

Faust

Adapted by Gyllian Raby.

Further Reading:

- Christopher Marlowe: [The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus](#)
Mary Shelley: [Frankenstein.](#)
Thomas Mann: [Doctor Faustus: the life of the German composer Adrian Leverkuhn as told by a friend.](#)
- Dr. Ben Bova [Immortality](#)
M. A. Rothstein [Protecting Genetic Privacy: Why It's So Hard To Do.](#)
D. J. Kevles & L. Hood: [The Code of Codes: Scientific and Social Issues in the Human Genome Project.](#)
D. Nelkin & M.S. Lindee: [The DNA Mystique: The Gene as a Cultural Icon.](#)
Roger Shattuck: [Forbidden Knowledge: from Prometheus to Pornography.](#)
Philip Kitcher: [Vaulting Ambition: Sociobiology and the Quest for Human Nature.](#)
Tom Wilkie: [Perilous Knowledge: The Human Genome Project and its Implications.](#)
Nancy Gibbs et al ["If We Have It, Do We Use It?" Time Magazine, 13/9/99.](#)
Bruno Latour [We Have Never Been Modern.](#)

FAUST

Dramatis Personae

Chorus & DNA Dancers

Helen Faust: Genetic Engineer Supreme

Crick: Faust's Clownish Fantasy Assistant

Watson: Faust's other Clownish Fantasy Assistant

Adam II: A Biomechanical Cloned Human-- his various incarnations are all figments of Faust's imagination

Mr Festerlees: A Tempter from the Corporate World of Bio- Genetic Profits.

Faust was first developed as a Xavier University New Works Commission, Cincinnati 1999. The workshop production was directed and designed by Gyllian Raby with the assistance of Catherine Moore, who played the role of Helen Faust. The other members of the acting ensemble were::

Brandon Anderson as Festerlees

Eric Brass as Adam II the Clone

Megan Fiene as Watson

Rob Jansen as Crick

NOTE:

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Prologue: The Facts

The Dawn of a New Age. 5 scientists in white lab coats stand silhouetted against a red sky. A mechanical drone sounds in security scan pulses.

VOICE OVER

Fact: The sequencing of the Human Genome was recently completed.

The Scientists move slowly downstage.

VOICE OVER

Fact: We have the theory and the technology to clone a new human.

5 apples appear mid-air, to dangle before each Scientist

VOICE OVER

Fact: The law forbids it.

(pause)

Please, do not wipe your feet. We are all scientists here.

Rock music blasts. The Scientists ponder the nature of the apples. Suddenly one of them grabs his apple, holds it aloft, then crouches to defend it from the others. Blackout. Silence.

Prologue: The Introduction

Pin spots illuminate the DNA Chorus who speak by turns.

Chorus

Not fighting aliens on Independence Day
nor blasting meteors in Armageddon
Intends our Muse to vaunt her heavenly verse.
Only this, gentles: — we will now perform
The choices put to Faustus, good and bad.
Now is she born, as DNA's discovered,
Age 14, works part time at a lab,
her learning and her great community service
win her Valedictorian, and then the Ivy League.
While mum and dad are busy or away
a boy breaks her heart ; her dog's killed by a bus
yet still she frames her Ph.D. Genetics,
and maps the Human Genome's DNA.
'Till, swol'n with cunning, of a self-conceit,
she finds a sealed glass ceiling where

her waxen wings, mounting above her reach,
cannot go, and melting, heavens conspire
her overthrow!

She falls to devilish exercise...

And gluttoned now with learning's golden gifts
She plays with outlawed clone technology.
Nothing so sweet as "Creation" is to her
which she prefers to any human bliss:
And Helen Faustus in her study sits.

*(Exit Chorus . Faust alone in her rather theatrical laboratory which
sits in a red circle in a black square on a raked stage.)*

Scene 1: Faust Decides Where she Stands.

Faust

The double helix code hath ravished me.
Yet gene therapy, to me, is commonplace;
'tis plastic surgery on a grander scale,
petty dreams of average perfection.....

I'll do no more, I have attained that end.

Couldst I make us live eternally—
—or being dead, raise us to life again,
or from a swab, grow tissues into life!
Then genetic science could be esteemed.

The law of God, the law of the land permits
no tampering with the human germ...

Yet I see a better world! Where nature's purified
our genes wiped clean of heritable disease...
Where beauty is as common as a sunny day
and the torture of the senile never comes;
A world where something close to happiness can reign.....

Foolish laws may fit technicians in a lab
who aim at nothing but the status quo
Laws too servile and illiberal for me.

Tush! we are post modern!

There is no truth, only patterns of meaning,
what are laws but language games...
Not laws but the vision of science shall guide our way!

Oh, what a world of progress and delight
What power, honour and omnipotence might come
were I to secretly enhance the human form...?

Faust falls to reveries as Bosanova Music plays. Enter her two clownish assistants. They are playing cards for high stakes in:

Scene 2: Eugenics Fantasia

CRICK

Watson! My fellow Nobel Laureate—do you have the Blue Eyed Gene?

WATSON

Crick, oh cherished colleague, you appear to be in luck.

CRICK

Watson! Do you have the Spatial Reasoning Gene?

WATSON

No. Go splice.

CRICK

Arggh!

WATSON

Crick, old playmate—do you have...
the Male Recessive gene for Baldness?

(Crick hands it over, annoyed)

WATSON

Do you have the gene for Webbed Feet?

CRICK

(mutters, shielding the card)

...bet you've got the gene for bad acting...

WATSON

Play fair Crick!

CRICK

(gives up the card grudgingly)

Yes!

WATSON

On a roll! Have you the gene for Super Aggression?

(The Bosanova music cuts out abruptly)

CRICK

My dear Watson. That's nurture, not nature.

WATSON

How can you be so sure?

CRICK

Fund my research, I'll make sure.

WATSON

Ye-es, super-aggressive funding does nurture nature.

(A loud knock at the door echoes loudly throughout. Crick and Watson draw back apprehensively. Faust goes to the door).

Scene 3: The Proposal

Faust

Who's there?

(Enter a man in a crisp well-tailored suit).

Festerlees

Doctor Helen Faust?

Faust

Do I know you, Mr—?

Festerlees

Festerlees.

We've met. I represent the Board of Tech-Bio-Gene-Tech, proud sponsor of this year's Human Genome Science Awards.

And here, Dr. Faust, are your prizes.

(He loads her up with trophies)

The Biological Clock Award, for your work on the klotho gene, flicking OFF the Hayflick limit on life. Excuse me:

(he sings a phrase)

Who, "I wanna live for ever!"

Faust

Thank you.

Festerlees

The Bleeding Heart Award, for your genetic breakthroughs eliminating 7 types of cancer, 6 muscular maladies, 5 respiratory afflictions, 4 immune deficiencies, 3 mental handicaps, 2 heart diseases and the host of unwholesome heritable genes.

Faust

Thank you.

Festerlees

Reputation, Dr. Faust, is in the hands of those who spread it and those who have some stake in the spreading. Oh-- and last, but not least, the Apple Award for your decision to create a complete human being by cloning.

(Faust won't take the apple)

Faust.

You're mistaken.

Festerlees

Ah ah ah! Dark secrets, like murder will out. Like the bomb, they must be tested. You've found the grail, Helen Faust: The code of codes. The book of Man. The answer to the ultimate question, "Know thyself"...

Faust

Cloning is illegal Mr—

Festerlees

Festerlees.

(He dismisses illegality with an airy shake of his hand)

You want to achieve your vision, and I want to shield you from the law. We have the President's ear.

Faust

Which President?

Festerlees

Every President. Brass tacks, Dr. Faust:
Your clone is your multi-billion dollar man. A vulnerable investment. It's a wicked world out there and only a large organization such as ours can protect the product,

Rock Music bursts.

Scene 4: Urban Myth Fantasia

(Faust's laboratory scene mutates in to a hotel bathroom. Two hands appear grasping the sides of the bathtub, and pull a man's torso into view. It is Adam, a human clone. He groans, hung-over)

CLONE

Lucia—?

(On the mirror, he reads a message scrawled in lipstick. He reaches blindly for his cell-phone and dials. A phone rings. Elsewhere, it is answered)

CLONE

Lucia—?

FAUST

Hello?

CLONE

The mirror...it says on the mirror to call this number...

FAUST

Adam? It's me, Adam, it's Helen. Where are you? Where have you been?

(He holds his head)

CLONE

I...went to a party

FAUST

What happened Adam? What have you done? You know it's not safe to go out.

CLONE

I gave my guard the slip, fell in with Lucia,
Unhappy man, I was blind with Lucia,
now she's gone, I woke up in a tub of ice,
in a strange place, without Lucia...

FAUST

Adam. Listen to me. Do you have any contusions, any new or unfamiliar scars on your body?

CLONE

What?...I

FAUST

Place your hands behind your back, at waist level.

CLONE

Swellings; stitches. And behind my left ear. And--

He cries out in despair.

FAUST

Alright. They took your kidney's and God knows what else.
Damn.damn! haven't I told you, trust no-one, touch no-one-- Adam!
Get back on the ice! NOW!!

The Clone collapses out of sight. The fantasy is over. Faust turns to Festerlees.

Scene 5: Festerlees Offers Control & Certainty

FESTERLEES

You see? Vulnerable. You want this product, you need our help Dr. Faust.

Faust

What exactly is your offer?

Festerlees

Unlimited funding to develop the superior human template.

Faust

In exchange for?

Festerlees

Complete control of the patents.

Faust

Just as Mattel controls Barbie?

Festerlees

(laughs at her)

Don't play hard to get with me, Doctor Faust. You'll agree.

Faust

Oh?

Festerlees

You will agree because you want it so much. You want to be the one to map, order, and control life, Unpredictable Life. You want to wrest a *reassuring certainty* from the chaos of the gene meddling future. There are some mad scientists out there, really Helen. Imagine what they might do.

Scene 6: Fantasia of Chaos

(Crick and Watson play "Headlines")

CRICK

Genetically Altered Seal Boy Swims round World...Twice.
By Dr. Crick.

WATSON

Transgenic Mouse Man Grown From Walt Disney's Left Toenail!
M-I-C...

CRICK

Master Race Cloned on Master Card credit. By Dr. Crick.

WATSON

Mud Tissue Fruit Fly Man--Wait.
You can't say "Master Race".

CRICK

Uh?

WATSON

Zieg Heil and all that..."Master Race" nuh uh.

CRICK

Ah. Healthy Race Cloned by-- no no, we want to be better than well. What's better than healthy? er, er...Ah! Who cares, Watson!!!

(He pulls a yo yo from his lab coat pocket)

CRICK

Look at it!!

WATSON

yo, yo.

CRICK

Zippping up, unzipping DNA in replication
all that useful information
it just drives my imagination
I can't get no--

(he arrests the yo yo)

Perfect pitch. Watson, what is perfect pitch?

WATSON

Base-pair 2,587,681.5b

CRICK

Clevver.

WATSON

Thank you.

CRICK

Clevver how perfect pitch is so similar to serial killing.

WATSON

gets it

Base-pair 2,587,681.5c. Oh! Valuable Information to some people!

CRICK& WATSON

Exactly my point, my dear Watson. Pavarotti will pay, or else we'll go public.

WATSON

Ele-gant, Dr. Crick.

CRICK

Ele-mentary, my dear Watson.

(Lights fade on the self-gratulating scientists and we are back in the lab where)

Scene 7: Festerlees Makes his Offer

Festerlees

You see? All over the world, scientists less skillful and less ethical than you are poised over the gene pool, Doctor Faust. An official ban inevitably leads to secret research by the elite—shouldn't you be the first tpo swan dive?

Faust

Stop.

Festerlees

Come on. You've had the vision. You think anyone can stop it now? A plan abandoned will haunt you like th undead, until you find the power to make it happen.

Faust

Power for good?

Festerlees

We-ell...why not? This is not a simple molecule we're talking here: read any magazine: this DNA is our essence, equivalent to the human soul.

Faust

Tush, the soul's a fable. Don't mix spirit up in science. What interests me is the human machine.

Festerlees

Precisely, precisely! And how far we can drive it! Combine bio-engineering with cloning and the old tribal laws divid-ing us by gender, ethnicity, will be no more! Freedom Helen! Imagine...

Scene 8: The Bio-engineered Cyber-Clone Fantasia

(Enter the DNA Chorus, bionically led by the Clone, Adam. Choreography:)

Clone

I am not a mammal but an idea, walking. Let us call this idea “global co-operation”. Seven races are genetically expressed in me, seventy patent-holders sponsored my development, seven thousand friendly brands network to show my vital signs here on my sleeve. More transparent than Glasnost you know me, for all my signs are open to you.

My cyborg body is a temporary body you can mass produce at will.
View:

Spinal fluid motordrive, *lymph-filters*, bio-plastic organs, *prostheses*, *cranial boosters*, *gene switchers*, psycho-neural synapse regulators, *neural-modem interface-- NORTAN ANTI-VIRUS.... scanning...*, My social skills have been idealised by bio-technical augmentations in hardware, software, wetware and designer drugs. View:

Panic systems, reconstructive memoryware, hormonal drive, biochip sex-drive, stress regulators, happy now?

Call me “*long lasting global co-operation*” for my auto-cell regeneration and in-vivo virtual self-help nano-bot treatment facilities----
NORTAN ANTI-VIRUS.... scanning.....,

I am you. Your lucky tourist, your good luck. I am permanent escape from the negative consequences of embodiment. I am your body of knowledge. Surprized?

(Fascinated, Faust takes a step towards the techno-clone. Festerlees stops her, dangling the contract)

Scene 9: Will Faust Sign The Contract?

Festerlees

Contract yourself with us. You won't regret it.

(Faust tears her eyes away from the Clone)

Faust

I'll think about it.

(Festerless hands over the contract)

Festerlees

You've got 'till midnight. Oh. Don't read the small print. You won't like it.

She reads it. He winces.

(Faust immediately reads the small print)

Faust

I'd b permitted to love only my work?

Festerlees

That's right. But think about it, there's nothing new or strange in that, we'll merely magnify the thing you are.
Till midnight, Doctor Faust!

(Exit Festerlees, cello music plays)

Faust

Do I love only my work? Is it true...?

(She looks anew at the Clone)

Scene 10: Fantasia on Loving Work

Clone

Yes. But will your work love you?

Faust

Yes

Clone

No

Faust

You must. I made you.

Clone

A hundred million ancestors handed down these genes for me. A mere handful bear your stamp, the year 2000. What of my ancestor's right to patent?

(Faust laughs this off)

Faust

Tell them to come call on me. I'll gladly pay their share.

Clone

They'll come. With side effects you never dreamed off, detours no tourist wants to take.

Faust

But will you love me?

Clone

Since you're the one who'd take a thousand risks
and crack the careful codices of nature to make me Paris...
Let Troy fall. Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

Faust

So you say now, because you're an idea that wants to LIVE and so
I'm a god to you...but ideas...philandering ideas, once out...take
their own space.....

*(From the back of the stage the DNA Chorus pull pingpong balls out
of their pockets. A few drop from the ceiling. Some roll down the
stage. Who knows where they go. Faust follows them with her eyes
and finds herself watching:)*

**Scene 11: Fantasia of Pan-Planetary
Physiology**

*(Music of the speheres plays as Crick and Watson sip tropical
Margueritas and play ping pong. After a moment:)*

WATSON

Will you marry me Crick?

CRICK

What? No. With your grandmother's heart defect and your poor
eyesight?!

WATSON

Oh you're right. Right.

CRICK

Do you think Cindy Crawford would marry me?

WATSON

If she didn't find out about your Uncle Web Foot. My serve.

CRICK

Quite. Quite.
You know, Watson: the more work I do, the more I believe the hu-
man body is obsolete. Enhancing it's a complete and utter waste of
time.

WATSON

Absolutely. "Human" ought to be redefined.

(Faust steps into their fantasia, caught up in the momentum of this idea)

FAUST

Yes! I believe that evolution in fact ends with the technological invasion of the body.

CRICK

Hear here!

WATSON

Rather necessary for space travel and all that.

CRICK

So...?

FAUST

—the question we should ask is—:

CRICK, WATSON & FAUST

—how do we shape a Pan Planetary Human Physiology?

Scene 12 : Faust Inspired by Future

Faust

If we can think it, we'll believe it and we'll do it: Yes!

Design a genome to resolve all ambiguities and wipe away the troubles of our earth.

We 'll fly to Jupiter and laugh amid its vapours! Inhale pollution, and heal the ozone hole; in the Amazon, replant the jungle; catch comets' fire to energize the earth.

No-one will starve, no-one will freeze, freedom for all in health and wealth! We'll found a single nation where I reign as Principal and all corporations canonize my science.

What shall I want? Nothing! Oh! This cheers my soul! In the double helix is Jehovah's name annagramatized! The abbreviated names of life's instruction!

(Crick and Watson applaud enthusiastically)

Crick

Fantastic, Doctor Faust!

Watson

So few *feel* enthusiasm these days !

Crick

— enthusiasm uncontaminated with criticism, lame prudence or —

Crick & Watson

—the deadly reins of reason!

Faust

Just call it vaulting ambition!

(Romantic synchronized swimmer music a la Esther Williams swells to full volume as Crick and Watson roll up their sleeves and get to work)

Scene 13: Fantasia of Creating a Clone

(The DNA Chorus gracefully and lyrically dance their own creation They spit in a bowl, gleefully mixed by Crick, and swim exotically. Watson snaps on colorful rubber gloves. Olympic gymnast ribbons swirl double-helices over the stage. The Clone appears in Leonardo's golden section stance, on a scaffold above. Faust watches in intoxicated amazement as the vision unfolds. And then it breaks. The music changes into demonic music. The Creation goes bad. The golden section distends out of proportion. The dancers get tied up in their own strings. They shrivel. Crick slits his wrist into a bowl. Watson withdraws into insanity. Faust watches, helpless. Festerlees' terrible knocking comes at the door)

Scene 14: Tempis Fugit

(Enter Festerlees)

Festerlees

Have you signed?

Faust

I need more time

Festerlees

Tempis Fugit, Doctor Faust. Decide.

(Faust dithers. From up above, the Clone speaks)

CLONE

I see parents who want first and foremost, sons.

I see insurance companies and employers— every rabid speculator
of the market economy—
Slavering to control your plan and profit from it.

I see genetic tests that order social grouping;
Genetic screening to predict job aptitude:
A billion dollar industry without secrecy or limits
brands a lifelong scarlet letter on each one of us.
Which of us is bound for the genetic underclass?
Which of us can buy our freedom from it?
A genetic passport guarantees our right to reproduce
who with, and when; Or sentences us to sterile lives
Outside the care community: No health or life insurance there
Because sound business practice supercedes the common good.

Festerlees

Sound Business *IS* the Common Good.

CLONE

Oh Faustus, leave these frivolous demands
which strike new terror to my fainting heart.

(Festerlees dispels the vision of horror, reproaching Faust for indulging her imagination)

Festerlees

You Pessimist Doctor Faust!
This isn't the future, you imagine here., this is how people used to
be, it's the past.
See how the past depresses you, how badly you want change: all
those rivalries, betrayals, experiments gone wrong...
Helen. She who is master of the future can rectify the past. Rewrite
the histories! Retouch the photographs! Alter the results! Power for
good! Power is good! Full power ahead!

Scene 15: The Signing of the Contract

Faust

God has given me the ability to recreate our germline.

Festerlees

With a little help from your friends. Sign.

Faust

Human nature resists leaving so much to chance, when there is a choice.

Festerlees

Choice *is* the greatest talent of the species.

(Faust takes the contract)

Faust

Yet I proceed in despair.

Festerlees

In despair, hope.

Sign.

(Faust signs the contract. Festerlees jigs)

A clock strikes twelve as Faust , alone, speaks directly to audience)

Faust

- 1) We're all citizens of the world, gathered here.
 - 2) Give me the benefit of doubt, think well of me...
 - 3) There was ink in the pen: I signed
 - 4) There was blood in my veins, I signed.
 - 5) Because progress is a straight line from the apes... I signed
 - 6) Because my greatest happiness is to live by theory
 - 6) yet pure theory tugs to be applied:
 - 7) The mountain's there, I must climb it...
 - 8) Free will is but illusion. We are puppets of Ideas who
 - 9) Believe what we accept and accept what we believe;
 - 10) and I believe the art of science impossible
 - 11) without the politician's smile and the profiteer's handshake;
- (A light shines on Festerlees, noisily crunching an apple)*
- 12) Oh, he smiles and smiles yet still is he a villain.

The End.