

theories and  
methodologies

The Reformation,  
Inter-imperial World  
History, and Marlowe's  
*Doctor Faustus*

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IN WHAT HAS OFTEN BEEN READ AS A COMIC DISPLAY OF FRIVOLITY, THE PROTAGONIST OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS* (c. 1589–92) produces a dish of grapes to satisfy the craving of a pregnant duchess. The duchess, a German, had implied that such a delicacy would be available to her in the summertime but was quite out of reach in the current month, January—"the dead time of the winter" (4.2.11).<sup>1</sup> Whereas modern-day global capitalism makes fresh fruits and vegetables available year-round in northern supermarkets, the gratification of a wintertime desire for them in the late sixteenth century required magic or stagecraft.<sup>2</sup> Asked how he managed to procure the grapes out of season, Faustus explains, "[T]he year is divided into two circles over the whole world, that when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba, and farther countries in the East; and by means of a swift spirit that I have, I had brought them hither, as ye see" (4.2.22–27). Thus, instead of simply conjuring the grapes out of thin air, Faustus employs a spirit courier who swiftly retrieves the grapes and transports them across the globe, from the warm climates of the Eastern Hemisphere to the German court of Vanholt. If Faustus's spirit transgresses the laws of nature, it also relies on a kind of scientific knowledge and technology to ascertain where grapes naturally grow in January. Additionally, the seizure of the grapes from "India, Saba, and farther countries in the East" implies a right of access that is attained (or circumvented) by Faustus's magic. In short, the magic for which Faustus has sold his soul to the devil is, in this instance, that of effortless global commerce—or, rather, the ability to attain a foreign commodity while bypassing the means of production and contingencies of exchange.

Numerous editors have noted Faustus's cosmographic inaccuracy in ascribing different seasons to the Western and Eastern Hemispheres rather than to the Northern and Southern ones, but they do not address the geopolitical implications of this transposition.<sup>3</sup> Faustus's trajectory from west to east maps the direction of desired trade

routes that Europeans were newly pursuing in the late sixteenth century. And yet India and Saba were countries geographically or temporally out of reach to the English, who had yet to establish formal trade relations with the Mughal Empire (which ruled India) and who likely associated Saba with the biblical kingdom of Sheba, an ancient empire in southern Arabia formerly known for its rich trade.<sup>4</sup> In actuality, the English began in the late sixteenth century to import a substantial quantity of currants (“raisins of Corinth”) and other dried fruits from Greece, which fell mainly under the dominion of the Ottoman Empire, but England lacked the technology to import fresh produce. Faustus’s linking of India and Saba with “farther countries in the East” (a specification that is absent from Marlowe’s source) establishes a clear eastward trajectory that gestures beyond the scope of the Ottoman Empire—perhaps signaling such countries as Persia or the Moluccas (Spice Islands), with which the English hoped to develop direct trade relations. Despite their distant source, the grapes procured by Faustus are decidedly “fresh,” and, unlike other things conjured by his magic, they are not mere phantoms: on consuming them, the duchess proclaims them “the best grapes that e’er I tasted in my life” (4.2.29–30). Thus, Faustus’s grapes reflect a fantasy of instantaneous access to a fecund East located across space and time.

But what is this fantasy of effortless commerce doing in a play that most critics read as centrally concerned with the influence of Reformation theology and its ambiguous application to Faustus’s fate?<sup>5</sup> I suggest that global commerce and its relation to empire provide an expansive historical framework in which the play locates the Reformation and Faustus’s journey toward damnation. Faustus’s decision to abandon his study of divinity at Wittenberg to seal a pact with the devil is motivated not just by the allure of fresh grapes but more generally by an imperial aspiration to reign as the “great emperor of the world” (1.3.106)

and to thereby lay claim to any number of commodities, including “gold” from “India” (1.1.84), “orient pearl” (1.1.85), “huge argosies” from “Venice” (1.1.132), “the golden fleece” from America “that yearly stuffs old Philip’s treasury” (1.1.133–34), and “pleasant fruits and princely delicates” from “all corners of the new-found world” (1.1.86–87). Thus, if Faustus’s former training at Wittenberg would have signaled for English audiences an association with Luther’s Reformation, his departure from Wittenberg is shown to be motivated by an ambition for unlimited imperial authority and access to global commodities.<sup>6</sup> For Faustus and for my reading of the play, spiritual matters take a backseat to imperial ambition, which is framed in a world history driven not by the Spirit but by a lust for power.

Furthermore, when we consider the myriad imperial references in the play, we see how it imagines a certain world history of empire that resonates with and embellishes recent revisionist accounts of world history that decenter Europe and question a premodern-modern divide. Through his magic, Faustus facilitates encounters with not only the pope (identified in the B text as Adrian VI, who served during 1522–23), the cardinal of Lorraine (associated with the Guise family, who helped lead the Spanish campaign against Protestantism), and Charles V (ruler of the Holy Roman Empire during 1519–56) but also (simulacrum of) Alexander the Great and Helen of Troy. In dramatizing the imperial Catholic rivals of the Reformation and juxtaposing them with the ancient and mythical imperial legacies of Macedonia, Greece, and Troy, *Doctor Faustus* divests the Reformation of its singularity by locating it in a *longue durée* of empire. The play further links the geopolitical schisms brought about by the Reformation—mediated through Faustus’s aspiration to rule the world—to a deep history of imperial rises and falls punctuated by inevitable collapse.

While, like the grapes for the pregnant duchess, Alexander the Great and Helen of

Troy have been interpreted as arbitrary expressions of Faustus's extravagance, they invoke poignant legacies of imperial ambition, violent conflict, and collapse. As I will demonstrate, the play takes the Reformation to be not an inaugurator of a modern era, as it has often been said to be, but rather a diffuse movement caught up in a continuous cycle of imperial rises and falls.<sup>7</sup> Episodes identifying Charles V with Alexander the Great and Faustus with Paris of Troy connect disparate empires from the ancient past to the present and also suggest a global frame in which the geographies of Asia Minor and territories farther east are as central as Europe. The play not only unites these empires under one umbrella but also shows how Faustus's historical moment derives from a complexly layered history. In addition, the play reveals that while the schism between Protestantism and Catholicism is a religious conflict, it is accompanied by and partly shaped by commercial and imperial imperatives. Sahar Amer's contribution to this cluster of essays makes a similar observation about the Crusades by emphasizing "the development of networks of commercial exchange [that] cuts across religious traditions." By drawing attention to the global economic developments that subtended the Reformation and locating the Reformation in a world history of empire—in effect, analogizing imperial initiatives across time and space—*Doctor Faustus* suggests that world history is motivated by a common pursuit of power, whether it takes the form of commercial exploitation or military conquest.

The Anglo-Spanish War offers a clear example of a conflict contemporary with Marlowe's play in which religious incentives intersected with imperial and commercial objectives. While partly fueled by confessional differences and attempts to gain adherents through military interventions in the Netherlands, France, and Ireland, the war was also motivated by piracy and competition for goods from the East as well as rivalry

over trade and colonial territory in the New World. Elizabeth I provoked retaliation from Philip II by officially sanctioning the plunder of Spanish ships and bestowing honors on Dom António, pretender to the throne of Portugal. Precipitated by local events, the war also reflected England's stake in spearheading a larger international alliance against Spain, its desire to curb Spanish imperialism, and its increasing awareness of itself as a potential imperial force. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 weakened Spanish naval power and bolstered the view of the English that they could compete with the substantially more powerful Spanish Empire.

If England's break from Rome with the 1533 Act in Restraint of Appeals proclaimed England a sovereign empire, its shifting commercial orientation in the late sixteenth century began to lay the groundwork for a maritime empire built on commerce, plunder, and naval defense. While, as David Armitage notes, the "history of the rise, decline and fall of the British Empire has most often been told as the story of an empire whose foundations lay in India during the second half of the eighteenth century," this colonial empire was preceded by an earlier oceanic empire of international trade (1). Even if fresh grapes were not readily available in London, the fruits of global commerce were becoming increasingly familiar to Marlowe's late-sixteenth-century audiences. With the chartering of the Levant Company in 1581, the English were able to import goods directly from the Middle East, including silks, cotton, rugs, dyestuffs, spices, tobacco, coffee, drugs, and dried produce.<sup>8</sup> These goods originated in places such as Persia, Anatolia, Russia, Morocco, the East Indies, and Greece but typically passed through the Ottoman-controlled ports of the Levant before being transported west. With the tremendous growth of England's import trade in the late sixteenth century, the attendant centralization of administration in Westminster, and the development of commercial

structures such as the Royal Exchange (built in 1571), London began to emerge as a major European entrepôt.<sup>9</sup>

However, as noted by Ralph Davis and echoed by others since, “[i]n the long history of European trade with the Levant, English participation was only a late episode” (204). Building on Fernand Braudel’s *longue durée* approach to the study of economic structures, Immanuel Wallerstein has influentially demonstrated how a European world system, centered primarily in Venice, was already forming when England initiated formal trade in the Levant. His analysis establishes a history for the interconnected economic structures through which modern-day capitalism emerged, making clear how capitalism was “from the beginning an affair of the world economy and not of nation states” (19). Subsequent analysis by Kenneth Pomeranz, Andre Gunder Frank, and Philippe Beaujard has traced the existence of a Eurasian and African economic world system further back in time, drawing attention to Europe’s long-standing marginality to the world economy. Decentering Europe and also broadening the scope of analysis established by Braudel and Wallerstein, Frank insists:

There is no way we can understand and account for what happened in Europe or the Americas without taking account of what happened in Asia and Africa—and vice versa—nor what happened anywhere without identifying the influences that emanated from everywhere, that is from the structure and dynamic of the whole world (system) itself. In a word, we need a holistic analysis to explain any part of the system. (37)

Laura Doyle’s recent theoretical articulation of “inter-imperiality” offers a particularly useful framework for understanding the holistic and yet multiply centered, dynamic structures of global trade that served as the backdrop for England’s economic transformations. As defined by Doyle, inter-imperiality

“encompasses a political-economic field of several empires operating simultaneously in every period since ancient eras, and in relation to capitalist formations”; it is “dynamic and uneven, yet systemic and accretive—and formative for modern history” (3, 2). In addition to illuminating the dynamics of global trade, such a model might be usefully applied to the shifting alliances and hostilities that characterized the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. As I have been suggesting, commercial and religious interests intersected to shape the geopolitical relations in these movements. To refer to these relations as transnational or imperial is insufficient and misleading, since the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation cut across the boundaries of nation and empire while at the same time creating new lines of imperial alliance. Although the Reformation did not constitute an imperial entity like Charles V’s Holy Roman Empire or Philip’s Spanish Empire (both ruled by a single sovereign), it spurred international alliances oriented around a common “Protestant cause.”<sup>10</sup> For example, Denmark and a number of German principalities (themselves part of the Holy Roman Empire, though rendered *de facto* sovereign by the Augsburg Settlement of 1555) allied with England to support the Protestant revolt in the Netherlands against the Spanish Empire; the conflict concluded with the official division of the Netherlands between the northern provinces, which gained sovereignty, and the southern ones, which remained under Spanish rule. Thus, fractures in the Holy Roman Empire gave way to anti-imperial alliances, which in turn drew new lines of nation and empire. Adding to the complexity of these realignments, early modern nations and (nascent) imperial entities were, as Barbara Fuchs demonstrates in her contribution to this forum, often difficult to differentiate, exposing the inadequacy of transnational models to attend “to the imbrication of nation and empire.” The entity we now refer to as Germany,

for example, bears no equivalence to the sixteenth-century Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation or the regions of Germania. Moreover, the web of relations woven in the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation extended to nations, empires, and colonial territories outside Europe and Christendom, including Asian and African networks of trade as well as colonial, contested, and “unclaimed” territories in the New World.<sup>11</sup>

Although critics have largely overlooked *Doctor Faustus*'s pervasive engagement with global commerce and imperialism, the play clearly locates the Reformation in an inter-imperial world history. From the first act of the play, Faustus's temptation to abandon divinity in favor of necromancy takes the form of an imperial desire to rule. After receiving the enticement by an Evil Angel to “[b]e thou on earth as Jove is in the sky, / Lord and commander of these elements,” Faustus responds, “How am I glutted with conceit of this!” as though the idea gratifies a bodily hunger (1.1.78–80). While editors dismiss the reference to Jove as a common substitution for the Christian God, Jove also signifies the king of the gods as well as the head of the Roman state religion, and so the name emphasizes the imperial connotations of “lord and commander.”<sup>12</sup> In response to this invitation, Faustus muses that with such power he will have spirits “fly to India for gold, / Ransack the ocean for orient pearl / And search all corners of the new-found world / For pleasant fruits and princely delicates” (1.1.84–87). Thus, his appetite to rule finds immediate expression as an appetite for precious Eastern commodities and for fruits and “delicates” from areas of the world that suggest potential colonial territories. Here and throughout the play, commerce is linked to imperial subjugation. His fellow magicians Valdes and Cornelius follow Faustus's speech with enticements to practice magic that emphasize its power to subjugate others in a geopolitical imperial context. Valdes describes magic's

power to “make all nations to canonise us,” and he further boasts, “As Indian Moors obey their Spanish lords, / So shall the subjects of every element / Be always serviceable to us three” (1.1.122, 123–25). His rhetoric subtly links subjugation with Catholicism and thus reflects the inter-imperial rivalries between the Holy Roman Empire and Protestant alliances. For example, his use of “canonise” to suggest that all nations will venerate the magicians like saints refers to a Catholic practice that was discontinued in Protestant countries. Catholicism was, of course, derided by Protestants as itself a form of magic. Valdes's subsequent reference to Spanish lords draws attention to the imperial practices of Catholic Spain, whose reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from the Moors, subjugation of Muslims in the East Indies, and vanquishing of Native Americans in the New World seem conflated in the term “Indian Moors.”<sup>13</sup>

Given the play's pervasive engagement with commerce and imperial subjugation, it is perhaps surprising that few critics have addressed these thematic concerns at any length.<sup>14</sup> A notable exception is Toni Francis's “Imperialism as Devilry: A Postcolonial Reading of *Doctor Faustus*,” which interprets Faustus's magic as a metaphor for imperialism—understood mainly as colonialism—and argues that the play critiques English imperialism by linking Faustus's use of necromancy to “England's violent and gluttonous domination of the indigenous peoples of Africa, India, and the New World” (117–18). While Francis opens up a new way of reading the play, her approach also demonstrates the potential limitations of a postcolonial model that tends to privilege modern Anglo-European empire and a binary relation between core and periphery. As literary scholars and historians have come to recognize, England's imperial status was far from fully realized in the early modern period, and its attempts at colonialism had met primarily with devastating loss and failure. By adopting the model of inter-

imperiality, we can illuminate the broader ways in which *Doctor Faustus* reflects imperial relations and imagines them to operate in the world and throughout world history. Instead of limiting its understanding of empire to European colonialism, the play engages a wider set of imperial practices that reach deep into the classical past. It thus reconceptualizes the Reformation in a dynamic inter-imperial frame, showing the movement to emerge from a long history of empire whose future trajectory remains undetermined.

If Faustus's imperial ambitions often find expression through fantasies of commercial exploitation, they are also anchored to his particular time and place in Reformation history. Hence, Faustus identifies partially with the international Protestant cause. In the same speech in which he announces his desire to "fly to India for gold" and "[r]ansack the ocean for orient pearl," he vows to oust the Catholic enemy from the Netherlands:

I'll levy soldiers with the coin [my spirits]  
bring,  
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land  
And reign sole king of all our provinces;  
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war  
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge  
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.  
(1.1.94–99)

Faustus's reference to the prince of Parma invokes Alessandro Farnese (actually titled the duke of Parma), a grandson of Charles V, who served as Spanish governor of the Netherlands during 1578–92. In England he was a reviled Catholic enemy of the Reformation, both for his role in the Netherlands and for his foiled attempt to lead a land invasion of England following the attack of the Armada. As Diarmaid MacCulloch notes, before the Reformation the Low Countries "had been the birthright of the dukes of Burgundy and their Habsburg successors" (326). In 1543 they came under the dominion of Charles V's Holy Roman Empire with his constitution

of the Seventeen Provinces, and they were passed to his son Philip II of Spain in 1555. In referring to the Netherlands as "our land" and placing it in the context of "all our provinces," Faustus seems to identify with the international Protestant alliance and its goal of freeing the Low Countries from Spanish imperialism. At the same time, his repeated use of "our" also stakes a claim to these territories that recasts Dutch sovereignty as Protestant dominion. Thus, the postcolonial project of rescuing the Dutch from Spanish rule masks a colonizing claim of Protestant possession. Faustus further expresses his imperial objectives through his vow to "reign sole king of all our provinces" once the Spanish yoke has been thrown off. Instead of restoring Dutch sovereignty, he envisions himself supplanting Philip II, thereby assuming a monarchical rule (like that of England), which differed vastly from the Dutch and German models. In fact, Queen Elizabeth deployed the earl of Leicester to the Netherlands in 1586–87 to act as governor, but she did not fully support Leicester's refusals to negotiate with Parma and resisted pressures to assume the role of sovereign. Whether Faustus's imperial modifications to the Protestant cause represented diversions from it or an interpretation of it that on some level diagnosed English interests in supporting it remains ambiguous. Because of Faustus's slippery identification with the Reformation and the equivocal ways in which the movement's geopolitical interests are represented, it is unclear to what extent the play implicates the Reformation in its critique of Faustian ambition.

Faustus's alliance with Charles V underscores his slippery orientation to the Reformation while also linking his ambitions to Charles's universalizing imperial vision. By further indulging Charles's desire to conjure Alexander the Great, the play identifies the Holy Roman Empire with Alexander's once massive but ultimately superseded world empire, tying universal imperial monarchy to

its inevitable collapse. It is significant that Faustus visits the court of Charles V directly after visiting Constantinople (specified as “the Great Turk’s court” in the B text), in that the Ottoman Empire represented a powerful inter-imperial threat to Catholics and Protestants alike. Of course, from the late-sixteenth-century perspective of Marlowe’s audiences, the pressures of Protestant and Muslim adversaries had already contributed to Charles V’s surrender of the title of emperor to his brother Ferdinand I, as well as of his claims to Spain and the Netherlands to Philip II. Thus, like Alexander’s empire, Charles’s Holy Roman Empire assumes an already receded status, and Charles’s role in *Doctor Faustus* signifies not only a major imperial leader but also a denuded one—further contributing to the play’s characterization of empire as continuously revolving.

The A and B texts differ markedly in their treatments of Charles V; however, in both texts Charles’s desire to see Alexander the Great suggests that he identifies his imperial reign with Alexander’s legacy. In addition, both versions emphasize the transience of empire. The A text links the fallibility of empire to an anxiety about being able to live up to an imperial legacy: Charles recognizes Alexander as one of his “ancestors” and worries that “we that do succeed or they that shall / Hereafter possess our throne” might not attain similar honor (4.1.22, 25–26). By contrast, the B text links empire’s fallibility to the potential dishonor of imperial ambition and conquest and directly implicates Faustus in the dishonorable pursuit of empire. The staging of Alexander’s momentous conquest of Persia as a dumb show in which Alexander confronts Darius III, king of Persia, in 333 BC, throws him down, kills him, and removes his crown bluntly illustrates Alexander’s violent means to imperial expansion. Faustus’s political alliance with Charles—sealed through his aid in the emperor’s rivalry with Pope Adrian and rewarded with “command”

of “the state of Germany” (4.1.172)—reflects poorly on Faustus not only because it suggests his collusion with Catholicism and the Counter-Reformation but also because it emphasizes an alignment between his and Charles’s shared desire to rule the world.

The tendency to locate events in a world history of imperial rises and falls was not necessarily unique to *Doctor Faustus*. Margreta de Grazia has influentially illuminated *Hamlet*’s engagement with imperial history and particularly with that of England’s brief subjugation to the foreign rule of Denmark. She thus foregrounds the play’s larger preoccupation with “the alternations of state that punctuate world history, as one kingdom gives way to another in what might be called a premodern imperial schema that assumes the eventual fall of all kingdoms” (65).<sup>15</sup> As I have been arguing, *Doctor Faustus* subscribes to a similar premodern imperial schema through its consciousness of the transience of empire. However, unlike the imperial schema of *Hamlet* and Shakespeare’s other pre-1066 history plays, *Doctor Faustus*’s imperial schema does not privilege England or the links between successive empires. Rather, *Doctor Faustus* disregards geographic and temporal continuities to propose other kinds of similarities between empires that bind them together in world history. In identifying ancient Macedon and, later in the play, Troy as antecedents to European empire, *Doctor Faustus* constructs a transhemispheric world history that locates the roots of empire in the East. In addition, if the fall of empire assumes a certain inevitability in the play, it is an inevitability linked to the pursuit of power exemplified by Faustus.

His final act of conjuration—that of Helen of Greece—further implicates Faustus in the play’s critique of imperial ambition by identifying his overreaching desires with the fall of Troy. More specifically, the episode taps into the mythological history of Paris’s abduction of Helen, which led to the Trojan War and thus precipitated Troy’s demise. Helen

represents a powerful hinge in the imperial clash between Greece and Troy, and the play's pointed reference to her as "Helen of Greece" (rather than the more familiar moniker "Helen of Troy") only accentuates the resignifying force of her abduction. By drawing a parallel between Faustus and Paris, the scene critiques the self-entitled claim to others' possessions that Faustus and Paris are shown to share and links this transgression to the fall of empire. Faustus makes his identification with Paris explicit in his famous speech to Helen:

Was this the face that launched a thousand  
ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?  
.....  
I will be Paris, and for love of thee  
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked,  
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,  
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest.  
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel  
And then return to Helen for a kiss.  
(5.1.91–92, 98–103)

Referring to the burning of Troy ("Ilium"), which signaled its imperial collapse, Faustus draws an explicit parallel between the sack of Troy and an impending sack of Wittenberg, brought on by his and Paris's love for Helen. As we know from Faustus's desire to have Helen for his "paramour," his attraction to her is lustful and illicit, and it ultimately seals his fall and damnation (5.1.110). By alluding to Paris's battle with Menelaus, Helen's husband, Faustus invokes Paris's dishonorable rape of Helen as well as his initial cowardice in facing Menelaus in combat, his defeat by Menelaus, and his narrow escape due to Aphrodite's intercession. Faustus's identification with Paris thus carries the shame of Paris's actions, which were well known to English audiences through Homer's and Vergil's accounts and ultimately led to the fall of Troy. Aeneas's survival of the fall would, of course, lead to his founding of Rome and also have special significance for England in that, according to

medieval English legend, Aeneas's descendant Brutus would go on to found Britain and serve as its first king. As de Grazia has pointed out, at the time of Aeneas's recounting of the fall of Troy in Vergil's epic, Troy was already a kingdom of the past, Carthage one of the present, and Rome one of the future (65). In effect, Faustus's speech appends the sack of Wittenberg to the end of this list, signaling his own demise as well as the Reformation's place in world history. Importantly, *Doctor Faustus* suggests that the Reformation is not some singular, spiritual history of the true church but rather another chapter in world history, subject to larger historical and material processes that subtend even those reform movements with the purest of spiritual intentions.

Perhaps Marlowe's own inter-imperial subject position as a suspected international spy who traveled on government business and was arrested in the Netherlands informs *Doctor Faustus's* imperial preoccupations. Certainly, Marlowe demonstrated an abiding interest in the vicissitudes of empire in his other works as well, including *The Jew of Malta*, parts 1 and 2 of *Tamburlaine*, and *Dido Queen of Carthage*. The source history of the Faust story itself, which originated in post-Reformation Germany before being transposed by *The English Faustbook* and then by Marlowe's play (as well as by numerous other national traditions), may reflect an inter-imperial process. And yet if Marlowe and his play are products of the material processes of history, they also help to write new histories. Notably, Marlowe draws his ancient history of Troy not from the historical record but from Greek mythology, which for the purposes of the play's inter-imperial imagination is no less a legitimate source of historical knowledge and cultural legacy. Of course, the very fact that Holinshed begins his chronicle history with the fall of Troy reflects the porous boundary between history and myth in the sixteenth century. The historical authority afforded by Marlowe's play to classical

mythology—received through the literary writings of Homer, Vergil, and Ovid—implicitly attests to the value of *Doctor Faustus* itself, as a work of creative imagination, in contributing to the history of empire. If Doyle draws attention to “art’s foundational entanglement in a multilateral and sedimented geopolitics shaped by interacting states and empires” (25), I am suggesting that art also impinges on geopolitical history and helps to reframe it. When we invite literary analysis into our study of imperial history, we gain access to alternative histories that reframe our typically periodized and Eurocentric views of the past. *Doctor Faustus*’s transhistorical construction of inter-imperiality challenges us to widen our historical lenses in approaching local imperial history, such as that of the Reformation. This broader, deeper view of the past also illuminates transhistorical aspects of imperialism that in turn enable more subtle and complex anti-imperial critiques.

## NOTES

1. Following current critical consensus on the most reliable text of the play, I quote throughout from the A text, though I draw attention to significant variations in the B text when relevant to the discussion. Citations are based on Bevington and Rasmussen’s edition.

2. Deats links Faustus’s use of magic with stagecraft and metatheatrical effects.

3. See, e.g., Keefer’s edition, as well as Bevington and Rasmussen’s edition.

4. For an extensive reading of the play’s allusions to the empire of King Solomon, to which Sheba paid tribute, see Tate.

5. Influential discussions of *Doctor Faustus*’s engagement of Reformation theology include those of Dollimore; Sinfield; and Poole, among numerous others. Parker discusses the play’s identification with iconoclastic Protestantism as well as its indulgence of religious theater and Catholic ritual (228–45).

6. Marcus has made a compelling argument for interpreting the A text’s “Wertenberg” as the duchy of Württemberg, “a hotbed of left-wing Protestantism” in some ways more closely allied with English Calvinism than Lutheranism (9). In the German *Historia von D. Johann*

*Fausten* (1587) as well as Marlowe’s direct source, known as *The English Faustusbook (Historie)*, the Faust figure is clearly associated with Wittenberg and not Württemberg.

7. Others who have contested the Reformation’s relation to modernity have done so on the grounds of religious history (not imperial world history)—for instance, locating the roots of reform in the dissident movements of medieval England and Bohemia (e.g., Oberman).

8. Brenner provides a history of England’s commercial reorientation beginning in the mid to late sixteenth century (esp. ch. 1).

9. Howard identifies these crucial developments in London’s growth and links them to the public theater.

10. A growing body of historical work on “the Protestant cause” addresses the international, geopolitical aspects of the Reformation. See, e.g., Lockhart; Gehring; Riches; and Trim.

11. Responding to the “Eurocentric” bias of Reformation history, Hsia’s collection attempts to give a more global account of the Reformation; however, the book does not consider the Reformation in relation to global commerce (“Reformation” xviii). Pestana focuses on how the Reformation fueled British colonial expansion in the British Atlantic. Elliott contrasts the colonial projects of England and Spain in North and South America between 1492 and 1830.

12. See, e.g., the glosses of Keefer (81n77) and Bevington and Rasmussen (115n78).

13. For further discussion of the term “Indian Moors,” see Neill.

14. Tangentially related discussions include those of Bartels and Sullivan. Bartels draws a connection between Lucifer’s targeting of “the interior spaces of Faustus’s self and soul” and the imperial hierarchy of the European self and non-European other (142). Sullivan focuses on the relation between geography and identity in Marlowe’s works, suggesting that Faustus’s absorption in worldly geographic and cosmographic knowledge detaches him from “a Christian cosmological order” (241). Hopkins briefly mentions *Doctor Faustus*’s imperial preoccupations in her discussion of Marlowe’s representation of the East (115–30), as does Mulready when examining the global investments of dramatic romance (81–82).

15. The organization of pre-1066 English history into a series of foreign rules also pertains to Holinshed’s 1587 *Chronicles*, as well as to other chronicle histories.

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