ‘heathen’ knowledge, providing him with necessary books and tools. Thus, the juxtaposition in “Despair in God, and trust in Beelzebub,” (II.i.393) emphasizes the duality of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ knowledge as perceived by the public of the sixteenth century: attached to identifiable locations.

The dialectic of power and knowledge in the play goes on. Faustus first needs knowledge (a book of necromancy) to begin his career as a magician; magic then provides him with power, which in turn opens for him the gates of universal knowledge, physical and metaphysical. Moreover, with this superhuman knowledge he gains control over history, summoning up representative figures such as Alexander the Great and Helen of Troy for scrutiny, investigation and violation. Such is an act of ‘Western historicism’, to borrow Said's phrase quoting Vico, “men made their own history,” and of course the history of the Other, which is more or less the practice of imperialism. "My argument is," Said explicates in 2003 in his later preface to Orientalism, "that history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and re-written, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated" (Said 2003, xiv). Western historicism is extensively investigated by Robert Young in his White Mythologies: Writing History and the West (1990). Describing the European narration of history with its close connection with imperialism, he writes:

Such an arrogant and arrogating narrative means that the story of ‘world history’ not only involves … the wresting of freedom from the realm of necessity but always also the creation, subjection and final appropriation of Europe’s ‘other’ (Young 1990, 33).

Another shade of imperialism is connected with the type of knowledge Said censures as "the will to dominate". It is "knowledge - if that is what it is - that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war" (Said 2003, xiv). The symbolic disguise of this knowledge in Doctor Faustus is expounded by Christopher Wessman (2001) in his article “‘I’ll play Diana’: Christopher Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus and the ‘Actaeon Complex’”. Wessman explains Jean-Paul Sartre's idea of the ‘Actaeon complex’ which involves “the visual possession of knowledge, a ‘violation by sight’ in which ‘to know is to devour with the eyes’” and “what is seen is possessed,” (Wessman 2001, 402; 404). He convincingly argues that the Actaeon metaphor pervades the whole play; so it will not be inappropriate if by extension the argument is developed
so as to replace the hunter with the scientist who in his desperate pursuit of knowledge sacrifices his own soul. Knowledge is 'violation by sight': one of Faustus's wishes for his "concealed arts" (I.i.129) is to open up "the secrets of all foreign kings" (I.i.114); while his cloak of invisibility allows him to spy on the Pope, "unseen of any" (III.i.991). Espionage is part of the process of domination by knowledge.

Said asserts the thesis that knowledge, which naturally includes geographical exploration, is a form of possession (Said 2003, 4-5). Under the title "Latent and Manifest Orientalism" he cites as evidence the movement of the Westerners eastwards, and the fact that the estimated number of books dealing with the Near Orient between 1800 and 1950 is 60,000 (Said 2003, 204). Marlowe does indeed connect sight with appropriation: "This sight better pleaseth me / Than if I gained another monarchy" (IV.i.1271-1272). Why bother to "prove cosmography, / That measures coasts and kingdoms of the earth" (II.iii.773-774) unless it is part of a colonizer's strategy? Visiting the Ottoman court can be regarded as just another element in this strategy. True, the British were on friendly terms with the Sultan at that time, but it was only a temporary arrangement. According to Said, this is not "the will to understand for purposes of co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons;" (Said, 2003, xiv) it constitutes one form of Orientalism – that of the apparatuses of classical scholarship, constructing its object (Young 1990, 130).

Faustus' imperialist view of the world can thus be classified into the following categories: first, historicism; second, violation and possession by sight; and third, conquering and subjugation of lands such as Spain and the African shores facing it. This third category is predominant throughout the play: even Germany is approached in this manner: "In recompense of this thy high desert, / Thou shalt command the state of Germany" (IV.i.1322-1323), ironically reiterated by the German emperor. Frantz Fanon discerns this spirit when he logically infers that Fascism was simply colonialism brought home (quoted in Young 1990, 125). The fourth element is economic exploitation of foreign lands like robbing India and the newly discovered America of their gold, or Saba of its fruit. Noteworthy is that Britain is nowhere mentioned in the play; Faustus is the actual voice of the British Empire.

The last two categories are unarguably imperialist. The first two, reinterpreting history and purposeful knowledge, can be conceived of as innocent activities; however, they become part and parcel of the imperialist project if viewed from Said's perspective, Sartre's Actaeon Complex, Hegel's "appropriation of the other as a form of knowledge" (Young 1990, 3), or Marlowe's own philosophy of knowledge as a means to power and dominate:

By him I'll be great emperor of the world,
And make a bridge through the moving air
To pass the ocean with a band of men,

(I.iii.332–334)

Looking back at the past four centuries after the age of Marlowe, one can see how he has helped define and spell out those aspirations of imperialism. The British Empire would soon gain control over vast areas including those predicted by Marlowe: India, Saba, and North America, defeating the Spanish there and establishing their rule in Gibraltar. This refutes the suggestions often made that Faustus sold his soul to the devil for trivial pleasure: "An immortal soul is a heavy
price to pay for such delights" (Gibbons 1965, xxi). Appraising this character as a mere individual while disregarding the tremendous imperial signification it emits certainly leads the reader to misconstrue the full picture and to formulate hasty judgments like Gardner's: "From a proud philosopher, master of all human knowledge, to a trickster, to a slave of phantoms, to a cowing wretch: that is a brief sketch of the progress of Doctor Faustus" (Gardner 1961, 321). On the contrary, to think of the play as historical prophecy or frank expression of a nation's aspirations makes the price seem not too heavy for an empire coupled with a scientific and industrial revolution.

Nevertheless, “science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul” (Levin 1961, 129); the empire and the industrial culture have both proved to be devoid of human soul. The preliminary admirable and noble ambitions, most of which are unselfish, with which Faustus inaugurates his quest can be simply perceived as imperialist rhetoric, deceptive, an anticipatory version of the advertisement that the colonizers are there to civilize the natives, a rhetoric that completely vanishes once Faustus/Empire tangibly achieves the goal of becoming like ‘a mighty god’. In the beginning, Faustus symbolically has in mind the fortification of his home town Wittenberg; at the end we hear him say to Helen, “Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked” (V.i.1776). The fact is that the whole project is built on materialistic principles, divorced from the moral and the spiritual, a fact that characterizes the subsequent phase of secular knowledge and anti-religious philosophies; the project draws attacks and criticisms, and as predicted by Marlowe, eventually ends up a soulless enterprise torn into pieces.

Marlowe subverts the imperialist project by turning it into a monstrous disaster in several ways: immediately after signing the deed with the devil, Faustus himself is transformed into another devil, a ‘spirit’ as he writes in the agreement. From that moment we witness his transformation into a demonic creature, thinking only of mischief and acting for the benefit of no one, not even himself. There is inversion of authority: Mephistopheles is supposed to serve Faustus, but in reality he controls him, “damning” his path so as to prevent his repentance, and entangling him further and deeper into sin. The imperialist project in the play is ultimately turned into a hellish nightmare due to the very disciplined and rigorous system of evil that presides over it. Tate discusses the assumption that colonialism offers a demonic temptation that eventually emasculates rulership; he argues furthermore that the threat offered by the colonized demonic “other” may be more significant than the promise of wealth that fuels the colonising vision (Tate 1997, 262). This is true, for in the last scene in the play we find that “Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world – yea, heaven itself - heaven” (V.ii.1843-1844).

Doctor Faustus is a deconstructive representation of the imperialist project. Like historical imperialism, his enterprise is transformed into a lawless practice against people not allowed to enjoy the same standards of justice and freedom. Besides, it is founded on self-deception and blindness to reality. Helen is not Helen, Alexander is a shadow, a sinister paradox of knowing the falsehood and yet believing it. All these factors testify to the fact that imperialism is a pathological use of power. As Mephistopheles says of Faustus at the end, “his labouring brain / Begets a world
of idle fantasies" (V.ii.1809-1810), while setting a time limit to the adventure makes it doomed, or at least experimental.

In conclusion, Said’s definition of Orientalism with its three senses elucidates but does not exactly coincide with the imperialism of Doctor Faustus. Though similar in nature and strategy, the two projects, imperialism envisioned by Marlowe and Orientalism dissected by Said, differ in scope and targets. Said's concern is with the plight of the Orient at the hand of a belligerent West; Faustus project, on the other hand, threatens world domination by certain European powers, more advanced technologically and scientifically; thus anticipating not only Europe's imperialism but also its intra-European great wars in the twentieth century. Said asserts that if it is the weakness of the East that led to such catastrophic results, the imbalance of power has not always been the same; it changes patterns (Said, 2003, 205). That is why Doctor Faustus, as an Elizabethan play, does not lend itself totally to the stereotyping of the Orient and the Orientals. The historical moment it captures was not when the East was weak; it was a worthy rival. Some of Marlowe’s most cynical jokes are not preserved for people of Eastern colour and denominations; European ideological adversaries are subversively portrayed, ridiculed and humiliated. The scope of the colonialist project in this play is larger than Orientalism; more of an anticipatory “globalism”. In fact Marlowe's Orientalism constitutes one mere element of the strategy set to dominate the universal other.

Endnotes

1 “The Nietzschean hero, like his classical counterpart, is a breaker of taboos and customs” (Theiele 1990, 82). Nietzsche’s will to power “is a life-affirming view, in that creatures affirm their instincts to acquire power and dominance” (Denneson, 2009). According to Nietzsche, a rebel like Faustus must be honoured “because he finds something in society against which war ought to be waged – he awakens us from our slumber” (Nietzsche 1968, 391).

2 All quotations from the play are taken from Bowers, The Complete Works.

3 ‘Nature’s treasury’ here is not identical with the Renaissance cliché ‘the book of nature’ as analogical to the book of divine revelation. “Nature as book is a metaphor found everywhere in the sixteenth century. …[T]he concept of the book of nature ‘originated in the pulpit eloquence, was then adopted by medieval mystico-philosophical speculation, and finally passed into common usage,’ where it was ‘frequently secularized’” (Willis 1988, 65). Marlowe’s term, on the other hand, is less analogical, more antithetical to the Scriptures.

4 “Hegel,” Young writes, “articulates a philosophical structure of the appropriation of the other as a form of knowledge which uncannily simulates the project of nineteenth-century imperialism.” It is a construction of knowledge, he further explains, which operates through forms of expropriation and incorporation of the other. Hegel applies his theory to Africa when he declares that Africa is no historical part of the world (Young 1990, 34; 221).
مسرحية مارلو "الدكتور فاوستوس": قراءة ما بعداستعمارية

سميرة الخوائدة
ملخص

تطرح هذه الورقة قضية أن مسرحية مارلو "الدكتور فاوستوس" تتضمن درجات متعددة من الهيمنة بما في ذلك الحصول على المعرفة المفرطة وثيقة الارتباط بالاستعمار. وأن نص المسرحية يكشف الاتجاهات الاستعمارية في بداياتها. يمكننا استشاط إجابة أشياء اثبات إستعمار في المسرحية، وهي: التاريخ المحيط، المعرفة كوسيلة للإمتلاك، الاستغلال الاقتصادي، والسيطرة الفعلية. تبحث الدراسة أيضاً صورة الشرق في المسرحية مستندة إلى منهج إدوارد سعيد في التحليل، وتصلى إلى نتيجة هي أن مشروع مارلو ابن عصر النهضة. له خطورة مختلفة: فهو مشروع عالمي يسعى إلى إمتلاك دول أوروبية كذلك؛ ويبدو الشرق أكثر ارتباطًا به في فاوستوس وراء المعرفة. رغم أنه كان تاريخياً مستهدفاً من قبل سياسة التوسع البريطاني. وتقدم الدراسة قضية أخرى هي تفسير السحر على أنه كنائية عن المعرفة الأجنبية الواردة من الشرق والتي وصفتها الكنيسة بالزنادقة. مما يلقي مزيداً من الضوء على التلاقح المتناقض بين السحر والعلم التجربى في معضلة فاوستوس.
References


