

السياسية المكيفيلية في مسرحية يهودي مالطا

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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى الكشف عن السياسات والممارسات المكيفيلية للمسيحيين واليهود والأتراك في مسرحية كريستوفر مارلو يهودي مالطا. كريستوفر مارلو ينتقد بشده اعمالهم المكيفيلية من خلال الكشف بأن غاية هؤلاء الشخصيات الذين يدعون التقوى هو الوصول الى السلطة. بالتالي، مارلو كمفكر وانساني يدعو الى التسامح الديني بين اتباع الديانات المختلفة ويدن التعصب الديني واستخدام الدين من اجل تحقيق رغبات شخصية وأهداف سياسية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مكيفيلية، 'ملحد'، الرياء، مسيحي، يهودي، تركي .

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even though critics such as Hopkins claim that “to present Barabas as a poisoner of water, then, could be used to invoke the twin perspectives of the irrationally malevolent Jew and the rational action of heroic, Christian resistance”.⁶⁴ None of the historical documents ever talked about Marlowe’s acceptance of any of the Christian dogmas or the violence that organized religions promulgated in the sixteenth century. Kuriyama’s analysis is more apropos here:

Marlowe would not make a very profound contribution to our understanding of the anti-Semitism by declaring that Christians are as unconscionable as Jews. Fortunately, this does not seem to be quite what Marlowe is saying, nor does Marlowe seem especially interested in contributing to our understanding of anti-Semitism. If the events represented in *The Jew of Malta* suggest anything, they suggest that religions of any kind are powerless to alter human nature or curb the ruthless egotism that dominates personal affairs and political life.⁶⁵

Jews, Christians and Turks are all engaged in attempting to destroy one another’s life for the sake of money, so that they can exert the most power. Accordingly, Marlowe ridicules this religious hypocrisy that leads to the corruption of society and the expansion of violence which makes “deception in the name of religion seems always to be accepted by those who believe in that religion”.⁶⁶

The death of the Jew in *The Jew of Malta* by falling into a cauldron and holding the leader of the Turks, Calymath, prisoner by the Christians does not represent a restoration of the Christian order to the land as Simkin claims,⁶⁷ but rather a continuation of the Machiavellian politics that Christians adopted at the beginning of the play of taxing the Jews and

exterminating those who oppose their beliefs. Therefore, Marlowe does not seem to be teaching morality by the survival of the Christians as Simkin suggests, but intends instead to criticize all religious denominations for the destruction they cause throughout exposing the corruption of authorities who use religion for personal ends. Christian characters believe in the same immoral doctrine of the Jew who declares before his death that “for, so I live, perish may all the world” (5.5.10).⁶⁸ Greenblatt describes the Machiavellian lifestyle in the play by saying that “the Turks exacting tribute from the Christians, the Christians expropriating money from the Jews, the convent profiting from these expropriations, religious orders competing for wealthy converts, the prostitute plying her trade and the blackmailer his”.⁶⁹ Religious fanaticism, therefore, is a tool of deception as presented by Marlowe that justifies evil practices and exploiting the wealth of others. Accordingly, *The Jew of Malta* represents an attack on the followers of all religious denominations who claim truth and superiority over one another to hide their hypocrisy and immorality.

In the end, Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* exposes the hypocrisy of clergy in the sixteenth-century who were using religion to satisfy personal needs, and who deceive people by introducing themselves as protectors of religion, as moral figures. To Marlowe, Religious bigotry seems to represent a source of evil and violence in society throughout giving a sense of righteousness to the followers of religion and justifying the extermination of all nonconformists. Accordingly, the violent practices of the Protestant government in the sixteenth-century toward all those who did not follow Christianity as a way of life including Jews and Turks, shows evidence about the deceptive methods of the clergy.

behavior. Religion to Marlowe is shown to be “a childish toy”⁵⁶ that only causes violence and hatred between people. Marlowe’s cynicism of faith is represented by the characters of the Jews, Christians and Turks who all claim righteousness to achieve their secular ends.

Marlowe does not then sympathize with the Jew after being stripped of his possessions by the Christians; rather, he “ridicules hypocrisy, political expediency, and greed”⁵⁷ that organized religions stimulate. In addition, by allowing Barabas to speak openly of the hypocrisy of Christians, Marlowe is criticizing indirectly the Christians who were practicing the same deceptive methods of the Jews. As Barabas says:

It is no sin to deceive a Christian,
For they themselves hold it a principle,
Faith is not to be held with heretics
But all are heretics that are not Jews.
(2.3.312–15)⁵⁸

Greenblatt also brings up this hypocrisy, asserting that “the Christians who prided themselves on their superiority to Jews were themselves practising Judaism in their daily lives, worshipping money, serving egoistic need, buying and selling men as commodities”.⁵⁹ Therefore, the Machiavellian lifestyle of the Jew was countered by the same policy by the Christian characters whose principal aim was to steal the Jew’s money. Friar Jacomo speaks about converting the Jew to Christianity only for this purpose:

This is the hour
Wherein I shall proceed. O happy hour,
Wherein I shall convert an infidel
And bring his gold into our treasury! (4.1.64–67)⁶⁰

Similarly, Simkin argues that “it is possible to perceive Ferneze as a greater Machiavellian than Barabas himself”.⁶²

This hypocritical Christian lifestyle that practices violence while claiming righteousness and divine authority proceeds in the same fashion against the Turk. Ferneze, the Christian governor of Malta, replies to the Turks’ claims of taxing the Christians:

Proud–daring Calymath, instead of gold,
We’ll send thee bullets wrapped in smoke and fire.

Claim tribute where thou wilt, we are resolved,
Honour is bought with blood and not with gold.
(2.2.53–56)⁶²

Sales comments on Ferneze’s speech by saying that despite Ferneze’s claim to honor, it “has nevertheless been bought with both Jewish gold and the prospect of a share in the profits from the slave market”.⁶³

Despite the fact that Marlowe presents the Jews in *The Jew of Malta* as money–worshippers, villains and deceptive people, it would be misinterpretation of Marlowe’s intentions though to emphasize the negative character of the Jew while ignoring other Christian or Turkish characters because Marlowe is not only criticizing the Jews for their hypocrisy and villainy, but he is also condemning the Christians and the Turks for the same reasons. Therefore, Marlowe is cynical of all institutional religions that convince their adherents to have righteousness and justify violence in society. As an intellectual and free–thinker humanist, Marlowe was aware of the dangers of religious bigotry in society that obstructs reformation and only benefits a small group of hypocrite politicians who engage people in religious wars to maintain their dominant positions. Therefore, the religious tensions in the sixteenth–century make Marlowe cynical of all hypocritical practices of those who misuse religion to achieve secular ends.

As a supposed ‘atheist’, Marlowe would not have been a propagandist of Christianity in the play

to the king's possessions. They did not enjoy rights of inheritance, all their property being confiscated by the state on their death".⁵⁰ If this proves anything, it proves that the Christians who were claiming superiority to the Jews were practicing the same cruel policy that Barabas practices in the play. He is merely playing them at their own game.

Religious tensions in *The Jew of Malta* are not only represented throughout the turbulent relationship between Christians and Jews, but also throughout the inflamed relationship between Christians and Turks. Just as the Christians tax the Jews because they have the power to do so, the Turks follow the same policy of taxing the Christian characters. The messenger of the Turks tells the Christian governor of Malta about the reason for his arrival in Malta: "The wind that bloweth all the world besides:/ Desire of gold" (3.5.3-4).⁵¹

Marlowe seems to be referring here to the bloody historical clash between the Ottoman Empire and Christians in 1565 on the land of Malta which became known as the Great Siege of Malta. The siege of Malta by the Turkish Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent and threatening to ruin Christendom during a time when the Ottoman Empire was the strongest power reflect the desire of religious groups to rule. Bonavita claims that the Christians succeeded in protecting the land of Malta because God interfered to save His people from the transgressors. Therefore, she suggests that Malta was saved by the prayers of the Christians and divine intervention. She says that "divine aid for Malta comes not merely through the pope ... but also directly from heaven".⁵² She also adds that prayers helped in "the preservation of Malta during the siege and for thanksgiving afterward".⁵³ However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that battles are won because divinity interferes to save the righteous and defeat the wicked. The historical

religious struggles between Christians and Turks recorded cruelty and the murder of many innocent people from both sides. Accordingly, the clash between the Turks and Christians on Malta and the execution of prisoners from both sides was motivated by the desire for power rather than righteousness. The story of Barabas plotting with the Turks to enter the city of Malta and then allying with the Christians for the sake of money makes religion a tool of deception according to Marlowe. Barabas talks about his plans to make the Turks seize Malta:

I'll be revenged on this accursed town,
For by my means Calymath shall enter in.
I'll help to slay their children and their wives,
To fire the churches, pull their houses down,
Take my goods too, and seize upon my lands.
I hope to see the governor a slave,
And, rowing in a galley, whipped to death.
(5.1.62-68)⁵⁴

However, the awareness of the Jew that religion is only a tool of deception to achieve personal ends makes him abandon the Turks and ally himself with the Christians against the Turks. He says:

And thus far roundly goes the business.
Thus, loving neither, will I live with both,
Making a profit of my policy;
And he from whom my most advantage
comes
Shall be my friend.
This is the life we Jews are used to lead;
And reason, too, for Christians do the like.
(5.2.110-16)⁵⁵

The logic of Barabas's argument here suggests the opportunistic and volatile nature of alliances in which ethnic identity is readily sacrificed for personal gain. Vengeance is an ethnic characteristic only as a mimetic pattern: Barabas is just following Christian

eyes of the indigenous inhabitants of the island as a suspect resident alien.⁴²

His religious othering causes the cruelty in the play, in which "the actions against Barabas are not only harsh and unfeeling, but actively vindictive",⁴³ a manifestation, in fact, of the inherited values of a Christian culture that had, since the time of its earliest history, regarded Jews as responsible for the murder of Christ.

Unlike Christian characters, the most fascinating aspect about Barabas is his honesty in which he is not afraid to speak openly of his hypocrisy. He says: "We Jews can fawn-like spaniels when we please,/ And when we grin, we bite; yet are our looks/ As innocent and harmless as a lamb's" (2.3.20–22).⁴⁴ He also speaks of himself as a killer and poisoner of wells:

As for myself, I walk abroad a–nights
And kill sick people groaning under walls;
Sometimes I go about and poison wells;
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves.
(2.3.177–80)⁴⁵

Barabas's awareness about his hypocrisy makes him a true follower of the politics of Machiavelli that considered religion an invention to justify cruelty. Therefore, we see Barabas asking his daughter Abigail after his mansion was converted into convent by the Christians to enter the nunnery and act as a Christian, so that she can have access to the treasure hidden there. Barabas tells Abigail: "Ay, daughter, for religion/ Hides many mischiefs from suspicion" (1.2.280–81).⁴⁶ Accordingly, Barabas's honesty lies in his awareness that religion can easily deceive people and help hypocrites achieve their secular purposes by acting as God's people. In contrast, Christian characters refuse to acknowledge this fact, or at least they are not aware of it, so they continue to blackmail Barabas while

acting hypocritically like dispensers of love and mercy.

Barabas, speaking about himself as a killer and poisoner of wells, knowingly reflects the prejudice of sixteenth century Christian audience who believed Jews to be criminals and villains. The image of the Jews in the sixteenth century as villains is manifested throughout the character of Barabas, who sends a poisoned porridge to the nunnery that kills all nuns. Luther speaks of the Jews that "the history books often accuse them of contaminating wells, of kidnapping and piercing children"⁴⁷ in order to prove that the Christians are superior to the Jews. White also says that "Marlowe's portrayal of Barabas combines historical facts about famous Jewish merchants of his day with a heavy dose of stage-stereotyping and centuries-old prejudice, which included the beliefs that Jews poisoned wells and crucified children".⁴⁸ The image of the Jews as poisoners and killers in the sixteenth century would have reminded the audience of the Jewish physician Roderigo Lopez, who plotted to poison Queen Elizabeth I and was executed for his crime. Roger Sales recounts the Lopez story:

Dr. Roderigo Lopez and his accomplices were executed in 1594 for yet another alleged plot to kill Elizabeth. As Lopez himself was Jewish by birth if not always by outward profession, it appeared that nothing could possibly go wrong with an execution that was staged in London at a time when there was intense hostility towards all those who could be demonized as 'alien strangers'.⁴⁹

Simkin also describes the status of the Jews during the reigns of Edward and Henry III by saying: "During the reigns of Edward and of Henry III, the Jewish population were literally brought and sold – having no rights of citizenship, and surviving under the protection of the monarch, they were tantamount

been officially expelled from England in 1290, although small communities still existed in the Elizabethan period. They were expected to wear a yellow cross to signal their status as aliens, just as beggars and others were forced to wear badges to identify their marginal status".³¹ James Shapiro also talks about the cruelty of the Jews when arguing that "generations of English children were exposed to stories of how Jews abducted, mangled, and cannibalized Christian children".³² Furthermore, Shapiro explains that the Jews were poisoners by saying that "one explanation for the association of Jews with poison is that Jews, celebrated as expert physicians, were suspected of abusing these healing powers, their knowledge used for sinister purposes".³³ This vicious image of the Jews in the history of Christianity is clearly reflected in Marlowe's play where the Christian characters choose to take the possessions of the Jew rather than banishing him. The Jew responds in self-defense against the claims of the Christians that his "inherent sin" (1.2.110)³⁴ as a killer of Christ makes him hated among the Christians:

What? Bring your scripture to confirm your wrongs?

Preach me not out of my possessions.

Some Jews are wicked, as all Christians are;

But say the tribe that I descended of

Were all in general cast away for sin,

Shall I be tried by their transgression?

The man that dealeth righteously shall live;

And which of you can charge me otherwise?

(1.2.111-18)³⁵

Barabas seems to be referring to the Book of Hebrews that no one is responsible for the sins of others because "the just shall live by faith"³⁶ but, what is more noticeable in making his ethnic identity blameless for the sins of his ancestors is that he identifies the absolute wickedness of all Christians.

This sermonizing by the Jew seems to be reflecting the secular position of Marlowe who opposed the ferocious policy adopted by Christian states of all denominations of killing innocent people for their beliefs in the sixteenth century.

Most perplexing about the history of the tensions between Christians and Jews is the negative attitude taken by Martin Luther, the leader of the Protestant Reformation. In his book *On the Jews and Their Lies* which was written in 1543, Luther struggles to prove that the Jews "are not God's people", but rather "the devil's people".³⁷ In his description of the Jews whom he considers a "miserable and accursed people",³⁸ Luther emphasizes that the Jews are "stiff-necked, disobedient, prophet-murderers, arrogant, usurers, and filled with every vice".³⁹ This anti-Semitic attitude of Luther shows that religion was a motivating force for cruelty and killing of Jews throughout history. Luther invites Christians to avenge themselves upon the Jews for the murder of Christ by saying: "We are even at fault in not avenging all this innocent blood of our Lord and of the Christians".⁴⁰ He adds: "We are at fault in not slaying them".⁴¹ The strategy that Luther calls upon Christians to follow is copied in the play in the Christian characters' treatment of Barabas. They strip him of his possessions by converting his mansion into nunnery and taking his gold as an indication that Christians show no tolerance or forgiveness toward dissenters. Hopkins argues that

The Jew is multiply alien: as Barabas, he is the polar opposite of the Christianity which theoretically characterises Marlowe's own audience; as a Jew, he is radically demonised; as a denizen of Malta, he is seen in English eyes as belonging to the furthest fringes of the Christian world ... and in the

seems to reflect the aspirations of Marlowe by ridiculing the Christian life in the sixteenth century that was full of bloodshed and cruelty as a result of the religious tensions concerning power struggles. The choice of Marlowe's protagonist is opposite. Marlowe speaks of Christ as described in the Baines' note that was provided against Marlowe as proof of his nonconformist beliefs "that Crist deserved better to die then Barabas and that the Jews made a good Choice, though Barabas were both a thief and murderer".²⁶ Marlowe is referring here to the Biblical verses that reference the murder of Christ at the hands of the Jews who preferred to release the murderer Barabbas rather than the sinless Jesus. The story as described by Luke says:

Then all the multitude cried at once, saying, away with him, and deliver unto us Barabbas; which for a certain insurrection made in the city, and murder, was cast into prison. Then Pilate spake again to them, willing to let Jesus loose. But they cried, saying, Crucify, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, But what evil hath he done? I find no cause of death in him; I will; therefore, chastise him, and let him loose. But they were instant with loud voices, and required that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the high Priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he let loose unto them him that for insurrection and murder was cast into prison, whom they desired, and delivered Jesus to do with him what they would.²⁷

The naming of the Jew in Marlowe's play as Barabas, who was murderer, represents the tensions between the Christians and the Jews which can be attributed to historical reasons where the Jews were considered the killers of Christ according to the belief of the Christians. Christian characters permit the confiscation of the property of the Jew Barabas because they believe that the Jews are "infidels"

(1.2.63)²⁸ a word used by Ferneze, the Christian governor of Malta. Therefore, Christian characters are not afraid to practice cruelty against the Jews because they consider them 'atheists' for their denial of the divinity of Christ. Accordingly, when the Christians were ordered to pay the tribute to the Turks, they sanctioned that the Jews should be taxed to pay this tribute. The only option that Christians give to the Jews to avoid taxation is conversion to Christianity. The dialogue between Barabas and Ferneze reflects the Jewish and Christian views concerning seizing the property of the Jew:

BARABAS. Will you then steal my goods?

Is theft the ground of your religion?

FERNEZE. No, Jew, we take particularly thine To save the ruin of a multitude. (1.2.95-98)²⁹

While Barabas considers confiscating his property by the Christians stealing, Christians believe it lawful to save their own land. Stephen Greenblatt claims that "the Jew is charged not with racial deviance or religious impiety but with economic and social crime, crime that is committed not only against the dominant Christian society but, in less 'pure' form, by that society".³⁰ However, the ground of all tensions in the play seems to be religious, and therefore the motivating force of the struggles between the Christians and Jews, as well as the Turks is not only economic as Greenblatt claims. The Jew is given the option to turn to Christianity and keep his property, but his refusal of this offer is what made him alien in the Christian world.

Such alienation was a fact for Jews in the sixteenth-century since they occupied a peripheral position within the community of Christians in which they had no rights and were considered less than human. Roger Sales talks about the history of the Jews of the English Christian Society: "Jews had

introduce the character Machiavel upon the stage, and to give a Machiavellian the central and dominant role in a play".¹⁶ It seems that the universality of the Machiavellian politics during the time of Marlowe is what caused him to introduce the Christians, Jews and Turks as disciples of Machiavelli who misused religion to achieve their personal needs.

The sixteenth-century Protestant state considered Machiavelli a villain and 'atheist' mainly for his attempts to deprecate the use of religion in a political state. Buckley asserts that "Machiavelli was for them the arch-atheist, the devil who had taught men to use religion for political ends, who had corrupted France and brought about St. Bartholomew's Day, who had taught simple Englishmen to be atheists, and who, unless his works were put down or effectively combated, would certainly be the ruin of Christendom".¹⁷ The fact that "every political and religious faction [in the sixteenth century] accused its opponents of being secret Machiavellians"¹⁸ could be one of the main reasons for Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre. Since both Protestants and Catholics were claiming to be representatives of the true Church, they were at the same time accusing one another of 'atheism' and Machiavellianism, which ignited the tensions between both parties. However, some people were fascinated by the Machiavellian politics because they believed it to be one of the successful ways to annihilate the restrictions of religion.

The historical Niccolo Machiavelli was one of a few intellectuals and patriot Italians who had set up distinct plans to reform the state; however, he received criticism from the Protestant state as being the follower of Satan because he attacks those who use religion to achieve personal ends. In his book *The Prince*, Machiavelli criticizes the cruelty of politicians by saying that "it cannot be called ingenuity to kill one's fellow citizens, to betray

friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion".¹⁹ He goes on to affirm that these evil characteristics "can acquire power but not glory".²⁰ Machiavelli believes that the politicians acquire their influential positions as "the result of either of cunning or force".²¹ Therefore, Machiavelli views religious fanaticism as an obstructing force for the advancements of nations. In fact, the world of the play is filled with materialistic needs, deception, cruelty and relationships that are based on physical power rather than morality and respect. Kuriyama defines power "as the ability to impose one's will on others, to victimize them and destroy them".²² In this respect, each religious group in the play is struggling deadly to eliminate other religious groups and label them as worshippers of the devil in order to assert their desire for sole authority.

The Jew Barabas, who is depicted as one of the faithful disciples of Machevil considers material happiness as a manifestation of the true faith. He believes that owning a fortune more than all the people of Malta is a blessing from God to the Jews. He says: "These are the blessings promised to the Jews" (1.1.103).²³ Douglas Cole says that for the Jew in Renaissance literature "his highest value is defined in terms of gold, and by that criterion he judges the superiority of the Jew over Christian, for Jews are richer".²⁴ Accordingly, the Jew sees the poverty of the Christians as indicative of following a false faith. He says:

Rather had I, a Jew, be 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.
(1.1.112-16)²⁵

The Jew reflects the ideas of Niccolo Machiavelli by openly criticizing the doctrines of Christianity, and in this light *The Jew of Malta*

of Machiavelli to achieve their ends. Religion was always a cover for those who were struggling to remain in power. For that reason, while doing things in the name of God may have always got the sympathy of those who associated it with searching for salvation, it could be used to justify the cruelty and deceptive behaviors of political figures.

As a reaction to the misuse of religion to suppress and oppress people, the character Machevil who seems to be speaking for Marlowe announces that religion is a fable. He says: "I count religion but a childish toy/ And hold there is no sin but ignorance" (14-15).⁹ Cartelli views this as a permission slip for various acts of unconstraint: "Machevil invites the playgoer to experience the pleasure of release from moral and intellectual constraints, to entertain the feeling that he or she is bound by none of the illusions that bind more slavish spirits".¹⁰ Marlowe was one of the intellectuals who saw the truth in the writings of Machiavelli, especially during an age of religious hypocrisy and deception that were manifested in the behaviors of both religious figures and politicians. It is important to mention here that Marlowe himself was used by the Protestant state as a secret agent whose behavior for the State by watching the Catholics in Rheims and the Low Countries resembled Machiavellian like behavior. In addition, the refusal of Marlow to enter the Church as a priest after graduating from Corpus Christi College at Cambridge is a Machiavellian like act, especially when he was awarded Archbishop Parker's scholarship. Wraight affirms that "[Marlowe's] study of Machiavellian principles had early taught him to use such means as Providence offered to his ends, and Archbishop Parker's grant was one of these".¹¹ Therefore, it seems that Marlowe saw more honesty in the works of Machiavelli who was calling to establish a secular political state by undermining the

role of the Church in the world of politics. Accordingly, the desire of Machiavelli to undermine the role of the Church in the life of people fascinated many free-thinkers in the sixteenth century who considered religion a restricting force. Machiavelli's belief that the state that encourages the Church to come to power is a state that does not know about politics¹² made him an embodiment of evil by the Protestant state in the sixteenth century. Therefore, Machiavelli's critique of Christianity made his name "synonymous with cunning, hypocrisy, treachery, cruelty, and the devil himself"¹³ that threatens to ruin Christendom.

Marlowe's introduction of Machevil as 'atheist-preacher' reflects the significance of his doctrines that dominate the relationships of the characters with each other. Machevil says:

Albeit the world think Machevil 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.
To some perhaps my name is odious,
But such as love me guard me from their tongues,
And let them know that I am Machevil,
And weigh not men, and therefore not men's words. (1-8)¹⁴

Although Machevil appears only in the prologue to introduce us to the tragedy of the Jew, his politics are manifested throughout the whole play by characters who are dismissive of the beliefs that religion has any role in a mature culture. Simkin says: "We are in world where everyone, it seems, like Machevil himself, holds religion as a childish toy; it is used only for personal gain".¹⁵ Machevil is visiting England to "frolic with his friends" who are the Jews, Christians and Turks who adhere to his principles. Marlowe was "the first dramatist to

and Turks claim to be the chosen people of God and manipulate the people to achieve their personal needs. In addition, Jews and Turks were considered 'atheists' by the Protestant government for opposing the Trinity and the doctrines of Christianity. And although the Protestant government viewed Machiavellianism as a form of 'atheism', Marlowe presents the Christians, who dehumanize the Jew and strip him of his property, as hypocrites. Consequently, this makes religion to Marlowe no more than a repressive ideology that keeps people subservient to the ruling class who claim to be religious and righteous. The ruling class in *The Jew* is represented in the hypocritical religious figures who present themselves as defenders of religion to maintain their dominant positions and live an extravagant life at the expense of the common people.

In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe makes Machevil who is "the manifestation of the spirit of Niccolo Machiavelli"² the prologue-speaker who introduces us to the Jew Barabas and asks us to admire him as a Machiavellian figure. Machevil says:

I come not, I,
To read a lecture here in Britainy,
But to present the tragedy of a Jew,
Who smiles to see how full his bags are
crammed,
Which money was not got without my means.
I crave but this: grace him as he deserves,
And let him not be entertained the worse
Because he favours me. (28–35)³

Therefore, Machevil's role in the prologue is to introduce us to the Jew as a tragic figure who got all his money by following the Machiavellian policy of deception. It is important to note that followers of the Machiavellian strategy in the sixteenth-century were considered by the Protestant state as evil people who were promoting rebellion against a godly

sanctioned authority. Therefore, the books of Machiavelli were banned during the Elizabethan era because of Machiavelli's rebellious attitudes to undermine the role of the Church in the political system of the state. The general belief that "Marlowe was fascinated by the writings of Machiavelli"⁴ produced a logic that associated Marlowe's name with Machiavellianism. Irving Ribner asserts that "'Machiavellianism' was a term indiscriminately applied to any villainous behavior, whatever its source".⁵ Accordingly, the books of Machiavelli were associated with 'atheism' in the sixteenth-century because they were calling for the establishment of secular state and eliminating the role of religious figures in controlling the life of people. Summers argues that "what frightened the anti-Machiavellians was the political scientist's acceptance of the secular state. They viewed as a corrosive poison that might destroy religion and morality Machiavelli's assumption that political necessity could overstep any bounds".⁶ However, religious figures were only opposing Machiavellianism because it threatens to weaken their influential positions that they acquire from their alleged roles as protectors of religion. The character Machevil confesses that despite the criticism that his writings encountered, he remains admired by those who are skeptical about the validity of his politics. He declares:

Admired I am of those that hate me most.
Though some speak openly against my books,
Yet will they read me and thereby attain
To Peter's chair, and, when they cast me off,
Are poisoned by my climbing followers. (9–13)⁷

Marlowe seems to be quite critical of religious figures that follow deception to achieve "earthly fame, inscribed sardonically in Christian cloth".⁸ Accordingly, Marlowe claims that many politicians in the sixteenth-century were benefiting from the policy

Machiavellian Politics in the Jew of Malta

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Abstract

This study exposes the Machiavellian politics and practices of the Christians, Jews and Turks in Christopher Marlowe's play *The Jew of Malta*. Christopher Marlowe is highly critical of their Machiavellian deeds by suggesting that the only motivation of these supposed religious characters is to retain their influential positions. Therefore, Marlowe, as an intellectual humanist, is calling for religious tolerance among followers of different religious denominations and condemns religious fanaticism and the use of religion to achieve personal and political ends.

Keywords: Machiavellianism, 'atheist', hypocrisy, Christian, Jew, Turk.

Machiavellianism in *The Jew of Malta* is represented throughout the reciprocal Machiavellian relationship of the Christians, Jews and Turks who claim righteousness, but they exploit religion for their secular benefits and desires. As a sixteenth-century free-thinker, Marlowe is highly critical of some religious figures as hypocrites who exploit one another to achieve their secular needs. During the sixteenth-century, Christian states, such as England considered the Jews and Turks 'atheists' because of their rejection of the divinity of Christ; however, Marlowe in his play announces that Christians hold the same wicked principles as the Jews and Turks because of their hypocritical practices.

The rise of the Protestant state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries allowed opportunists such as spies and religious hypocrites to use religion to achieve personal ends. Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* represents example about this religious hypocrisy in the sixteenth century by presenting deceptive characters who claim a faith solely for the purposes

of garnering power and ensuring the manipulation of other faiths. In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe depicts all religious denominations as equally blameworthy and portrays followers of these religious denominations as money worshippers. Therefore, describing the Jews as deceivers and money worshippers does not make Marlowe anti-Semitic writer because he describes followers of other religions as holding the same deceptive and evil methods of the Jews. In the play, the Jew, Barabas, considers deceiving the Christians, poisoning their wells and killing all the nuns and priests justifiable because he claims that the Christians use the same deceptive methods against him. Similarly the Turks, represented by Ithamore, expropriate the money of the Christians.

The Jew of Malta reflects Marlowe's dissatisfaction with the hypocritical behaviors of the characters who use religion as a tool of deception in order to achieve material purposes. *The Jew* represents an example about the "universality of Machiavellian hypocrisy"¹ in which Christians, Jews