

Religious Fanaticism and Intolerance in Sixteenth Century Europe: A Contextual Analysis of the Protestant-Catholic Wars in Christopher Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a contextual analysis of Christopher Marlowe's play *The Massacre at Paris* with an eye to the historical Protestant-Catholic religious wars in sixteenth century Europe, especially those in France and England. The play exposes the hypocrisy of both Protestants and Catholics, both of whom lay claim to righteousness and to be followers of the true teachings of religion while in fact they are both obsessed with the idea of asserting power over the other. Marlowe seems to be cynical of the idea that religion is a means to reform societies by presenting it as a tool of destruction in the hands of political leaders to maintain their powerful positions by exterminating their rivals. As a consequence of the reciprocal violence which was practiced by Catholic states such as France and Spain as well as Protestant states like England over minor religious groups, Marlowe seems to be suggesting throughout his play that a more secular humanist society that can accept all peoples' differences and that works for the benefit of all is more preferable than a religious institution who commits itself to violence in order to assert its power at all costs.

Keywords: cynicism, fanaticism, Protestantism, Catholicism, heretic, 'atheist', unorthodox, nonconformist

Christopher Marlowe's last play *The Massacre at Paris* is a play that shows cynicism towards the religious intolerance and fanaticism in the Europe of the sixteenth century. Although the play recounts the violence of one day on August 24, 1572 in Paris that is well-known as Saint Bartholomew's Day, it epitomizes the general religious malaise sweeping Europe in the sixteenth century in which both Protestants and Catholics were engaged in a deadly struggle over power.

Saint Bartholomew's Day signifies an attempt on behalf of the Parisian Catholics to massacre all Huguenots or force them to return to the old Catholic faith. This attempt by the Catholics was a result of the increasing threat that Huguenots, French Protestants, posed to the official Catholic faith of the country. Therefore, the war against the so-called heretics was aided by Spain and the Pope in which "Catholic propagandists denounced the new beliefs as heresy and

derided those who adopted them as atheists who had abandoned God to follow their own preserve inclinations" (Diefendorf 7). Despite the violence practiced against the French Protestants in the play, it does not represent "a piece of crude Protestant propaganda" (Briggs, "The Rites of Violence: Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*" 217) as some critics claim that "[Marlowe] was writing a straightforward English Protestant view of the French Wars of Religion" (Potter 88). In another work, Julia Briggs describes *The Massacre at Paris* as "a work with a strong Protestant bias" ("Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*: A Reconsideration" 263). However, as a nonconformist writer, Marlowe is cynical of the cruelty of the adherents of Protestantism and Catholicism who legitimize the killing of people and accuse them of heresy because of their faith.

Many other modern critics read Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* as a propaganda for Protestantism while at the same time ignore the fact that Marlowe was well-known among his contemporaries for his atheism and heretic views on religion. Andrew Kirk says that "

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[Marlowe] has made himself a 'brutal propagandist' for a Protestant interpretation of history" (194). Another critic A. D. Wright, one of the biographers of Marlowe, claims that "[Marlowe's] Huguenot sympathies are evident in the play, and may have stemmed from recollections of the Canterbury Huguenots who helped to bring prosperity to his native city" (35). My criticism of those critics is that they read *The Massacre at Paris* as completely isolated from its context, a study which could be considered invalid by New Historicists who emphasize understanding the context to get "a heightened understanding of the culture within which [the text] was produced" (Greenblatt 13). This study, unlike the study of those critics who do not read Marlowe within the larger religious and historical context of the sixteenth century, presents contextual analysis of the play of Marlowe the atheist with an eye to the historical Protestant-Catholic religious wars in sixteenth century Europe, especially those in England and France.

During a time of religious tension, public execution and torture became a scene of everyday life in which the Protestants headed by Queen Elizabeth I were struggling to maintain power while the Catholics headed by the Pope were trying to restore power. It is important to note that in order retain her powerful position as the head of the Church of England, Queen Elizabeth

aided Protestant rebels in both France and the Netherlands. Her efforts eventually prompted King Phillip II of Spain to send an armada of more than a hundred ships with the intention of invading England, deposing Elizabeth, and restoring the Catholic Church. Launched in 1588, Philip's great armada was defeated at sea. Elizabeth's throne was saved, but the conflicts reinforced anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic sentiment in the island nation" (Diefendorf 29)

The Spanish Armada in 1588 resulted in the establishment of Francis Walsingham's intelligence network, the secretary of Queen Elizabeth, which increased the threat on the Catholics who were trying to assassinate Queen Elizabeth. It also endangered the lives of so many other nonconformists who were criticizing the policies of the Queen because of the use of power to

silent her opponents. In this context, it is important to mention that the Spanish Armada against England was followed by the English Armada against Spain in 1589 with an attempt to topple the Catholic system of the country. Accordingly, Catholics and Protestants were engaged into continuous struggles over power in the sixteenth century.

In addition to Christopher Marlowe's tragedy *The Massacre at Paris* which deals with the historical Protestant-Catholic religious wars in sixteenth century Europe, these religious tensions were also reflected in two of the great French tragedies: Francois de Chantelouve's *The Tragedy of the Late Gaspard de Coligny* and Pierre Matthieu's *The Guisiade*. However, unlike Marlowe who criticizes the religious violence that was sweeping Europe in the sixteenth century, and therefore considers religion as a tool of enmity deigned to divide peoples, Chantelouve and Matthieu take a Catholic view of the religious wars in Europe in which they celebrate the revenge the Catholics take on the French Protestants on Saint Bartholomew's Day. The importance of bringing the story of these plays here resides in the fact that "Marlowe may well have read them before writing *The Massacre at Paris*" (Enright 815) and that Marlowe's play could be response to the extremist attitudes these writers take in their plays.

The religious wars in Europe of the sixteenth century which resulted to emergence of Protestantism and other religious denominations were one of the major reasons that led nonconformists to lose their trust in religion as a source of truth. The desire of religious denominations to accuse one another of heresy and immorality on the basis of the claims that they are not God's people and counter-reformation heretics resulted in the rise of unorthodox writers like Marlowe who are highly critical of the politicizing of religion and using it as a tool of cruelty and killing. This means that "religious differences introduced by the Protestant Reformation result not just in official persecution but also in popular religious animosities strong enough to provoke the slaughter of neighbor by neighbor" (Diefendorf 1). Therefore, the ferocity which was practiced against Protestants in Catholic states such as France and Spain was matched by the same policy against Catholics in Protestant states like England. This made Europe the center for religious

tensions in which public ceremonies of the minor religious groups were forbidden while killing in the name of religion was widely practiced. Therefore, it would be erroneous to consider Marlowe, who was well-known for his enmity towards organized religion, as a propagandist of Protestantism when he was threatened with being taken to the gallows if a proof of unorthodoxy was provided against him. Richard Baines indicates in the 'atheistic' document, which was provided against Marlowe as proof of his unorthodoxy, that Marlowe was a dangerous 'atheist' "that the mouth of/ so dangerous a member may be stopped" (Kocher 36). Accordingly, *The Massacre at Paris* represents an example about the religious intolerance and bigotry among all denominations in the sixteenth century in Europe.

Marlowe's cynicism of religion in *The Massacre at Paris* is represented in exposing the hypocrisy of politicians and religious figures by uncovering the real intentions behind the religious wars and use of power to explain the hatred between different religious denominations. To Marlowe, religion was a means to achieve political power rather than a means to advocate morality and preach love. Therefore, the violence which dominates the relationship of the characters of Marlowe with each other and which is ostensibly an outcome of religious difference is instead a gloss on Marlowe's cynicism towards religion and statecraft whose practitioners are only truly invested in the duration of their own power.

The play begins by recounting the arrangement of the historical marriage between the Catholic Margaret, sister to Charles IX, King of France and daughter to Catherine de Medici, Queen-Mother, and the Protestant King of Navarre. This religiously mixed marriage was an attempt to stop the constant riots performed by the Huguenots as well as the massacres of the Catholics. Charles addresses the nobility:

Prince of Navarre, my honourable brother,
Prince Conde, and my good Lord Admiral,
I wish this union and religious league,
Knit in these hands, thus joined in nuptial rites,
May not dissolve till death dissolve our lives,
And that the native sparks of princely love,
That kindled first this motion in our hearts,

May still be fuelled in our progeny. (1.1-8)^(*)

Although historical documents show that Charles was faithful in his plans to stop the religious violence in France, the hypocrisy of Catherine de Medici and her support of the Guises who were the most ferocious enemies to the Huguenots paved the way for the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day. While Catherine announces to the King of Navarre that "[their] difference in religion/ Might be a means to cross [him] in [his] love" (1.15-16), she says aside that she "will dissolve [this marriage] with blood and cruelty" (1.25). The reason that this religiously mixed marriage was opposed by the majority of Catholics is attributed to the fact that Catholics considered "the religiously mixed marriage ... an impious alliance for which God would surely be avenged" (Diefendorf 19). Therefore, Catholics considered the religiously mixed marriage as a disobedience of the laws of God that deserved heavenly punishment.

The fears of the French Catholics that the religiously mixed marriage of Margaret and Navarre will empower the Huguenots which may result in the Huguenots reaching the throne, especially when the marriage was welcomed by Charles IX and the Queen of England's support to the Huguenots, caused the Catholics to make the decision to exterminate all of the Huguenots. Furthermore, the murder of the Protestant Admiral Coligny, who was encouraging the King to wage a war against the Spanish Catholics in the Netherlands, which was ordered by Queen-Mother and the Guises, increased the fears of the uprising of the Huguenots to revenge his death. Mack Holt asserts that "the announcement early in 1572 that a royal wedding was planned between the king's sister Marguerite and the Protestant Henry of Navarre only confirmed Catholic fears that Charles IX himself had fallen under the spell of the charismatic Coligny" (81). The lenient politics of Charles IX towards the Huguenots, which Marlowe affirms in his play was a source of fear to the Catholics, made the Queen-Mother interfere and order the massacre of Huguenots. Charles laments the murder of Huguenots:

(*) This quote and all subsequent quotes from the primary text are to the same edition by Frank Romany and Robert Lindsey, 2003. See documentation in references.

My heart relents that noble men,
 Only corrupted in religion,
 Ladies of honour, knights, and gentlemen,
 Should for their conscience taste such ruthless
 ends. (4.9-12)

In addition, the speech of Charles IX to the King of Navarre before his death represents a confession of his sins because of his role in the massacre where he says:

O no, my loving brother of Navarre!
 I have deserved a scourge, I must confess;
 Yet is their patience of another sort
 Than to misdo the welfare of their king:
 God grant my nearest friends may prove no
 worse!
 O hold me up, my sight begins to fail,
 My sinews shrink, my brains turn upside
 down,
 My heart doth break, I faint and die. (13.8-15)

However, historical sources attest that Charles played a peripheral role in the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in which he was only "wear[ing] the diadem" (11.41) while the actual ruler was the Queen-Mother. The fears of Charles getting deposed or murdered if he opposes the cruel politics of his mother and the Guises make him confess that they are the ones who hold the power in their hands. He says: "Well, madam, I refer it to your majesty,/ And to my nephew here, the duke of Guise:/ What you determine, I will ratify" (4.23-25). In addition, Catherine threatens that her will shall rule in the country by force when she announces: "Tush, all shall die unless I have my will,/ For, while she lives, Catherine will be queen" (14.65-66). This reciprocal violence between Catholics and Protestants in Europe was an outcome of the religious tensions that was a result of the struggles over power. While the Protestants deified Queen Elizabeth as divine and considered her a reformer of the false Catholic Church, Catholics deified the Pope and considered him as the true representative of God on earth. Therefore, Catholics considered Queen Elizabeth as a heretic for her anti-papist politics which resulted in murderous religious wars that erupted throughout Europe.

It is important to note that when Queen Elizabeth ascended to the throne, the majority of the people were Catholics. However, by the end of her reign, Elizabeth was able to transform England into a Protestant country. Susan Doran claims that "the task of the new Protestant regime of Elizabeth was ... to wean the population away from its traditional beliefs and convert the country to Protestantism through preaching and education" (*Elizabeth I and Religion* 48). Nevertheless, Elizabeth did not follow a policy of "preaching and education" as Doran argues, but a policy of killing and extermination that guaranteed the transformation of England into Protestantism through power in which Catholics had either the option of converting to Protestantism, getting mutilated or immigrate to the Low Countries. Queen Elizabeth followed strict politics against Catholic missionaries in England who were gathering Catholics and preaching rebellion against the Church of England with the hope that Catholics would return to power. Robert Ashton recounts the story of Catholic missionaries during the reign of Elizabeth by arguing that

The achievement of the Catholic missionaries was very great. Their determination to stem the process of minimal conformity with the established church on the part of English Catholics, and the example of the lives and the heroism of the deaths of so many of them, were factors whose importance it is difficult to exaggerate in the survival of Catholicism as a force in English life. (147)

On the other side, the Queen-Mother was able to eradicate the Huguenots throughout the same atrocious politics which were followed against Catholics in England. To nonconformists like Marlowe who considered religion "a childish toy", religion was simply a pretext for killing rather than a source of teaching morality and mercy. Marlowe's play is an attempt to deconstruct the notion that religion is a source of truth throughout presenting it as a tool in the hands of politicians to elevate themselves above the people.

In France, the murder of Admiral Coligny ignited the religious upheavals between Catholics and Huguenots. Holt argues that

All the surviving evidence suggests that the popular massacre that broke out in Paris on St Bartholomew's night was neither planned nor condoned by the king's council. The king himself issued orders as soon as the popular violence broke out for everyone in the city to return to their homes. And apart from the radical fringe of the city militia who did encourage and even led the populace in many of the attacks, the bulk of the king's and the city's forces seem to have been trying to maintain order rather than participating in the murders. Even Henry, duke of Guise, who personally took charge of the murder of Coligny, made efforts to prevent the unnecessary deaths of other Protestants in the capital. (90)

Although the massacre may have not been planned before, the gathering of the Huguenots in Paris threatening revenge for the murder of Coligny caused the Catholic government to follow a bloody policy aimed to weaken the Protestant movement in France. Holt explains that "[the Catholics] gross miscalculation of the situation at court – based on their fear of Huguenot reprisals for the attempt on Coligny's life – led them to order a quick strike against the Huguenot leadership still in Paris after the royal wedding" (85). The strike against Huguenots resulted in the slaughter of thousands of innocent people only because of their faith. Despite the claim of Barbara Diefendorf that "the Protestants may have been numerically weak, but they still held enough cities that the Catholics could not afford to fight on" (15) which may have caused the Catholics to wage a war against the French Protestants, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day remains an appalling event in the history of Catholic-Protestant tensions during this time period.

It is quite important to note that Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre was not the only outcome of the French religious wars over power. This massacre was preceded by many clashes between Catholics and Huguenots, such as the Massacre of Vassy which was performed by Francis, Duke of Guise, against the Huguenots in 1562. This massacre was a result of the constant failure attempts of the Catholic government to stop the Huguenots' public religious practices as well as the riots which aimed to destroy the religious symbols of the

Catholic Church. As an attempt to stop the Huguenots' expansion in the Catholic state, Queen-Mother issued an edict in 1561 that allows the Huguenots to perform worship only outside the walls of Paris. However, the refusal of the Huguenots to obey the royal edict caused to the Catholic-Huguenot relationship in France to become more inflamed. This in turn led the Catholic state to follow a more strict policy to extirpate the Huguenots from the country. Diefendorf explains:

Although the edict of April 1561 explicitly forbade Protestants to worship in public, they continued to gather in increasingly large numbers for sermons and prayer. They also began to seize churches in the cities where they were strongest and to engage in acts of iconoclasm, deliberately destroying saints' images and other ritual objects so as to publicize alleged errors in Catholic teaching. (11)

Therefore, when "Francis, duke of Guise, attacked Protestants gathered for worship at Vassy, near a Guise estate in Champagne, many Parisians acclaimed him as their hero. Here, people believed, was the Catholic leader who would put an end to the Huguenots' insolence" (Diefendorf 13). Therefore, it would be quite possible to say that the counter-attacks of the Catholic Church in France, from the Catholic outlook, came as a reaction to the insurgence of the Huguenots.

Marlowe as an enemy of religion who was familiar with the cruel politics of the New Protestant Reformers who aimed to make Protestantism flourish all around Europe by force would have taken a cynical attitude towards the Huguenots presentation of themselves as innocent victims. This is best represented by Navarre who says:

But he that sits and rules above the clouds
Doth hear and see the prayers of the just,
And will revenge the blood of innocents
That Guise hath slain by treason of his heart,
And brought by murder to their timeless ends.
(1.41-45)

Marlowe exposes the hypocrisy of religious figures by

uncovering the reasons behind the French religious wars which are launched by people who claim to be righteous and faithful while they intend to live a luxurious lifestyle by holding power. The Machiavellian Guise who was seen as the savior of the Catholics represents an epitome of the religious hypocrisy in the play. Although the Guise orders the killing of Huguenots in the name of religion, the following speeches reveal that his real motivation is power. The Guise says:

Set me to scale the high pyramides,
And thereon set the diadem of France,
I'll either rend it with my nails to naught,
Or mount the top with my aspiring wings,
Although my downfall be the deepest hell.
(2.43-47)

He also adds:

For this, from Spain the stately Catholics
Sends Indian gold to coin me French *ecues*;
For this, have I a largess from the Pope,
A pension and a dispensation too;
And by that privilege to work upon,
My policy hath framed religion.
Religion: *O Diabole!* (2.60-66)

The fact that Marlowe calls religion “diabole” in his play supports the claim that he was cynical of religion, an accusation which was attributed to him by his contemporaries – Richard Baines, Thomas Kyd, Robert Greene and Aldrich – who accused him of saying “that the first beginning of religion was only to keep men in awe” (Kocher 36). Therefore, by introducing hypocritical religious figures such as the Guise and who call religion “diabole”, Marlowe seems to be aware that religion was used during his time as a cover for corrupt clergymen and politicians to achieve their secular ends.

By presenting the Guise as evil and a murderer, the play might be seen as an anti-Catholic propaganda from the Protestant perspective; however, applying the evil characteristics of the Guise to the Protestants who are motivated by the same Machiavellian aims shows that Marlowe intends to present all denominational religions as “diabole” in which “neither Protestantism nor

Catholicism engendered the spirit of toleration within themselves” (Salmon 13). To Marlowe, religion is a political tool that benefits few numbers of people while it causes torture and death to many. The Guise is struggling to wear the diadem of France with the help of the Pope and Spain who aid his campaign. On the other side, Queen Elizabeth aids the Huguenots to defeat the Guises who represent a major threat to her position as the head of the Protestant Church. Doran explains:

The problem for Elizabeth lay in the repeated threat that the Guises would seize power and direct royal policy. Because of their determined stand against the Huguenots, their international connections and their close ties to the papacy, the Guises were viewed in England as dangerous agents of the Counter-Reformation who were intent on exterminating ‘entirely the Protestant religion’. (*Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy* 9-10)

This makes the laity victims of the Machiavellian politics of those who are in power and who use religion as a tool to achieve their personal needs by claiming to be protectors of religion and accusing other religious denominations to be of the devil and that they should be wiped out.

Religious violence in the play is so pervasive that it was no wonder that nonconformists like Marlowe would have been skeptical that religion was the product of a merciful God. They would have been convinced by witnessing to the inhumane and intolerant practices of those who claim to be performing God’s will on earth by killing nonconformists. The Guise makes his advocates vow “by the argent crosses in [their] burgonets/ To kill all that [they] suspect of heresy” (5.2-3). An example about the religious cruelty in the play is represented in deforming and dismembering the dead body of the Admiral and keeping him unburied until his body is decayed. Anjou, one of the followers of the Guise, orders the mutilation of the Admiral by saying: “Away with him! Cut off his head and hands,/ And send them for a present to the Pope” (5.42-43). This speech announces that Catholics in the play are performing the will of the Pope who justifies cruelty in which he considers himself mediator between people and God. Therefore,

viewed by Catholics as threats to the social and political order, Huguenots not only had to be exterminated – that is, killed – they also had to be humiliated, dishonoured, and shamed as the inhuman beasts they were perceived to be. The victims had to be dehumanized – slaughtered like animals – since they had violated all the sacred laws of humanity in Catholic culture. (Holt 87)

Skeptics of religion such as Marlowe would have found Sir John Cheke's statement about religion to be all so true: "A true religion, ye seke by lyke, and worthy to be fought for. For without the swerd indeed nothyng can help it" (Cheke 11). In addition, Marlowe should have been cynical of religion which considers killing nonconformists as a way to salvation and the cleansing of sins. This cynicism is presented in the speech of the Friar who expresses his will to seek revenge against Henry of Navarre for the murder of the Guise. He says to Duke Dumaine: "O my lord, I have been a great sinner in my days, and/ the deed is meritorious" (23.27-28). Marlowe's parody of religion is also demonstrated in the consideration of whether winning a battle was a form of divine support for the righteous and truthful. This issue of righteousness gets complicated when "Protestants and Catholics alike interpreted their political allegiances in terms of obedience to God's will and believed they were fighting to ensure God's will on earth and access to salvation and eternal life for themselves and their fellow citizens. This made the stakes in the war very high" (Diefendorf 14). While the Guise says: "I am no traitor to the crown of France;/ What I have done, 'tis for the Gospel sake" (19.20-21), Navarre announces:

We undertake to manage these our wars
Against the proud disturbers of the faith,
I mean, the Guise, the Pope, and King of Spain,
Who set themselves to tread us under foot,
And rent our true religion from this land.
(16.2-6)

Accordingly, the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, from the Catholic perspective, could have been seen a form of punishment from God over the heretics and a

promise that "Catholics [shall] flourish once again" (5.21). On the other side, the murder of the Guise at the hands of Henry, who ultimately joins the forces of Queen Elizabeth, could have been considered a godly support of the true religion of Protestantism which introduces Queen Elizabeth as the "natural queen" who was chosen by God to protect His religion. Henry boasts after the murder of the Guise:

This is the traitor that hath spent my gold
In making foreign wars and civil broils.
Did he not draw a sort of English priests
From Douai to the seminary at Rheims
To hatch forth treason 'gainst their natural queen?
Did he not cause the King of Spain's huge fleet
To threaten England and to menace me?
Did he not injure monsieur that's deceased?
Hath he not made me in the Pope's defence
To spend the treasure that should strength my land
In civil broils between Navarre and me?
Tush, to be short, he meant to make me monk,
Or else to murder me, and so be king. (21.98-110)

However, although the end of the play seems to glorify Queen Elizabeth by Protestant characters by suggesting that she is a legitimate and godly ruler, the play does not seem to represent the propaganda of any particular denominational religion. As Douglas Cole says:

Suffering and evil in *The Massacre at Paris* emerge finally as tools manipulated for propaganda purposes. Death and destruction brought about by Guise and the Catholics are evil crimes of heinous and ungodly injustice; the killing of Guise and his brother the Cardinal by forces favorable to Protestantism are virtuous acts of retribution, and are brought about with God's help. (154)

On the contrary, the play is critical of religion in the Europe of the sixteenth century as a tool of bloodshed

and cruelty that is practiced against all nonconformists in society. To Marlowe, religion was a means to achieve political power rather than a means to advocate morality and preach love. Therefore, the violence which dominates the relationship of the characters of Marlowe with each other and which is ostensibly an outcome of religious difference is instead a gloss on Marlowe's cynicism towards a statecraft whose practitioners are only truly invested in the duration of their own power.

It is also important to note that in addition to the extermination policy which Catholics followed on Saint Bartholomew's Day, "many of the killings had a didactic or ritual character. Killers forced their victims to recant their faith or repeat Catholic prayers and made bonfires of Protestant books" (Diefendorf 21). The association of religion with force expresses the unorthodox belief that religion is an invention which spreads by power rather than by love. Furthermore, it supports the notion that religion is a political tool to achieve the needs of those who are in power. Therefore, Protestants who found refuge from the battle-grounds in the Protestant England were welcomed kindly as allies. And the Protestant government provided support for the Protestant refugees and improved their economic situations by providing all assistance to them. However, some of the local English people protested against the policy of the Privy Council of supporting the Protestant refugees because they believed that they were going to share the resources of economy with them and increase the taxes. Charles Nicholl argues that there are some references in which Marlowe describes the New Protestant comers to England as Machiavellians who try to destroy the economy of the country (41). Nicholl also asserts that "several petitions were signed against the 'strangers', but these seem to have been ignored. The official line was that the immigrants were *bona fide* refugees and Protestant allies, and that they benefited the economy. On 21 March 1593, the House of Commons voted to extend the privileges of resident aliens" (39). Marlowe's opposing attitude towards the Protestant refugees in England reflects his anti-Protestant sentiments and suggests that *The Massacre* represents "a panorama of the history of the late sixteenth-century France" (Summers 134) rather than attempt to present the Huguenots as victims of the French religious wars.

The end of the play with the ascension of Henry IV to the throne has been seen by many critics as proof of Marlowe's orthodoxy. Summers explains that "the Protestant triumph in the play must be taken as proof of God's concern for the affairs of men. The play finally reflects an impeccably orthodox – if unpleasantly violent – Protestant view of the French religious wars" (153). Therefore, the association of Protestantism with revenge suggests a continuation of the religious violence and bloodshed in France. Henry IV vows revenge for the assassination of his father, Henry III, and the murder of Huguenots:

And then I vow for to revenge his death
As Rome and all those popish prelates there
Shall curse the time that e're Navarre was
king,
And ruled in France by Henry's fatal death!
(24.108-111)

Accordingly, the misuse of religion by politicians and hypocritical religious figures transformed religion into a "weapon in the hands of political leaders" (White 86) that could be used to justify their immoral and violent practices. This distorted image of religion in the sixteenth century and its association with politics made some intellectuals of the time lose their trust in the possibility of religion as a way of advancement, and therefore; it was no wonder that Marlowe was "a crusader against Christianity" (Kocher 317) during the last few years of his life because of the use of religion to achieve personal interests.

In conclusion, *The Massacre at Paris* represents criticism of the bloody politics of Catholics and Protestants in sixteenth century Europe. The play recounts the religious campaign of Catholics against French Protestants with the hope that Catholicism will prosper again to become the only power in Europe. Characters in *The Massacre at Paris* use religion as a means to exert political muscle. Therefore, Marlowe exposes the hypocrisy of politicians and religious characters such as the Guises and Henry III by uncovering the real intentions behind the religious wars and use of power to explain the hatred between different religious denominations. .

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التعصب وعدم التسامح الديني في أوروبا في القرن السادس عشر: تحليل سياقي للحروب البروتستانتية والكاثوليكية في مسرحية كريستوفر مارلو مجزرة باريس

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ملخص

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً سياقياً لمسرحية كريستوفر مارلو مجزرة باريس مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار الحروب التاريخية البروتستانتية والكاثوليكية في القرن السادس عشر - خصوصاً الحروب الدينية في فرنسا وإنجلترا. كما تكشف هذه المسرحية عن الرياء لكل من البروتستانتين والكاثوليك الذين يدعون الأستقامة وأن كل طائفة تمثل تعاليم الدين الصحيحة، ولكن في الواقع كلاهما مستبد بفكرة اظهار القوة ضد الطائفة الاخرى. وبناء عليه ونتيجة للعنف المتبادل والذي كان يمارس من قبل الدول الكاثوليكية كفرنسا واسبانيا والدول البرتستانتية كانجلترا ضد الاقليات الدينية، فأن مارلو يقترح من خلال المسرحية ان العمل على انشاء مجتمع مدني متسامح يقبل الفروقات بين الناس ويسعى الى خدمة الجميع افضل من وجود فرقه دينية متطرفة تسعى الى الوصول الى السلطة بشتى الوسائل.

الكلمات الدالة: التهكم، التعصب الديني، المذهب البروتستانت، المذهب الكاثوليكي، المهرطق، الملحد، غيرتقليدي، منشق.

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