

by the desire of 'worldly pleasure', nor, like Goethe's, by the vanity of knowledge; it is power, power without bound, that he desires, all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life,

— a world of profit and delight  
Of power, of honour, and omnipotence.

This gives him a passionate energy, an emotional sensibility which Goethe's more shifting, sceptical and complex Faust lacks. For Marlowe, also, magic was a possible reality.

(from *Christopher Marlowe*, ed. H. Ellis (1887) pp. xxxviii—  
xxxix)

### A. C. SWINBURNE

THE unity of tone and purpose in *Doctor Faustus* is not unrelieved by change of manner and variety of incident. The comic scenes, written evidently with as little of labour as of relish, are for the most part scarcely more than transcripts, thrown into the form of dialogue, from a popular prose *History of Doctor Faustus*; and therefore should be set down as little to the discredit as to the credit of the poet. Few masterpieces of any age in any language can stand beside this tragic poem — it has hardly the structure of a play — for the qualities of terror and splendour, for intensity of purpose and sublimity of note. In the vision of Helen, for example, the intense perception of loveliness gives actual sublimity to the sweetness and radiance of mere beauty in the passionate and spontaneous selection of words the most choice and perfect; and in like manner the sublimity of simplicity in Marlowe's conception and expression of the agonies endured by Faustus under the immediate imminence of his doom gives the highest note of beauty, the quality of absolute fitness and propriety, to the sheer straightforwardness of speech in which his agonising horror finds vent ever more and more terrible from the first to the last equally beautiful and fearful verse of that tremendous monologue which has no parallel in all the range of tragedy.

(from *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908) pp. 4-5)