

Lucy prebble's enron  
and christopher  
marlowe's doctor  
faustus: comparing  
the cons...



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The playwrights display lessons that the audience are to learn whilst watching the play. However, arguably the playwrights have different aims as to what they are, Marlowe projects a moral warning about reaching higher than 'heavenly power permits.' Writing in the sixteenth century it naturally falls into the category of a morality play in part. Whereas Enron seeks to give an ultra-theatrical demonstration of how corporate madness works, Enron lacks the universal relevance that Marlowe creates by presenting Faustus as an everyman. Instead the purpose of Enron is to make the audience question their trust and the reliability of the capitalist system that allowed the Enron disaster to happen.

Primarily, both plays offer a similar message about the danger of overreaching indeed, Marlowe creates a protagonist whose downfall occurs because 'his waxen wings did mount above his reach'. 'waxen' suggests that Faustus is actually vulnerable and the knowledge he is shown as having, only places him on a flimsy pedestal, this is because wax is pliable and easily melts. Essentially man's fragility is conveyed. Similarly, the danger of overstretching is shown in Prebble's presentation of Skilling's arrogance that 'countries are meaningless.' Both protagonists are seduced by the allure of power offering a moral message about the corrupting nature of greed. This is further exemplified in Enron as the LJM, the wielder of the power, is created in 'a dingy place at the bottom of Enron' creating the illusion that this hell, especially as the 'box glows red and throbs.' Red is closely associated with hell and danger particularly as it is set in the underbelly of Enron, however, the 'throb' has connotations with a heart; suggesting that hell has become the heart of the company, Enron, a

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company that much of the contemporary population trusted and invested in is reliant and worships hell.

Doctor Faustus in many parts follows the allegorical genre of a morality play that was the main genre that made the transition from the medieval to the Early Modern period, thus, suggesting that it aspires to be a moral tale. The staple of a morality play was that it had universal relevance by representing an everyman, Faustus is the epitome of this as he is 'born, of parents base of stock.' Therefore, the moral message of the play is accessible to all members of society whereas Enron seems more to be a window into the on goings of corporate business, that isn't necessarily relevant to all society. Furthermore, the simplistic characterisation of the seven deadly sins and the angels is typical of a morality play where the moral message is clear as the characters adopt a Brechtian function by being created to portray a message oppose to prioritising in-depth character development, indeed the bad angel is used to illustrate the horror 'hell's pains perpetually' the use of alliteration gives the illusion of hell going on eternally, whilst the harsh consonant sounds give insight the horror and unforgiving nature of hell. This is where the success of Faustus as a moral tale could come into question as Marlowe creates Faustus himself as a multifaceted character that can be sympathised with as well as despised. He can be admired for his yearning for the knowledge of 'the Delphian oracle' this reference to where the ancient Greeks sought divine knowledge, shows Faustus as aspiring for greater intelligence, arguably this could be Marlowe subtly laying blame at the feet of the church for restricting everyman's access to knowledge by keeping the bible in Latin. Nonetheless, Faustus' cold-hearted tricks of fixing 'two

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spreading horns' on Benvolio and then condemning men to ' the lowest hell,' inspires hatred towards this flippant behaviour, this is a result of excess power.

It could be argued that Fastow is employed by Prebble for similar reasons as Marlowe's use of Faustus, to offer a warning about greed and obsession with personal gain as he exclaims ' what the f\*\*k do you want' to the revered Lehman brothers. This disrespect and ugly use of language shows Fastow as having an inflated sense of self-importance. However, I would argue that its main intent is to offer a condemnation of business and the capital system, as Fastow exclaims ' This is an area where we are expected to be creative. The system encourages it.' The short sentences seem final; creating a damning portray of the loopholes that the current system allows. Whilst it is It is difficult to feel sympathy for the men whose deregulation policies did so much damage, Prebble reminds us of the global complicity in money worship.

There is a moral message in both plays however, ' Faustus' end be such as every Christian laments to think on'. Faustus contains a strong message regarding man's ability to wield power successfully whether this be interpreted in a Christian mindset stating that God's position shouldn't be challenged or applying to renaissance thinkers unto which individualism was appearing. In this renaissance period, new knowledge was rife and Marlow offers a warning about how everyman chooses to employ this new power than knowledge brings. It offers a timeless moral message that can be applicable to all status of man and all eras. Meanwhile, Enron shows the

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danger of excess power however the presentation of the Lehman brothers as Siamese twins and Arthur Anderson as a ventriloquist, add to the idea that this play is designed to make a mockery of the corporate system instead of issuing a message regarding the behaviour of an everyman.