

## ✍ Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)



- born to a Canterbury shoemaker; attended Cambridge on an ecclesiastical scholarship
- may have served as a spy against English Catholics desiring to overthrow the Protestant regime
- launched the great period of Elizabethan drama at age 23 with *Tamberlaine* (1587), written in resonant blank verse
- died of a dagger thrust at age 29 in a London inn, purportedly over the bill (*NAEL* B561-62)



## 📖 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (1604): Rhetorical Structure

### The Bargain

- **Prologue:** Introduction of Faustus
- **sc. 1:** Faustus resolves to practice magic, sorcery
- **sc. 2:** Scholars discuss Faustus
- **sc. 3:** Faustus conjures Mephastophilis
- **sc. 4:** Wagner and Clown discuss Faustus; Clown's servitude
- **sc. 5:** Faustus sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for knowledge
- **sc. 6:** Robin and Rafe discuss Faustus; a stolen book of magic

### The Payoff

- **sc. 7:** Faustus with the Pope
- **sc. 8:** Robin and Rafe conjure Mephastophilis, scare Vintner
- **sc. 9:** Faustus with the Emperor
- **sc. 10:** Faustus with the Horse-Courser
- **sc. 11:** Faustus with the Duke
- **sc. 12:** Scholars and Old Man urge Faustus to repent
- **sc. 13:** Faustus is taken to hell
- **Epilogue:** Exhortation to learn by Faustus' example

## morality play

EVERYMAN Have mercy on me,  
God most mighty,  
And stand by me, thou mother and  
maid, holy Mary!

GOOD DEEDS Fear not: I will  
speak for thee....

EVERYMAN Into thy hands, Lord,  
my soul I commend:  
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost.

As thou me boughtest, so me  
defend,  
And save me from the fiend's boast,  
That I may appear with that blessed  
host

That shall be saved at the day of  
doom. (*NAEL* A643, 873-84)

- religious drama popular in Europe in the 15th C and early 16th C; echoes can be found in later Elizabethan drama (e.g., *Doctor Faustus*, *Othello*)
- dramatized allegory in which personified virtues and vices struggle for the soul of humankind from birth to death
- instills a simple message of Christian salvation, but can also include comic episodes
- best-known example is *Everyman* (ca. 1510) (*Baldick* 232-33)

## blank verse

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but  
strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to  
yield.

—Tennyson, "Ulysses" (1842)

But, soft! what light through yonder  
window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious  
moon....

—Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*  
(1594-96)

- unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter

- very flexible verse form that echoes natural speech rhythms

- first used by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, ca. 1540

- became the standard metre for dramatic poetry, also widely used in narrative poetry

- not to be confused with *free verse*, which has no regular metre (*Baldick* 42)

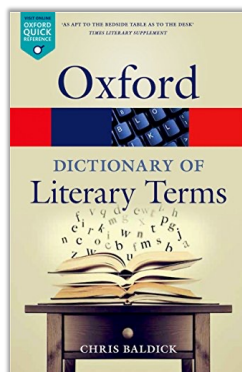
## the three unities

- unity of time:** a play should represent events of a single day, or ideally the same length of time as the length of the actual performance itself
  - principles of dramatic structure advanced by European critics and playwrights of the 16th and 17th centuries
- unity of place:** a play should take place in a single setting or locale, which might include different parts of the same city
  - claimed the authority of Aristotle's *Poetics* (4th C BC), even though he mentions only one of three of the unities
- unity of action:** a play should have a single, unified plot, without the distraction of subplot(s)
  - found some implementation in Italy and France, but was taken up less seriously in England, possibly owing to Shakespeare, all of whose plays violate the three unities (Baldick 372-73)

## 📖 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (1604): the three unities

- unity of time:** a play should represent events of a single day, or ideally the same length of time as the length of the actual performance itself
  - VIOLATED**
  - ▶ *Doctor Faustus* takes place over the course of "four and twenty years," the same length of time as Faustus' contract with Lucifer for his soul
- unity of place:** a play should take place in a single setting or locale, which might include different parts of the same city
  - VIOLATED**
  - ▶ *Doctor Faustus* takes place in multiple locales, including Wittenberg (Faustus' home), Rome (with the Pope), etc.
- unity of action:** a play should have a single, unified plot, without the distraction of subplot(s)
  - VIOLATED**
  - ▶ *Doctor Faustus* includes various subplots, often comic, involving the Three Scholars, Robin and Rafe, among others

## comic relief



- the interruption of a serious work, especially a tragedy, by a short humorous episode
- can have various effects:
  - relaxation after moments of high tension
  - sinister ironic brooding
- Shakespeare and other 16th C playwrights (including Marlowe) made frequent use of the technique (Baldick 68-69)

## 📖 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (1604): The Two Texts

### A Text (1604)

OLD MAN Ah Doctor Faustus, that I might prevail  
To guide thy steps unto the way of life,  
By which sweet path thou may'st attain the goal  
That shall conduct thee to celestial rest.  
Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears,  
Tears falling from repentant heaviness  
Of thy most vile and loathsome filthiness,  
The stench whereof corrupts the inward soul  
With such flagitious crimes of heinous sins  
As no commiseration may expel  
But mercy, Faustus, of thy saviour sweet,  
Whose blood alone must wash away thy guilt.

### B Text (1616)

OLD MAN O gentle Faustus, leave this damned art,  
This magic that will charm thy soul to hell  
And quite bereave thee of salvation.  
Though thou hast now offended like a man,  
Do not persèver in it like a devil.  
Yet, yet, thou hast an amiable soul,  
If sin by custom grow not into nature.  
Then, Faustus, will repentance come too late;  
Then thou art banished from the sight of heaven.  
No mortal can express the pains of hell.  
It may be this my exhortation  
Seems harsh and all unpleasant; let it not,  
For, gentle son, I speak it not in wrath  
Or envy of thee, but in tender love  
And pity of thy future misery.  
And so have hope that this my kind rebuke,  
Checking thy body, may amend thy soul.

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