MARLOWE'S "JEW OF MALTA": A CRITICAL STUDY

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Robert Albert Currie

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

CR - Contemporary Review

JEGP - Journal of English and Germanic Philology

MLN - Modern Language Notes

MP - Modern Philology

N&Q - Notes and Queries

PMLA - Publications of the Modern Language Association

RES - Review of English Studies

TLS - Times Literary Supplement

PART I

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the biographical sketch of Christopher Marlowe which prefaces his 1818 edition of The Jew of Malta, Oxberry wrote: "Of his (Marlowe's) family we know absolutely nothing; their very names are forgotten. . . . All the genius of Marlowe . . . has not had the power to save the records of his life from oblivion."[1] Present-day biographers have a great many more facts to work with than Oxberry had at his disposal, and this is largely owing to the efforts of such scholars as Professor Hotson, whose researches put an end to some three centuries of shadowy legend surrounding Marlowe's death; to Professor Tucker Brooke, Miss Ethel Seaton, Colonel Bakeless, Dr Boas, Professor Eccles; and to many others whose enquiries have thrown light on Marlowe's early life, his days at Cambridge, his activities in London, his sojourns on the Continent, and his source materials.

Yet in spite of everything modern scholarship has uncovered, the centuries of indifference to Elizabethan literature have done their work. As things are, no critical biography can be written about an Elizabethan author without a framework of arbitrary conjectures; failure in the past to understand the Elizabethan mentality has denuded of its significance much of what Marlowe and his contemporaries are known to have uttered; and despite the recent

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[1] W. Oxberry, editor, The Rich Jew of Malta; a Tragedy, (London, 1818), p. iii.

discoveries of investigators, all hope of our ever having an authoritative text of The Jew of Malta must be based on the slender possibility that one day someone will discover an extant copy of the text entered for publication in the Stationers' Register on May 17, 1594 (supposing, that is, that this entry was followed up).[2] At present Marlowe's life remains shadowy, and the textual problems often seem as insurmountable as ever.

As editors and biographers continue their attempts to disentangle the facts about Marlowe from the legends that have come down through the ages, others, perhaps more intuitive in their approach to the subject, respond to the dearth of factual data by turning to the playwright's works for evidence to support their biographical conjectures and for material that will provide further speculation. The result has been the growth of modern legendary Marloviana. This biographical method is conspicuous in the writings of Miss Una Ellis-Fermor,[3] who, in the words of Mr Battenhouse, has "proceeded virtually to abolish the distinction between drama and autobiography."[4] This is also true of John Ingram and Dr Boas, and their criticisms will be considered presently.

There can be no doubt that an investigation of an artist's creations will reveal much of the inner man, but if preoccupation with the artist himself is carried to an extreme it can only result

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[2] The textual status is outlined in the following chapter.
[3] Una M. Ellis-Fermor, Christopher Marlowe, (London, 1927)
[4] Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, (Nashville, 1941), p. 1.

in confusion. The most valid reason a critic can have for wanting to know the artist as a man and as a thinker is to understand his creations more fully; and if the only recourse the critic has to the artist as thinker is the art itself, then it would seem that he is employing a method which is merely circular. Miss Ellis-Fermor turns to Tamburlaine, the better to understand Marlowe, and with her supposedly heightened understanding of Marlowe she then proceeds to illuminate her conception of the play, Tamburlaine.

This is not only a roundabout method; it is a dangerous one. For if one forms an impression of the dramatist's personality from one of his plays and the impression is permitted to influence the interpretation of his other works, the notion may or may not account for the other plays quite plausibly; but in the meantime hidden meanings, which are inherent in the plays, may pass unnoticed, and the author's intention may be missed entirely.

This is apparently what has happened in the instance of Miss Ellis-Fermor's criticism of The Jew of Malta. When she says implicity that Tamburlaine is Marlowe, what can she say of Barabas? Barabas and Tamburlaine have certain characteristics in common-- ruthlessness, ambition, and 'Machiavellian' duplicity-- but in the main they are very different figures: one is a mighty conqueror whose very audacity thrills the imagination; the other is a sinister figure who seems large only in villainy. And the result is that since Miss Fermor is wont to identify the protagonists in Marlowe's plays as Marlowe himself, she must cleave to the one as an artistic triumph and reject the other as a slip of the pen. And this is, in effect, what she does.

To Miss Fermor The Jew of Malta is a failure because she feels that Marlowe intended to present an aspiring-mind conception, but that because a great spiritual force was spent on an unworthy goal (in the case of Barabas) the result was merely bathos.

To offer interpretations of difficult plays, or to present a theory that will seem to suggest a sustained purpose through a series of plays (and thus enable the spectator to enjoy these plays more fully) may well be to perform a valuable service for the student and theatre-goer; but if the application of this theory necessitates the critical mauling of any one of the author's works in order to fit it into a pattern, then a great injustice is rendered the play, the author and the public alike. This is what a great many critics appear to have done to the works of Marlowe, and this particularly in the case of The Jew of Malta.

In addition to the school of biographical critics, there are those whom we might call the scientific critics. These are more convincing in their opinions, since their conclusions are invariably based on careful historical research; and such scholars as Miss Ethel Seaton, Miss Leslie Spence, and Colonel Bakeless,[5] have worked diligently to bring to light factual evidence that helps to explain

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[5] Ethel Seaton, "Fresh Sources for Marlowe," RES, V:385-401 (1929); "Marlowe and his Authorities," TLS, June 16, 1921; Miss Leslie Spence, "The Influence of Marlowe's Sources on Tamburlaine," MP, XXIV:181-99, (1926); "Tamburlaine and Marlowe," PMLA, XLII:604-22, (1927); John Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: The Man in his Time, (New York, 1937); The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, (Harvard Press, 1942), 2 vols.

some of the more puzzling aspects of Marlowe's life and works. Miss Spence sets out to prove that Marlowe did no violence to his historical sources; Miss Seaton discloses pertinent evidence to support her contention that Marlowe was a more sound scholar than critics have hitherto believed him to be; and Bakeless has followed Hotson's lead in documentary researches to discover new bits of information about many phases of the poet's life.

Unlike Dr Boas, who in spite of his scholarly handling of documentary material adopts a romantic and admiring attitude, the latter critics maintain a scientific detachment toward their problems. If Colonel Bakeless persists in Miss Ellis-Fermor's vice of identifying Marlowe with Tamburlaine (for reasons other than the plays themselves), Miss Seaton and Miss Spence have achieved a thorough detachment toward the author and the plays. These scholars, reacting as they do against the romantic critics, actually go to the other extreme. In their desire for authenticity and accurate judgement they tend to ignore almost everything that is not factually concrete, and this tends to the loss or distortion of aesthetic perspective.

Christopher Marlowe lived in a stirring, brutal period of history, when European man was reacting violently to the crumbling structure of authoritative medievalism, and just as other Renaissance artists and thinkers such as da Vinci and Montaigne began to look upon man as a thing of admirable proportions, so Marlowe presented the Elizabethan play-goers with a series of dramatic figures of

heroic courage and titanic spirit. And in the midst of these titans is the figure of Barabas, a titan himself assuredly, but to many nowadays a monstrous conception. Barabas brings vexing problems to the romantic critics who like to think of Marlowe's protagonists as so many alter-egos of a many-faceted poet. And Barabas troubles the scholarly critics who seek concrete historical or literary sources in order to check the author's treatment of his subject.

The Jew of Malta has suffered at the hands of the critics. It has become standard practice for the critic to 'observe the falling off of Marlowe's power in the second and third acts,' and, having made this observation, to devote a goodly portion of his essay to a consideration of how it was botched. Many scholars have more or less neglected this particular play, or have treated it summarily. Fortunately, interest in Marlowe's plays has been steadily increasing in the twentieth century, and The Jew is beginning to get the attention it deserves.

In this study the play will be examined carefully and allowed to speak for itself. Moreover, it will not be assumed at the outset that the play represents Marlowe's attitude towards life. Nevertheless, if there is evidence, in the light of historical fact, that this play assumes a particular point of view; and if, after considering The Jew in relationship to Marlowe's other plays, we have the impression of a consistently coherent ideological pattern, then it may very likely be that The Jew and the other plays do represent Marlowe's visionary speculation.

Before outlining the program of this study and turning to Marlowe's sources and historical influences, it will be interesting and revealing to outline the early history of the play and to trace the critical opinion of Marlowe's work from the Elizabethan era to our own day, considering The Jew of Malta in particular from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present time. This critical survey will not pretend to be complete, but if it touches on all of the leading authorities as well as some of the minor ones, it will be sufficiently illustrative of the shifting critical attitude to act as a point of departure for what is to follow.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY HISTORY OF THE PLAY

Modern editors of The Jew of Malta are not much troubled by the perennial problem of dating the play. So far, there is nothing by which an exact date can be established, and scholars are satisfied to narrow the possible period to a matter of two years on the basis of internal and external evidence.

The internal clue is a reference to the death of the Duc de Guise made by Machiavel in the prologue. Since the Guise was assassinated on December 23, 1588, the time of writing is presumably later than this. In the introduction to his edition, Mr Bennett introduces Wagner's objections to this bit of evidence,[1] and decides that there is no reason for divorcing the Prologue from the rest of the play. Bakeless concurs, feeling that "there is good reason for believing that this play and its prologue must have been written fairly close together."[2] Tucker Brooke agrees with Wagner that the prologue may have been written later, but feels that from the point of view of dramatic structure and versification, it is impossible

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[1] H. S. Bennett, editor, The Jew of Malta and The Massacre at Paris, (London:Methuen & Co. Ltd.,1931), p. 4, citing Albrecht Wagner, Marlowes Werke Historische-Kritische Ausgabe,(Heilbronn:Gebr. Henninger, 1889). Wagner suggested that the prologue might have been written later, and that the play may have been written before 1588 although it was probably produced in that year.

[2] John Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, Vol. I, p. 329.

to refer the play as a whole to an earlier year than 1589.[3]

The bit of external evidence, on the other hand, is an entry in Henslowe's Diary which notes the receipt of fifty shillings for a presentation of "the Jewe of malltuse" on the 26th of February, 1591 (or New Style, 1592).[4] Henslowe's customary "ne" for new plays was not beside the entry, and so it is assumed that at that date the play was not a new one-- that it had been produced before the Diary was begun in 1591. This makes it fairly probable that the play was written after the beginning of 1589 and before the close of 1590. There is one factor which tends to place it early in 1589, and this is that the allusion to the Guise suggests his assassination was comparatively recent and that, as Bennett points out, "the dramatist was making use of something that was current gossip."[5] Bennett argues further that the violence of the plot would suggest comparative earliness in the Marlowe canon. Bakeless states that Marlowe could hardly have had the leisure necessary to turn out the play before 1590, offering as grounds the fact that Marlowe had been, at most, four years out of university and that, Tamburlaine being two plays, this was his fourth play.[6] But these are points on which one may not speak too decisively, and if one were to say that

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[3] C. F. Tucker Brooke, editor, The Works of Christopher Marlowe, (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 230.

[4] Bennett, op. cit., p. 1, citing W. W. Greg, editor, Hemslowe's Diary, pt. I, p. 13.

[5] Ibid., p. 5.

[6] Bakeless, op. cit., vol. I, p. 329. According to the recent view put forth by Greg, Bakeless is mistaken. See infra., p. 135.

the play had been written sometime during 1589 or early in 1590, one would not be very far wrong in either case.

The entry in Henslowe's Diary is the earliest reference to The Jew of Malta that we have. It was at that time in the repertoire of Lord Strange's company, and there it stayed until the following February. It was very popular with Elizabethan audiences, and Henslowe records ten performances from February, 1592 until July of that year, when plague forced the temporary closing of the theatres. Between 1592 and 1596 he records thirty-six presentations altogether. During this period it was successively played by Strange's men, by the Queen's and Sussex's men in conjunction, by the Lord Chamberlain's men, and it finally passed into the possession of the Admiral's men in 1594. To account for the changing ownership it has been suggested that Henslowe lent it to any company that happened to be using his theatre, and this seems to be an acceptable conjecture.

The popularity of the play eventually waned. Between 1596 and 1601 there is no record of its having been staged. The only mention of it during this period occurs in an inventory of the stage properties of the Admiral's men in 1598, where is contained the entry "j cauderm for the Jewe."[7] There is no way of telling how successful Henslowe's revival of the play in 1601 may have been or how long it ran, for Henslowe's records were no longer kept in

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[7] Bakeless, op. cit., vol. I, p.360, citing the Henslowe Papers, p. 118.

detail. There are two entries for May 1601 recording the purchase of "divers things for the Jewe of Malta."[8] After this the play drops completely out of sight until it is entered at Stationers' Hall on November 20, 1632 by Nicholas Vavasour and is published by him the following year.

The Jew of Malta had been previously entered for publication on the Stationers' Register in 1594 by Nicholas Ling and Thomas Millington, although it may never have gone through the scheduled printing.[9] At that time the play was at the height of its popularity, and Bennett thinks that the players themselves may have intervened to prevent a popular play's becoming public property.[10] The revival of popularity to which the quarto of 1633 bears witness was due to Thomas Heywood's presentation of the play at Court and at the Cockpit sometime before the appearance of the printed text. For these occasions Heywood wrote prologues and epilogues, and for the Court presentation he may have revised the play. Bakeless considers Heywood responsible for the "mangling" of the text and feels that episodes in his play The Captives comprise the material "most likely to have been introduced by

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[8] Bennett, op. cit., p. 2, citing Greg, Henslowe's Diary, vol. I, p. 137.

[9] In his Epistle Dedicatory of 1633, Heywood describes it as being "newly brought to the press," but the phrase is ambiguous: 'newly' might mean either 'for the first time' or 'again'. In his edition Tucker Brooke gives examples of its being used in both senses.

[10] Bennett, op. cit., p. 4.

Heywood during his revision of 1633."[11] For a discussion of this possibility, see Appendix B.

From this point onwards interest in The Jew of Malta swiftly declined. The exotic light in which the Jew was seen by Elizabethans and Jacobeans had doubtless played its part in the sporadic bursts of popularity enjoyed by Marlowe's play, and this factor is considered fully in Appendix A. After Cromwell's recall of the Jews,[12] the mystery that had hitherto surrounded them may have been largely dissipated. If such was the case, their ceasing to be regarded as oddities or novelties might help to account for loss of interest at that time in The Jew of Malta in particular and in the Jew as a literary subject in general.

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[11] Bakeless, op. cit., vol. I, p. 334.
[12] See infra., p. 120.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE PLAY

(a) From the Elizabethan Age

Although Marlowe and the other Elizabethan dramatists were writing prolifically in the decades that followed Sir Philip Sidney's eloquent Defence of Poetry, literary criticism remained a comparatively undeveloped activity until the critical force of the Johnson personality made itself felt on English letters, and it is for this reason that we have very little actual knowledge of the critical attitude held by Marlowe's contemporaries towards the young poet's plays. There are, however, a number of references to Marlowe and to his plays, and many of these have warmth of feeling. Apart from the contemptible and scurrilous remarks of Robert Greene and the Harvey brothers, Gabriel and Richard, the comments about Marlowe have been sufficiently favourable to compel the conclusion that he was admired as an artist and liked and respected as a man. Green's allusion to Marlowe in his Groatsworth of Wit, which consists in the famous pun on Marlowe's name and an attack on the apparently popular blank-verse of the day, is very probably the result of jealous irritation at his inability to imitate successfully in his own Alphonsus of Aragon the poetic brilliance of Tamburlaine. And his moral condemnation of Marlowe in the reference to "Machivilian pollicie" is more of the nature of pathological religious fervour than of anything else. If the

poetical epilogue[1] to Harvey's A New Letter of Notable Contents refers to Marlowe, then apart from malice it merely expresses ignorance of the true circumstances of Marlowe's death.

In 1597 the appearance of Richard Beard's Theatre of God's Judgements, a fictional version of Marlowe's murder which served to point a moral against play-writing, started a succession of misleading references which persisted to the time of Professor Hotson's researches in the present century. Francis Meres' Palladis Tamia (1598) incorporated Beard's account, adding to it the moral charge of lewdness, and the anonymous Return from Parnassus (1601?), an academic drama printed in 1606, hints at the story as told by Beard. William Vaughan's Golden Grove (1600), Rudierd's Thunderbolt of God's Wrath, (1618), and Clarke's Looking-Glass both for Saints and Sinners (1645)[2] all tell very much the same story with equal puritanical bias; although of those mentioned, Vaughan has at least the merit of being rather more accurate in his statements than the others.[3]

On the other hand, there are numerous critical references which have survived. At around the turn of the century, Shakespeare, Nashe, Blount the publisher, Thorpe and Peele were alluding to

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[1] Reprinted in Frederick S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe, (Oxford, 1940), p. 279.

[2] The accounts of these are considered fully in the chapter "Marlowe's Death", Bakeless, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 141-189.

[3] Vaughan mentioned the Christian name of Marlowe's actual murderer, and he was aware that the affray had occurred in Deptford rather than in "London streets."

Marlowe in sincere and generous terms; and Petowe, Chapman and Jonson were writing in impersonal commendation.[4] Richard Carewe in On Excellencies of the English Tongue (1602) pairs the poems of Shakespeare and Marlowe somewhat enthusiastically:

> Would you read Catullus? Take Shakespeare and Marloe's fragment; that is the Venus and Adonis or Lucrece of the one and the Hero and Leander of the other.

And Middleton in A Mad World, My Masters, (1608) also pairs them. A splendid reference to Ben Jonson's view of Marlowe's Hero and Leander is to be found in R.C.'s preface to the posthumous Chast and Lost Lovers of William Bosworth (1651):

> The strength of his fancy and the shadowing of it in words he [i.e. Bosworth] taketh from Mr Marlowe in his Hero and Leander, whose mighty lines Mr Benjamin Iohnson (a man sensible enough of his own abilities) was often heard to say, that they were Examples fitter for admiration than for parallel, you shall find our Author everywhere in this imitation.[5]

There are, too, many allusions to lines from Tamburlaine and Faustus by Dekker, Jonson, Massinger, Greene and Shakespeare; and these dramatists sometimes parallel some of the lines, although the paralleling of lines seems to have happened rarely in the case of The Jew of Malta. This is a little puzzling. The neglect of The Jew by other dramatists as a source of favourite lines cannot be the result of the play's lack of popularity-- Henslowe's record of performances would show the play as a favourite, and the play's

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[4] Cf. Charles F. Tucker Brooke, "The Reputation of Christopher Marlowe," Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, (1922), XXV: 347-408.

[5] Reprinted in Saintsbury's Caroline Poets, vol. II.

continued appeal in the seventeenth century is attested by Heywood's revision in 1632 or earlier. Although parodies and allusions are less frequent, Barabas must have been just as familiar a figure as Tamburlaine or Faustus. Professor Tucker Brooke thinks that the original triumph of The Jew may have moved Shakespeare to write The Merchant of Venice, and that Henslowe's revival of The Jew in 1601 may have given him the first impulse to write another play of Mediterranean races and politics, Othello, the Moor of Venice.[6]

Still, even if its lines were not stolen, The Jew of Malta had its influence. The opening speech of Jonson's Volpone seems reminiscent of the first speech of Barabas, just as the bickering of Volpone and Moscha in Act V, scene viii seems to suggest Barabas before the Governor (I, ii, 37 ff.).[7] Harington, in Epigrams (1592?), writes, "Was ever Iew of Malta or of Millain/Than this most damned Iew more Iewish villaine?"[8] And Dekker in 1606 writes in The Devils Answer to Pierce Pennylesse, (ed. Grosart, ii, 142), "Lies there a boate readie (quoth my rich Iew of Malta) to take me in so soon as I call?"[9] And again in the Seven Deadly Sins (Grosart, ii, 31), "When it came to the eares of the Sinfull Synagogue, how the rich Iew of London, (Barabbas Bankruptisme) their brother, was receyued into the Citty, and what a lusty Reueler he has become . . . "[10] Rowley, in Search for Money (1609) writes, "This visage

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6 Brooke, op. cit., p. 379.
7 Loc. cit.
8 Ibid., p. 380.
9 Loc. cit.
10 Loc. cit.

(or vizard) like the artificiall Jewe of Maltaes nose."[11] And Cowley, Cutter of Coleman Street, (1641), II, iii, "But I'm the very Jew of Malta, if she did not use me since that worse than I'd use a rotten apple."[12] And these few direct allusions, together with the imaginative accounts of Beard and his imitators, make up the sum of contemporary references to Marlowe.

After the closing of the theatres in 1642, Marlowe became practically forgotten. As Professor Tucker Brooke remarks, "His 'translunary' genius was equally alien to Puritan and to Restoration taste . . . as a dramatist at least, his reputation had shrunk to very small proportions before the death of James I."[13] From this time on, no edition of his plays went through the press until the publication of the first Dodsley in 1744, except for the spurious Lust's Dominion and the mutilated 1663 perversion of Doctor Faustus, which Samuel Pepys so deplored. The encyclopedic poem, "On the Time Poets," (in Choyce Drollery, Songs and Sonnets, reprinted by Halliwell in the Shakespeare Society's Papers, iii, 172-174, 1847)[14] does not mention Marlowe. Fuller's Worthies of England (1662) is also silent about him. Downes, whose Roscius Anglicanus (1708) lists the dramatic performances that took place between 1641 and 1660, has no record of any Marlowe presentation.

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[11] Brooke, op. cit., p. 380.
[12] Loc. cit.
[13] Ibid., p. 383.
[14] Loc. cit.

Professor Brooke suggests that the only evidence of Marlowe's influence in the Restoration age may be found in "the apparent reminiscences of Mephistophilis in Milton's Satan; but even Milton does not anywhere refer specifically to Marlowe."[15] Curiously enough, it is Milton's nephew, the "inaccurate" Edward Phillips, who provides the most adequate account of Marlowe at this time in Theatrum Poetarum (1675):

> Christopher Marlow, a kind of second Shakespeare (whose contemporary he was) not only because like him he rose from an Actor to be a maker of Plays, though inferiour both in Fame and Merit; but also because in his begun poem of Hero and Leander, he seems to have a resemblance of that clean and unsophisticated Wit, which is natural to that incomparable Poet: this poem being left unfinished by Marlow, who in some riotous Fray came to an untimely and violent End, was thought worthy of the finishing hand of Chapman; in the performance whereof nevertheless he fell short of the Spirit and Invention with which it was begun; of all that he hath written to the Stage his Dr Faustus hath made the greatest noise with its Devils and such like Tragical sport, nor are his other two Tragedies to be forgotten, namely his Edw. the II. and Massacre at Paris, besides his Jew of Malta a tragicomedie, and his Tragedy of Dido, in which he was joyned with Nash.[16]

Gerard Langbaine's New Catalogue of English Plays (1688) and his Account of the English Dramatic Poets (1691) illustrate the scanty and fallacious ideas of Marlowe that had survived. He seems to have little knowledge and still less sympathy.

The resurgence of interest in Marlowe might well be said to begin with the publication of Edward II in the original edition

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[15] Brooke, op. cit., p. 383.
[16] Ibid., p. 387.

of Dodsley's Old Plays in 1744. This was the first genuine work of the poet to be printed in over a century, the last authentic item printed being the 1637 edition of Hero and Leander. The Jew of Malta was added in the second edition of Dodsley in 1780. Around this time Thomas Warton's History of English Poetry appeared, and the third volume devoted several pages of sensitive criticism to Marlowe's work. Although Warton's knowledge of Marlowe might seem meagre by present standards, this was the first reasonably just treatment Marlowe had received since the days of the Elizabethans. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, Edmund Malone, who was so influential in arousing curiosity about Marlowe and providing knowledge of him, had equipped himself with a one-volume collection of Marlowe's plays by binding together early editions of the various pieces, using manuscript transcripts where originals were unobtainable.

By 1818 demand for Marlowe's collected works was sufficiently strong to justify publication of them, and in that year W. Oxberry, comedian and printer, brought out separate texts, with brief prefaces and a few notes, of The Jew of Malta, Edward the Second, Dr Faustus, Lust's Dominion, and The Massacre at Paris. To these were added Tamburlaine, parts I and II, in 1820; and in 1827 these were all bound together, along with an undated edition of Dido, in a single volume entitled, The Dramatic Works of Christopher Marlowe, With Prefatory Remarks, Notes, Critical and Explanatory, by W. Oxberry, Comedian. The first collected edition of Marlowe had already appeared, however, during the preceding year in three

handsomely bound but badly edited volumes. Professor Tucker Brooke identifies the editor as George Robinson.[17]

(b) From Early Nineteenth Century to the Present Time

Any attempt to survey the growing and changing feeling for Marlowe's plays might well begin in the very early nineteenth century; for it is around this time that Marlowe had truly begun to emerge from the obscurity which two centuries of unsympathetic literary taste had imposed. The purpose of this part will be to present a clear outline of the critical pattern which the criticisms of The Jew of Malta have formed in the past century and a half. Moreover, when these various criticisms are viewed in close succession false conjectures may tend to stand out more sharply; and the influence of particular scholars on their colleagues and the sometimes malignant results of this condition may become more obvious. Since this section will be no more than a point of reference, the criticisms will not be challenged in detail, but comments will be offered for the sake of continuity. A chronological progression for the recording of critical opinions will be used here-- not in mere obeisance to historical sequence, but because the earlier critics were hampered in their judgements by misinformation and a dearth of factual and textual knowledge, and it would be unjust to contrast their views with those of present-day

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[17] Brooke, op. cit., p. 390.

scholars through haphazard juxtaposition. For greater clarity each critic will be treated in a section sub-headed by his own name.

Charles Lamb

Lamb's Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare, published in 1808, was a valuable instrument for the reviving of interest in the Elizabethan dramatists, and while one may agree with Professor Tucker Brooke that it ultimately became an important influence in restoring Marlowe's reputation,[18] yet one may also join Dr Boas in guarding against exaggerating Lamb's achievement as Swinburne has done in his declaration that "to him and to him alone it is that we owe the revelation and resurrection of our greatest dramatic poets after Shakespeare."[19] Lamb in his 1808 preface refers to Marlowe as one of the dramatists who have been "slighted" and whose "more impressive scenes" he intends to present. Yet his treatment of Shakespeare's greatest predecessor is somewhat unsatisfactory. The scenes he chooses from Tamburlaine are usually those more characteristic of Marlovian rant than of poetry; and the treatment of that play in particular would suggest that he misunderstood Marlowe's dramatic intention as it is generally accepted today. Of The Jew of Malta and Dr Faustus Lamb writes:

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[18] Brooke, op. cit., p. 394.

[19] Swinburne quoted by F.S. Boas in "Charles Lamb and the Elizabethan Dramatists", Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, (1944), XXIX: p. 81.

> Barabas the Jew, and Faustus the conjuror, are offsprings of a mind which at least delighted to dally with interdicted subjects. They both talk a language which a believer would have been tender of putting into the mouth of a character though but in fiction . . .

and of course Lamb is not the first or the last to suggest this point of view. Dr Boas points out that whereas Lamb is inclined to censure Marlowe for his subject-matter, "he is apparently unconscious that through the lips of Mephistophilis the so-called atheist he gives a spiritual interpretation of hell which no 'believer' has ever bettered."[20] Lamb treated of Marlowe scantily and of The Jew of Malta hardly at all.

Henry Maitland

This writer undertook to present a series of essays in Blackwood's in which his intention was clearly an imaginative interpretation of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. Of Marlowe he writes:

> We have been induced to dwell longer on the writings of Marlowe than perhaps their intrinsic worth demanded of us in a series of essays of the kind proposed, by the fact of his being, beyond all comparison, the greatest dramatic Genius who preceded Shakespeare.[21]

and after this apology, he busies himself somewhat awkwardly with an attempt to do critical justice to The Jew:

> We scarcely know how to speak of the character of such a drama as this . . . We confess, that over our own mind it

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[20] Boas, op. cit., p. 66.

[21] H(enry) M(aitland), "Analytical Essays on the Early English Dramatists, No.III, Jew of Malta -- Marlow", Blackwood's (1817), II:260-66.

> exerts a very powerful dominion, by the extreme rapidity of the action, the unmitigated ferocity of the chief character, and the congenial wickedness of all the subordinate agents.[22]

Maitland finds no discrepancy between the first and last acts of the play; indeed, he seems willing to view the play as a smoothly cohering whole:

> It is not perhaps easy for us to bring our minds into a state of terror, his wickedness is so grotesque and boundless; but when we do so, it is fearful enough to think of the poisoning of nunneries, of men betrayed into the commission of crimes and punishment of death, and finally, of captivity and overthrow, all brought about by the devilish machinations of one fiendish Being.[23]

It cannot actually be called criticism. Professor Tucker Brooke cites Maitland's remarks in connection with Byron's Manfred and Marlowe's Dr Faustus only in order to show how little the public knew of Marlowe in the age of Keats and Byron.[24]

Nathan Drake

In this same year, Nathan Drake's large work entitled, Shakespeare and his Times appeared. Drake disposes of Marlowe in very few words. He describes him as follows:

> As an author, an object of great admiration and encomium in his own times, and, of all the dramatic poets who preceded Shakespeare, certainly the one who possessed the most genius. He was egregiously misled, however, by bad models, and his want of taste has condemned him, as a writer for the stage, to an obscurity from which he is not likely to emerge.[25]

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[22] Maitland, op. cit., p. 265.
[23] Ibid., p. 266
[24] Brooke, op. cit., p. 396.
[25] Ibid., p. 397, quoting Nathan Drake, Shakespeare and his Times, Vol. ii, p. 245.

Oxberry

To his edition of The Jew of Malta, published in 1818, Oxberry prefixed these remarks:

> The "JEW OF MALTA" is very far from being the first of MARLOWE'S productions; there is in it the same want of poetical feeling and poetical expression, that we find in his "Edward the Second"; but then there are none of its redeeming beauties, none of its vigorous phrase, none of its striking energy of character. The Jew, Barabas, is not the picture of a human being, but the figurative representation of an abstract passion; there are none of the motives or the feelings of humanity about him: he is, indeed, the passion itself-- and is no more to be called a human being, than the canvas on which a picture is painted can be called the picture. . . .
>
> Plot there is little, and that little is akin to the ridiculous: the most striking event is the burning of the Jew in a cauldron-- an event that at once combines the ludicrous with the horrible. . . . Indeed, as there is nothing in the characters to excite sympathy, so there is nothing in the fable to excite interest; it creeps on slowly, and without any apparant object, to the catastrophe, which is tolerable only because it is in keeping with the rest of the drama. . . . It scarcely ever employs the figures of poetry, its metaphors, its similes, its bold personifications; it goes, or rather rushes to its object, with language that is as plain as it is energetic.[26]

His only favourable comment about The Jew is that it has "great vigour" and "sweeping relentlessness of purpose," although he seems to contradict this in the foregoing quotation.

Kean's revival of The Jew of Malta may have been responsible for the public demand for an edition at the time when Oxberry's went through the press. Moreover, that demand may have been increased by the controversy that ensued. The producers of the

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[26] W. Oxberry, editor, (the) Rich Jew of Malta: a Tragedy, (London, 1818), pp. iii and iv.

play were confronted with a situation which did not exist in Elizabeth's age-- the presence in the audience of English Jews who might take offence. The acting text, prepared by Samson Penley and interlarded with large but unacknowledged plagiarisms from Edward II, was an obvious attempt to placate the many Jews that would attend. For example, the poisoning of Abigail and the nuns is cut out, a pirate is executed rather than the friar, and Barabas is eventually shot rather than parboiled. It was conventionalized, but not sufficiently to avoid the hostility of the Jewish factions of London. A feud sprang up between Kean and dramatist Charles Bucke on account of the revival, for which Bucke refused to write a prologue, saying that he "felt ashamed in being accessory to the cruelty of offering such an undeserved and unprovoked insult to the great body of Jews."[27] Apart from the perversions of Doctor Faustus by Mountford, Thurmond, and Rich, this seems to have been the first performance of a play by Marlowe since the Faustus of 1663. Fortunately, although his notes are scanty, Oxberry's text of The Jew is essentially accurate.

William Hazlitt

The second of Hazlitt's lectures, "Chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth" (1820), contains some fifteen pages of Marlowe criticism. Hazlitt says:

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[27] Brooke, op. cit., pp. 402-3, and cf. Monthly Magazine, (1822), vol. LIII, p. 59.

> Marlowe is a name that stands high, and almost first in this list of dramatic worthies. . . . There is a lust of power in his writings, a hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, a glow of the imagination, unhallowed by anything but its own energies. His thoughts burn within him like a furnace with bickering flames; or throwing out black smoke and mists, that hide the dawn of genius, or like a poisonous mineral, corrode the heart.[28]

Hazlitt occupies himself more with Doctor Faustus, which "though an imperfect and unequal performance is his greatest work," and with Lust's Dominion, which he thinks most resembles it. The Jew of Malta he does not think "so characteristic a specimen of this writer's powers"; and he regards Edward II as weak in most respects, though "according to the modern standard of composition, Marlowe's best play."[29]

John Payne Collier

This eminent nineteenth-century scholar, whose fame was unfortunately sullied by a too-great zeal where it came to "proving things," had a decisive notion about the play:

> The plot [of The Jew of Malta] was invented and the characters formed, to take powerful hold of the vulgar mind, and to gratify it by the exhibition of blood and horror to an extent that appears in our day either ludicrous or revolting. The character of Barabas is not human, but it is nevertheless consistent with the notions of a Jew entertained by our ancestors. In many scenes the versification is vigorous, rich and harmonious; in others it is loose, careless and irregular, but never languid: in every part it appears to be the work of an energetic mind, with an imagination 'all air and fire' . . . We cannot sympathize

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[28] Brooke, op. cit., p. 403.
[29] Loc. cit.

> with Barabas, because he is a mere monster, and his daughter is, in the first instance, too instrumental in her father's bloody purposes, and afterwards too insignificant, to excite compassion in her death. The whole structure of the tragedy is confused, exaggerated and improbable.[30]

The regrettable problem one has to face in considering the opinions of Collier is that the eventual dishonesty of the man has thrown practically everything he touched under suspicion. Much of what he has done in the way of scholarship has been quite valuable, and Professor Tucker Brooke says of him on this point, "though Marlowe only less than Shakespeare, became the unfortunate subject of Collier's forgeries, the fact remains that students of the former poet have gained far more than they have suffered by his indefatiguable activities."[31] Collier's activities with The Shakespeare Society were not only halted when his forgeries were brought to light, but the society itself did not survive the scandal. Of one thing we can be certain: Collier did more than most scholars to establish Marlowe among his contemporaries and to point out new sources of information.

Henry Hallam

In the three pages assigned to Marlowe in his Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (1837-39), Hallam, in Professor Tucker

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[30] John Payne Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare, and Annals of the Stage to the Restoration, (London, 1831), vol. I, pp. 135-138.

[31] Brooke, op. cit., p. 404.

Brooke's opinion, "has left little for more recent critics to unsay or dispute."[32] Of The Jew Hallam writes:

> The first two acts of the Jew of Malta are more vigorously conceived, both as to character and circumstance, than any other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare. . . . No one could think of disputing the superiority of Marlowe to all his contemporaries of this early school of the English drama.[33]

Brooke regards the judgements of Hallam as being "more modern in tone than those of Collier, and more final than Fleay's."

Leigh Hunt

This writer has praise for Marlowe, although his sonorous generalities stamp him as being distinctly of the 'romantic' school. He remarks in Imagination and Fancy (1844):

> Marlowe and Spenser are the first of our poets who perceived the beauty of words; not as apart from their significance, nor upon occasion only . . . but as a habit of the poetic mood, and as receiving and reflecting beauty through the feeling of the ideas.[34]

Alexander Dyce

The edition of Marlowe's plays which contains the introductory Account of Marlowe and his Writings marked what was probably the greatest advance in Marlovian scholarship that has ever been made by one person. Dyce took the trouble to verify the historical accuracy of many points which former scholars had

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[32] Brooke, op. cit., p. 404.
[33] Loc. cit.
[34] Ibid., p. 405.

never bothered to check; and apart from the purely biographical and textual detective-work which eventually concerns every Marlovian student, he brought his careful critical acumen to matters of interpretation. In the part of his essay devoted to the Jew of Malta he writes:

> The character of Barabas, upon which the interest of the tragedy entirely depends, is delineated with no ordinary power, and possesses a strong individuality. Unfortunately, however, it is a good deal overcharged; but I suspect that, in this instance at least, Marlowe violated the truth of nature, not so much from his love of exaggeration, as in consequence of having borrowed all the atrocities of the play from some now-unknown novel, whose author was willing to flatter the prejudices of his readers by attributing almost impossible wickedness to a son of Israel. . . . the latter part is so inferior, that we rise from a perusal of the whole with a feeling akin to disappointment. If the dialogue has little poetry, it has often great force of expression.[35]

It is doubtful if anyone writing of Marlowe in the twentieth century would accept the conjecture of a "now-unknown" novel, not only because there are more convincing hints at his possible sources, but also because Dyce's view argues in Marlowe a want of moral consciousness which does not seem justified.

John Addington Symonds

In his edition of Marlowe in 1870, Cunningham fought shy of any attempt at interpretation, being content to echo what Dyce had said, but in 1884 Symonds wrote a series of essays of

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35 Rev. Alexander Dyce, editor, Works of Christopher Marlowe, (London, 1859), pp. xxiii-xxiv.

some length on Shakespeare's predecessors, and in these we find the lush, pseudo-critical mood of Swinburne. He paid particular attention to Marlowe, naturally, and of the Jew of Malta he remarks:

> As it was, his third creation, Barabas, incarnated a lower form of the same insatiable longing. Ambition, the desire of empire, the adoration of beauty, the control of power by means of superhuman knowledge, yield place here to avarice. But the avarice of the Jew of Malta is so colossal . . . that we dare not call even this baser exhibition of the Impossible Amour ignoble. Swinburne, who cannot assuredly be arraigned for want of sympathy with Marlowe, has styled Barabas 'a mere mouthpiece for the utterance of poetry as magnificent as any but the best of Shakespeare'. With this verdict we must unwillingly concur. Considering the rapid and continual descent from bathos unto bathos after the splendid first and second acts . . . through the mad abominations and hysterical melodrama of the last three acts; no sane critic will maintain that the 'Jew of Malta' was a love-child of its maker's genius. One only hypothesis saves Marlowe's fame, and explains the patent inequalities of his third tragedy . . . It is that stage-necessities and press of time compelled the poet to complete in haste as task-work what he had conceived with love and blocked out at his leisure.[36]

A conflict is beginning to establish itself between the interpreters of the play: Dyce told us a few moments ago that the play had other virtues to compensate for its lack of poetry; and now Symonds "unwillingly" agrees with Swinburne that the play is a mere vehicle, not only for poetry, but for poetry almost comparable to Shakespeare's. One wonders if many of these writers are not merely determined to accept the Jew of

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[36] John Addington Symonds, Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama, (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1884), pp. 617-618.

Malta solely because it is a product of Marlowe and are searching around for grounds on which to defend their acceptance. And to reflect on Symonds' suggestion that Marlowe's "fame" rests on the conclusions drawn by any one of the play's interpreters should be merely to excite a smile.

A. H. Bullen

Bullen's edition of the plays, published in 1885, adds very little to Dyce, and the biographical sketch of the poet states more decisively the cautious errors of the latter editor. For example, on the assumption that Marlowe lacked the Parker scholarship, he surmises that Sir Roger Manwood was his patron at Cambridge. And he also inclines towards Cunningham's opinion that Marlowe may at one point have been a soldier.[37] His criticism of the play, however, leans away from Dyce and towards Symonds and Swinburne:

> The Jew of Malta is a very unequal work. Hallam, the most cautious of critics, gives it as his opinion that the first two acts 'are more vigorously conceived both as to character and to circumstance, than any other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare'. . . . But in the last three acts vigorous drawing is exchanged for caricature; for a sinister life-like figure, we have a grotesque stage-villain, another Aaron. . . . Was the artist's hand paralyzed by the consciousness of an inability to work out in detail the great conception? I think not. It is more reasonable to assume that the play was required by the actors at a very short notice, and that Marlowe merely sketched roughly the last three acts, leaving it to another

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[37] A. H. Bullen, The Works of Christopher Marlowe, (London: John Nimmo, 1885), vol. I, pp. xi and xiii.

> hand to fill in the details. . . . In any case it is a sheer impossibility to believe that the play in its present form represents the poet's finished work. . . . It has not yet been discovered where Marlowe procured the materials for his play. Probably he used some forgotten novel; nor is it unlikely that he had been afforded opportunities of personally studying Jewish character.[38]

And of Barabas, he says:

> Round the person of Barabas, in the two first acts, is thrown such a halo of poetry as circles Shylock from first to last. His figure seems to assume gigantic proportions; his lust of gold is conceived on so grand a scale that the grovelling passion is transmuted, by the alchemy of the poet's imagination, into a magnificent ambition. Our senses are dazzled, sober reason is staggered by the vastness of Barabas' greed . . .[39]

Bullen also speaks of "a strong Jewish trait" which Marlowe emphasized in his first two acts-- "intense family affection"[40]-- and although Sir Sidney Lee agrees with this, yet it is for the apparent non-Jewishness of the conception that the Jewish critics have castigated Marlowe, as will be shown when the Jewish criticisms of the twentieth century are noted.

Sidney Lee

An industrious scholar and member of The New Shakespeare Society, Lee has investigated problems of an historical nature and often from the Jewish point of view. His splendid paper on the Jews in Elizabeth's England, while it has turned up a

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[38] Bullen, op. cit., pp. xl-xli.
[39] Ibid., p. xlii.
[40] Loc. cit.

wealth of useful historical data, offers no fresh interpretation of Marlowe's Jew of Malta:

> Barabas is for the most part a brutal caricature. His bitter hatred of the Christian and his greed for money combine to obliterate almost all trace of human feeling. But in his most characteristic utterance there is an obvious reflection of Jewish feeling-- 'I am not of the tribe of Levi . . .' The popularity of Marlowe's Jew on the stage is remarkable. . . . Its representations exceeded in number those of any other play of the day, even including Shakespeare's plays.[41]

John Ingram

Ingram's Christopher Marlowe and his Associates (1904) represents the first attempt at a full-dress biography of the poet. As such it was an advance over the biographical sketches that had been done up to this time, but its main value was in the publication of a few hitherto unpublished transcripts of Canterbury wills of the poet's relatives and additional bibliographical data. Ingram's interpretation of the play is of questionable value:

> In The Jew of Malta Marlowe sought once more to depict the attempt of a strong mind to domineer over his fellow-men. As Tamburlaine attempted to gain his ends by force of arms, as Faustus did by means of 'Learning's golden gifts', so did Barabbas seek supremacy by the power of wealth. In this Jew the greed for riches is sublimated and even ennobled; his longing for inexhaustible wealth is not the vulgar avarice of a Shylock, heaping up riches for riches sake, but an intense lust for gold as a means for the acquisition of power, and as a tangible evidence of his supremacy over the rabble. The grandeur of his

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[41] Sidney L. Lee, "Elizabethan England and the Jews", New Shakespeare Society, (1887-92), p. 146.

> passion for wealth, his grandiose efforts to heap up 'infinite riches in a little room', exalt Barabbas to heroic proportions, so that Shylock is a pygmy in comparison. The treatment the Maltese Jew receives excites our pity; the magnitude of his crimes-- of his revenge-- almost compels our admiration.[42]

Thus far we have an amplification of the view put forth by Symonds, and he concludes with a strong echo of Bullen's judgement:

> Yet The Jew of Malta is regarded as the most unequal of Marlowe's known plays. . . . How it came about that the firm hand was fettered and the potent stroke grew feeble may not be known, although it is easy to imagine. In all probability the success of his previous productions had been so phenomenal that he was urged to further efforts; his brain, weary and exhausted by the demands made upon it, could not continue to engender masterpieces to order, so that the work he had started so grandly was scamped. . . . yet the fact must not be overlooked that the work has evidently been tampered with by hack revisers.[43]

Algernon Charles Swinburne

The romantic exuberance of Swinburne, who made a "special cult of Marlowe" during his lifetime,[44] was quite evident in his later writings. The Age of Shakespeare (1908), his article for the Eleventh edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica published the year after his death, and Contemporaries of Shakespeare, which appeared in 1919, all tell much the same story in similar terms:

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[42] John H. Ingram, Christopher Marlowe and his Associates, (London: Grant Richards, 1904), p. 155.

[43] Loc. cit.

[44] Brooke, op. cit., p. 405.

> It is now a commonplace of criticism to observe and regret the decline of power and interest after the opening acts of the Jew of Malta. This decline is undeniable, though even the latter part of the play (the text of which is very corrupt) is not wanting in rough energy; but the first two acts would be sufficient foundation for the durable fame of a dramatic poet. . . . In the blank verse of Milton alone-- who was perhaps hardly less indebted than Shakespeare was before him to Marlowe as the first English master of word-music in its grander forms-- has the glory or the melody of passages in the opening soliloquy of Barabbas been possibly surpassed. . . . The figure of the hero before it degenerates into caricature is as finely touched as the poetic execution is excellent; and the rude and rapid sketches of the minor characters show at least some vigour and vivacity of touch.[45]

The Jewish Critics

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, a number of books were written by Hebrew historians and literary men on the Jewish element in English literature. The Jewish contribution was considered from the point of view of the Jew as author and as subject of plays, novels, and of literature generally. What those who treat of the Jew on the English stage have to say is of interest to students of the play, but it must be remembered that their viewpoints can never be completely impartial.

Rabbi Edward Calisch, in his survey of the Jew as a literary subject, writes:

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[45] Algernon Charles Swinburne, article on "Christopher Marlowe" Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, 1910, vol. 17, p. 742.

> "The Rich Jew of Malta" is a classic, but one of injustice and untruth. It was a picture of the popular conception of the Jews as it existed in Marlowe's day. It was an untrue conception, begotten of ignorance and prejudice, and Marlowe helped, all unhappily too well, to strengthen and perpetuate them.[46]

and Calisch feels that "owing to the inevitable comparison with the 'Merchant of Venice,' it has been accorded a place in literature it would perhaps not otherwise have attained."[47]

Of the Jewishness of Barabas, Calisch says:

> Barabas' love for his daughter, Abigail, his one redeeming quality, is Jewish. . . . The other incidents of the play as pictures of Jewish life or character are false, all false.[48]

It has been stated more than once that Marlowe "violated nature" in his shaping of The Jew, and no one has troubled to deny this. Calisch, curiously, censures Marlowe for failing to achieve what the dramatist does not seem to have attempted-- an authentic picture of Jewish life.

David Philipson, in The Jew in English Fiction, writes:

> This play, with the atrocious character of Barabbas, the most villainous, perhaps, on the English stage, gives us an excellent opportunity to judge of the opinion in which the Jews were held, for Barabbas is meant to be representative, and the play was exceedingly well received by the populace.[49]

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[46] Rabbi Edward W. Calisch, The Jew in English Literature, (Richmond: Bell Book and Stationery, 1909) p. 66.

[47] Ibid., p. 62.

[48] Ibid., p. 64.

[49] David Philipson, The Jew in English Fiction, (Cincinatti: Robert Clarke Co., 1911), p. 19.

as does Arthur Bourchier in an article in the Contemporary Review:

> As Charles Lamb points out, whereas Shylock at worst was a man, Barabbas is a mere monster, and in any but a Jew-hating age the character, played as it was by Edward Alleyn with a red nose of elephantine proportions, would have been laughed at as a vulgar caricature; but the play suited the age and fanned the animosity against the Jews in England.
>
> There is, however, some fine poetry in the play.[50]

With more detachment Felix Schelling remarks:

> With Marlowe the conception of the superman comes prominently into English literature. Through everything that he wrote runs an inspiring dominant motive, perhaps somewhat expressed in the words, poetry, passion, exorbitancy. Tamburlaine, ruthless conqueror, lashing the world with 'high astounding terms', no less than the victor's sword; Faustus selling his soul to the devil in an avid eagerness to know all, to enjoy all; the Jew, extravagant in his revenge as in his avarice, ingeniously wicked and daring in all his scheming-- each of these is sustained through scenes, instinct with the engaging improbabilities of true romance, on the strong wings of magnificent verse. . . . It is not accidental that Machiavelli, the person who, in Elizabethan literature, became the accepted parent of politic and godless intriguing, should have been chosen by Marlowe to speak a prologue justifying villainous craft. On mention of Barabas, Marlowe's monster Jew, the mind reverts to Shylock, who, however humanized by a hand which could reach human nature as never could Marlowe, owes much to that earlier striking stage realization of a popular misconception of the Jew.[51]

And, finally, Landa adds his bitter comments:

> The world has long since passed judgement upon the play as a masterpiece of inhuman horror that never had

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[50] Arthur Bourchier, "The Jew in Drama", CR, vol. CVII, p. 378.

[51] Felix E. Schelling, Elizabethan Playwrights, (New York and London: Harper Brothers, 1925), p. 84.

> its counterpart in life. Existence was a vile thing to the disordered imagination of Marlowe, who delved into the lowest dregs of his mind, revelled there like a pariah dog in a shambles, without pausing to deliberate for a moment upon probabilities, unhampered by pricks of conscience.[52]

With the single exception of Mr Schelling, whose concern is purely literary, these writers have passed their judgements on the basis of how justly or unjustly the Jew has been treated ethnically, and consequently their criticisms can in no sense be considered literary criticisms. Marlowe may be considered to have done the Jews a great disservice from a sociological point of view, but the problem of this study is not a sociological one; it is the interpretation of a piece of dramatic literature.

T. S. Eliot

T. S. Eliot's short essay on Christopher Marlowe, which was written in 1918 and published in The Sacred Wood (1920) and in Selected Essays (1935), contains a criticism of The Jew of Malta which represents a complete departure from the stereotyped theorizing that characterized the critical opinions of the play for more than a century. The criticism is refreshingly imaginative and sensitive:

> Of [The Jew of Malta] , it has always been said that the end, even the last two acts, are unworthy of the first three. If one takes The Jew of Malta not as a tragedy,

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52 M. J. Landa, The Jew in Drama, (London:King, 1926), Chapter V, "Marlowe's Jew of Malta."

> or as a 'tragedy of blood', but as a farce, the concluding act becomes intelligible; and if we attend with a careful ear to the versification, we find that Marlowe develops a tone to suit this farce, and even perhaps that this tone is his most powerful and mature tone. I say farce, but with the enfeebled humour of our times the word is a misnomer; it is the farce of the old English humour, the terribly serious, even savage comic humour, the humour which spent its last breath in the decadent genius of Dickens. It has nothing in common with J. M. Barrie, Captain Bairnsfather, or Punch. It is the humour of that very serious (but very different) play, Volpone. . . . and the last words of Barabas complete this prodigious caricature . . . It is something which Shakespeare could not do, and which he did not want to do.[53]

Eliot's view seems in some respects to be defective. For example, if we regard the play as a farce on the strength of the last two acts, in what light are we to regard the first acts? And what place would the obviously caustic references to the Christian Church have in a farce? The objections to Eliot's theory will be dealt with presently. In the meantime, however, it should be noted that the fact which most strongly recommends Eliot's perception is that it is one of the few criticisms that take into account the mood and the tone of the play, two features which are naturally very closely related to the author's intention.

W. J. Turner

The Phoenix Society's revival of The Jew of Malta in 1922 elicited some interesting views from the London critics.

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[53] T. S. Eliot, "Christopher Marlowe," Selected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 123.

Mr Turner wrote:

> To enjoy Marlowe's play it is not necessary to understand it. This alone shows that Marlowe had a robustness sadly lacking in the pellucid writers of our contemporary drama; but it is an advantage not to be looking in Marlowe for the qualities of Shakespeare. Shakespeare . . . had the realist's extraordinarily developed sense of humour . . . he always saw more than most people see . . . he was capable of looking at all sides . . . he was interested in real men and women. Now, Marlowe, like Milton was not. . . . Certainly he had not the Shakespearean humour . . . his was a wild, passionate ferocity of temper and a fiery will which everywhere turned from men and women around him to distant countries and vast deserts which he could people with the convulsed phantoms of his imagination.[54]

Although Mr Turner speaks here in generalities, his observation hints at a sound approach to an interpretation. Unfortunately, he does not carry it to particular issues. In another review of the same revival he observed:

> Marlowe, Milton, Shelley, all three were fanatics, cranks, men driven by a vertigo of the imagination, or by excessive idealism, to extremes which more ordinary men find laughable. It was not therefore surprising-- it was mete and proper-- that the audience at the Phoenix Society's performance of The Jew of Malta last Monday should frequently have roared with laughter.[55]

Turner continued with the suggestion that Milton's Paradise Lost would be laughed off the stage, and in order to counter the obvious charge that Paradise Lost is a poem rather than a play, Turner ventured that "a stage representation only brings into special prominence essential characteristics of an imaginative

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54 W. J. Turner, Review of the Phoenix Society revival, London Mercury, 1922, vol. VII, p. 199.

55 W. J. Turner, another review of the same (London) Spectator, 1922, vol. CXXIX, p. 695.

work." Mr Turner had good cause to defend the play, for another reviewer was capitalizing on the audience's tendency to laugh at it rather than to consider it seriously.

Frances Birrell

In her article on the Phoenix performance in the New Statesman, Miss Birrell echoed the opinion expressed by T. S. Eliot in his selection of essays, The Sacred Wood, two years earlier:

> The critics have been much exercised about the Jew, regret the last two acts which seem to them a woeful decline from the Marlovian splendour of the opening scenes, and see two hands when perhaps they should see two states of mind. . . . It is tempting to think that Marlowe started on the Jew, meaning it to be a Dr Faustus, but, on discovering it would not do, gently toppled it over into farce, so that Barabbas stops being a foreshadowing of Faustus and becomes a skit on Tamborlane (sic)[56]

This is a very easy method of accounting for the apparent rupture in the play, and it conveniently short-circuits many textual problems. Miss Birrell continues,

> Latter-day play-goers then, though they may appreciate to the full the splendour of much of the verse and the earlier conception of Barabbas, so magnificently sultry, cannot but view the play with the eyes of Marlowe, rather than with those of his first audience, and enjoy the piece as the first and best of English melodramas.[57]

As Mr H. S. Bennett (in the preface to his edition of The Jew of Malta) suggests in connection with Eliot's judgements, this

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[56] Frances Birrell, "The Jews, or Genius at Play", New Statesman, 1922, vol. XX, p. 175.

[57] Loc. cit.

kind of assumption seems to argue a greater detachment on Marlowe's part toward his own work and toward Elizabethan stage conventions generally than what is known of him would lead one to expect.

Una M. Ellis-Fermor

In her book Christopher Marlowe, Miss Ellis-Fermor has attempted to define the nature of Marlowe's mind and to follow its development, using the corpus of his work as a blue-print. Some of her insights are interesting, but as a whole her view does not carry conviction; and for the reason that her method has forced on her certain assumptions-- such as an aspiring-mind nobility for all Marlowe's protagonists-- and these do not ring true. She seems, on the one hand, to be headed in the right direction when she regards the plays as being highly subjective; but on the other hand one could reasonably postulate that the subjectivity in a given play can only exist in inverse ratio to the realism manifest. The more subjective the play becomes, the less realism do we find; and by corollary, the more abstract (and hence the more personal) a play becomes, the more subjective it might be said to be. But although there will be a greater subjectivity, it becomes increasingly difficult to interpret it because of its abstract form. We have then a paradox: the play in which the author puts more of himself is the play in which it is more difficult to actually find the author. And this would certainly seem to be the case with Marlowe. At any rate, Miss Fermor's approach has not enabled her to give a satisfactory

explanation of Marlowe's dramatic motives.

The Jew of Malta is one play in particular which she finds it difficult to account for:

> The play is, as has been remarked by all its editors, extremely difficult to describe, as the breakdown in the third and fourth acts is complete, and the recovery in the fifth only partial. Various explanations could be offered, such as that Marlowe lost interest after the first two acts and found his inspiration insufficient; or that he was for some reason obliged to finish hastily what he had begun carefully; or that he left the play to other hands after he had finished the first two acts, sketched the outlines of the next two and written a rough draft of the fifth. I incline to some supposition such as this last because the development of the character of Barabas, which moves clearly through the first and second acts, is lost sight of entirely in the next two, but reappears approximately as we might have expected to find it in the fifth. Moreover, in the fifth act there are clear traces of the hand that wrote the first two, while there are only occasional traces of it in the intermediate acts. It is perhaps wiser to base any opinions of Marlowe's work in this play only on Acts I and II, and, with reservations, on Act V. This condition accepted, the character of Barabas appears to have been one of the fullest studies that Marlowe ever made.[58]

Miss Fermor's "condition" is expressly dependent on "the development of the character of Barabas" as she would have it develop to accord with her theory; but because this play tends in part to violate her theory, she would throw out the offending parts entirely and consider only those which can be fitted into her pattern. She continues:

> It is only under pressure of extreme suffering, when the only thing he could have dreaded had come upon him through

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[58] Una M. Ellis-Fermor, Christopher Marlowe, (London: Methuen and Co., 1927), p. 97.

> the agency of the basest hypocrisy and injustice, that Barabas' mind loses its balance, and ferocity and cunning gradually takes possession of it.[59]

And this statement could only be made by one who is determined to defend Barabas as an essentially lofty spirit wronged and embittered by gross injustice; yet there is nothing in the play on which to base an assumption that Marlowe intended Barabas to be anything other than monstrous from a moral point of view and much to indicate that Barabas' conduct is cunning and vicious from the opening lines. She concluded:

> In the final catastrophe, Barabas' policy recoils upon his own head, and it was clearly Marlowe's intention from the first that it should do so. He reveals in his Jew a strong, dominating nature driven by the practices of the world in which it works to adopt the tactics of that world; but eager as he was to explore the possibilities of these principles, he seems to have seen clearly their nature was fatal. He lets the curtain fall upon Barabas, corrupted and ruined by the weapons he has used, with none of the tragic poignant regret which he appears to feel for the ruin of Tamburlaine or of Faustus. . . . His sympathies leave the central figure and resign him without regrets to the results, spiritual and material, of his machinations; the author's energy turns instead to a pitiless revelation of the effects of this policy, and to an implicit denunciation of the system itself and of the society which forced into such service the soaring spirit of man.[60]

This is not quite true. Barabas' conduct can in no sense be called the "tactics of the world," and if he was driven to anything, it was probably by inner compulsion. Throughout her critique Miss Fermor gives the impression that she thinks Marlowe failed to

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[59] Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., p. 98.
[60] Ibid., pp. 101-2.

do what he set out to do-- that Barabas was intended as an "aspiring mind" conception, but that he was imperfectly conceived-- and one can but wonder why the critics persist in making Marlowe appear stupid in order to make themselves appear wise.[61]

Bennett

Mr Bennett's edition of The Jew of Malta (1931) is the best one that has appeared. His notes are much fuller than those in any other edition, and he has had the unquestionable advantage of the fruits of many years of scholarship from many hands. In addition, he has had the assistance of Professor Tucker Brooke, whose notes for a new edition of Marlowe's works were turned over to the various scholars who were editing the separate texts for the Case edition.

Mr Bennett, too, believes that Marlowe failed in his original intention, but he is cautious in his judgement:

> Whatever our conclusions as to the authorship of this play, we are forced, I believe, to agree that, as it now stands, it cannot be dignified with the name of tragedy. Marlowe was still immature: he was reaching forward to what he was to perform in Edward II (though even there his gifts were limited), but in The Jew of Malta the great possibilities which the initial strokes of his portrait of Barabas prepare us for, are never consummated. Barabas is conceived on the great scale-- the poise and mastery of Marlowe are at their best in these first scenes-- but

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61 Battenhouse (op. cit. p. 5) notes this tendency in Bakeless, who states (op. cit., p. 11) of Tamburlaine, "Marlowe never suspects that his magnificent chieftain is at bottom a bloody and useless brute".

> it all crumbles away before long, and the Jew becomes the mere plaything of the popular imagination that, whetted by such stories and fanned by sedulous rumour, was to lead to the fanatical display of intolerance which attended the execution of Dr Lopez a few years later. Hence there is no inevitability in the final scenes, no sense of the passing of something great; and we acquiesce gladly in the destruction of Barabas, and know the world is well rid of him . . . Marlowe might, as we have seen, have wished to write a great tragedy, but he missed his chance, and once the critical speeches in act II were written all his instincts, and the instincts of his audience, compelled him to follow one path-- a path which led to the final attempt of Barabas to deceive both Turks and Christians and to its over-reaching conclusion.[62]

Bennett does not subscribe to the view that The Jew of Malta is a farce-- he does not go that far-- but he is unwilling to accept it as a successful tragic conception. Which begs the question, did Marlowe intend it to be regarded as a tragedy-- that is, tragedy as it is conventionally understood? Assuredly it deals with the eventual collapse of a forceful personality, but Marlowe is not writing in the de casibus tradition, and by no means can The Jew be considered tragic in the sense that Othello is tragic. It may well be that the tendency to tag a drama as tragedy, comedy, or chronicle, has caused the critics to look for values in The Jew which they have no right to expect; that the play is one to which no such tag can be applied. Since one of the central tasks of this study is to discover Marlowe's intention in writing The Jew, a descriptive name for this kind of play may suggest

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[62] H. S. Bennett, editor, The Jew of Malta and the Massacre at Paris, (London: Methuen and Co., 1931), pp. 17 and 18.

itself along the way.

John Bakeless

Colonel John Bakeless has authored two thorough studies of the dramatist's life and works in order to reconstruct a coherent biographical pattern. The first of these was published in 1937 under the title, Christopher Marlowe: the Man in his Time. In it he says of the Jew of Malta:

> Marlowe's Jew of Malta has been so barbarously mangled that it is an open question whether it was he or Thomas Heywood who wrote most of the last half of the play as we now have it.[63]

and again,

> The Jew of Malta, as even this barest of outlines makes only too clear, is a rather crude play, filled with the cheapest blood and thunder, which alternates with the keenest characterization and lines of clear human understanding expressed in the finest verse . . . Then, of a sudden, the poetry-- save for infrequent snatches of a few lines-- has disappeared. The character of a man who is vindictive with a good reason changes; and he becomes the least credible of theatrical villains, indulging in miscellaneous iniquities merely to cause shudders in the uncritical pit. . . . This sudden collapse of the play in its latter half is not proof positive that someone else has retouched and ruined Marlowe's original handiwork. Brave beginnings and botched endings are no novelty in dramatic literature; nor was Christopher Marlowe a steady going young man who could be relied on to finish with painstaking care, every work that he began. . . . It is more likely, however, that the play owes its present mangled condition to the handiwork of one Thomas Heywood, man-of-all-work to various theatres until well on in the time of Charles I, who boasted that he had 'either an entire hand, or at the

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[63] John Edwin Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: the Man in his Time, (New York: Morrow and Co., 1937), p. 143.

> least a main finger' in two hundred and twenty plays, as well as in others he could not remember.[64]

Although he blames Heywood for "mangling" the play, Bakeless regards his changes as "good theatre."

Bakeless' second work on Marlowe was published five years later and called The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe. It is a larger study and possesses the distinction of having the most extensive Marlowe bibliography to be had today. Apart from this its usefulness is somewhat circumscribed; it is largely a compilation of the results of recent investigations, and the critical judgements it contains tend to be more lyrical than sound. His remarks on The Jew of Malta are similar in tone to those of 1937:

> The Jew of Malta is not a great play, for it lacks almost, though not quite, all the ingredients of greatness. It is not even a good play; for breaking squarely in two in the middle, it lacks even the saving virtue of unity. It is, indeed, not so much a play at all as the great beginning of a play, or the remnants of a play that once was great.[65]

and

> Such, then, is The Jew of Malta: a wretched work shot through with genius, the standing puzzle of the English stage, and the inspiration of the greatest poet that ever set pen to paper, Shakespeare himself.[66]

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[64] Bakeless, Marlowe: The Man in his Time, pp. 174-6.

[65] John Edwin Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), vol. I, p. 328.

[66] Ibid., p. 329.

Frederick Boas

Dr Boas is sympathetic to Miss Ellis-Fermor's view of Barabas as an 'aspiring mind' conception. Indeed, Boas' judgement of The Jew of Malta implies the same identification of the mind of Marlowe with those of his creations as do Miss Fermor's observations. For Dr Boas, the play is but another indication of an artistic method and a dramatic philosophy peculiar to Marlowe:

> The third of the great religious systems known to Marlowe was now to suffer at his hands the same mockery as its rivals. The choice of the name Barabas, with its sinister associations, for the Jew of Malta was in itself significant. Yet Barabas, as first conceived by Marlowe, was more than a representative of the Hebrew religion. Within the narrower sphere of finance he is cast in the same mould as Tamburlaine. We see him on his chosen field of battle, with his munitions of war, when in the opening scene of the play he 'is discovered in his counting-house with heaps of gold before him'.[67]

Unlike Miss Fermor, however, Dr Boas finds it easy to account for The Jew of Malta in the Marlowe canon, without rejecting it as only partly Marlowe's work:

> The central problem of Marlowe's work and career lies in his exceptional union of two almost conflicting Renaissance elements. There was in him the soaring aspiration after power and knowledge and beauty in their ideal and absolute forms. Side by side with this there was the critical, analytic impulse which led to the questioning of orthodox creeds and standards of conduct. As the myths of classical antiquity had fed his 'aspiring mind', so his critical faculty, sharpened by his governmental service,

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[67] Frederick Samual Boas, Christopher Marlowe: a Biographical and Critical Study, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 132.

> was fortified further by the study of the maxims of sixteenth-century Italian state-craft, considered without relation to the special conditions in which they originated. Thus the Machiavel who speaks the Prologue to the Jew of Malta is to Marlowe one and the same, whether alive in his native land, or embodied in France in the Guise, or after his death come to frolic with his friends in England . . . [68]

Charles Norman

In 1946 this writer published a biography of Marlowe which attempted to give more life and substance to the poet's history than any earlier biography had done. He succeeded in some measure through his method of narration, but he contributed little in the way of new knowledge of Marlowe or of a fresh approach to his works. He writes:

> The Jew shadowed forth by Marlowe, on whom Shakespeare afterward modelled his Shylock, is an intense and sympathetic characterization. The language of Barabas, from the opening soliloquy until he becomes a caricature under another writer's recasting, is full of dignity and poetry, embodying Marlowe's never-ebbing delight in fabulous enterprise.[69]

He offers a theory concerning the "recasting":

> I have referred to a fumbling, sensational hand present in the text of Marlowe's play. There is no other way to account for the sudden change from drama to melodrama which finally overwhelms the structure of The Jew of Malta, as rising waters might first flood, then submerge a pillared edifice. . . . The conjecture is irresistible that Marlowe was dismissed by Lord Strange after his opinions became known; and as the play he was working on was the property of Strange's company, he left it behind, unfinished, when his employment ceased.[70]

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[68] Ibid., p. 135.

[69] Charles Norman, The Muses' Darling: the Life of Christopher Marlowe, (New York: Rinehart, 1946), p. 132.

[70] Ibid., p. 134.

And if indeed Marlowe's work were left incomplete, this would seem to be a more plausible way of accounting for its completion than the hypotheses put forward by some critics. Lord Strange is more than likely Kyd's "Lordship" who "never knew his (Marlowe's) service but in writing for his plaiers"; for although Kyd does not refer to his 'lord' by name, we find that Strange's company included in its repertoire in 1592 The Spanish Tragedy as well as The Jew of Malta.[71]

Paul Kocher

Kocher's study attempted to become what Miss Ellis-Fermor's biography purported to be: a means of understanding Marlowe's mind through the evidence offered in his plays. But there is quite a difference in approach. Whereas Miss Fermor attempted to show a progressive development in Marlowe's thinking, Mr Kocher is content to expend his efforts in discounting any ostensible discrepancies between the dramatist's work and the known facts about his life. Miss Fermor's remarks on Marlowe's religious beliefs do not always have a bearing on her criticisms of the separate plays; but Kocher feels, and quite rightly it would seem, that since Marlowe spent a substantial part of his life ostensibly[72] preparing for the taking of holy orders, the

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71 Ibid., p. 129.

72 Whether or not he intentionally violated the terms of the Parker Foundation to obtain an education, which ordinarily he could never have had, is of no importance. The fact remains that the philosophy studies on a curriculum designed to prepare students for ordination must have been devoted largely to Christian theology.

subject of Christian ethics must occupy a commensurately large part of his thinking, and that the plays reveal its nature. The Baines libel, Kyd's letters to Puckering, and some contemporary references to Marlowe, would hardly justify the opinion that Marlowe's rejection of a clerical career was due to indifference; and if at Cambridge he developed a temperamental hostility towards the life for which he was preparing, it would be reasonable to expect indications of this feeling in his later thoughts and in his art. For this reason, Kocher has made his study of Marlowe's religion the core of his book, and he analyses Marlowe's work from this point of view:

> The Jew of Malta is the third successive play in which the plot chosen by Marlowe lends itself naturally to criticism of Christian life and principles. . . . Ferneze is the official voice of Christianity in the drama, defending the confiscation of the Jew's wealth and denouncing him at the end for his many crimes. The voice, however, is a most apathetic one, through which sounds always the sardonic laughter of Barabas, irrepressible and triumphant.
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> One method of attack widely used in the play is to set off the doctrines of Judaism against those of Christianity in such a way as to equalize the two. . . . Inevitably the effect of this kind of juxtaposition of creeds is to question the absolute of Christianity and reduce everything to relativity. These conflicting claims of the two religions were, of course, often set forth in contemporary literature . . . but . . . All such pronouncements declare . . . one-sidedly against the Jews. Marlowe, on the contrary, allows Barabas ample liberty to have his say unopposed, and emphasizes the contentions of Judaism . . . It is one thing to give an occasional airing to the Jewish point of view by way of a realistic drawing of character, as Shakespeare does with Shylock, and quite another thing to afford it frequent, powerful, and often uncontested expression, as Marlowe does through his hero.[73]

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[73] Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: a Study of his Thought, Learning and Character, (Chapel Hill: University Press, 1946), pp. 120-22.

Kocher then puts forth the theory that the Governor's treatment of Barabas is a "survival of primitive conceptions of collective guilt" and that Barabas' reaction is the "new conception of individual accountability."[74] Kocher concludes:

> All that Barabas says in this scene, and much that he says in other scenes, is in harmony with what we know of Marlowe's views. Not that he has any personal sympathy for Jews, as far as one can tell. The warmth of human understanding that went into the making of Shylock is almost totally absent in Barabas. Marlowe is not a defender of Jews; he is an attacker of Christians. Shakespeare, perhaps, is neither, but a loving observer of men. The Merchant of Venice is primarily a clash of people of different creeds, The Jew of Malta a clash of the abstract creeds themselves. In the former play the devil occasionally cites Scripture for his purpose, but in the latter he cites much more of it, and the devil who cites it is not a Jew but a Christian. For the other devil becomes an angel of light as a messenger of religious satire.[75]

The foregoing survey forms the greater bulk of what has been written critically of The Jew of Malta. Much of it is nonsense; some of it is penetrating and provocative; but with the single exception of Paul Kocher's treatment there is nothing which could defend the play against T. S. Eliot's judgement that it is a farce-- indeed, there is no convincing or satisfactory interpretation of the play. If Mr Kocher's view of the play is defective in any way, it is not because of anything he says, but rather because of what he does not say. Many points arise which Mr Kocher's remarks do not cover-- for example, the

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74 Ibid., p. 129.
75 Ibid., p. 130.

Machiavellian elements and the question of the apparent anti-Semitic emphasis in the play-- and until these points are considered any attempt at full interpretation is, perhaps, premature.

CHAPTER 4

DEFINITION OF THE THESIS

When all of the criticisms of the preceding chapter have been weighed and sifted, one fact stands out clearly: the critics are puzzled by the play. Some seem uneasy about accepting it as being wholly Marlowe's; and while some have dismissed it summarily as farce, still others have apologetically attempted to find it worthy as a tragedy. Yet of all the interpretations that have been attempted, of all the theories that have been put forward to explain various aspects of the play, none offers a coherent and satisfying solution to the large number of questions which The Jew inevitably raises for modern readers.

Considered as a tragedy the play will simply not stand critical examination. In its first printed form it was, admittedly, styled a tragedy, but the theme is not a tragic one, nor is the mood tragic. Those who defend the play as a tragic piece are forced to contend that it was begun as a tragic drama and distorted into melodrama, either by some unscrupulous or incompetent hack or by Marlowe himself. This is what Symonds, Bullen, Ingram, Miss Fermor, and Bakeless, among others, have done by exaggerating the contrast between the Barabas of Acts I and II and the Barabas of the acts that follow what has become traditionally known as "the breakdown."

T. S. Eliot suggested that the play should be treated as a farce, as did Frances Birrell. And again, Bennett, the most recent editor, while he does not speak of it as farce or melodrama, denies that it can be "dignified by the name of tragedy."[1] Eliot's views on the Marlowe plays are interesting, but his judgement of The Jew as a farce can be readily rejected. What is known of Marlowe, his ideas, his temperament, the work he left behind, all preclude the probability of his indulging in farce. He was, perhaps, as temperamentally incapable of that sort of humour as Milton would have been.

Strangely enough, it is not until Kocher's work appears that the play is described as a satire. Strange it is, indeed, for this is one tag that could at once account for the play's remarkable success and lengthy runs, as well as its unreal aspects and its caricatures. That the critics from the Restoration period onwards have consistently failed to understand The Jew is obvious; and perhaps the reason is simply that Marlowe had written a satire on topical issues of the day, the implications of the satire being thoroughly understood and enjoyed by his contemporaries, but, that day having passed, the implications have ceased to be so readily perceived, and the play has gradually become an enigma. Possibility, if not probability, justifies

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[1] Bennett, op. cit., p. 17.

an examination of the play from this point of view. Kocher's Marlowe is a savage (if subtle) cynic, whose chief preoccupation is with the Christian ethos of the sixteenth century, but it may well be that Marlowe can also be shown to have had just as lively an interest in the secular matters of his time.

The central thesis, then, might be stated as follows: that The Jew of Malta is an abstract dramatic design in which Marlowe satirized (a) the Christian hypocrite, (b) the current travesty of Machiavellianism, but principally, (c) the ever-recurring Jew-hatred of Europe. It is strongly suggested that far from being a conventional document of Elizabethan anti-Semitism (as so many have taken it to be) The Jew of Malta is, on the contrary, a cleverly prepared broadside that was levelled at the prevalent and monstrous anti-Jewish myth which had flourished during the centuries of the Jewish exile from England. In addition to the main argument certain subordinate hypotheses will need to be considered. These form a basis for the central thesis, and they are dealt with fully in Appendixes. The hypotheses are: that Marlowe was familiar with the authentic writings of Machiavelli and with the Gentillet Contre-Machiavel, and that Marlowe regarded the pseudo-Machiavellianism derived from the latter document as a monstrous absurdity; that although representation of Jewish character was not Marlowe's principal aim, yet that he was familiar with Jews in England and from his travels on the Continent; that Marlowe was familiar with the

legend then growing around Joseph Mendez-Nassi; that Mendez-Nassi may possibly have served as the model for the leading figure in Marlowe's triple-barrelled satire, being himself wealthy and an alleged Machiavellian, a bitter enemy of the Christians, and a paradoxically successful man in a Jew-hating age; that the play is not a tragedy, tragicomedy, or farce; that it is a satire and, as such, a dramatic success.

The writing and staging of what we might call a tragical satire (since it seems to caricature among other things the medieval conception of tragedy) is quite in keeping with the personal pattern of dramatic heterodoxy that Marlowe had established with the writing of Tamburlaine. And the motives he had for writing this satire and the views expressed in it are certainly consistent with the motives and views of the sort of man who could so easily provoke the Baines libel. Moreover, the satire is not out of keeping with the mood of the times. After the Renaissance, the questioning and critical attitude so repugnant to the medieval scholasticists took hold of European thinkers, and this attitude was in turn reflected in the art forms that were developing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, particularly in English literature. If the dramatists came into bitter conflict with the clergy (and hence with the numerous moralists and didacticists of the period, for books were then the hand-maidens of theology), it was because the dramatists had stopped believing and docilely accepting

standardized spiritual edicts and had begun to question everything, to explore within themselves, much as the Greeks had done before them. Art in the hands of such dramatists had become art proper, for it had begun to enable man to understand himself entirely by permitting him to express himself completely. In his self-expression he articulated and gave substance to the vague, shadowy feelings that can only be understood when they have been given full expression.

This study will try to show that The Jew of Malta, expressing as it did a mood of critical satire, was just such a questioning, spiritual exploration.

PART II

ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

CHAPTER 5

MARLOWE'S CRITICISM OF THE CHRISTIANS

The task of analysing the satire in The Jew of Malta is not an easy one. There are three distinct satiric targets--the Christians, the Machiavellians, and the Jews-- and these separate strands of satire are so intertwined that the play tends to become a tantalizingly complex fabric of references and allusions. The first strand, the Christian one, is itself more or less complex. The satire here is on two levels: on the one hand there are openly scurrilous references to the adherents of Christianity; on the other hand there is a less obvious but more damning criticism of false Christians in Marlowe's fully drawn portrait of the Christian hypocrite. If we begin by tracing the references on the lower and obvious level as they occur throughout the play and follow these with an analysis of Ferneze's role, we may find that we have, not only a criticism of Christian bigotry, but also a foil or background for the greater satire on anti-semitism.

The first reference to the Christians occurs in the Prologue. The Machiavel says:

> Though some speak openly against my books,
> Yet will they read me, and thereby attain
> To Peter's chair; and, when they cast me off, 12
> Are poison'd by my climbing followers.

Here we have what is almost certainly a caustic reference to the French Jesuits. In his British Academy lecture in 1928

Mario Praz refers to the Jesuits' use of Machiavellian principles (even though they had at first violently attacked the Florentine's writings) and to the Elizabethan tendency to link the Jesuits and Machiavelli together. Here the Jesuits are seen to be hypocritical opportunists who freely practice duplicity to achieve the worldly ambition that they pretend to eschew. In line 12 "Peter's chair" can mean only one thing: the office of Pope in the fiercely competitive Roman Catholic hierarchy. The word "poison'd" in line 13 appears to be a pivotal word, one in which Marlowe suggests immediately the harshness of the Jesuits' dog-eat-dog methods in their game of policy and on which he pivots then to imply also the Italianate atmosphere, which symbolized to the popular mind the anti-Christ.

Later, in Act II, Scene iii, while speaking to Lodowick of the Governor's confiscation of his property, Barabas' words are full of bitterness and irony. Here Marlowe seems to thrust again and again at nuns and priests. Barabas says, for example:

> And yet I know the prayers of those nuns
> And holy friars, having money for their pains, 81
> Are wondrous; --<u>and indeed do no man good</u>; [<u>aside</u>.

and

> And, seeing they are not idle, but still doing,
> 'Tis likely they in time may reap some fruit, 84
> I mean, in fullness of perfection.

This sort of lash at the immorality of practicing Christians occurs again between Ithamore, the Turkish slave, and Abigail in Act III, Scene iii. Here Ithamore reveals to Abigail her

father's brutal agency in the deaths of Mathias and Lodowick, and when the shock of the disclosure disillusions her and prompts her to become a Christian in earnest, the moment provides Marlowe with another opportunity for a jibe at the Church. Ithamore's question,

> A very feeling one; have not the nuns fine sport with the friars now and then? 36

is a most calculated piece of bathos; for Ithamore's mocking irreverence stands in direct contrast to Abigail's mood of intense seriousness. Bennett's question, "an interpolated piece of clowning?"[1], can be readily answered in the affirmative if we are prepared to concede that any alliance of the trivial with the lofty or sublime is clowning. Bennett's question seems irrelevant, for Ithamore's dialogue is entirely consistent with a change of tone which is very marked in the middle of the second act. For that matter, the bathos introduced by Ithamore is characteristic of the very structure of the play: the first act is certainly a strange contrast in its seriousness to the savage mockery of the other four acts, and this contrast might, indeed, be said to balance the play.

Again, in Act III, Scene vi we have another instance of irony at the expense of the Christians. Abigail, dying, confesses to Barnardine her sin of having been doubly betrothed and her

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[1] Bennett, op. cit., p. 105.

knowledge of the circumstances of the deaths of Lodowick and Mathias, and she enjoins the friar not to reveal her father's guilt. After receiving the friar's assurance that he cannot break faith with her, she dies, piously uttering the hope that her father may yet be converted. Barnardine's comment on her death,

Ay, and a virgin too; that grieves me most. 41

seems to be Marlowe's cynical answer to the insolent question that Ithamore asked and that Abigail chose to ignore.

There is, finally, in Act IV, Scene i, a satirical tour de force. Nowhere else in the play, except perhaps in Barabas' celebrated speech of self-indictment, is Marlowe so direct in his lashes at the target of his satire. When speaking of the nuns, Barabas says:

For every year they swell, and yet they live; 6

and to Ithamore's proposal that he poison the friars, Barabas says again:

Thou shalt not need, for now the nuns are dead,
They'll die with grief. 16

Ithamore's contemptuous reference to them as caterpillars, and their clownish stupidity in their conversation with the Jew mark them, not only as foils for Barabas' cunning, but also as buffoons in their own right. Bennett likens them in their echoing of each other to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,[2] and

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[2] Bennett, op. cit., p. 120.

this seems to be an excellent observation. The friars come to exclaim against the Jew and are completely gulled by him.

Many editors suspect the third and fourth acts of having been the subject of interpolations, which were supposedly made for the sake of low humour. This hypothesis, however, seems hardly necessary. The remark of the Machiavel in the Prologue in connection with the Jesuits, the obscene remarks of Barabas, Ithamore's question, and Barnardine's answer are all of a kind; and they are, in fact, very much like the kind of blasphemy with which Marlowe is charged by Kyd in his letter to Sir John Puckering and by Richard Baines in his note to the Queen's Privy Council. Marlowe's alleged statements there-- for example, that Moses was a juggler and that an unnatural relationship existed between St. John and Christ--[3] had obviously been intended to shock his hearers; and it is remarkable that the critics find it so difficult to believe that Marlowe could have written in his plays what he may very likely have uttered in more than one private conversation. These blasphemies would, of course, come quite naturally to the lips of a Jew such as Barabas, whose natural dislike and suspicion of the Christians have been turned to a positive hatred. Yet when we examine Marlowe's portrait of Ferneze and find that the principles of Ferneze are far from being above criticism, we may well conclude that Marlowe is

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[3] Kocher, op. cit., p. 25.

intentionally providing Barabas with a suitable target for his barbs and that the remarks some critics have taken to be 'low humour' are actually satiric overtones. If this is truly the case, Barabas is doing more than merely speaking 'in character'; he is acting as the spokesman for Marlowe's cynical attitude towards, and mockery of, Christian hypocrisy.

The fact that Act IV contains many abusive references to Christianity may be the real reason for its having been strongly criticised as being the work of someone other than Marlowe. His use of the incident of Barnardine's corpse, a possible source of which appeared in 1584 in a jest book,[4] has obliged some critics to conclude that since Heywood uses a similar device in The Captives this part of The Jew of Malta must be an interpolation made by Heywood. Moreover, both Wagner and Fleay are of the impression that the Bellamira scenes are additions which show the hand of Heywood, although a metrical and stylistic study of these passages would indicate that they are probably entirely by Marlowe.[5] Again, in his note to IV, i, 85 Bennett suggests that Marlowe's having had Abigail send to the nunnery for the friars shows that Marlowe was 'hazy' about matters relating to nuns and friars[6] (a curious suggestion

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[4] Bennett, op. cit., pp. 7 ff.
[5] Loc. cit.
[6] Ibid., p. 123.

when it is remembered that Marlowe was preparing for the ministry under the terms of the Archbishop Parker Scholarship),[7] and Bennett goes on to suggest that in any case interpolations have very likely been made. It is, on the contrary, fairly certain that Marlowe would have been well aware of this discrepancy, and at this point we have every reason to believe that far from being a discrepancy, this is very likely more of the dramatist's mockery. Marlowe's implication that the place to find friars is at a nunnery is just the sort of scurrilous reference to the Christian Church that occurs with such frequency in the play that we are compelled to recognize it as an essential part of the play's texture. If passages such as this were to be deleted as interpolations, much of the meaning of the play would disappear as well.

Apart from being Marlovian in tone, Act IV admirably enlarges the Christian element of the play's satiric design. The act falls neatly into two halves, each half being devoted to a separate crime by Barabas. The first three scenes deal with Barabas' baiting and elimination of two buffoon-like friars; the last three scenes deal with the blackmailing of Barabas by his rascally servant. The friar scenes hold the Church up to severe ridicule, and accusations of the sort that Marlowe has hurled at the Church in the foregoing scenes are here assembled

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[7] Kocher, op. cit., p. 21.

in a veritable phalanx. The friars are strange representatives of Christianity. Their conduct is reprehensible; they are dull-witted, immoral, and secularly greedy.

It would be risky indeed to deduce from the foregoing passages that Marlowe is striking at Christianity itself; it would seem, however, that if Marlowe's quarrel is not with Christianity, it is then almost certainly with the false adherents of Christianity. The jibes, the wry comments, the off-colour remarks about nuns and priests occur too frequently and too pointedly to allow us to draw any other conclusion.

Marlowe's more subtle criticism of the Christians is to be found in his characterization of Ferneze, the Christian Governor. In the second scene of the play he appears in full length and is set off against Barabas. Here the Jews of Malta have been summoned to a meeting with the Christian Governor and his Knights, and this meeting brings out fully the relationship that exists between the Jews and the Christians in the play.

Barabas' role during the meeting-- for he is here acting the part of the clever Machiavellian-- is similar to that which he played in the presence of the Jews in the first scene: the uninformed but well-meaning member of an ill-favoured race. He pretends to misunderstand the Governor's motive in having them appear at the council house; and when the Governor begins by pointing out that Malta owes a large amount of money to the Turk, Barabas innocently suggests that Ferneze pay it. When the

Governor points out that he needs the Jews' help, Barabas, persisting in his wilful misunderstanding, reminds Ferneze that the Jews are not soldiers and that they would be of little use against the Turks. Barabas' hedging throughout this scene, however, does not impede the Governor in his determination to extort the full amount of the tribute money from the Jews. Barabas' evasions, in fact, merely serve to goad Ferneze into disclosing his cruelly unjust and superstitious hatred of the Jews; for when Barabas questioned the Jews' responsibility for the debt on the grounds that the Jews were actually strangers to Malta, and when Ferneze countered that the Jews had been permitted to amass their wealth in Malta and hence were required to contribute with Malta's citizens, Barabas asks if they are to contribute equally, and Ferneze answers bitterly:

> No, Jew, like infidels;
> For through our sufferance of your hateful lives,
> Who stand accursed in the sight of heaven,
> These taxes and afflictions are befall'n,

There is no doubt here about the injustice of Ferneze's attitude towards the Jews. The decree, which Ferneze orders proclaimed at this point, leaves the Jews no chance to escape the heavy penalty which has been prepared for them. They must relinquish half of their holdings, or become Christians (in which case they would still have to forfeit their goods), or, should they refuse either of these alternatives, lose all that they possess. The decree was obviously prepared beforehand; it is evident

that the Christians fully intended to make the Jews solely responsible for Malta's debt. It is hardly surprising, then, that Barabas feels himself and the other Jews to have become the victims of unjustified discrimination. It is true that Ferneze brings forth other reasons for the heavy taxing of the Jews. He says, for example, that it is better that one should suffer for the common good than that all should perish for a private man. This does not, however, explain why the Christians have not been asked to contribute along with the Jews. Ferneze says, too, that excess of wealth breeds covetousness and that covetousness is 'a monstrous sin'; but this is surely a mere excuse-- both of these reasons are pure equivocations-- for the evasion of responsibility for a ruthlessly unjust, if convenient, course of action. Barabas and the other Jews are quite helpless, and it may be Barabas' very feeling of helplessness that prompts his violent denunciation of the other Jews for their fearful and ready submission to the decree. Barabas' resistance is, however, futile; for if the Governor has been prepared to seize unjustly half of the Jews' property, we must not be surprised to find that he uses Barabas' hesitation as a pretext for the seizing of all of his wealth. When, after Barabas' outburst at the Jews for their having submitted to the first article of the decree, Ferneze asks with irony if Barabas will be Christened, Barabas very naturally replies that he will not. We may observe in the first scene what Barabas' motives

are-- his love of gold, his contempt for Christians and Christianity-- and if we are to accept the evidence in Bennett's notes that Jewish converts to Christianity were obliged to forfeit their goods, this proposition is to Barabas an idiotic one. Ferneze has apparently interpreted Barabas' abuse of the three Jews for their having submitted to the decree as a refusal of the first article and when Barabas refuses the alternative of becoming a Christian, Ferneze gives the signal for the seizure of all Barabas' property. As he sees the soldiers leave, Barabas quickly cries out that he will submit to the first article, but he is told by the Governor that it is too late. The question of whether or not Barabas' conduct up to this point can be construed as an outright refusal of the decree is a debatable one. When it is seen subsequently that Ferneze prepares for the confiscation of the residue[8] of the three Jews' property, it would seem evident that the Jews' voluntary submission does not matter very much. Ferneze is determined to have their wealth, and it is of no consequence to him how he gets it. While the Governor's soldiers are in

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[8] Bennett feels that 'residue' must mean that part which has already been taken, and in view of what passes between Barabas and the three Jews later on, he has some justification for this view. It should be remembered, however, that the OED offers no precedent for the meaning Bennett ascribes to the word, and Marlowe may intend us to believe that Ferneze is prepared to take everything, even underhandedly.

the act of making off with his goods, Barabas is offered the dubious consolation of being permitted to remain in Malta in order that he may continue his enterprising. As Barabas quickly points out, this concession is of little practical value-- nothing can come from nothing-- and the implication in the Governor's words, that Barabas might well have expected to be arbitrarily banished, is added evidence (if, indeed, added evidence were necessary) that Ferneze is fully guilty of unreasonable and vindictive rancor towards Malta's Jews. Barabas remonstrates with Ferneze for the latter's cloak of false piety and reiterates his accusation that the Governor's actions are tantamount to theft. His arguments are useless, and before the Christians leave, Ferneze accepts the suggestion of one of his Knights that they transform Barabas' mansion into a nunnery.

The arguments and actions of Ferneze in this scene should be compared to his actions in Act II, Scene ii. An officer in the Spanish Navy, Martin Del Bosco, comes to Malta to sell as slaves some captives he has taken following an engagement with the Turkish Fleet. Ferneze explains that he dares not allow such a sale because of the fact that Malta has a tributary alliance with Turkey. Assisted by the urgings of one of Malta's knights and the reminder that the Spanish Crown has a valid claim to Malta, Del Bosco easily persuades Ferneze to withhold the tribute money and to ally Malta with Spain against Turkey.

Ferneze makes Del Bosco his general and gleefully awaits the Turks' surprise at being met with cannon fire instead of gold. If there were any question at all about Ferneze's want of faith in his dealings with the Jews a little earlier, there is no question here of his faithlessness to Calymath. The Governor's perfidy is an established fact, and it is left to us only to determine what precisely Marlowe's purpose was in having the man whom Kocher describes as the official spokesman for Christianity in the play[9] represented as a faithless knave. The intention cannot be other than satiric. The paradox is that of the two-- Christian Governor and sinister, evil Jew-- the Christian is the villain.

In the passages at the close of Act I there is a curious Biblical significance. After the property has been confiscated and the Christians have gone, Barabas is left with the three Jews; and just as three Jews sat with Job for seven days and seven nights comforting him in his great afflictions,[10] so the three Jews linger with Barabas to comfort him in his distress. The symbolism is quite intended; for one of the Jews asks Barabas to have Job's patience, and the lost wealth of Barabas is likened to that of Job, although Barabas bitterly reminds the Jews that his own wealth was far greater than ever Job's had been. An enormous irony creeps into the play through the implied

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9 Kocher, op. cit., p. 120.
10 Job, ii, 11-13.

comparison of Job and Barabas: whereas Job is the victim of Satan in a test of Job's faith in God, Barabas is the victim of the hatred, dishonesty, and injustice of a professing Christian who clothes his ruthless actions in the name of righteousness. This is an obvious and satirical thrust at orthodox Christianity, but the instrument of Marlowe's thrust has two edges: one edge cuts through the myth of Christian virtue to reveal sham and hypocrisy; the other edge cuts through the myth of the Jew to reveal a human creature instead of a mythical monster.

Marlowe's criticism of the Christians has an important function in the satire as a whole. For if the medieval myth of the Jew is to be exploded, an effective means of preparing for this is by the shattering of another and equally well established myth-- the myth of Christian virtue. Marlowe is strengthening his suggestion that the Jew may not be as black as the myth paints him by demonstrating that the Christian, the original detractor of the Jew, is not as white as his myth of Christian virtue would paint him.

CHAPTER 6

THE ATTACK ON PSEUDO-MACHIAVELLIANISM

Like the recurring references to Christianity, the Machiavellian strand of the satire provides a secondary leitmotif in The Jew of Malta. Just as the Christian theme runs through the length of the play, so the Machiavellian references are scattered throughout; and just as the references to Christianity appear on two levels, some of them direct and some of them indirect, so the Machiavellian references appear, the direct allusions centering mainly around the figure of Machiavelli in the Prologue, the indirect allusion consisting in the play's indistinct but ubiquitous atmosphere of 'Machiavellianism'. There is, however, a marked difference in Marlowe's treatment of the two themes: whereas the Christian references are openly scurrilous, the Machiavellian references often seem blandly innocent. When on the one hand Barabas casts aspersions on the morals of nuns and priests, it is clear that Marlowe means to ridicule Christian institutions; when on the other hand the Machiavel delivers his address in the Prologue, it is by no means clear that Marlowe means to disparage Machiavellism. The one fact of which the reader can be certain after having read the play carefully is that both the numerous references to Machiavelli and the very Machiavellian tone of certain parts of the play are no accident. They form

too consistent a pattern to be accidental. The play is, for example, literally ushered before us by the Machiavel, whose opening remarks are somewhat cryptic until we look at them in retrospect; the word 'policie', which Bennett describes as having become a cliché in the jargon of Machiavellism even before Marlowe's time,[1] recurs frequently; and the conduct of Barabas, Ithamore, and Ferneze is liberally compounded of the duplicity that had become characteristic of 'the Machiavellian' or what was in Marlowe's day popularly believed to be 'the Machiavellian'.

The cumulative effect of these references, however, and the persistence of the 'Machiavellian' atmosphere do not, in themselves, imply a satiric intention. The reader may be justified, to some extent, in feeling that it was Marlowe's intention merely to inject an exotic element into his play and that the eerie, evil strangeness that the name 'Machiavelli' would have had for Elizabethans was just the sort of exotic note that Marlowe sought to strike. Indeed, the exotic pitch of the play may have satisfied many critics that this was actually all that Marlowe required of the Machiavel, for few critics have bothered to sift the Machiavellian elements for larger meanings. That a larger meaning does exist seems to be hinted at in the Prologue, and an examination of the relevant passages there may bring out more clearly the function of the

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[1] Bennett, op. cit., p. 45.

Machiavellianism in The Jew of Malta.

We may, for the sake of convenience, divide the Prologue roughly into two parts. In the first of these, the larger one, we find that the Machiavel is busily defending both his principles and his reputation. In lines 1-4,

> Albeit the world think Machiavel is dead,
> Yet was his soul but flown beyond the Alps;
> And, now the guise is dead, is come from France,
> To view this land, and frolic with his friends.

he tells us that the spirit of Machiavelli, far from being dead, is now abroad in England. The next line, however,

> To some my name is odious, 5

brings up some pertinent questions. Does 'some' mean a minority or the majority? And is Machiavelli's name odious because of his actual views or because of what Innocent Gentillet insisted were his (Machiavelli's) views? Not only is there evidence that educated Elizabethans knew Machiavelli's writings in the Italian,[2] but there is also evidence that several faithful English translations of The Prince were circulated in manuscript in Marlowe's time.[3] These, however, would hardly be available to most English readers; it is more likely that Simon Patericke's published

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[2] Cf. Edwin A. Greenlaw, "Influence of Machiavelli on Spenser," MP, 7:187-202 (1909); C. Elliot Browne, "Marlowe and Machiavelli," N&Q, 5th ser. 4:141-2 (1875); Thomas Hugh Jameson, "The Machiavellianism of Gabriel Harvey," PMLA, 56:645 ff. (1941).

[3] Napoleone Orsini, "Elizabethan MS Translations of Machiavelli's Prince," The Journal of the Warburg Institute, I:166-9 (1937), offers proof of five and knows of a sixth.

translation in English of Gentillet's Contre-Machiavel would have been accessible to the greater number.[4] Moreover, despite English anti-Catholic feeling there is a strong likelihood that the French-Catholic attack on The Prince was applauded in England, and line 5 would seem to bear this out. In the next passage,

> But such as love me, guard me from their tongues,
> And let them know that I am Machiavel,
> And weigh not men, and therefore not men's words.
> Admir'd I am of those that hate me most:
> Though some speak openly against my books,
> Yet will they read me, and thereby attain
> To Peter's chair; and, when they cast me off,
> Are poisoned by my climbing followers.
> I count religion but a childish toy,
> And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

Machiavelli urges his true followers to protect his reputation (presumably from such calumniators as Gentillet), and he adduces a strong argument for the effectiveness of his principles by suggesting with irony (lines 9-15) that his greatest enemies, the Jesuits, have made very effective use of what are believed to be his doctrines, even though their use of them violates the spirit of his teachings. The last passage of the first part of the Prologue,

> Birds of the air will tell of murders past:
> I am asham'd to hear such folleries.
> Many will talk of title to a crown:
> What right had Caesar to the empery?
> Might first made kings, and laws were then most sure
> When, like the Draco's, they were writ in blood.
> Hence comes it that a strong built citadel

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[4] Mario Praz, "Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," Proceedings of the British Academy, XIII:6, (1928).

> Commands much more than letters can import:
> Which maxim had [but] Phalaris observ'd,
> H'ad never bellow'd, in a brazen bull,
> Of great ones' envy: o' the poor petty wights
> Let me be envied and not pitied.

is devoted to a vindication of power as a desirable goal. The birds of the air will vie with one another, power being the ultimate arbiter; might was Caesar's right. And this is actually part of the essence of Machiavellism.

The latter part of the Prologue shifts our attention from Machiavellism itself to the Machiavellian Barabas. These lines,

> But whither am I bound? I come not, I,
> To read a lecture here in Britain,
> But to present the tragedy of a Jew,
> Who smiles to see how full his bags are cramm'd,
> Which money was not got without my means.
> I crave but this, --grace him as he deserves,
> And let him not be entertain'd the worse
> Because he favours me.

seem to carry the key to the Machiavellian aspect of the play: Machiavelli's spirit, after having made a spirited and rhetorical speech in defence of his reputation, states that he has come to England, not to deliver a lecture on Machiavellianism, but to present the story of a Machiavellian Jew. This is a most important point: it is not Marlowe but Machiavelli who is presenting the play. Many critics appear to have visualized the speaker of the Prologue as the conventionalized Machiavellian villain, sinister in thought and appearance, a mere stage prop whose function is to imbue the play with the atmosphere of crafty

villainy. And there is some justification for this view: Machiavelli, misunderstood by most and calumnied by the clergy, an agent of free thought in an age that eschewed the insolence of free enquiry, was to many a mysterious, exotic, and thrillingly evil figure. But here the viewpoint breaks down. The Machiavel of the Prologue is not the villainous creature we shall find Barabas to be; the Machiavel is, on the contrary, a compellingly logical defender of his principles and one who is rather tolerant in his own closing plea for tolerance. An arresting element, too, is his position in the presentation of the story of Barabas; after having taken pains to defend himself throughout the Prologue, Machiavelli is unlikely to present a story which is designed to attack the very thing he has gone to such trouble to defend. This amounts to a riddle. Machiavelli's closing words suggest that Barabas may seem reprehensible to us in any case, and when we are told that he is at the same time a follower of Machiavelli, we may well ask ourselves what Machiavelli's (or Marlowe's) motive in all this really is. We may, perhaps, conclude that Barabas will not be a stock Machiavellian rogue, for the excellent reason that since Machiavelli's speech is in part a justification of his doctrines he would hardly be furthering his aim by employing the stock symbol of a popular misconception of Machiavellism. For the same reason we may, perhaps, conclude that the play itself is not anti-Machiavellian. Without the Prologue it might appear so; with the Prologue this

can hardly be the case.

In fine, the reader or spectator has been prepared by the Prologue for a Machiavellian protagonist, but to an even greater extent he has been disarmed for what is to follow. The last part of Machiavelli's speech suggests that the story of Barabas will be a kind of parable (presumably in vindication of Machiavelli just as was the Prologue); and yet this parable will seem to the spectator almost as cryptic as the Prologue itself. Barabas, although not a demon at the outset, has throughout the play a sinister air about him, and he is a figure that could hardly arouse the sympathy of followers of Machiavelli. As a Machiavellian, Barabas is, in fact, an ugly caricature. In his actions he is the embodiment of the pseudo-Machiavellian, the contre-Machiavel, the popular misconception of Machiavellism. He is rich and greedy, wicked and cunning. He employs duplicity rather than force to achieve his ends, and his conduct, like that with which the Jesuits were charged, could only be interpreted as a misapplication of Machiavellian principles. Similarly, the characteristic speech of Barabas marks him as a pseudo-Machiavellian. This is evident, for example, in part of a longish monologue that occurs early in the second act:

> We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please;
> And when we grin we bite; yet are our looks
> As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.
> I learn'd in Florence how to kiss my hand,
> Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
> And duck as low as any bare-foot friar; 25

and again in the same scene:

O, sir, your father had my diamonds. 50
Yet I have one left that will serve your turn:
I mean my daughter; but, ere he shall have her,
I'll sacrifice her on a pile of wood:
I ha' the poison of the city for him,
And the white leprosy. [Aside

In both of these speeches the dissembling of the Jew has a grotesqueness about it. As Bennett points out,[5] the first speech is a particularly good example of the popular notion of Machiavellism, although the only clue that could actually link it to Machiavelli is the reference to Florence (ll. iii, 23). At all events both speeches have a singular quality about them, a mocking tone. The imagery by which Barabas exaggerates his monstrous, expedient self-abasement before the Christians imbues his portrait with a satiric quality, and this satiric imagery recurs in passage after passage; this is the Machiavellian leitmotif. The impression is conveyed not so much by what is said as by how it is said.

The circumstances under which Barabas applies his so-called 'policie' are in themselves a commentary on the popular notions surrounding the Florentine. Since the principles of Machiavelli form the basis of a political creed, their application in economic matters or in a revenge plot could only constitute a misapplication. The fact is that in the popular imagination Machiavelli as a political scientist has no reality or even existence; Machiavelli is to the popular mind merely a

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[5] Bennett, op. cit., p. 79.

symbol of evil. It is, therefore, perfectly in keeping with the stock conception of Machiavelli for Marlowe to have Barabas appear furtive, cunning, depraved, greedy, and secretive. All that is needed in Barabas' speech to authenticate the picture is the word 'policie'. The conclusion to be drawn is that the conduct of Barabas can be considered Machiavellian only in so far as villainy, hypocrisy, and duplicity themselves can be equated with Machiavellianism. The one instance where Barabas has an opportunity to make use of the ideas contained in The Prince and to apply them validly is in the fifth act after Calymath has made him Governor of Malta. Here, as Bennett suggests,[6] Barabas' debate with himself on the wisest course for a hated ruler to follow smacks not only of the authentic seventeenth chapter of The Prince but also of the influence of Gentillet. At this point, however, an authentic touch of Machiavelli can only have the effect of bathos. The final irony has already occurred in the fourth act, where Barabas was blackmailed by Ithamore. Whereas the Jew was initially victimized by the unscrupulous Governor, he was finally duped and harassed by his none-too-bright slave; the super-Machiavellian was taken in by an inferior confederate.

The moment we draw a distinction between the Machiavellian and the pseudo-Machiavellian, the Prologue ceases to pose a riddle.

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[6] Bennett, op. cit., p. 153.

The story of Barabas, far from damaging the Machiavel's case, graphically illustrates the point that Machiavelli sought to make through the whole of the Prologue: namely, that there is a vital difference between what Machiavellism actually is and what the Elizabethan Englishmen may imagine it to be. By reducing Barabas to a mocking caricature of Machiavellism, Marlowe demonstrates the absurdity of the popular notion about it. The conduct of Barabas is no indictment of the doctrines of Machiavelli, for Barabas is no true Machiavellian but only the counterfeit article.

Marlowe seems to be intent more on flaying a popular notion than on merely justifying Machiavellism. And since a ridiculing of the popular view is a factor we found at work in the Christian strand of the play, it may very well be that the function of this second satiric element is similar to that of the first: namely, to provide another precedent for the destruction of the anti-Jewish myth. If popular faith in the morality of Christian clerics is groundless, and if the popular view of Machiavelli is a misconception, it becomes increasingly likely that the popular idea of the Jew is also a fable.

CHAPTER 7

BARABAS: THE MAN AND THE MYTH

It is at last to the personality of Barabas that we must direct our attention, for we cannot hope to interpret the play properly unless we first learn to understand its central figure. Barabas is surely one of the most complex, misleading, and misunderstood figures in Elizabethan dramatic literature; and this fact is attested by the conflicting impressions that have resulted from most attempts to analyse him and his rôle in the play. He seems to some critics to be an 'aspiring mind' conception; to others he appears to be Marlowe's badly drawn version of a medieval Jew; to others he is a comic creature; and to still others he is a mere brute. Some of these observations may be quite sound, but it is doubtful that any single one of them is more than an oversimplification. Barabas is, after all, a dynamic conception, and we should not be surprised to find that his vigorous growth during the play's progress will sometimes entail seeming contradictions in his motives and in his actions-- one of these being, for example, his early avowal of love for Abigail and his subsequent poisoning of her. It may be that what some critics have described as artistic discrepancies are in fact an important part of the play's design as well as the natural outcome of a sudden metamorphosis in Barabas' character. For this reason we are well advised to examine

carefully Marlowe's portrait of Barabas as it is progressively delineated in the early part of the play.

When Barabas first appears before us, we note certain facts about him. He is incredibly wealthy-- so much so that he complains of the troublesome necessity of having to count coins of small denominations; he envies the Indian merchants who trade in gold and precious stones and who are consequently able to enclose vast wealth in a little space. He is, too, a miser, gloating over his wealth and boasting about it. Above all, however, he is a paradoxically insecure man for one so wealthy. For example, his desire to accumulate riches in a form easily portable and universally negotiable seems indicative of this; for, as Hermann Sinsheimer informs us, it was fear and insecurity that led the Jews to become the only notable capitalists in pre-capitalistic Europe.[1] They were forced to the expedient of locating their wealth in objects that could be easily carried away because of the constant threat that their goods and property would be seized in the wake of anti-Semitic demonstrations. The passage might, of course, be merely an indication of Barabas' greed, yet there seems to be more to it than that; for although a Jew might conceivably have felt secure on the island of Malta at that time, yet the universal ramifications of the Jewish persecution in thirteenth-century England would very likely

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[1] Hermann Sinsheimer, Shylock, (London, 1947), p. 33.

have made it impossible for the Jews to feel entirely secure anywhere in the known world. There is an excellent possibility that what on the surface looks like pure greed is actually a submerged and somewhat muffled anxiety for the security of his possessions. Marlowe seems to emphasize this, moreover, in having Barabas express concern for his goods at every turn. In I, i, 38-48 he anxiously considers the weather, fearing for the safety of an argosy of his ships that is due to arrive richly laden with spices from Alexandria. Again, when one of his ship captains appears on the scene, Barabas at once questions him about the Alexandrian argosy, and when he learns that there is still no news of it he once more expresses concern.

In his second soliloquy (I, i, 101-37) Barabas expresses the insolent pride in his religious heritage and the kind of hostility towards the Christians that might perhaps be expected of a Jew in a sixteenth-century Christian community. Here he cynically defends his avarice from the point of view of one who is a potential victim of anti-Jewish discrimination. He reflects smugly in the first nine lines,

> Thus trowls our fortune in by land and sea,
> And thus are we on every side enrich'd:
> These are the blessings promis'd to the Jews,
> And herein was old Abraham's happiness:
> What more may heaven do for earthly man
> Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
> Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
> Making the sea[s] their servants, and the winds
> To drive their substance with successful blasts?

that the Jews, as the chosen people of God, are merely receiving

the material blessings which they deserve, that this earthly bounty is merely what mortal man, and particularly a Jew, has every right to expect from God. In the next two lines,

> Who hateth me but for my happiness?
> Or who is honoured now but for his wealth?

we see that Barabas feels himself hated, but that he rationalizes that the hatred stems directly from envy for his fortune. The closing lines of the soliloquy,

> I must confess we come not to be kings:
> That's not our fault: alas, our number's few,
> And crowns come either by succession,
> Or urg'd by force; and nothing violent,
> Oft I have heard tell, can be permanent.
> Give us peaceful rule; make Christians kings,
> That thirst so much for principality.
> I have no charge, nor many children,
> But one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear
> As Agamemnon did his Iphigen:
> And all I have is hers.

are to justify Barabas' feelings in the subsequent action of the play; for, recognizing the Jews as a hated minority, Barabas sees that the power of wealth is as much as he can hope for. His reference to Agamemnon is a touch of irony; for just as Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, so Barabas soon finds it necessary to do away with Abigail when she has become a threat to his safety. At this point, however, he seems to care for her. He is in fact a thoroughly isolated figure: Abigail and his beloved wealth are all that he has.

Towards the close of the first scene an exchange occurs between Barabas and three Jews, and in the course of their conversation Barabas reveals to us his callous disregard for

the safety of Malta as well as his vague premonition that the security of his riches is threatened. The Jews have come to tell Barabas that the Governor has summoned all of Malta's Jews to a meeting. It is significant of his recurring anxiety that on first seeing them, Barabas' first thought is that something has happened to the Jews of Malta; and when he is informed of both the presence of Turkish galleys in Malta's harbour and the Governor's summons, his fears take a more definite form. Whereas the three Jews can apparently see no connection between the Turks' presence and the summons, Barabas remembers the tributary alliance that Malta has with Turkey, and he is aware that any sudden need of money on Malta's part would bode him, as Malta's wealthiest inhabitant, no good. And apart from the Governor's business with the Jews, what would happen to Barabas' wealth if Malta were to be seized by the Turks for non-payment of the tribute money? Here Barabas' anxiety rises to the surface of his thoughts. He is indifferent to Malta's danger; his concern is a selfish one. He tells the three Jews that he cares not if Malta wars as long as Malta wins, but he mutters in an undertone that he cares not if both sides destroy one another as long as his two prized possessions remain safe. In the soliloquy that ends the first scene, he seems indifferent, not only to the fate of Malta, but also to the fate of the other Jews of Malta. He is openly contemptuous of them, and in the following scene he bitterly abuses them for their stupidity

and submissiveness.

What we have in the early part of the play is the hated and hating figure of a super-isolationist Jew. At the outset he is a solitary figure, and he remains solitary throughout the play. He has no interest in the affairs of Malta, except where Malta's fortunes will affect his own. He seems to live in complete physical and spiritual isolation, being detached even from the few members of his own religion who dwell in Malta. He identifies himself only with his daughter and with his gold. When these are subsequently threatened, the Christians seeking to strip him of all of his wealth and two of them having designs on Abigail, Barabas turns on his tormentors like a trapped and tortured animal.

As the super-isolationist, Barabas is a disorder figure; yet his motives and his feelings have been carefully justified by Marlowe. Barabas is a creature of excesses, a monster of greed, swift and violent in his hatreds, cunning and slippery in his dealings; yet in the first scenes he cannot be charged with having committed any actual crime. His greatest sin is an insatiable thirst for power, and it will be seen from his own musings on his commercial success that if it were not for the fact that he is a Jew, he might be in search of political power or even kingship. His isolation and his greed are both conditioned by his Jewishness; and although Marlowe paints the portrait in stark and violent hues, Barabas presents the superbly

apt spectacle of a dynamic, aggressive, Renaissance Jew, chaffing under the social and political restraints imposed by a superstitiously anti-Semitic Christian society. The only power Barabas can hope to achieve is the power of wealth, and in spite of his wealth he is comparatively helpless. It is only when he begins to feel that his one source of strength is in danger that traces of incipient treachery become apparent in his guarded references to the other Jews. Indeed, his crafty rôle during the meeting with Ferneze is dictated by his helplessness, and after he has been driven to the wall his frustrated rage is to be expected, as is the fact that he will soon turn to other more direct expedients to gain his ends. Throughout these first scenes, however, and despite provocations and justifications, Barabas has about him a sinister air. Even though the spectator may seem to see the Jew's predicament from the Jewish point of view, Barabas remains a strange, isolated, shadowy, threatening figure.

Shortly after the purchase of Ithamore, a curious change occurs in Barabas. This change, an abrupt one, is characterized by the celebrated speech of self-vilification in which Barabas recounts extravagantly a long list of his earlier infamies. This is the same speech that is used by Eliot in illustration of his view that the play is a farce. The passage reads:

> As for myself, I walk abroad a nights
> And kill sick people groaning under walls:
> Sometimes I go about and poison wells;

And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns,
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'em go pinion'd along by my door.
Being young, I studied physick, and began
To practice first upon the Italian;
There I enrich'd the priests with burials,
And always kept the sexton's arms in ure
With digging graves and ringing dead men's knells:
And, after that, was I an engineer,
And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
Under pretence of helping Charles the Fifth,
Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems:
Then, after that, was I an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I fill'd the gaols with bankrouts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals;
And every moon made some or other mad.
And now and then one hang himself for grief,
Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll
How I with interest tormented him.
But mark how I am blest for plaguing them;
I have as much coin as will buy the town.
But tell me now, how hast thou spent thy time?

The tone of this passage might well prompt Eliot to describe Barabas as a "prodigious caricature,"[2] for in this utterance he does, assuredly, become one. The Barabas who speaks here bears no relationship to the Barabas we have observed in the first act. In the beginning Barabas is victimized, and he carefully attempts to justify himself at every turn; but now for no apparent reason he makes a strange and abrupt confession of monstrous vice. He is matamorphosed very suddenly into the grotesque embodiment of the anti-Jew myth; for Barabas' confession sounds like the wild admissions of the Jewish victims

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[2] See supra, p. 40.

of Christian hysteria in Toledo during the onslaught of the bubonic plague in fourteenth-century Europe.[3] Yet despite the fact that those unfortunates often vied with one another in their confessions of horror after having been driven half mad by the torture of the rack, their confessions were not as extreme as the present confession of Barabas. The exaggeration is, indeed, so marked-- the contrast between the earlier Barabas and the Barabas here is so complete-- that one is compelled to seek a reason for it. Eliot's conclusion is that it is merely farce, but this view hardly explains the peculiar emphasis that Marlowe gives to the anti-Jew myth; and Eliot's view also side-steps the remarkable reference that Marlowe makes to the House of Mendez in lines 188-90,[4] a reference so amazingly apt as to be scarcely coincidental. The sudden transformation of Barabas was very likely calculated to discredit the myth; and while the identification of Barabas with Mendez-Nassi may have humour of a kind, it is hardly a farcical kind of humour. In the fourteenth century, when the systematic purging of the Jews was being carried out by the frenzied and infatuated survivors of the plague, Pope Clement had attempted to mitigate the Jewish suffering (which his Church had started with the expulsion order of 1290) by issuing a Papal bull in

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[3] See infra, p. 111.
[4] See Appendix A.

which he argued that the Jews were not monsters but human beings, and he produced a variety of arguments which were designed to illustrate the absurdity of the accusation.[5] Now, in the late fifteen-hundreds, Marlowe is saying precisely what Pope Clement said, but he is saying it with savage humour. It might be suggested that the Elizabethan audience would accept Barabas' confession as a statement of fact, yet the sudden, wild contrast between the hate-ridden but human Barabas of Act I and the fabulously depraved villain who utters these words would surely have been great enough to have caused even the most ingrained anti-Semites among the spectators to be struck with wonderment. When Barabas becomes sheerly ludicrous, the myth loses its magic, and behind the fanciful distortion of Barabas stands the shockingly real figure of Mendez-Nassi to reinforce the grim irony that permeates so much of the play. From this point onward Barabas becomes even more grotesque. It is no longer Marlowe's purpose to justify the Jew; on the contrary, the unreality of the myth is heightened to the last extreme in the remaining acts of the play. Immediately after this speech, Ithamore boasts of an equally heinous career, and Barabas avows that they are villains both.

The sudden change in the conception of Barabas and in the tone of the play is obvious and palpable, and it is surely

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[5] See infra, p. 112.

this change that has led critics to hypothesize the intrusion of other writers. Yet Miss Ellis-Fermor, who is as forthright in this view as anyone could be, feels that the change (or 'breakdown' as she prefers to call it) occurs in the third and fourth acts rather than in the second act. This can only lead us to suppose that the alteration in the portrait of Barabas (and the alteration seems swift and striking enough in the well-poisoning speech itself) is not actually felt until the effects of the change begin to appear in the actions of Barabas and Ithamore in the third act; and this act, far from marking a breakdown, is a thoroughly logical extension of the second act. Not one stitch in the play's fabric has been dropped: Barabas has sought and achieved his revenge; he enacts here the kind of unearthly villainy that in the second act he charged himself with having committed; Ferneze goes through with his earlier decision to betray the Turks; and Ithamore encounters the two rogues who will eventually influence the destinies of both him and Barabas.

If there were a breakdown in this play we should have to ascribe it to the second act. This is, however, hardly necessary, for there is no breakdown. The change that is evident is not a change in Marlowe's intention but is, on the contrary, merely a shift of focus. Failure to recognize this fact has evidently been the cause of much of the critical bewilderment in connection with <u>The Jew of Malta</u>. In the beginning of the

play Marlowe criticizes Barabas as a disorder figure, as an isolationist Jew. In the middle of the second act Marlowe's criticism is transferred to the myth that envelopes the Jew, and as a result the Jew becomes the very personification of the myth. There is no truly fundamental change in Barabas, for throughout the play he remains the same sinister figure. The only difference between the Barabas of Acts I and II and the Barabas of the remaining acts is that the first one, the sullen, hateful victim of persecution, is Marlowe's conception of a Jew; the latter one, the sinister grotesque, is the fanciful creature of popular belief.

The significant thing about this three-pronged satire is that in each case Marlowe is assailing a popular notion: he sneers at the popular misconception and misapplication of Machiavelli's views; he mocks popular belief in the piety of Christian holy men and belief in the righteousness of Christians generally; and he flays the popular subscription to the medieval myth of the monster-Jew. It is this similarity of purpose in each of the three elements of the satire, his recurring contempt for the popular view, that unifies the play and gives to it its seeming singleness of effect. The Machiavel had every reason to caution the spectators not to be hasty in their judgement of the Jew, for there is more to Barabas than meets the eye of the thoughtless spectator; and as Barabas struts across the stage, pseudo-Machiavellian, anti-Christian, and monster-Jew, the Machiavel may well have laughed to himself in the wings.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PLAY

Part 1: The English Jew and the Myth

The first part of this appendix (which is a compilation of the findings of Sir Sidney Lee, Hermann Sinsheimer, Heinrich Graetz, and Albert Hyamson) has the following for its aims: to record the attitude held by Elizabethan Englishmen toward the Jews; to describe in its enormity the anti-Jewish myth which sprang up after the Jews were expelled from England in 1290; and to present bits of evidence which enhance the probability that despite the expulsion Elizabethan playwrights had first-hand knowledge of Jews. The latter part of the appendix will be devoted to a consideration of some historical figures as possible models for Barabas. Before turning to the myth itself, let us first consider the factors which led to its creation.

The Expulsion of the Jews from England

There is no record of any persecution of the Jews in medieval Europe before the eleventh century. In spite of the fact that they had their own form of worship and their own culture and literature (which in themselves would leave the Jews vulnerable to the barbs of Christian zealots), they were allowed to live their own lives undisturbed. This may be owing to the fact that they were at that time commercially valuable to the European centres in which they had

settled. Hermann Sinsheimer describes the Jews as being at this time "useful members of society," suggesting that "as agents for the international exchange of goods, especially between East and West, their connections with fellow believers in every country of the known world could hardly have been replaced or dispensed with."[1]

It is the Crusades, according to Sinsheimer, which intensified a then-growing tendency on the part of ecclesiastical leaders to discriminate against the Jews. Before this there were no accusations of either ritual murder or profanation of the sacraments. These followed, Sinsheimer suggests, only when the Christians, feeling that they had to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidel, "found themselves suddenly face to face with the amazing fact that the 'murderers' of Christ had settled-- industrious and rich!-- in the very heart of Christendom."[2]

It must be remembered that the Jews were on a different spiritual basis from that of the ruling society. According to Sinsheimer, "the Jewish communities remained inevitably foreign bodies within the anatomy of medieval Europe."[3] Here, as Sinsheimer suggests, when the tendency was to universalize we have the figure of the Jew. In a strongly Christian Europe the Jew remained apart with his Talmud and his florid rabbinical literature, despising

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[1] Hermann Sinsheimer, Shylock, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1947), p. 32.
[2] Ibid., p. 33.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.

the spiritual life of the Christian community.

The anti-Jewish feeling aroused by the Christian leaders at the time of the Crusades took the form of a concerted attack on the lives and property of European Jews. In addition to the constant threat to their lives, they were prevented by the feudal economy and the guild organizations from settling anywhere and from following any of the basic trades.[4] Added to this was the fact that the travel stimulated by the Crusades created contacts with the East which did much to diminish the Jew's economic value. It is small wonder, then, that he turned to peddling, second-hand dealing and money-lending for a livelihood. Enlisting in these callings, the Jews increased the mounting hostility of the Christians; as peddlers the Jews were despised, and as creditors on a large scale they were hated. Sinsheimer writes:

> Jew-baiting became a medieval institution like pilgrimage, and a habit like tournaments. But still worse was the protection granted them by the sovereigns as their conscript bankers. They were forced into the part of the exploited exploiters and drew upon themselves the contempt and hatred of the Christian subjects. In pre-capitalistic times they were, apart, incidentally, from the church, the only conspicuous capitalists, not only because they were forced to be such by their masters, the impecunious princes and emperors, but also because the uncertainty of their own position led them to invest in securities that could be most easily carried away in the event of persecution-- namely, money and jewels. A Jewish capitalism officially imposed or at least officially protected was grafted on an already decaying system of barter. Contempt and hatred, hatred and contempt were the consequences.[5]

English History tells of sudden anti-Jewish riots. The

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[4] Sinsheimer, op. cit., p. 28.
[5] Ibid., pp. 33 ff.

massacre at the coronation of Richard Coeur-de-Lion on September 2, 1189 is a famous example. There were mass executions of Jews who had been charged with coining; and towards the close of the thirteenth century a large number of Northampton Jews had their bodies torn apart by horses for the alleged murder of a Christian child.

It was, however, the Christian Church which finally brought about the utter ruin of the Jews in England. The Jews had been exploited to a degree never before seen in Europe as a result of England's efforts to put her finances on a constitutional basis; yet in spite of the fact that there was a political issue involved, it was the rumours of profanation of the cross and of the Church which finally brought about the Papal wrath and, in turn, the expulsion order.[6] The popular and fanatical Dominicans appealed to the Pope on the grounds that the Jews were leading Christians away from the Church and persuading them to adopt the Jewish customs and way of life. The Pope responded with an encyclical, and in 1287 the Church Assembly in Exeter revived the canonical injunctions against the Jews. The King had all of the Jews thrown in prison, and they were released only after a large ransom had been paid. Its collection very likely impoverished the Jews, leaving them ripe for banishment.[7]

The order of expulsion came in the year 1290, and Sir Sidney

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[6] Sinsheimer, op. cit., p. 38.
[7] Loc. cit.

Lee describes it as an order-in-council and feels that it must certainly have lacked the force of an act of Parliament.[8] Nevertheless, no matter how haphazardly it may have been carried out, the order scattered the bulk of the English Jewish population throughout the world.

The Jews and the Black Death

In the years prior to the expulsion, myth-making rumours were accumulating. The first charge of ritual murder was made as a result of the death of William of Norwich in 1144. Sinsheimer advances the theory that the murder was committed by marauding mercenaries of King Stephen, and that the Jews were the scapegoats because they were regarded as heretics and creatures of the devil.[9] The legends multiplied and even found their way into English medieval literature through Chaucer's use (as a source of the Prioress' tale) of the legend of Hugh of Lincoln, the most famous ritual murder legend of the thirteenth century.

With the advent of the catastrophic Black Death in 1348, Jewish persecution and the monstrous myth reached their highest point. Graetz, the Jewish historian, writes:

> The destroying angel called the Black Death, which carried on its ravages for over three years (beginning in 1348). . . left a devastated track behind, sweeping away a fourth part of all mankind (nearly 25,000,000). . . In Europe the invisible Death with its horrors turned the Christians into veritable

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[8] Sidney L. Lee, "Elizabethan England and the Jews." (New Shakespeare Society, 1887-92), p. 152.

[9] Sinsheimer, op. cit., p. 40.

> destroying angels for the Jews. Those whom the epidemic had spared were handed over to torture, the sword, or the stake. Whilst neither Mahometans nor Mongols who suffered from the plague attacked the Jews, Christian peoples charged the unhappy race with being the originators of the pestilence, and slaughtered them en masse. The church had so often and impressively preached that infidels were to be destroyed; that Jews were worse than heretics, even worse than unbelieving heathens; that they were the murderers of Christians and the slayers of children, that at last its true sons believed what was said, and carried its doctrines into effect.[10]

The plague had, of course, visited the Jewish population as well, but in a much milder form than was felt by the Christians, (and Graetz thinks this may have been due to the Jews' use of sanitary precautions and to their careful attention to the sick). The suspicion then arose that the Jews had poisoned the wells and streams of Europe in a devilish attempt to annihilate the European Christians at a blow.

It was charged, for instance, that the Spanish Jews, who were believed to exert a great influence over the Jewish peoples of Europe, had hatched the plan; that they had dispatched messengers far and wide with boxes containing poison; that by threats of excommunication, they had coerced other Jews into aiding them in the carrying out of their plans; and that these directions issued from Toledo, which one might well think of as the Jewish capital at that time. The infatuated Christians went so far as to name the man who had delivered the orders and the poison. It was, they

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[10] Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews (Philadelphia Jewish Publication Society of America, Vol. 4. New York: Dobsevage, 1927), pp. 100-01.

said, Jacob Pascate from Toledo, who had settled in Chambery (in Savoy), from which, as a center, he had sent out a troop of poisoners into all countries and cities.[11]

Graetz describes in detail the mixing of the poison:

> The poison, prepared by the Jewish doctors of the black art in Spain, was reported to be concocted from the flesh of a basilisk, or from spiders, frogs and lizards, or from the hearts of Christians and the dough of consecrated wafers. These and similar silly stories invented by the ignorant, or, perhaps, malicious people, and distorted and exaggerated by the heated imagination, were credited not alone by the ignorant mob, but even by the higher classes. The courts of justice earnestly strove to learn the real truth of these rumours, and employed the means for confirming a suspician used by the Christians of the Middle Ages with especial skill-- torture in every possible form.[12]

And he goes on to tell of the heinous trial by torture of four Jewish people who were suspected of using the poison:

> On the day of atonement (15th September, 1348), three Jews and a Jewess in Chillon were made to undergo torture: the surgeon Valavigny, from Thonon, Bandito and Mamson, from Ville-Neuve, and, three weeks later, Bellieta and her son, Aguet. In their pain and despair they told the names of the persons from whom they had received the poison, and admitted that they had scattered it in different spots near wells and brooks. They denounced themselves, their co-religionists, their parents and their children as guilty. Ten days later the merciless judges again applied the torture to the enfeebled woman and her son, and they vied with each other in their revelations. . . . Aguet made the wild statement that he had placed poison in Venice, in Apulia and Calabria, and in Toulouse, in France. . . . The secretaries took down all these confessions in writing, and they were verified by the signatures of their authors. . . . In consequence of these disclosures, not only the accused, who acknowledged their crime, but all of the Jews in the region of Lake Geneva and in Savoy were burnt at the stake.[13]

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[11] Graetz, op. cit., p. 101.
[12] Ibid., p. 102.
[13] Ibid., p. 104.

While the systematic purging of Europe's Jews was being carried out, Pope Clement tried to help these people by publishing to the whole of Catholic Christendom a bull in which he affirmed the innocence of Jews in connection with the charge which faced them. He produced many arguments which were calculated to illustrate the folly of the accusation. He stated, for example, that in regions where there were no Jews the people had suffered from the pestilence, and that elsewhere Jews had also sustained its terrible effects. He urged the clergy to alleviate the sufferings of the Jews, and he placed the false accusers and murderers under the ban; but these measures met with scant success. Nowhere was the ruin of the Jews carried out with a more unrestrained hatred than in the Holy Roman Empire.[14]

Thus was the medieval Jew of Europe transformed by the popular imagination into a bloody and brutal monster. The ubiquitous settlements of Jews across the continent, lodged in ghettoes which had become sources of irritation to the cities which contained them, were hounded and harassed, and this treatment was to continue for centuries to come. But in England the case was different. There the Jews were only a memory. The legends continued to persist in England, however, and the myth, if anything, became even more grotesque, for there the Jews were no longer a living reality. By the end of the sixteenth century the Jewish myth which awaited the early dramatists was quite firmly established.

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14 Graetz, op. cit., p. 105.

The Jews in Sixteenth-Century England

Modern scholarship is much indebted to Sir Sidney Lee for the fact that his researches in the latter part of the nineteenth century established beyond any reasonable doubt proof of the presence of Jews in England during the sixteenth century. Before Lee's investigations historians assumed that the expulsion had been effective and that England was in fact devoid of Jews during the centuries prior to Cromwell's rise to power. "From the time of Edward the First to that of Cromwell," writes J. R. Green, "no Jew touched English ground."[15] In the absence of evidence to the contrary, there was some justification for this view, for the authorities who were writing in that period apparently made no mention of anything which might lead one to suspect that the banishment had not been rigorously enforced. And yet, as Lee asks, how is it that in Every Woman in her Humour a thoroughly English housewife can advise her friend to borrow court finery from a Jew's second hand clothes shop? Were it not for evidence that the dramatists knew or knew of Jews then living in London, this and similar references to Jews in our early literature would be very difficult to explain.

Lee's investigations, not only yielded documentary proof that certain Jewish persons moved within London's aristocratic circles, but also led him to advance conjectures which make it

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15 Lee, op. cit., p. 150.

appear as though a relatively large number of private Jewish householders and merchants may have dwelt in post-exilic England.

The first conjecture is, of course, that the expulsion order may never have been very effectively executed; and Lee has very good grounds for this view. He points out, for example, that Edward the First issued similar orders for the expulsion of the Jews from Gascony, then under English rule, in 1289. Yet, according to Lee, there is positive evidence to show that the Gascon Jews remained undisturbed thirty years later.[16] Lee suggests, moreover, that an order-in-council designed to exclude a certain class of people from a heavily populated country would lose its effectiveness unless it were re-enacted from time to time. Lee assures us that the edict of banishment was never re-enacted and that it could be enforced only by the "slow machinery of the Privy Council."[17] Again, we are told that Henry the Third established in 1233 a public building for the residence and protection of Jewish converts to Christianity. This building, a forfeited Jewish residence in Chancery Lane, survived the Jewish exodus,[18] a fact which Lee accepts as practical

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16 Lee, op. cit., pp. 151 ff.

17 Ibid., p. 152.

18 Hyamson tells us in his book, Jews in England, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), pp. 132-134, that the house remained in existence with a varying number of inmates until the eighteenth century and until 1552 was never totally devoid of Jewish residents. One of the occupants of the house, a Portuguese Jew who was converted in 1578, is particularly interesting to us, for he is indirectly connected with Marlowe. This man, Jehuda Menda, who was both a hebraist and a biblical scholar, delivered a sermon in the Church of All-Hallows, Lombard Street, and in the course of it he explained

proof that the order was not stringently enforced.[19]

Another of Lee's conjectures is that the commercial advances which were made during Elizabeth's reign fostered the immigration of large numbers of aliens from Europe, and that among these were a substantial number of Jews and marranos.[20] In the years prior to 1571 the number of aliens in London had increased from three to ten thousand, and this is at a time when the city's inhabitants numbered little more than three per cent of the present population. No foreigner was officially described as a Jew in the census, but prudent Jews could easily disguise their names and conceal their religious opinions. "Early in the seventeenth century," writes a pamphleteer of the time, "a store of Jewes we have in England, a few in court, many i' the city, more i' the country."[21] As the number of aliens increased in England an insular feeling began to declare itself, and it eventually became so strong that the newcomers were occasionally placed in bodily peril. Elizabeth's ministers never checked the foreign influx by legal enactment. This

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his conversion. The sermon was translated into English and circulated widely, and it attracted much attention to Jewish matters. We are told that Sir Francis Walsingham, the Secretary of State, was anxious to be present for the sermon, but was prevented by illness. Walsingham was the cousin of the man who was later to become Marlowe's patron, and it is possible that Walsingham's interest in Jewish affairs was shared by other members of his circle, and that Marlowe at a later time may have heard of Menda or of other Jews like him.

19 Lee, op. cit., p. 154.

20 The marrano is a Jew who falsely professes Christianity in order to escape persecution.

21 Lee, op. cit., p. 154.

insular prejudice persisted, and the aliens remained the objects of a petty social tyranny.[22]

Apart from Lee's very plausible surmises, we have documented proof of two notable exceptions to the Jewish ban: the visit to London of the prominent Jewess Maria Nunes and the celebrated case of Dr Lopez. In 1591, according to Jewish historians, Elizabeth received and entertained at Court a Portuguese Jewess, Maria Nunes, who with her brother had been taken prisoner by an English captain on the high seas while they were on their way to the Netherlands. While she was in London the Jewess acted as one of the Queen's Ladies-in-Waiting, and on one occasion she rode with the Queen through the streets of London. The lady was courted by an English nobleman, but she rejected his suit on the grounds that she could not change her faith. She was ultimately permitted to join her friends in Holland.[23]

The case of Lopez is a strange and interesting one, not only in itself, but again because of a possible connection the man may have had with Marlowe. Roderigo Lopez took up residence in England in 1559. He is described in the foreign census of 1571 as "doctor Lopus, a portingale, householder, denizen," who "came into this realme about 12 yeares past to get his living by physicke."[24] He quickly attained the highest honours in the medical profession,

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22 Lee, op. cit., p. 154.
23 Ibid., p. 156.
24 Ibid., pp. 158 ff.

becoming by 1569 a member of the College of Physicians and in 1571 attending the Queen's secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham. A year or two later he had become chief physician in the household of the Earl of Leicester, the most powerful nobleman of his time. In 1586 his fortunes reached a climax: in that year he became Chief Physician to the Queen. Intimacy with Elizabeth and her ministers naturally and inevitably drew Lopez into the perilous world of contemporary politics. On Leicester's death in 1588, Leicester's place was taken by the rash and popular young Earl of Essex, who immediately sought to supplant the Queen's older and more cautious counsellors. Towards this end Essex thought to use the friends Lopez had in Spain for the obtaining of useful information, but Lopez did not respond to the plan with the desired warmth. In 1592 Essex and his friends brought to England Don Antonio, a claimant to the throne of Portugal, who had suffered humiliations at the hands of Philip II of Spain. Antonio was enthusiastically received and was paraded through England as a representative victim of Spain's cruelty and intolerance. He knew very little English, and Lopez, an able linguist, was persuaded to act as his interpreter and personal secretary. Lopez, a man of irascible temper, did not get on well with Essex, and in the summer of 1593 he unwisely divulged some professional secrets which were said to "disparage Essex's honour." An estrangement ensued, and by 1594 Lopez had incurred the hostility of the entire Essex faction. Rumours began to spread that Lopez was pensioned by Philip of Spain to poison Elizabeth and Don Antonio.

When Elizabeth first learned of the accusations she was angered and out of patience with Essex. But examination under torture (and the threat that Lopez' friends and servants would be tortured) revealed that Lopez had been receiving presents of money and jewels from Spain. Eventually, in February, 1594, Lopez was brought to trial for high treason. He was convicted, and at Tyburn on the following seventh of June he was hanged. In spite of the fact that Coke, the prosecuting counsel, denounced him as a "vile Jew," "a perjured and murdering traitor and Jewish doctor, worse than Judas himself," the Queen was clearly reluctant to execute the capital sentence, and she declined to sign the warrant for nearly five months after the conviction.

One is immediately struck by the fact that Lopez was for some time retained by Sir Francis Walsingham, the cousin of Marlowe's patron. This fact, however, is not nearly so important as might be thought at first glance. The ultimate fate of Lopez can have had no bearing whatsoever on the writing of The Jew of Malta; Marlowe's play was on the stage before Lopez fell victim to the hatred of Essex, and Marlowe, himself, was dead before the execution of Lopez. Nevertheless, Dr Lopez may have a special significance: he was a Jewish resident of London, who mingled with a circle to which Marlowe had entrée, and he was a Jew whom Marlowe had an opportunity to observe at a time when he is believed to have written The Jew of Malta. From the results of recent researches which deal with Marlowe's diplomatic work and secret service missions, one may

safely conclude that he moved freely within the topmost political cliques of the time.[25] There is, for example, every probability that Marlowe was a frequent visitor at the home of his patron's cousin, the Secretary of State, and the possibility that he not only knew of Dr Lopez but had encountered him personally. It is by no means suggested that Lopez served as a model for Barabas; but it is suggested that Lopez may have served as a foil for the anti-Jewish legends which still persisted in Marlowe's day.

The evidence noted above describes the exodus of a minority group from the English scene and its entrance into the popular imagination; it describes how, with the passage of time, religious intolerance gave rise to a distorted legend, until all that was left as a memory of the group was an incredible and unreal myth.

The evidence, in addition, proves quite conclusively, not only that there were Jews living in England during the reign of Elizabeth, but that the dramatists may very well have encountered them in the flesh. There are also grounds for the view that mass foreign immigrations around 1570 may have helped to bring back to life a more or less moribund Jew-hatred.

Lastly, there is the linkage of Marlowe with London Jews through the agency of his patron, Sir Thomas Walsingham. That Marlowe knew the physician of his patron's cousin is an interesting

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25 Austin K. Gray, "Some observations on Christopher Marlowe, Government Agent," (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, 1928, Vol. 43), pp. 682 ff.

possibility. Unfortunately, in the absence of stronger evidence it must remain only a possibility. Nevertheless, the indications are that Marlowe had an opportunity to learn more about Jewish life and customs than he could possibly have learned merely from the legends.

After Cromwell's rise to power some fifty years after Marlowe's time, the Jewish exile was brought to a close. A two-fold reason for the recall of the Jews is suggested by historian George Trevelyan:

> It was natural that during the decade when Old Testament sympathies and theoretical religious toleration inspired the governors of England, the Jews who had been expelled in the day of mediaeval Catholicism should find the road of return opened to them by the enemies of the Inquisition. Indeed the popular prejudice against which Oliver had in this matter to contend was due to commercial jealousy rather than to any other feeling.[26]

Cromwell may have felt, not only that the Jews would be a commercial asset to his government, but that their return to England under the aegis of the Roundheads would certainly be a source of irritation to the Royalists. In any case, the re-entry of the Jews into England probably did much to put an end to the strange myth of the Jew. And as the myth passed, so passed a large part of the basis for Marlowe's satire; for without the background of the myth, The Jew of Malta has only a fragment of its original meaning and very little of its original purpose.

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[26] George Macaulay Trevelyan, England under the Stuarts, (London, 1922), p. 317.

Part 2: The Historical Prototype of Barabas

Ever since it occurred to Professor L. Kellner that Marlowe might have found his inspiration for Barabas in the splendid career of Juan Miques (or Michesius), alias Joseph Nassi, (the Portuguese Jew who in 1555 led a band of Jews from Italy to Turkey and there found favour with Selim II, eventually being created Duke of Naxos and the Cyclides),[27] scholars seem to have been intrigued by the prospect of positively identifying Barabas with an historical prototype; and although this hope has not been completely fulfilled, yet both Professor Tucker Brooke and Miss Ethel Seaton have thrown additional light on Nassi and have brought forth some new and interesting facts for students of The Jew of Malta to consider.

In an article in the Times Literary Supplement of June 8, 1922 Professor Brooke rejected Kellner's candidate and suggested one of his own, one David Passi. Brooke's objection to Nassi was based on the facts that (1) Nassi's riches were inherited rather than acquired and that (2) his successes were political rather than economic. Brooke went on to suggest that if Marlowe had had Nassi in mind, he would hardly have had Barabas disparage kingship as un-Jewish.

The case for Passi is worth considering. Professor Brooke writes:

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27 Kellner cited by Bennett, op. cit., p. 9.

> I believe that considerably more similarity to Marlowe's Barabas is found in the character of a later Jew of Constantinople, David Passi, whose career reached its culmination, after a half dozen years of European notoriety, in March, 1591, some eleven months before the earliest extant reference to The Jew of Malta. It will be observed . . . that this David, more distinctly than Joseph Nassi at an earlier period, was involved in the Turkish designs on Malta; and that instead of Joseph's consistently anti-Christian attitude, he pursued a boggling policy, playing off Turk against Christian after the fashion of Marlowe's Barabas. It will be observed also that he was closely connected with English diplomacy in the Mediterranean (notably with Elizabeth's design of putting the Pretender Don Antonio on the Portuguese Throne), and was a person of particular interest to English political observers.[28]

Brooke went on to suggest that although Marlowe could not have seen the papers of state that carry the story of Passi, he probably knew of Passi's affairs through the Walsinghams. Brooke concludes:

> Marlowe was fond of introducing the immediate presence into his work, and of going to talk rather than to books for his inspiration. The Massacre at Paris is not a dramatizing of French chronicles so much as an effort to grope out Guise's personality through the haze of ephemeral report . . . My conjecture is that Marlowe's Barabas is a somewhat similar blend of contemporary rumour and imaginative improvisation, growing out of the vague table talk which must have abounded in England-- particularly in the early part of 1591-- concerning the mysterious Passi and the future fate of Malta.[29]

The attractive hypothesis that Marlowe was making use of a topical issue need not, however, be confined to the case of Passi; it could apply equally well to Joseph Nassi's case.

Some years after the TLS item appeared, Ethel Seaton published an article that not only counters Brooke's objections to Nassi, but

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[28] C. F. Tucker Brooke, "Prototype of Marlowe's Jew of Malta," TLS, 21:380, June 8, 1922.

[29] Loc. cit.

also states a rather convincing case for Marlowe's having used more than one person as the model for Barabas. The great weakness in Kellner's theory was that Nassi appeared to be a political-- not a commercial-- figure: Miss Seaton eliminated this weakness by producing evidence that Nassi was in fact a member of the notoriously wealthy and powerful House of Mendez, which had banking interests throughout Europe. She states:

> It would have been impossible for a Jew of the sixteenth century to aspire to any political influence unless he were in a position to tap the great sources of Jewish wealth to which Marlowe alludes. The modern historian of Juan Miques (M. A. Levy, Don Josef Nasi, Herzog von Naxos, Breslau, 1859) states that he was a nephew of Don Gracia Mendez, who had married into the great banking family of Mendez, which ran banks in France, and had financed Charles V and Francois I; also that he himself was involved in these interests;[30]

Miss Seaton strengthens her case by demonstrating Marlowe's indebtedness to the historical writings of Philippus Lonericus and through him Giovanni Antonio Menavino, whose accounts of Turkish affairs refer to Nassi, linking him to the Mendez family.

Miss Seaton is not content, however, merely to plead Kellner's case for Mendez-Nassi. She would consider, in addition to Nassi and Passi, a third candidate, and possibly a fourth, as models for Barabas:

> Of these Jews with English connections, one of the most important was Alvaro Mendez, diamond merchant and political intriguer, kinsman of Miques, whom he visited in 1564, ally of the Portuguese Pretender, Don Antonio, and brother-in-law of Dr Roderigo Lopez. After the death of Miques in 1579, Mendez settled in Constantinople, and openly reverted to Judaism. Here he came into conflict with David Passi, also a royal favourite

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[30] Ethel Seaton, "Fresh Sources for Marlowe," RES, 5: 392, (1929).

> and an agent for Don Antonio; in 1591, Elizabeth upheld Mendez character to the Sultan, even against the allegations of her own ambassador, Edward Barton; and, in the eighteen months preceding Marlowe's death, he twice sent Jews of his household to England on Turkish Missions. Another important Portuguese Jew resident in London was Dr Hector Nunez; Barabas speaks of his compatriot, 'Nones in Portugall.'[31]

Miss Seaton's theory seems rather more attractive than Professor Brooke's; for in Barabas we can perhaps recognize David Passi as well as Mendez-Nassi-- we may even seem to detect Alvaro Mendez. If The Jew of Malta does indeed satirize the anti-Semitic myth, as would appear to be the case, how much more effective the satire would be, how heightened the irony, if Barabas were to be recognized by Elizabethans as a composite of Jews who were not mythical monsters, but eminent and illustrious figures in contemporary European history!

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[31] Seaton, op. cit., p. 392.

APPENDIX B

HEYWOOD'S HAND

Of all the problems that face an editor of The Jew of Malta, perhaps none is more tantalizing than the problem of determining where Marlowe's work ends and an interpolator's begins. There is no conclusive evidence that the Quarto of 1633 represents a substantial alteration of Marlowe's play; but there are a series of circumstances that have led some critics to suspect that at least part of the play is the work of Thomas Heywood. There is, first of all, the fact that Heywood, an energetic writer of plays himself, sponsored The Jew for its presentation at Court, writing for it Prologues and Epilogues; there is, too, the fact that the friar incidents in The Jew are parallelled in the sub-plot of Heywood's play The Captives; there is, finally, the opinion of some critics that the altered tone of the third and fourth acts of The Jew argues the intrusion of another playwright and that the intruder was probably Heywood. A consideration of these three factors is advisable if one would hazard an opinion on the authenticity of the extant text of the play.

Heywood's sponsorship of the play in 1633 or thereabouts is a fact to be reckoned with. Here is a dramatist whose output was prodigious, who boasted of having had 'at least a main finger' in some two hundred and twenty plays,[1] and who would not very

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[1] See supra, p. 48.

likely be too scrupulous about the liberties to be taken with the work of another playwright. There was, moreover, a lapse of some thirty years between Henslowe's last revival and Heywood's, and the state of the text from which Heywood had to work may well have necessitated emmendations. How extensive these emmendations would need to have been is another matter. Professor Tucker Brooke is of the opinion that The Jew was altered not once but twice.[2] He feels that the first revision was made before the revival of 1601 and that the second one was 'that which must have been necessary before so old a work could be presented at Court or at the Cockpit' in 1633. One may well wonder why the age of the play would warrant its being revised. When one considers the prospect of presenting the play before a nineteenth-century audience, which would certainly contain a number of Jews, one can perhaps understand Penley's well-intentioned mutilation of the play;[3] but surely no such necessity would arise in 1633. Nor would the play appear to have needed a revision at that time on the grounds of taste; for the extant text is not lacking in bawdy and scurrilous allusions to the Church. That Heywood may have made minor emmendations in the text is probable; but that he can be presumed to have changed the play vitally merely because of his having revived it smacks of specious argument.

The fact that one of Heywood's sub-plots should appear in The Jew of Malta might, at first glance, lead one to suspect that

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[2] Brooke, Works of Marlowe, p. 231.
[3] See supra, p. 26.

Professor Tucker Brooke's convictions are founded on much more than mere hypothesis. The results of careful studies of the available evidence, however, do not tend to bear out the suspicion. As Bennett has noted, the device of having a character "Kill" a corpse could have been taken from two sources, namely an English jest-book story entitled 'Here beginneth a mery Iest of Dane Hew Munk of Leicester,' which seems to have appeared before 1584, and one of Massucio di Salerno's novellas, which was printed in 1476 at Naples.[4] Bennett assures us that A. C. Judson, the most recent editor of The Captives, has demonstrated satisfactorily Heywood's familiarity with the Massucio story, and Bennett goes on to suggest that no one can speak with the same authority about Marlowe's reading. But is this not the old riddle of the egg and the hen? Is it not possible that instead of his having inserted the device in Marlowe's play, Heywood used the device in his own play after having observed how successfully it had been used by Marlowe? The Captives was, after all, written in 1624 or thereabouts, and The Jew of Malta had been one of the most popular plays on the stage some thirty years earlier. Apart from this consideration, the fact that the jest-book appears to have been published a few years before the writing of The Jew argues the likelihood that it was a more topical and familiar item to Marlowe than it would have been to Heywood. We can only conclude that Marlowe's and Heywood's use of a similar

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4 Bennett, op. cit., p. 7.

theme is not in itself sufficient to justify the charge that Heywood tampered with The Jew of Malta.

The stereotyped and overworked critical presupposition that The Jew of Malta breaks in two after the second act and that someone either finished Marlowe's work for him or overhauled the play completely is a notion that has, more than anything else, made Heywood appear to be the true villain of the piece. An inspection of Chapter 3 will show that this notion has persistently interfered with most attempts to interpret and to evaluate the play, and from Fleay's time to the present day the question has often been, not 'What is Marlowe's play all about?' but 'Did someone other than Marlowe write a generous part of this play?' Acceptance of Fleay's view ("I have no doubt that the Bellamira part was inserted by Heywood to bombast out Marlowe's short play")[5] would mean that after parts of the third, fourth, and fifth acts were taken away Marlowe's contribution would be fragmentary. Fleay's judgement may be considered faulty for a number of reasons. In the first place there are the metrical and stylistic characteristics of the play. Bennett cites the findings of Fraulein Margaret Thimme, whose study convinced her that the play is entirely Marlowe's. Again there is the question of diction, although here Bennett feels that since studies of this aspect have yielded meagre results he can only say that he finds it impossible 'to speak with anything like

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5 Fleay quoted by Bennett, op. cit., p. 8.

the certainty of Mr Fleay.' There is, finally, the fact that the Bellamira and friar scenes bear out what seems to be an original, Marlovian, dramatic intention and that they therefore appear to have a greater function in the play than critics have hitherto imagined them to have. If it were to be agreed that Marlowe's purpose was to present a three-fold satire, the Bellamira and friar scenes would be seen to be absolutely vital to the structure of the play.

Bennett concludes that the least one can say of the charge that Heywood altered the play is that it is '<u>Not proven</u>'; and while his opinion may seem unnecessarily conservative, it is perhaps the only wise one. Much time has elapsed since Marlowe's day, and many pieces of the puzzle are missing. If, however, careful readers of the play could turn from it, without having had to hypothesize an intruder's hand, satisfied that the play is a unified and coherent whole, the problem might not seem such a large one.

APPENDIX C

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE JEW AND FAUSTUS

Because of what appears to have been a progressive maturing in technique and ideology between the writing of his first and last plays, the chronology of Marlowe's work has a direct bearing on the interpretation of a difficult play such as The Jew of Malta. The accepted chronology of the major plays is as follows: Tamburlaine I and II, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, and Edward II. Moreover, it is also an accepted view that whereas the plays Tamburlaine I and II, with their triumphant hubris, express a heterodox outlook, Faustus and Edward II, with their evil and its nemesis, represent an orthodox point of view. This leads us to one of two questions: (1) If the chronology were to be indisputable, could The Jew be other than orthodox, falling as it apparently does between two orthodox plays? or (2) If The Jew were to be regarded as a heterodox play, could the chronology as it stands continue to be accepted? Either question would very likely elicit a negative response, the critics who accept the chronology finding it difficult to consider The Jew unorthodox, the critics who regard the play as unorthodox finding it difficult to accept the traditional chronology. It would seem that those who accept the conventional chronology find it difficult to account for The Jew of Malta at all; and it may well be that their proneness to accept the chronology has increased the already numerous problems of interpretation. In any

case, since it is the contention of this thesis that The Jew is a heterodox play, the unlikelihood of its falling between two orthodox plays necessitates a reconsideration of the chronology.

The problem play, as far as dating is concerned, seemsto be Faustus. It may be assumed that Tamburlaine I and II were Marlowe's first major plays and that they were written in, say, 1587-88. It may be assumed, moreover, that Edward II was written late in Marlowe's career. Nor are there any grounds for altering the assumption contained in Chapter 2 that The Jew of Malta was written during 1589-90. But what of Faustus? The difficulties of dating this play are manifold; although critical opinion has generally agreed that it was written sometime during 1588-89, yet there is a strong possibility that it was written as late as 1592. Dr Boas, the editor of the Case Edition of Faustus, writes:

> Unless Marlowe used a manuscript of the History, the balance appears to sway at present towards the earlier part of 1592 [for the writing of Faustus], though this may involve some rearrangement of the generally accepted order of the plays in the canon.[1]

This would make The Jew Marlowe's third major play, Tamburlaine being two plays; and it would also help to account for The Jew's being an unorthodox play. This new chronology, with its progression from heterodoxy to orthodoxy, would show a coherent pattern in Marlowe's gradual ideological growth.

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[1] Frederick S. Boas, editor, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, (London, 1932), p. 11.

One factor which has to be considered in connection with the dating of Faustus is its apparent relationship to the work of Robert Greene. Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, which was probably written in 1591,[2] contains what appear to be echoes of Faustus; but much more striking than these are the parallels that occur between Faustus and Greene's and Lodge's A Looking Glass for London and England, which Churton Collins thinks was written in 1590. In his introduction to the latter play, Collins writes:

> The influence of Marlowe is discernable in the play; . . . though the germ of the scene in which the usurer wakes to remorse (Act V, Scene 2) is in Lodge's pamphlet, it is difficult not to suppose that it is a reminiscence of the famous scene in Marlowe's Faust.[3]

And some of the more obvious similarities are certainly startling. We have, for example, Looking Glass, V, ii (1948)[4]:

> Hell gapes for me, heauen will not hold my soule.

Faustus, V, ii (160)[5]:

> Earth, gape! O, no, it will not harbour me!

Looking Glass, V, ii (1949 and 1953-4):

> You mountaines, shroude me from the God of truth:
> Couer me, hilles, and shroude me from the Lord;
> Swallow me, Lycus, shield me from the Lord.

Faustus, V, ii, (156-7):

> Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
> And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!

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[2] J. Churton Collins, editor, The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene, (Oxford, 1905), Vol. I, p. 44.
[3] Ibid., p. 139.
[4] Ibid., p. 204.
[5] Boas, Doctor Faustus, p. 172.

These lines can hardly be a coincidence, and unless they stem from a common source-- the English Faust Book would be the likely one-- one of the dramatists has been borrowing lines from the other. In his edition of Faustus, Boas records the passages from the English Faust Book that were used by Marlowe in the writing of Faustus, and the closest passage is the following one, which occurs in Chapter LX:

> Would God that I knew where to hide me, or into what place to creepe or flie. Ah, woe, woe is me, be where I will, yet am I taken.[6]

Since this bears but little similarity to the parallel lines, the problem is reduced to the question 'who borrowed from whom?' If, on the one hand, Greene borrowed from Marlowe, as Churton Collins suggests, Faustus must have been written before 1590, and the traditional chronology stands. If, on the other hand, Marlowe borrowed from Greene, Faustus must have been written after 1590, and a new chronology is implied. One might well feel reluctant to imagine that a mature Marlowe would borrow from an immature Greene, a greater poet from a lesser one; and yet there is no doubt that Shakespeare, a greater poet than Marlowe, is indebted to Marlowe's Barabas for his own Shylock. There would seem to be no reason why Marlowe might not have consciously used elements that first appeared in the work of Greene, metamorphosing them into some of his finest poetry. If this were to be admitted as a possibility, there would be no reason why Doctor Faustus could not have been written as late

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[6] Boas, Doctor Faustus, p. 194.

as 1592.

Another important factor in the dating of Faustus would seem to be the play's dependence on the English translation of the German Faustbuch, the facts of publication of which seem almost as obscure and unsatisfactory of those of Faustus itself. After recently making a review of the evidence, W. W. Greg concludes that the Faustbuch did not appear in printed translation before 1592,[7] and this would mean that those who favour an early dating of the Faustus must hypothesize that Marlowe saw the Faustbuch translation in MS, a not altogether satisfactory conjecture.

There are other factors which urge an early date for Faustus, and Greg considers these carefully in his attempt to resolve the problem. His conclusion that Faustus is a late play seems to run counter, not only to the traditional view, but to a large accumulation of weighty evidence; and yet his opinion seems so sensible that it is attractive and persuasive. After having dealt with the conventional objections to a late date, Greg bases his case on his belief that P. F.'s Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr John Faustus was not published before 1592 and that Marlowe never saw the Damnable Life in MS. Greg writes:

> It might be argued that while none of these fragments of evidence has much individual weight, yet collectively they constitute a plausible case for dating Faustus before rather than after 1590. To which I think the answer is that critics,

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[7] W. W. Greg, editor, Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Parallel Texts 1604-1616, (Oxford, 1950), p. 10.

> having decided, for some not very apparent reason, that Faustus was Marlowe's second (or third) venture as a dramatist, have cast round for any indications of early date, and have not unnaturally discovered some specious confirmation of their views. I confess that the traditional dating seems to me intrinsically improbable, and I am at a loss to understand why critics should have been so ready to believe that the rant and youthful crudity of Tamburlaine should have been immediately followed by anything so spiritually mature as Faustus, a play moreover which, whatever its dramatic defects, admittedly contains Marlowe's finest dramatic writing.[8]

and he concludes:

> The conclusion therefore stands that the Damnable Life was almost certainly not in print before the spring of 1592, and that the play (if, as I shall show reason to believe (p. 81, note 3), it was completed in Marlowe's lifetime) was probably written in the course of the next twelve months. At the same time it must be admitted that the dependence of the play on the history cannot be held altogether conclusive in the matter of date, since there remains the possibility of Marlowe having had access to the Damnable Life while it was still in manuscript. Such an hypothesis, indeed, savours of special pleading, and the manuscript circulation of a work of this sort should not be assumed without much stronger evidence than can be produced in the present case.[9]

Although Greg's position is not entirely unassailable, it should perhaps be accepted as a working hypothesis by those whose direct concern is with The Jew of Malta. Greg's chronology permits the reader greater freedom in his interpretation of The Jew; it suggests a more plausible, more coherent development in Marlowe than might be implied by the other; and it removes some of the question marks that were appended to The Jew by the traditional chronology.

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[8] Greg, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
[9] Loc. cit.

APPENDIX D

BARABAS AND SHYLOCK

To compare Barabas and Shylock as artistic conceptions is to do what probably every reader of both The Jew of Malta and The Merchant of Venice has done at one time or another. This is not to say that a comparison of the two plays will necessarily enhance the reader's understanding of them, although it should certainly tell the reader something about Shakespeare and Marlowe as dramatists. Nor is it to say that the comparison has long since yielded all of its worthwhile findings to the repetitive dredgings of a long succession of critics. Herman Sinsheimer, some of whose findings appear elsewhere in this thesis, recently made a most valuable study of the relationship between Barabas and Shylock; and Paul Kocher, whose study of Marlowe in 1946 was so original and informative, made the provocative observation that whereas The Merchant of Venice is the conflict of people of different creeds, The Jew of Malta is the conflict of the creeds themselves.[1] This view, which would show Shylock as a real person and Barabas as an abstraction, may tend to silence the protests of those readers who see Barabas as a mere brute or as a badly drawn Jew.

A disconcerting fact about Kocher's view is that William Poel, whose study of the portraiture in the two plays appeared much

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[1] Kocher, op. cit., p. 130.

earlier than Kocher's, adduces an argument for a conflicting view, citing Heine's opinion that Shylock, far from being a real person, was a mere caricature.[2] This brings up a very basic problem: if Shylock and Barabas are both caricatures, there should perhaps be a closer relationship between the two figures than actually seems to be the case. For practical purposes we might agree that a portrait becomes a caricature when it loses its lifelike aspect, when it is wilfully distorted in order that certain idiosyncracies may be emphasized. One can imagine a satirist caricaturing the object of the satire in order to make his criticism of it more devastating; and indeed there is ample reason for one's regarding Barabas as just such a caricature. He becomes so grotesque in the second act that he is then no longer a human being; he becomes a symbol, a mere vehicle for the conveyance of ideas.

Yet can one say that this is also the case with Shylock? Does Shylock lose his human aspect and become transformed into a grotesque? One surely cannot answer these questions affirmatively. Like Barabas, Shylock lives in isolation; he is unrelentingly cruel and grasping; he, too, turns on his daughter for her conversion to Christianity; and he also seems to be the microcosm of a malignant force within Christian society. Unlike Barabas, however, he makes an emotional appeal for recognition as a human creature. The basic

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[2] William Poel, Shakespeare's Jew and Marlowe's Christians, (Bedford, 1911), p. 1.

difference between Barabas and Shylock is to be seen in the 'As for me . . .' speech of the one and the 'Hath not a Jew . . .' speech of the other. Barabas mockingly and defiantly proclaims himself to be the monster that Christians will believe him to be in any case, and his affirmation emphasizes the folly of the traditional Christian concept of the Jew; Shylock eloquently strikes at conventional anti-Semitism by means of his graphic and sensuous description of the Jew as a very real and feeling creature. This basic difference between Barabas and Shylock is reduced to a matter of dramatic method; for the dramatic intention of each portrait is to reveal the essential pathos of the isolated Jew. Both Marlowe and Shakespeare are contending against popular superstition, and each is presenting a portrait that will enable the spectators to gain an insight into the Jewish side of anti-Semitism; but whereas Marlowe's method of achieving this end is to ridicule Christian beliefs generally and the lunacy of Christian anti-Semitism in particular by crowding his stage with abstract grotesques who are puppets for his views, Shakespeare's method, a more positive one than Marlowe's, is to appeal directly to the emotions of his spectators by having a realistic Jew plead his own case. It is not surprising, therefore, that between two more or less similar portraits there is such a striking discrepancy.

Heine may have felt, in spite of Shylock's warm and human speech, that Shakespeare placed the Jew in an unsympathetic light and that <u>as a Jew</u> Shylock is a caricature. Unfortunately the term 'caricature' implies a greater distortion of character than that of

which Shakespeare has been guilty; Shylock may not be an entirely convincing Jew, but he is, assuredly, an entirely convincing human being. Heine's criticism would appear to have merely created confusion; for Barabas is the caricature, and Shylock is, by contrast, a movingly real and human figure.

An example of the relationship between these two Jews could be suggested perhaps in the comparison of a portrait by El Greco and one by, say, Valesquez. The El Greco, with its peculiar facial elongations and its stark colour contrasts, might at first seem crude and inhuman alongside the more polished, more lifelike Valesquez; and yet the discerning eye would hardly fail to grasp the curious paradox that beneath the harsh and unreal surface of the El Greco portrait lurks irony, brooding, melancholy, and human understanding.