Ferneze Machiavellianism and Barabas Hope for the Protestants in *The Jew of Malta*

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Abstract

Christopher Marlowe's (1564-1593) representation of Catholics, Machiavelli, and the Jews is unique in that he employs each of these to serve as an image he creates to drive his plays, in particular, *The Jew of Malta*, in a direction and to a conclusion that pleases the Elizabethan Protestant audience. By presenting Ferneze and Barabas, Marlowe manages to exploit his drama to present how Machiavelli was perceived. The prologue is essential in shaping Machiavelli's journey from France to Malta. Barabas' function as a Jew seems not to evoke sympathy because Marlowe is more interested in using the Jew as a symbol rather than portraying him as an innocent person.

Keywords: Marlowe, Barabas, Ferneze, Machiavelli, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, representation, Catholicism, Machiavellianism

Introduction

This article focuses on *The Jew of Malta,* a Renaissance tragedy, written by Christopher Marlowe, a famous playwright of the sixteenth century, a member of a popular University Wits, and a contemporary of William Shakespeare.[1] *The Jew of Malta* was first produced at the Rose Theatre, London in 1592.[2] The play is based on the tragic dilemma of a wealthy Jew Barabas who lived on the Mediterranean island of Malta with his beautiful daughter Abigail. He established a vast empire through the practice of usury, but all his wealth was seized by the Catholic governor of the island to save Malta from the Turks, and he was forced to be converted to Christianity.[3] The anguished Jew was swept into a whirlwind of revenge and became a serial killer. He even helped the Turkish army to capture Malta and was appointed as the Turkish governor before his tragic death by falling into a trap which was a boiling cauldron. This play shows the importance of wealth, power, and business, which reflects the changes that occurred in the sixteenth century from a feudal to a capitalist society.

In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe expresses criticism of the Catholic Church through its other enemies, who this time are the Jews, dramatically represented by Barabas, the eponymous Jew of Malta. Marlowe offers the Protestant audience an opportunity to view a non-Protestant

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[1] Walid Ali Zaiter, "The Representation of the Jews and Others in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* on the Elizabethan Stage: Convention, Rhetoric, Sources and the Spirit of the Age", *Arab World English: Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, vol. 4 (2020).

[2] Michael L. Basile, "*The Merchant of Venice* and *The Jew of Malta*", *Shakespeare Bulletin*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2007), pp. 111-115.

[3] Abigail Shinn, "'Come to My House': The Architecture of Conversion and Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malt*a", *Modern Philology*, vol. 120, no. 4 (2023), pp. 419-443.

figure (Barabas) having to expose and confront a Catholic figure (Ferneze), both of whom are evil to a certain degree. Barabas is not a Protestant and can never be associated with them.[4] He is rather a Jew, who shares one thing with the Protestants, that is, his attack on Catholics and hatred for Catholicism. The second aspect of *The Jew of Malta* is its treatment of the political representation of Machiavellianism in Malta. Marlowe can be said to depict Machiavellian elements through both Ferneze and Barabas who lead the play to a conflict that focuses on religious and political challenges. This study analyses the representation of Machiavellianism and the light it sheds on Marlowe by examining how he characterizes Machiavellianism and how he and his contemporaries understood Machiavelli.

The villainy is seen at the beginning of the play when Ferneze practices his tyranny against the Jews, an important aspect of his political influence as a Catholic; as Paul Kocher states, "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."[5] The negative depiction of the Catholic regime in Malta reflects the popular English Protestant perception of the Roman church and its adherents. For example, in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe illustrates through Barabas some of the characteristics frequently associated with Catholics. Barabas says he "can see no fruits in all their faith/ but malice, falsehood, and excessive pride." These features are presented later in the play in the characterization of Ferneze, so Barabas depicts the actions of Catholics in a way that exposes Catholic injustice when it is practiced against him.

The Prologue and the Historical Machiavelli

The prologue demonstrates the importance of Machiavelli on the Elizabethan stage as a politician and a character known for his villainy and scheming. Marlowe portrays him in a way that personifies wickedness and political cleverness, so the prologue is the first link between *The Jew of Malta* and *The Massacre at Paris* in terms of themes and ideas:

> Albeit the world think Machiavelli 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.[6]

Machiavelli, represented in both Barabas and Ferneze, thus brings his power and his policy to Malta. Marlowe effectively revives Machiavelli, who, after Guise's death, travels to Malta; this allows the playwright to stress the religious and political implications for the island. By mentioning that Machiavelli has traveled from one place to another ("his soul but flown beyond the Alps"),[7] Marlowe implies that Italian is present everywhere in the world and elsewhere in his plays: from France, Machiavelli moves to Malta, and so on. Catherine Minshull argued that "the image of Machiavellianism which emerges from the main body of the prologue is one of

[4] Stephen J. Lynch, "*The Jew of Malta*", in *Christopher Marlowe at 450*, eds. Sarah Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 101-124.
[5] Paul H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 120.
[6] George Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 84, no. 4 (1976), pp. 630-648.
[7] David Riggs, "The Poet in the Play: Life and Art in *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*," in, *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson*, eds. Takashi Kozuka and J. R. Mulryne (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 205-224.

power politics in which conventional religious and moral scruples play the little part."[8] Minshull's argument is accurate since power decides the destiny of characters and their control. The importance of the prologue for the play's religious representations is evident in the way Machiavelli speaks. In contrast, the emphasis given to Machiavellianism in the prologue hints both that the body of the play will feature Machiavellianism as an important theme and that it will contain a discussion of its religious and political implications.[9] The speech of Machiavelli also indicates the importance of political influence, as represented by the interaction between Ferneze and Barabas.

Since Guise is Machiavellian, Marlowe may be using his name to highlight the transformation of Machiavelli into Ferneze and Barabas, who either have Machiavellian thoughts or rather have the villainy that Machiavelli is known for. The relevance of both Machiavelli and Guise is widely established by critics. For example, Una Ellis-Fermor mentioned that "the prologue represents fairly the Guise."[10] This seems clear in Marlowe's representation of Guise as a political power, as we have seen. Marlowe equates Guise with Machiavelli according to his speech, which could indicate Marlowe's attempt to relate Catholicism to Machiavellianism. Another strong link between the two plays can be seen in the statement that Machiavelli "count[s] religion but a childish toy, and holds there is no sin but ignorance."[11] There is a striking similarity with the words of Machiavelli in the mouth of Guise who states that his policy "fram'd religion." Guise overcame ignorance by learning to seek knowledge that helped him to become strong; this knowledge enabled him to abandon religion in practice and exploit it to deceive. Machiavelli's implied presence in Malta strongly demonstrates the direction in which the discussion of political thought is being taken in the play. Marlowe's prologue can thus be considered a starting point for the political problems that increase the tension between Barabas and Ferneze and which also bring these two characters into a fierce political debate. Marlowe's prologue as a whole may merely reflect popular perceptions of Machiavelli, which were not always accurate, and Machiavelli's writings were not precisely represented by these perceptions. Marlowe's drama opens the door for broad depictions of different aspects of Machiavellianism according to how the playwright may have viewed him. The conclusion of Barabas' Machiavellian policy can be seen when he led Calymath and his men to Malta and was made governor. His speech at the point of his greatest victory underlines all that was famously conceived to be Machiavellian:[12]

> No, Barabas, this must be looked into;
> And since by wrong thou got'st authority,
> Maintain it bravely by firm policy,
> At least unprofitably lose it not.[13]

[8] Catherine Minshull, "Marlowe's *Sound Machevill*", *Renaissance Drama*, vol. 13 (1982), pp. 35-53.
[9] Howard S. Babb, "Policy in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta", *ELH*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1957), pp. 85-94.
[10] Una Mary Ellis-Fermor, *Christopher Marlowe* (London: Routledge 2012 [1927]).
[11] James Harmer, "Toying with Religion in the Prologue to *The Jew of Malta*", *Notes & Queries*, vol. 57, no. 3 (2010).
[12] Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), pp. 34-37
[13] Marlowe, *Jew of Malta*, pp. 34-37.

The Jews and the Christians

A few issues that might intrigue curiosity is whether Marlowe deals with the issue of Jews as the 'other' in the Christian society. Marlowe shows a negative representation of two major religions, namely Roman Catholics and Jews, and the representation of both these religions reflects the general attitude of his English audience towards them. Marlowe's drama *The Jew of Malta* shows the real-life problems between the Jews and the Roman Catholic Church and the Church in England. He makes the two friars vie with one another to convert Barabas to Christianity, because they are interested in his wealth, which he promises to give to the order as he decides to join. This behavior of the friars highlights the hypocrisy and corruption of the church. The whole play shows the struggle between what is inside and outside. While the Jews of Malta are familiar with the land, they still think of themselves as strangers and are treated as one by Ferneze and his followers.[14]

Marlowe's representation of Jews in the Elizabethan period

At the start of the play, Marlowe has Barabas count his fortune and reflect on how trade has brought him such wealth. He is shown to be a Jew who is blessed for what he has and is elevated in financial terms above his Jewish co-religionists. Marlowe makes sure his Barabas are no exception to the stereotyped picture of the Jews. Thus, Barabas starts by wondering:

> who is honored now but for his wealth?
> Rather had I, a Jew, been hated thus
> Than pitied in a Christian poverty;
> For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
> But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
> Which methinks fits not their profession.[15]

Barabas is proud and content to be a Jew so long as he is rich, and he despises the notion of being a Christian because he identifies Christianity with qualities like poverty.[16] Marlowe prepares Barabas to become a victim of Catholics due to many factors, one of which is his wealth. Marlowe thus develops his representation of the Jews by having Catholics desire to attain what the Jews excel at. Dena Goldberg suggests that the scapegoat in Malta is Barabas, who has been chosen not for his innocence, "but for his wealth, and for one other quality: his alienness, for it is the fact that Barabas is an outsider that enables Ferneze to use him as he does and get away with it."[17] Goldberg's argument shows Barabas' position as an alien, while Ferneze is viewed as an exploiter and enemy. Marlowe surely demonstrates that the Catholics

[14] William M. Hamlin, "Misbelief, False Profession, and *The Jew of Malta*", in *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, eds. Sarah Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[15] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[16] Shawn Smith, "A Society of One: Reading *The Jew of Malta* Through Serres's Theory of Exchange", *Exemplaria*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2003), pp. 419-450.
[17] Dena Goldberg, "Sacrifice in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*", *Studies in English literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 32, no. 2 (1992), pp. 233-245.

are keen to exploit Jews. They are shown as opportunists who exploit others by all necessary means. Marlowe suggests Barabas' alienness to allow Ferneze to reveal his wickedness.

Although Marlowe presents a stereotypical Jew, he manages to confuse his reader by also making the Jew a unique character who does not appear true to type in some ways. This is seen in Barabas' resistance to Ferneze, which is a distinguishing feature of the Jew as he relinquishes his stereotyped nature and becomes active in his opposition to the Catholic attacks. This change—or rather confusion—in the way in which Marlowe depicts Barabas' character, sometimes stereotyped and sometimes not, is similar to his depiction of Guise in *The Massacre at Paris*, as noted above.[18] Marlowe makes it a habit to change the attitude of his characters from one thing to another. In this earlier play, Marlowe also invokes a feeling of sympathy for Guise despite his Catholicism and his enmity towards the Protestants. Marlowe seems to be interested in bringing together a mixture of features in his protagonists to allow a space for them in which to enact their roles.

So far, as Barabas speaks of his nature and his wealth, it can be argued that Marlowe is still at the stage of introducing his character more intimately to his audience. Marlowe does not seem to concentrate at this stage on Barabas' villainy, for although his greed is revealed during this soliloquy, there is no indication that he has practiced any kind of villainy so far; his soliloquy simply serves as an introduction to his personality. Barabas shows only a stereotype of Jewishness by saying:

> 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 urged by force; and nothing violent.[19]

Barabas clearly states that his background does not belong to the line of Kings— "we come not to be Kings"—demonstrating how inexperienced he is in that role.[20] He asserts his identity, instead, using wealth. Marlowe's depiction of the Jews sets the scene for a later confrontation between them and Ferneze when Barabas' words are compared with how Ferneze treats the Jews. This passage also offers a political account of his attitude as a Jew, since Barabas clearly states that he is not suitable for the role of King. Ferneze, on the other hand, demonstrates his evil by exercising his authority over the Jews, who are few.

The introduction of Ferneze, when he initiates his enmity with the Jews, appears a few lines later.[21] This despot raises many questions related to political rule and control. His governing of the country brings many issues to the surface and Barabas is used as a device for raising such issues. At the outset, it is important to stress the idea that Barabas serves to delight Protestants by attacking Catholicism and that he stands in opposition to it in some ways, although he is not himself a Protestant. Stephan Greenblatt notes that "the figure of the Jew is

[18] Abdulaziz Mohd Al-Mutawa, *The representation of religion and politics in Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris, The Jew of Malta, and Edward II*, University of Leicester (PhD. dissertation, 2010).
[19] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[20] Akram Shalghin, "Power Relations in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*", *International Journal of English and Education*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2014), pp. 2278-4012.
[21] Goldberg, "Sacrifice in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*", pp. 233-245.

useful as a powerful rhetorical device,"[22] which suggests that Marlowe uses Barabas as a tool to reveal Catholic hypocrisy. Barabas lives under despotic Catholic rule in Malta; thus, discussing his resistance in the play will demonstrate how Marlowe manipulates his character by adding the feature of resistance to a stereotype who is not, as he admits, born to resist. His resistance will demonstrate that it is somehow desirable and necessary. Further, Barabas' resistance can be seen as springing from Marlowe's desire to echo anti-Catholic sentiment. Thus, the representation of Barabas has more significance than that of a stock character, as Barabas carries several additional characteristics that are important for Marlowe's purpose.

Malta in a Historical Context

As the play opens, Ferneze, the Catholic ruler, faces a predicament regarding his island: he must pay the Turks a levy to avoid war. After Calymath, the Turkish Emperor's son, has left Malta following their meeting, Ferneze summons the Jews, including Barabas, to explain the situation that faces Malta. It is also possible to consider Ferneze's first meeting with the Jews as the first sign of political awareness on his part in the play, as this crisis is purely political, and he responds accordingly. Thus, Ferneze opens his exchange with Barabas by saying:

> Hebrews, now come near.
> From the Emperor of Turkey is arrived
> Great Selim Calymath, his highness' son,
> To levy of us ten years' tribute past.
> Now, then, here know that it concerneth us.[23]

It is noticeable that Ferneze does not start the conversation with direct demands for money from the Jews; he explains to them the situation of the Turkish emperor and then addresses the main issue. This highlights his awareness as a clever and villainous ruler in that he awaits the Jews' response before imposing his decision, having faced possible rejection in Barabas.

Ferneze is accurate in using words similar to those of Guise, who starts his soliloquy by using violent words that presage what he intends to do. Here, Ferneze clearly says that 'it concerneth us', marking his desire to involve the Jews in the problem and to prepare them for his demand that they should pay. Barabas replies simply that Ferneze will have to pay the tribute, but Ferneze responds that he needs the help of the Jews, upon which Barabas states that the Jews were not born soldiers, which seems a kind of refusal to pay money. Ferneze then reveals what precisely he wants from the Jews more directly:

> Jew, we know thou art no soldier,
> Thou art a merchant and a moneyed man;
> And 'tis thy money, Barabas, we seek.[24]

[22] Stephen Greenblatt, "Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play", in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: More to Shakespeare*, ed Robert A. Logan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 193-221.
[23] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[24] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.

Thus, Marlowe begins to distinguish the religious identity of Jews from that of Catholics, the start of a gradual process of establishing the differences which are to cause problems between Catholics and others. By making the Jews scapegoats, Marlowe can depict Catholics as greedy for their money, as the Jews are traders and have fortunes that others may want to exploit. Worse, Catholics are shown via the actions of Ferneze to be unjust and tyrannical.

Furthermore, a line of similarity can be drawn between this play and *The Massacre at Paris* in the way historical events are depicted. In *The Massacre* we learn from Marlowe's representation of Catholics that the motivation behind a historical event such as the marriage was not 'love' but rather 'hatred' and that they aimed to ensnare the Huguenots. The same thing occurs in Malta. Ferneze claims to Barabas that he wants to save Malta before frankly admitting the purpose of his actions. Ferneze uses his decision to misguide Barabas because he hates him for his religion, just as the Catholics in *The Massacre* are motivated by their hatred of the Huguenots. The parallels between the two plays in this respect are remarkable, reinforcing the notion that such historical decisions were based on cunning practiced by Catholics against the minorities in Malta and France. Indeed, in the case of Malta, any attempt by Marlowe to justify Barabas' actions or elicit any kind of sympathy for him might be seen as indirectly buttressing support for the Huguenots when they were targeted in France. The events in Malta can be seen as an extension of the circumstances in France as a whole for many reasons, such as religious hatred, power, dominance, and injustice. The theatre in Marlowe's time witnessed many attempts to negatively describe Catholics and how tyrannical they were. The message conveyed by Marlowe's representation of Ferneze is that the tyrant was single-mindedly determined to practice injustice and dominance by robbing and oppressing the Jews. Some interesting points may be worth investigating regarding Ferneze and his attitude towards the Jews. In light of Healey's comments concerning the stereotypes of Jewish culture rooted in ideas such as that of "God's chosen people."[25]

Barabas' actions against Catholics and Ferneze in particular can be said to derive some justification from Marlowe's viewpoint. Marlowe's dramatic representation of Barabas shows that he justifies his actions against Catholics because he is one of "the chosen people" and, hence, has a divine right to do so. For Marlowe, it seems that Barabas' actions are justified simply because Catholic tyranny was conducted against Barabas. Marlowe may care less for Barabas, but he cares more about representing a picture of evil Catholics mainly for the sake of his Elizabethan audience, who was at that time more concerned with such issues. Barabas elevates himself above the Catholics and even above his brothers in religion when he says that he is "born to better chance and framed of finer mold than common men,"[26] all of which reflect his desire to be superior to others. The Catholics' attempt to break Barabas goes against his perception of himself as superior, and it is this that generates his resistance. It is indeed possible to say that Marlowe legitimizes Barabas' pride in his own better nature because it does not transgress against others but merely protects him and his rights.

[25] Robert M. Healey, "The Jew in Seventeenth-Century Protestant Thought", *Church History*, vol. 46, no. 1 (1977), pp. 63-79.
[26] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.

Ferneze and the Resistance of Barabas

The idea of resistance Marlowe depicts in Barabas may have reflected contemporary events in England. Marlowe's elaboration of Barabas' resistance could be seen as a reference to events that took place in the last two decades of the sixteenth century.[27] The anti-Catholic feeling was widespread and often invoked by writers such as Marlowe, whose depiction of Barabas and his resistance could be seen as an extension of that feeling. For example, Anne McLaren, in her search for the genesis of English anti-Catholicism, argues that "anti-Catholicism became central to English national and political life in the late sixteenth century in response to a particular problem,"[28] which was the threat of the Catholic Mary becoming Queen. [29] Anne McLaren quotes Carol Weiner as arguing that "hatred of Catholics changes from being the private obsession of religious extremists… into part of national ideology."[30] These arguments address a particular wave of anti-Catholic sentiment in the Elizabethan era. Such hatred did exist before that time, as McLaren herself states, but the point is that Marlowe was able to use the historical circumstances of this anti-Catholic sentiment to depict the hatred that Barabas shows for the Catholics of Malta. Barabas' resistance can thus be used to highlight Protestant ideas of the dangerous ambitions of the Catholics.

The factor that seems to exacerbate the tension between Barabas and Ferneze is how the Jew insists on resisting the ruler. Barabas persists in opposing Ferneze's unjust actions until the latter succeeds in escalating their disagreement to the point where opposition can be taken as defiance of legal authority. Ferneze decides to demand more than he had originally planned to take from Barabas, because he knows that Barabas will reject his demands for money, giving him the excuse of insubordination to confiscate his property legally. The threat to Barabas lies not in jailing or punishing him in other ways but in stripping him of what is dearest to him, his money. Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is similar to William Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*.[31] In that, it reflects one aspect of the Christian stereotype of the Jewish character: the placing of the highest money value. Furthermore, the Jews in both plays are rich because they are traders, and perhaps also because they practice usury. Thus, they are more deeply despised for their violation of a prohibition that Christians hold dear. The Jews' wealth is thus seen as a sin because their money has not been acquired lawfully. The point here is that Marlowe develops the personality of the Jew in how he defends himself, while Shakespeare's Jew and the way he is presented do not imply any kind of resistance. In that sense, Marlowe's character is, here, a truly Marlovian character whose resistance, challenges, and defiance are features that fit well with how such Marlovian characters act.

By allowing Ferneze to treat Barabas unjustly, Marlowe manages to show Ferneze as an oppressor; he is also shown to possess the intellect of a political ruler who treats Barabas in a way that he sees will destroy him and his wealth. As for Barabas, his appeal to Marlowe may lie in the fact that he becomes even more villainous than Ferneze himself. For Marlowe, the

[27] Lynch, "*The Jew of Malta*", pp. 101-124.
[28] Anne McLaren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism", *American Historical Review*, vol. 107, no. 3 (2002), pp. 739-767.
[29] McLaren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism", p. 740.
[30] McLaren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism", p. 741.
[31] Goldberg, "Sacrifice in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*", pp. 233-245.

idea of Barabas resisting his ruler is attractive, other than for its representation of the conflict with Catholics, because it allows a character to become interesting by being revolutionary and defiant. It is thus possible to view his treatment of the idea of resistance as a representation of defiance against the Catholic order under Ferneze's rule. In that light, Barabas' resistance can be seen as opposition to a tyrant who happens to be an enemy to Protestants and others too. Catholics represent evil, as Barabas describes the features of their faith as "malice, falsehood, and excessive pride."[32] If Marlowe's depiction of Catholics is as incarnating the devil, then Barabas is justified in his resistance to Ferneze, since it is a revolt against the devil. Marlowe shows Barabas' resistance to highlight his criticism of the papacy as the basis for Catholicism.

Alfred Harbage claims that "Barabas is essentially innocent-minded."[33] If Barabas is innocent in any way in Marlowe's drama, as Harbage claims, then Ferneze is probably the character who most closely embodies the true villain. Luc Borot presents the same idea when he argues that "Barabas is somehow not the only villain in the play, and [. . .] he too was misused."[34] Again, such claims assign the role of villain to both Ferneze and Barabas, except that their situation presents Ferneze as the instigator. Furthermore, Barabas' decision to take revenge in Malta is not related to his past, when he committed many crimes. Barabas demonstrates his wickedness to Ithamore:

> As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights
> And kill sick people groaning under walls;
> Sometimes I go about and poison wells.[35]

Although this may be a comic stereotype, Barabas is showing some kind of villainy here. Having admitted to evil actions such as killing sick people, Barabas shows great intensity and cruelty. The audience must be eager to see how he and Ferneze will manifest their villainy towards each other, which grants Marlowe the freedom to include in both characters elements of Machiavellianism, or at least of what many Elizabethans understood as Machiavellianism. Perhaps the significance of Marlowe showing Barabas admitting to such villainies is to present him as Machiavellian in the aspects related to murder, but not when it comes to political government. Marlowe makes Ferneze outdo Barabas in the political field.

Barabas does not wait for others to solve his problem with Ferneze; he resists Ferneze's demands, but as a result, he loses even more than he would have lost by conceding to Ferneze and his accomplices. This shows Marlowe's perspective on Catholics, that their influence over others is harmful and abusive. The injustice that Ferneze inflicts on the Jews cannot be justified simply by considering his Catholicism and his deliberate action, so it is important to give an account of all the circumstances that made Ferneze decide to take advantage of the Jews in the interests of his country. Although Ferneze does all this to protect his country, his actions still do not reflect any kind of justice. For example, when Barabas wonders why the Jews, as strangers, should be taxed inequitably, Ferneze replies:

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[32] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[33] Alfred Harbage, "Innocent Barabas", *The Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1964), pp. 47-58.
[34] Luc Borot, "Machiavellian Diplomacy and Dramatic Developments", *Cahiers élisabéthains*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1988), pp. 1-11.
[35] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.

> 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,
> And thus we are determined.[36]

Judging by Ferneze's words—particularly his phrase 'like infidels'—it seems that injustice has less directly to do with money and more to do with Judaism as a religion; Ferneze's prejudice is clear in the above lines. He relates Judaism with infidelity because he thinks his religion is truthful while other religions and infidelity are the same. The religious and political beliefs on which Ferneze depends when executing his orders are essentially related to his Catholic faith. It may be a general Christian (Catholic or Protestant) view that the Jews are sinful, but Marlowe may be using Catholics to stand for all who exploit the sinful deeds of others for their interests. Ferneze articulates moments of hatred because he believes that the Jews are to blame for their sinful lives, but he also expresses detestation to denote his superiority and what he stands for.

Marlowe's analysis of Barabas' resistance is presented in the play. Greaves states that 'primarily because of the Reformation, political obedience became an increasingly significant issue in Tudor England.[37] Although in Marlowe's time, English Protestantism was not subject to such oppression, his depiction of despotism in this play could be taken as a reminder of how Catholics were seen as acting against others, especially when the setting of the play involves the Jews as a minority in Catholic, Mediterranean Malta. Marlowe's depiction of an unjust ruler oppressing the Jews, who also happen to be in the minority in Malta, can be viewed as a representation of the faults of the faith that Ferneze professes. There are clear parallels with the treatment of the Protestant minority in Paris in Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*, where the Huguenots are tyrannized and seen as strangers in France, in just the same way that the Jews of Malta are victims because they are outsiders whose number is small.

The resistance of Huguenots like Coligny and Navarre gains the sympathy of the audience, while Barabas' defiance of Ferneze's tyranny might be intended to paint Ferneze as a potential threat to be stopped, rather than to depict Barabas as a character who deserves sympathy. Consequently, Marlowe achieves his goal by showing the Catholics as occupiers who dominate others by force. Regarding the audience and sympathy, Elizabethan audiences must have been sympathetic to Huguenots for obvious reasons, such as hatred of the common enemy and solidarity with their brothers. It is no wonder that a feeling of enthusiasm arose when Protestants were seen to oppose Catholics in a play such as *The Massacre at Paris*. In the case of Barabas, the Elizabethan audience would respond differently to him as a non-Protestant, but they would be expected to show approval for what he does to Ferneze.

There is no doubt that Ferneze perpetrates injustice against Barabas. Marlowe depicts Catholics as people who interfere in others' affairs and impose their opinions, even in personal matters. Harbage argues that the offer to convert Barabas to Christianity 'would have seemed (to Barabas) not only just but generous.[38] Ferneze is not just in his offer, simply because when

[36] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[37] Richard L. Greaves, "Concepts of Political Obedience", *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1982), pp. 23-34.
[38] Harbage, "Innocent Barabas", pp. 58, 52.

Barabas decides to convert to avoid losing his money, the Catholics rapidly announce that it is too late and that they intend to confiscate half his wealth. The Catholics are not serious in their offer, but it might be an indication of their deceit that they want to humiliate Barabas so that he surrenders to their demands. Furthermore, when Barabas is asked to pay half his wealth, Marlowe stresses that Catholicism is a worthless religion:

> Ferneze: Why, Barabas, wilt thou be christened
> Barabas: No, governor, I will be no convertite.
> Ferneze: Then pay thy half.
> Barabas: Why, know you what you did with this device?
> Half of my substance is a city's wealth.
> Governor, it was not got so easily;
> Nor will I part so slightly therewithal.[39]

Marlowe not only shows Barabas being treated unjustly here but also reveals the Catholic faith as not worth losing money for. Barabas declares total rejection of the Governor's offer of conversion to Christianity stating "No, governor, I will be no convertite."[40] Elsewhere, he states, as mentioned above, his refusal to submit to Ferneze's orders. Marlowe depicts Barabas' resistance, illustrating how it could be of interest to him because it promotes courage and confidence, consistent characteristics of Marlowe's protagonists throughout his plays.

Conclusion

It seems impossible to disregard Marlowe's linking of Barabas with resistance. Earlier we mentioned Barabas' transformation from a mere stereotyped Jew who is not a fighter into someone who resists. Greenblatt argues that Barabas never relinquishes the anti-Semitic stereotype and adds that 'Marlowe quickly suggests that the Jew is not the exception to but rather the true representative of his society.[41] No attention is paid to Greenblatt's argument to the resistance shown by Barabas. It should be noted that because the play portrays Ferneze's actions against others, Barabas' resistance should be assessed in light of these because it is considered a reaction to Catholic tyranny. Barabas never yields to the Catholics, indeed, he criticizes his brothers by asking "Why did you yield to their extortion?;"[42] Clearly describing his ability to resist courageously with "You were a multitude, and I but one and of me only have they taken all."[43] Barabas' ability to face the Catholics alone emphasizes his fearlessness. Elizabethan audiences may have been more than willing to see an unorthodox character who would challenge Ferneze, whom they would have despised for his religion. In this context, Stephen Greenblatt notes that Marlowe's protagonists "rebel against orthodoxy."[44] The difference between a rebel and a resister is huge since Barabas' resistance was a result of injustice practiced against him. If Elizabethans attending the play recalled the events of the

[39] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[40] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli", pp. 630-648.
[41] Greenblatt, "Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play", p. 203
[42] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli," pp. 630-648.
[43] Watson, "Machiavel and Machiavelli," pp. 630-648.
[44] Greenblatt, "Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play", p. 210.

Spanish Armada several years before it was written, they would then be able to recognize Barabas' righteous actions in defending his money and would see Ferneze as representing an authentic Catholic danger, a member of a religion responsible for attacks against their own country.