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Anti-Theatrical Costume:
Catholic Vestments and Post-Reformation Visual Rhetoric in *Doctor Faustus**

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I

Among numerous changes Reformation brought to English stages, the transfer of Catholic vestments from church to theater may be one of the most direct evidences to explain the complex relationship between church and theater in the sixteenth century England. In addition to other religious and political pressures that helped shape Post-Reformation English theater, direct supply of religious garments as theatrical costume may have, not only ideologically but also technically, affected play producing process, ranging from deciding performance repertory to designing scenes that took advantage of Catholic vestments visual splendor. Catholic liturgical

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vestments, prohibited for use by the clergy in reformed churches, could be freely worn on stage, and became more valuable because they contained contradictory connotations of the sacred and the secular which were open to be appropriated by contemporary playwrights. As Stephen Greenblatt points out, theater companies pay for the religious vestments no longer used in churches "not because it contributes to naturalistic representation, but because it still bears a symbolic value, however attenuated" (Greenblatt 113). Catholic vestments, used for religious characters on the pre-Reformation stage were transformed into theatrical costumes for devils under a political and religious propaganda spreading Protestant antipathy towards the image-oriented Catholic religion. In detaching Catholic ecclesiastical vestments from the sacred authority they signified in the past and associating them with Catholic hypocrisy, post-Reformation theaters reveal the vestments to be costumes, easy to be abused for disguise. Plays used Catholic vestments as costumes, but they also foregrounded the idea of vestments as costumes. What Catholic vestments came to represent on Elizabethan stage was a symbol of hypocrisy and a tool for disguise. With an example of Christopher Marlowe s *Doctor Faustus*, this essay examines how anti-Catholicism was expanded to contain, or related to another contemporary antipathy of anti-theatricality in the sixteenth-century England.

II. Catholic Vestments in Post-Reformation plays

The ideological development from anti-Catholicism to anti-theatricalism is closely intertwined with the adaptation for new purposes of medieval dramaturgy, stagecraft and costume usage. The transition from so-called "medieval" drama[1] to early modern drama not only corresponds to the

[1] Paul White argues, in his "Reforming Mystery s End," that periodizing cycle plays as 'medieval and interpreting them as defiantly Roman Catholic would limit

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shift of popular or authoritative religious doctrines but also accompanies the rise of anti-theatricalism, overlapping with the antipathy against Catholic theology, iconography, and clericalism. While keeping the medieval dramatic conventions of allegorical characters and the plot of protagonist s spiritual redemption, post-Reformation plays recycled ecclesiastical vestments as costumes for religious characters, but reversed their traditional symbolism by assigning them to vices and devils. Not only the dramatic form and theatrical costumes but also the political function of the plays survived the Reformation and even strengthened its social influence with strategic sponsorship from the government. Medieval dramaturgy survived the Reformation as the most familiar form of theatrical representation to access the audience.[2] In the same vein, post-Reformation theaters willingly adopted Catholic vestments as costume, partly because they were widely available garments to be used for this purpose, and partly because they were an effective means of attacking Catholicism. The Protestant political strategy that branded Catholic priests as evil disguisers was soon conventionalized and developed to imbue, inversely, evil connotations on what is theatrical, including theatrical techniques and the institution of theater itself.

The English Reformation was not traditionally associated with anti-theatricalism. Although the closure of the London public theaters in 1642 was mainly pressured by the rising Puritan movement, early reformers

further examination on the Protestant adaptation of theatrical practices, and Protestant strategic modification of 'medieval plays. To better explain the dilemma they could not but face with their self-contradictory attitude toward visuals, images and theaters, prevalent at least during the middle years of the sixteenth century, White suggests to look for "instances of negotiation, compromise and conformity, as well as antagonism and disjuncture" (140).

[2] Beatrice Groves argues that, rather than classical decorum celebrated by the humanists, early modern drama shows a stronger connection with medieval dramaturgy by mixing generic boundaries, presenting violence on stage, and not preserving the unities of time and space (46-50).

did not hesitate to make use of plays to access their largely Catholic audience. For more than five decades after Henry VIII s Act of Supremacy, the official departure of England from Roman Catholic Church, traditional drama s popularity was not diminished by Protestantism but rather used to propagate it by the Cromwellian regime.[3] The iconoclasm engineered by English reformers initially targeted the visual images and ritualistic practices of Catholicism and did not include any specific criticism against theatrical business, although they customarily used theatrical metaphors to condemn Catholic hypocrisy. John Bale s plays are often chosen to exemplify Cromwell s use of theater to propagandize the Reformation. Bale rewrote biblical stories to recreate the traditional cyclic drama from a Protestant viewpoint in his plays, including *God's Promise*s (1538), *John's Preaching* (1538), and *The Temptation of Our Lord* (1538). In interludes such as *Three Laws* (1538) and *King Johan* (1538), he also employed the dramatic techniques of the morality plays in interludes while using vices to represent Catholic clergies. John Cox, while exploring the stage devils in medieval and Renaissance drama, discusses the satiric reversal of symbolism invested in the vestments when they are used for devils disguise on post-Reformation stages; he uses Bale s stage as one of the first examples of putting the devil in clerical disguise (84-85). The character of disguised priest is retained by later plays not only for propagandizing purpose but also for commercial success. Robert I. Luplin also tracts the "visual vocabulary of religious apparel" that makes "conspicuous comment on characters religious identities" (58). His discussion covers early post-Reformation stages where the Vices were played as Catholic clergy. He looks at religious characters in later history plays such as Cardinal Wolsey

[3] According to White, in the Essex towns of Chelmsford, Braintree, and Maldon, the cycle plays were rather revived after the Elizabeth s accession, although declined under Queen Mary s, and continued uninterrupted through to 1579, without surviving evidence of opposition to it ("Reforming Mystery s End," 134, 139)

and Archbishop Cranmer in William Shakespeare s *Henry VIII* (1613), and also at puritan characters like Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in Ben Johnson s *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). As a close observer of the representational history of ecclesiastical vestments on stage, Lublin suggests that the visual language of religious apparel must be carefully read if we are to understand both the playwrights and the audiences at the time.

The practice of staging vice characters as corrupt bishops dressed in luxurious Catholic vestments was apparently undertaken to mock the former religious setting in which the same clothing wielded such authority. The visual rhetoric structured through ecclesiastical vestments served to build and relieve social anxiety toward the Roman Catholic Church, by setting and crossing the audience s horizon of expectation.[4] What early Protestants contrived to do by dressing Catholic clergy in religious vestments was to challenge the horizon of expectation audience had about the garments, and consequently to shape a collective response to redefine them as Vices costumes, and finally build a new stage convention, a newly established horizon of expectation, that was embedded through repetitive theatrical representations.

The Protestant adaptation of medieval dramaturgy is more discernible in "bad" characters rather than in "good" characters. While the rhetoric and visual display of divine or good minded characters were not much changed after the Reformation, the visual changes devils and vices underwent were hard to miss. Cox explains that the role of stage devils has been traditionally based on the "oppositional thinking" paralleling good and evil, truth and illusion, community and chaos, baptized and non-baptized, and belief and heresy (6). What the devils stand for in the mystery cycles is the

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[4] Hans Robert Jauss, a reader response critic, explains that there are collective assumptions, conventions and cultural ideologies shared by texts and readers, and he designates a set of expectations readers bring to a text, a horizon of expectations that reconstructs the works through "the interrelations of production and reception" (15).

failure of community, and the plays portray the battles to counteract their influence and maintain the Christian community intact (Cox 27). On the pre-Reformation stage, devils were supernatural beings threatening the spiritual security of Christian communities, whereas the devils in the early Reformation stage had to be secularized to be powerful, socially privileged but corrupted individuals; most of them were Catholic priests (Cox 32, 76). As the reformers invented a new system defining traditional truth as heresy and traditional heresy as truth, Catholic priests and devils on the stage shared the same costumes of ecclesiastical dress as a visual sign of hypocrisy and corruption. Over the process of the English Reformation, the roles stage devils played were not confined to supernatural sacred beings, but gradually expanded to include secular social problems in human society. Devils in people s imagination have been modified through the revolutionary shift of religious doctrines, and it was witnessed not only in churches but also in theaters. On the post-Reformation stage, traditional ecclesiastical vestments were often utilized as devils costume, while the same garments were still used for priest characters, either Catholic or Protestant, on stage. The theatrical nature of the vestment was soon exposed to be witnessed by audience and ready for theatrical manipulation for playwrights, when they were adjustable for both good and bad characters, crossing the boundaries between sacred and secular. The disparity between the sacred clothing and the secular body beneath parallels the gap between the imitated and the imitator. As Thomas Postlewait points out, "A priest in raiment and an actor in costume were equally suspect; the one as duplicitous and dangerous as the other" (98)

III. Priests and Devils in Catholic Vestments: *Doctor Faustus*

Marlowe s *Doctor Faustus* contains anti-Catholic elements, but its lead

character seems to question Protestant orthodoxy as well. Unlike the plays created under the national policy to spread Protestantism right after the Reformation, *Doctor Faustus* and other plays performed on popular stages in the 1580s and later cannot be easily identified as conforming strictly to one or other religious viewpoints. Plays had more diverse and less religious subjects to deal with, ranging from Greek mythologies to stories of Italian merchants; and the interests of playgoers became more sophisticated and secularized enough not to appreciate the simple dichotomy of devils and angels or Catholicism and Protestantism any more.

A commercially successful play throughout the early modern period (Bevington 51), *Doctor Faustus* inherits many medieval dramaturgical features such as appearance of good and bad angels fighting over one s soul, a parade of seven deadly sins and, most of all, a main frame of morality play; a man seduced by a devil to fall and his salvation, but in this play, damnation. In addition, the play inherited costumes from medieval plays; costumes for devils and costumes for Catholic priests while mixing and matching them to adopt both the traditional symbolism and post-Reformation Protestant theatrical rhetoric. The religious propensity of *Doctor Faustus* is ambiguous, not overtly discernable in the conflicting structure of Protestantism and Catholicism, but the meanings invested in the ecclesiastical vestments seem to be fairly anti-Catholic. The play demonstrates that the vestments are to be abused not only by devils to disguise their true identity, but also by corrupt and incompetent priests to conceal their secularity. The traditional symbolism invested in the vestments is invalidated, whereas the theatricality of the vestments is highlighted when different characters adopt the garments for, mostly, disguising purposes.

The continued popularity of *Doctor Faustus* has mostly been interpreted as a success of spectacles, especially spectacles of devils. Michael Hattaway elaborates that the commercial success of the play depends on "a great

phantasmagoria of scenic properties, ceremonial and emblematic costumes, battle-games between powers of good and evil, action portrayed on the three levels of the stage, dances, music, Latin declamations, mirror scenes in which the portentous actions of the hero are travestied in the cross-talk and knockabout games of the playhouse clowns" (160). With all those spectacular entertainments, what made the play more popular and almost sensationally scary were the scenes devils appear in various shapes. When Faustus servant, Wagner, conjured two spirits to scare Robin, an ostler, Robin describes them as "a she devil and a he devil" (1.4.55) and explains how "you shall know them" as "all he devils has horns / and all she devils has clefts and cloven feet" (1.4.56-57).[5] The scary appearances of the devils with horns, clefts, and cloven feet correspond to Robin s background knowledge about traditional stage devils. Mephistopheles also brings a traditionally scary-looking devil, dressed like a woman, when Faustus addresses his wish to have a wife, and Faustus soon expresses his dissatisfaction with her appearance in act 2, scene 1. Moreover, Marlowe stages Lucifer, the prince of devils, when Faustus sways by struggling desire to repent. The hideous appearance of Lucifer is conjectural when Faustus asks "who are thou that look st so terrible?" (2.3.86) once he sees him. In addition to these particular scenes describing devils outward looking, devils appear on stage when Mephistopheles tries to delight

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[5] All quotations from the play are taken from the Revels edition of *Doctor Faustus A and B Texts (1604, 1616): Christopher Marlowe and His Collaborator and Revisers*. Bevington, David M. and Eric Rasmussen. Ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993. Among the two versions of *Doctor Faustus* existed, with no evidence of authoritative readings, this chapter will primarily use A-text for the scenes staging devils, as it has more detailed descriptions on them, and examine B text for the expanded Vatican scene. The so-called 'A-text was first printed in 1604, byValentine Simmes for Thomas Bushell in quarto, whereas the 'B-text first appeared in 1616, as printed for John Wright. Seeing the substantial differences, B-text omits 36 lines from A-text and adds new 676 lines and introduces thousands of verbal changes (Bevington 64-5).

Faustus with rich apparels and devils dances in act 2, scene 1 and the seven deadly sins parade before Faustus and talk to him under the order of Lucifer in act 2, scene 3. The frequent presence of devils on stage even produced a terrifying rumor that one of the devils staged was real (Bevington 50). The vivid, scary presentation of devils in *Doctor Faustus* provided compelling visual entertainments to Elizabethan theater audience, and was likely very troubling to anti-theatrical British Protestants.

Along with the medieval theatrical tradition to shape imaginary devils on stage, *Doctor Faustus* also inherited the early Protestant convention of presenting evil characters in Catholic vestments. The major devil character residing on stage most of the time with Faustus is Mephistopheles, and his appearance is described as hideous, just like other devils when he first enters to stage. Faustus orders him to "return and change thy [his] shape" since he is "too ugly to attend me [him]" and gives a specific instruction to "return an old Franciscan friar" and adds that "that holy shape becomes a devil best" (1.3.24-27). Robert I. Lublin points out that the choice of Franciscan friar is noteworthy since Franciscans had a reputation as the most ascetic among the orders of friars, devoting themselves to lives of poverty, chastity, and obedience (68). The Franciscan friars were called "gray friars" due to the color of their original habit, but from the fifteenth century, they began to wear brown apparel. Mephistopheles might have reentered to stage with a brown tunic, a hood, and a cord around his waist, but Lublin presumes that he might have worn gray apparel, at least in productions in the late 1590s. An entry in Henslowe s diary for March 10, 1598 lists six friar s gowns, one of which is identified by color as "item i freyers gowne of graye" (61). While Mephistopheles is off stage to change to a Franciscan friar, Faustus repeats his request one more time in Latin; "Quin redis, Mephistopheles, fratris imagine! (1.3.35)" (Why don t you return, Mephistophels, in the guise of friar!), and from then on, Mephistopheles appears as a Franciscan Friar for the rest of the play except

for the extended Vatican scene in B text, where he adopts another Catholic vestments to pretend to be a cardinal. The frequent appearances of other devils monstrous shapes often paralleling Mephistopheles on stage remind audience of what Mephistopheles s real form is like under the disguise and help accentuate his hypocritical nature.

The anti-Roman Catholic sentiments of the play become more apparent when Faustus visits Rome and makes fun of Catholic priests and their sacred ceremonies in Act 3. In the A-text of 1604, the scene presents the Pope, the Cardinal of Lorraine with Friars probably in their appropriate religious vestments: the Pope with tiara, a triple crown, and a white cassock, an ankle length sleeved tunic buttoned from neck to foot, and cardinals with scarlet cassock and a biretta or a miter (Lublin 58). Faustus, in a robe making him invisible, interrupts their ceremony, jeers at its ineffectiveness and physically attacks them until they run off the stage. He snatches a dish and a cup from the Pope, calls the Pope s crossing a trick and mocks Friars superstitious use of bells, books and candles "to curse Faustus to hell" (3.1.85). In Medieval England, bells, books and candles were used in the ceremony of excommunication, in which the bell is tolled, the book is closed, and the candle is extinguished (Bevington 166). A similar scene can be found in Bale s *King Johan* (1538) where the Pope excommunicates King Johan, cursing him with book, bell and candle. The Pope closes the Bible and prays "God to close uppe from hym his benyfittes all" (1.1039),[6] and he extinguishes the candle praying "God to put hym from his eternall lyght" (1.1041). Lastly, he tolls the bell and prays that "both body and sowle I geve hym to the devil of hell" (1.1043). As Bale s Pope describes, the act of excommunication aims to separate the excommunicated persons from the Church and deprive them of all the benefits they can receive as Catholic, including the hope of salvation (*New*

[6] All quotations from the play are taken from the *The Complete Plays of John Bale. Vol.2. Tudor interludes*, 5. Peter Happé ed. Cambridge: Brewer, 1985.

Catholic Encyclopedia, 705). The phrase of "book, bell, and candle" has been proverbially used to indicate the Catholic excommunication ritual in Medieval England, and Bale designed the ritual to be performed by an allegorical character called Usurped Power playing the role of the Pope. In the same line of Bale s Protestant propaganda, the scene demonstrates the distrust on the authenticity of Roman Catholic religious practice, and questions the Pope s authority to excommunicate the king as the Pope is portrayed as one of the vices contriving to impoverish England and ruin its defender, King Johan. The full ceremony is carried out on stage by three appropriately attired Catholic prelates: the Pope, a Cardinal, and Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bale subverts its sacredness by disclosing their secret identities: the Pope as Usurped Power, the Cardinal as Private Wealth, and Stephen Langton as Sedition. As in other Bale s plays, his dramatic technique is to reveal the true identity of such presumed religious characters to be those of vices, their religious attire exposed as mere costumes. *Doctor Faustus* should be read in this tradition of the Reformation play parodying Catholic authority and its visual display.

However, Marlowe s attack on Catholic hypocrisy goes a step further. Instead of switching the role of the Pope from a sacred priest to a vice, Marlowe misrepresents conventional Catholic practices including the ceremony of bell, book, and candle while leaving all the religious characters as humanly evil, not only sacredly evil. After attacking the Pope, when Faustus asks Mephistopheles what the Catholic priests will do, Mephistopheles warns that they will bring bell, book, and candle. He, however, misdirects Faustus about the meaning of the ritual as an exorcism by addressing: "We [Mephistopheles and Faustus] shall be cursed with / bell, book and candle" (3.2.82-83). The priests conjecture that the disturbances are made by "some ghost, newly crept out of / purgatory" (3.1.73-74), and decide to exorcise the haunted place by preparing "a dirge to lay the fury of / this ghost" (3.1.76). David Bevington explains that the

office of excommunication is confused with that of exorcism in the scene (166) and Jan Frans Van Dikhuizen agrees that the friars are asked to perform an exorcism on the haunted place. The scene sets a precedent for later dramatized mock-exorcisms as in Robert Davonport s *A New Trick to cheat the Devil* (1639) (46-47). Mephistopheles s confusion of excommunication and exorcism might be on purpose to make Faustus give up the last hope of salvation since the ultimate goal of excommunication is not to separate individuals eternally from the Christian community but to pressure them to repent and return to full communion whereas exorcism dispels the devils. However, Mephistopheles is not the only one who confuses the two rituals. The following scene shows that the Friars do the cursing with bell, book, and candle, just as they exorcize the devils. They do not even do the exorcism right, as they sing "dirge," the most inappropriate song for the cursing (Bevington 166).[7] The major conventional Catholic ceremonial practices are mixed, misunderstood and misrepresented, and the scene produces a comic effect rather than a sense of crisis. Unlike Bale s Pope in *King Johan*, Marlowe depicts the Pope not as a vice but as a stupid and helpless human pretending to be sacred and powerful. The Roman Catholic Church is no longer represented as a sacred authority on its duty to establish and maintain Christian communities, but as a man-made collective body seeking secular power and producing superstitious ceremonies to allure people.

In the B-text of the play printed in 1616, which inclines to be more anti-Catholic, the Rome scene in act 3 is even more expanded in length and presents more Catholic priests on stage: two Cardinals, two Bishops, Monks, Friars, the Pope, and Bruno, the rival Pope. The newly added scene has Faustus and Mephistopheles dress like two cardinals and interrupt their

[7] *Catholic Dictionary* elaborates that the rite of exorcism begins with the litany of the Saints, two prayers, readings from one or more passages from the Gospels, followed by repeated prayers and various psalms (183-4).

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errand to carry the papal crown, deprived of Bruno, to the Church s treasury. Their disguise as Cardinals is easily believed by the group of fellow Catholic priests and they do not recognize the difference until the two real cardinals appear again and deny having carried out such a mission. To disguise as Cardinals, Faustus and Mephistopheles might wear scarlet garments symbolizing the willingness to die for their faith, which consisted of a cassock[8] and biretta,[9] a square cap; or they might wear a miter[10] if they are portrayed to be ready for mass. Considering that the vestments, especially the headdress for cardinals do not hide their faces, their identity is solely determined by the vestments they wear, which are so vulnerable to be abused, and so dangerous in the hands of devils. Catholic clergies are depicted as corrupt as to abuse the power invested in the vestments, and furthermore, they are as gullible as to be easily deceived by their own vestments. The episode undermines their sacred authority, disproves the availability of traditional symbolism invested in the vestment, and warns the audience to beware of the same mistake, easily identifying clergies by their superficial garments.

The scenes are conspicuously designed to mock the papal authority, but Catholic priests are no longer posed as a drastic enemy to Faustus, or an immediate threat to the spiritual welfare of Christian community. Apart from the post-Reformation plays that often reflect Catholic priests as spiritual heirs of devils, Marlowe s *Doctor Faustus* does not take their authority or influence seriously enough to fight against, but jeers at and

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[8] Cassock is the central vestment of the Catholic Church, floor length, with 33 buttons total, topped with a roman collar. Although the ordinary cassock is always black, a cardinal s is scarlet.

[9] Biretta is a square cap of silk "in a shape like the lower half of the pyramid inverted" (Miller 49) and was one of the ornaments pronounced to be unlawful in the Church of England.

[10] Mitre was a cap worn by bishops, cardinals and abbots, deeply cleft at the top and shaped like a pointed arch when seen from the front or back, decorated with jewels or embroidered with gold according to the occasions (Miller 56).

mocks the secularized papal system and superstitious practices of the Catholic Church rather comically. Cox argues that Marlowe s *Doctor Faustus* reduces the Reformation to a struggle for power, no longer between good and evil but between overwhelming cosmic power and another (113-114). In the grand structure of the play depicting two supernatural powers competing over Faustus s soul, the role of Roman Catholic Church is not even on the side of the devils, but described as just a corrupted political system established and operated by men. The link between their hypocritical nature and their vestments as a tool to conceal it almost becomes a cliché on the Elizabethan stage, mostly thanks to the repetitive representations from the Protestant propagandizing plays. Although the role of Catholic Church and Catholic clergy is rather reduced to a corrupted social vice rather than a powerful spiritual enemy in Christian society, their vestments and the symbolic system built over years demonstrate stronger presence on stage in the hands of different characters.

Rather than the corrupted Roman Catholic Church itself, *Doctor Faustus* targets the power of visual display once used dominantly by Catholic Churches. Houston Diehl points out that Marlowe constantly dramatizes the danger and limitations of spectacle by depicting a highly imaginative protagonist (77). Faustus is so obsessed of the phantasmal, the artificial, the theatrical, and the beautiful that he interprets God s invisibility as absence. By making spectators watch characters watching the magician s or devil s theatrical shows, the play aims to disenchant the enchanting power of theater (Diehl 77). Diehl also argues that the play s comic scenes often parody Faustus s magic to demystify it and it resembles "ritual desacralization" performed by protestants in Germany to transform "sacred images invested with magical properties into "profane objects, mere matter" (79). Catholic liturgical vestment was one of the major Catholic official properties Protestants contrived to desacralize. Their partial success of desacralization was soon achieved by transferring them to actors wardrobe

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and displaying them as devils costume on stage. More fundamental attack on Catholic sacredness invested in the garments was to expose and stage the incompetence of Catholic clergies themselves: their inability to meet the expectations set by their vestments. Liturgical vestments, no longer emblemizing sacred authority, are once more degraded when a faithless former divinity scholar takes advantage of its ritualistic usage.

In addition to Catholic clergies and Mephistopheles disguised as a friar, Doctor Faustus is conjectured to have worn religious vestments in the play s original staging, whose visual image was well circulated to be referred to in other cultural product. Samuel Rowland s satirical poem, *The Knave of Clubbes*, printed in 1609, describes that "The Gull gets on a surplis / With a crosse upon his breast, / Like Allen Playing Faustus, / In that manner he was drest" (29) to conjure up devils. A well-known actor, Edward Alleyn of the Lord Admiral s Men, seems to have worn a surplice to play the role of Faustus, and Bevington explains it as a visual term accentuating "the irony of his defection from the study of divinity" (49). As a former Doctor of Divinity, it might be natural for Faustus to keep and wear a religious vestment. The surplice, in particular, is not exclusively Catholic, but an officially sanctioned vestment for Protestant clergymen to wear.[11] Although Faustus s wearing the surplice might not be read as particularly anti-Catholic, Faustus wearing a surplice and conjuring devils on stage might remind contemporary audience of Catholic priests conducting Eucharist, and mildly warn Protestants of the dangers of even their minimized use of vestments. Hattaway discusses that Faustus s conjuring speech and spells perform "an inverted parody of the ritual

[11] The surplice is a white line garment with wide and long sleeves, and down to the ankles; and based on its whiteness, it designates cleanness or purity of chastity (Miller 57; Anderson 86). Although legislations issued after the Reformation prompted churches to get rid of most of the vestments they possessed, surplices were excepted and by an injunction of Elizabeth in 1563, the surplice became the universal vestment for all Anglican clergy at all services (Mayo 68).

actions of the priest at mass . . . without any power to raise spirits" (171). Comparing to the ineffectual rituals performed by Catholic priests in the Vatican scene, Faustus s magic at first seems to work successfully to conjure up Mephistopheles. However, as Hattaway points out, the devils arrive, not responding to the conjuror s magical power, but simply "in hope to get his glorious soul," (1.3.50) "when we [they] hear one rack the name of God, / Abjure the scriptures and his savior Christ" (1.3.48-49) (171). The surplice here serves as a fallen clergyman s magical property, deprived of ritual power as well as religious authority. As Catholic priests ceremonies are debunked, Faustus s magic show conjuring spectacular effects turns out to be a theatrical show propped with liturgical vestments.

In *Doctor Faustu*s, religious vestments are worn by a devil and Catholic priests. Apart from early Protestant dramaturgy identifying them in one character, Marlowe separates them into different characters and plays with multiple meanings invested in Catholic vestments accumulated over the last fifty years through the process of the English Reformation. In the sixteenth century public theaters, once sacred religious garments become a symbol of hypocrisy for Catholic priests. They soon represent a conventional disguise for devils, and a useful prop for a former clergyman in wielding supernatural power. Marlowe makes the best of the sacred quality not completely devoid from traditional vestments, which ultimately enables their multi-dimensional presence on stage. However, none of the characters in religious vestments are to be viewed as sacred or serving to keep the traditional symbolism. *Doctor Faustus* repeats anti-Catholic rhetoric, assigning religious vestments to corrupt Catholic priests, hideous-looking Mephistopheles, and a faithless former divinity scholar. By representing different characters in religious vestments, the play highlights the theatricality of the garments, as "things indifferent"[12] adoptable by different

[12] Throughout the English Reformation, there were two phases of vestiarian controversy arguing over what to wear or what not to wear in reformed churches.

characters for different disguising purposes.

The inheritance of medieval dramaturgy in the post-Reformation plays enables the comparison of changing usages of traditional religious vestments. The different symbolism invested in the same costume on stage helps to define the ways contemporaries view the old religion, its authority and sacredness, not entirely diminished, but easily associated with something hypocritical, and soon expanded to anything unfamiliar and foreign. Marlowe s *Doctor Faustus* shows that the singular fixed link between a wearer, a particular garment and its symbolism is no longer available for religious vestments. Marlowe s tragedy depicts the result of anti-Catholic rhetoric repetitively practiced through post-Reformation culture, which changed religious vestments into theatrical costumes adjustable to different roles for different disguising purposes. On the Elizabethan stage, post-Reformation theatrical convention of the disguised evil priest has been inherited, developed, and contributed to the ideological convergence of anti-Catholicism and anti-theatricalism in the late sixteenth century.

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While one side argued Catholic vestments as remnants of old religion, the other side saw the vestments as meaning-ridden objects, mere clothing, or adiaphora, “things indifferent” (Knappen 83).

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ABSTRACT

Anti-Theatrical Costume: Catholic Vestments and Post-Reformation Visual Rhetoric in *Doctor Faustus*

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This essay discusses the ideological development from anti-Catholicism to anti-theatricalism, while examining the representation of Catholic vestments in Christopher Marlowe s *Dr. Faustus*. Based on the fact that religious garments were transferred from church to theater throughout the Reformation, this study explores cultural meanings produced and manipulated on stage with this particular theatrical property. *Dr. Faustus* repeats anti-Catholic rhetoric, assigns religious vestments to corrupt Catholic priests in Rome, a hideous-looking devil, Mephistopheles, and a faithless former divinity scholar, Faustus. By representing different characters in religious vestments, the play highlights the theatricality of the garments adopted by different characters for disguising purposes. On the Elizabethan stage, post-Reformation theatrical convention of the disguised evil priest was been inherited, developed, and contributed to the ideological convergence of anti-Catholicism and anti-theatricalism in the late sixteenth century.

Key Words | *Dr. Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe, Catholic Vestment, Anti-Theatricalism, Anti-Catholicism

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