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INTRODUCTION

Renaissance¹, the ‘rebirth’ of literature, art, and learning that progressively transformed European culture from the mid-14th century in Italy to the mid-17th century in England, strongly influenced by the rediscovery of classical Greek and Latin literature, and accelerated by the development of printing. The Renaissance is commonly held to mark the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern Western world, although the problems of dating this process have caused much debate: the existence of a significant renaissance of European learning in the 12th century is now accepted, while the 18th-century Enlightenment is a direct continuation of the Renaissance's intellectual tendencies. However, the term normally refers to the combined intellectual and artistic transformations of the 15th and 16th centuries, including the emergence of humanism, Protestant individualism, Copernican astronomy, and the discovery of America. In literary terms, the Renaissance may be seen as a new tradition running from Petrarch and Boccaccio in Italy to Jonson and Milton in England, embracing the work of the of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare; it is marked by a new self-confidence in vernacular literatures, a flourishing of lyric poetry, and a revival of such classical forms as epic and pastoral literature.

Renaissance characterizes the impulse towards improving the contemporary world by discovering and applying the achievement of classical antiquity. The movement was at its strongest from the time of Petrarch (1304-74) through the ‘long 16th cent.’ (1450-1625). ‘Renaissance’ is now generally used to describe the politics, beliefs, philosophy, science, scholarship, discourse, literature, handwriting, printing, painting, engraving, sculpture, architecture, and music of that period.

¹ P. Burke, *The Renaissance*, Princeton University Press, 1964. p. 12.

The English Renaissance was influenced by the Italian indirectly, through France, Burgundy, and the Netherlands, as well as directly. In its earliest phase, the patronage and book collections of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester (1390-1447), were important; later, under Henry VII, William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre won a reputation for Greek. From about 1500, however, the chief force in English humanism was the concept of *pietas literata*, or evangelical humanism, associated with Erasmus. The friendship of Erasmus with John Colet and with Thomas More was particularly significant; he and More translated Greek together.

Drama before the Elizabethan Age was mainly connected to religious themes since the stories were taken from the Bible. The clergy would perform these plays in church but during the fifteenth century they became very popular and were acted by ordinary people. The main aim of the religious plays was to teach the people the stories from the Bible. The main types of the religious plays of that time were the Miracle plays or Mystery plays and the Morality plays.

Miracle play is a type of vernacular drama performed in the Middle Ages, presenting a real or fictitious account of the life, miracles, or martyrdom of a saint. The genre evolved from the liturgical dramas of the 10th – 11th centuries, which were intended to enhance church calendar festivals. By the 13th century the plays were separated from church services and performed at public festivals by members of craft guilds and other amateur actors. Most miracle plays concerned either the Virgin Mary or St. Nicholas, both of whom had active cults in the Middle Ages.

Morality play is a type of allegorical drama of 15th – 16th-century Europe. The plays' characters personified moral qualities (such as charity or vice) or abstractions (such as death or youth). One of the main types of vernacular drama of its time, it provided a transition from

liturgical drama to professional secular drama. The plays were short works, usually performed by semi-professional acting troupes that relied on public support. *Everyman* (c. 1495), featuring Everyman's summons by Death and his journey to the grave, is considered the greatest morality play.

Elizabethan drama² refers to the plays produced while Queen Elizabeth reigned in England, from 1558 until 1603. It was during this time that the public began attending plays in large numbers. The opening of several good-sized playhouses was responsible for this increased patronage, the largest and most famous of which was the Globe theatre (1599), home to many of Shakespeare's works. The most popular types of Elizabethan plays were histories of England's rulers, but revenge dramas and bawdy comedies also drew significant crowds. Although Shakespeare was the most prolific and certainly the most famous of the Elizabethan dramatists, other popular playwrights of the period included Christopher Marlowe (*Dr. Faustus*) and Ben Johnson (*The Alchemist*).

Before the age of Elizabethan drama, plays tended to be based on religious themes. Elizabethan dramas, however, focused on more secular issues.

Learning about the "heroic past" of their country was important to England's playgoers. Christopher Marlowe preceded Shakespeare with the historical play *Edward II*, but the Bard of course wrote many histories too, including *Richard III* and *Henry V*.

Tragedies of the era focused on creating a sense of both terror and pity in the audience. Shakespeare was the master of tragedy (*Hamlet*, *Othello*), but other writers were quite popular as well, including John Webster who had a hit with *The Duchess of Malfi*.

² <http://www.enotes.com/topics/elizabethan-drama> (10.06 2008.)

Perhaps for the first time, English patrons during the Elizabethan period could go to the theatre for a good laugh. Again, though Shakespeare was the most popular, other successful playwrights such as Ben Johnson (*The Alchemist*) enjoyed poking fun at society and its institutions.

The English Renaissance³ is distinct from the Italian Renaissance in several ways. First, the dominant art form of the English Renaissance was literature, while the Italian Renaissance was driven much more by the visual arts, such as painting and sculpture. Second, the English movement is separated from the Italian by time: many trace the Italian Renaissance to Dante or Petrarch in the early 1300s, and certainly most of the famous Italian Renaissance figures ceased their creative output by the 1520s. In contrast, the English Renaissance seems to begin in the 1520s, reaching its apex around the year 1600, and not concluding until roughly the restoration of Charles II in the 1660s. Finally, the English seem to have been less directly influenced by classical antiquity, which was a hallmark of the Italian Renaissance (the word "renaissance" means "rebirth," an allusion to the Italian belief that they were merely rediscovering or reviving lost ancient knowledge and technique); instead, the English were primarily influenced by the Italians themselves, and rediscovered the classical authors through them.

The notion of calling this period "the Renaissance" is a modern invention, having been popularized by the historian Jacob Burckhardt⁴ in the nineteenth century. The idea of the Renaissance has come under increased criticism by many cultural historians, and some have contended that the "English Renaissance" has no real tie with the artistic achievements and aims of the northern Italian artists (Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Donatello) who are closely identified with the Renaissance. Indeed, England had already experienced a flourishing of

³ <http://www.family-ancestry.co.uk/English-Renaissance.htm> (10.06.2008.)

⁴ P. Burke, *The Renaissance*, Princeton University Press, 1964. p. 14.

literature over 200 years before the time of Shakespeare when Geoffrey Chaucer, possibly the second most important writer in the English language, was working. Chaucer's popularising of English as a medium of literary composition rather than Latin was only 50 years after Dante had started using Italian for serious poetry. At the same time William Langland author of *Piers Plowman* and John Gower were also writing in English. The Hundred Years War and the subsequent civil war in England known as the Wars of the Roses probably hampered artistic endeavour until the relatively peaceful and stable reign of Elizabeth I allowed drama in particular to develop. Even during these war years, though, Thomas Malory, author of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, was a notable figure. For this reason, scholars find the singularity of the period called the English Renaissance questionable; C.S. Lewis, a professor of Medieval and Renaissance literature at Oxford and Cambridge, famously remarked to a colleague that he had "discovered" that there was no English Renaissance, and that if there had been one, it had "no effect whatsoever"

Historians have also begun to consider the word "Renaissance" as an unnecessarily loaded word that implies an unambiguously positive "rebirth" from the supposedly more primitive Middle Ages. Some historians have asked the question "a renaissance for whom?" pointing out, for example, that the status of women in society arguably declined during the Renaissance. Many historians and cultural historians now prefer to use the term "early modern" for this period, a neutral term that highlights the period as a transitional one that led to the modern world, but does not have any positive or negative connotations.

Other cultural historians have countered that, regardless of whether the name "renaissance" is apt, there was undeniably an artistic flowering in England under the Tudor monarchs, culminating in Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

The key literary figures in the English Renaissance are now generally considered to be the poet Edmund Spenser; the philosopher Francis Bacon; the poets and playwrights Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson; and the poet John Milton. Sir Thomas More is often considered one of the earliest writers of the English Renaissance.

Many sixteenth-century artists, such as Christopher Marlowe⁵, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare, brooded on the magical, transforming power of art. It is significant that Marlowe's great play was written at a time in which the possibility of sorcery was not merely a theatrical fantasy but a widely shared fear, a fear upon which the state could act — as the case of Doctor Fian vividly shows — with horrendous ferocity. Marlowe was himself the object of suspicion and hostility, as indicated by the strange report filed by a secret agent, Richard Baines, professing to list Marlowe's wildly heretical opinions, and by the gleeful (and factually inaccurate) report by the Puritan Thomas Beard of Marlowe's death.

Marlowe's tragedy emerges not only from a culture in which bargains with the devil are imaginable as real events but also from a world in which many of the most fundamental assumptions about spiritual life were being called into question by the movement known as the Reformation. Catholic and Protestant voices struggled to articulate the precise beliefs and practices thought necessary for the soul's salvation.

Christopher Marlowe wanted to educate his audience for the changing world: Tamburlaine, the Jew of Malta and Doctor Faustus are all modern people displaying basic structure of any society in Renaissance- need for power, money and knowledge. Marlowe made his characters look like individuals.⁶ Christopher Marlowe is the best specimen on whom the influence of humanism is seen through his works because he gives humanist arguments.

⁵ <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/16century/welcome.htm> (12.06.2008.)

⁶ Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, lectures on the English renaissance literature, University in Zenica, 2007/ 2008.

DR FAUSTUS AS A REBELLION

“Dr Faustus can be seen as an autobiographical sketch since the main character and the author have a lot in common. For instance both Faustus and Marlowe come from poor background, both are leading scholars of their age and both are dissatisfied with their system. Marlowe shows us his dissatisfaction through ecclesiastical lectures and Faustus shows us his dissatisfaction through his rejection of the Bible. In his ecclesiastical lectures Marlowe openly claims that God does not interfere with humans and that God is human creation. Faustus is clearly antipope and shares with Marlowe interest in dualist colours in Christianity.”⁷ Marlowe and Faustus both ended their lives in similar mysterious ways. We do not know what exactly happened to Faustus except that he was torn to pieces. The murder of Marlowe remains a mystery up to this day and we do not know where his body is. The identification with Faust is personal and psychological. The evidence about the life of Christopher Marlowe is almost as puzzling as that of Faust; it allows us to infer that the two men had many basic intellectual and moral attitudes in common. Restless, vain, ambitious, they both waged a lonely, devious, and bitter warfare against many of the established opinions of their time, and the circumstances of their own dangerous lives.⁸

The first lines of the play give us reasons for Faustus' dissatisfaction; he is a true scholar who aims at supreme knowledge as his ultimate ambition⁹:

Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin

To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess:

Having commenc'd, be a divine show

⁷ Dr. Shahab Yar Khan lectures on the English renaissance literature, University in Zenica, 2007/2008.

⁸ Ian Watt, *Myths of modern individualism*, Cambridge University Press, 1966. p. 32.

⁹ Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, *From Renaissance to Classicism*, Univerzitet Džemal Bijedić u Mostaru, 2006. p.

Yet level at the end of every art

And live and die in Aristotle's works. (I. i. 3-5)

"We can see that Faustus wants to study in depth and detail the subject he decides to pursue. He could not recognize God who declares mankind as born sinners so he is standing up for humanity against divinity"¹⁰. This is why he has desire to understand the reason for injustice done to mankind and to know God as benevolent or malevolent force.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there

is no truth in us. Why, then belike we must sin and so

consequently die:

Ay, we must die an everlasting death,

What doctrine call you this, Che sera, sera,

What will be shall be? Divinity adieu! (I. i. 42-47)

Faustus leaves out the crucial second part of biblical text- Book of John, chapter One, Lines 8-9, which says:

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. *If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, ad to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*¹¹.

As a theologian, he may be deliberately portrayed by Marlowe in a severe Calvinist light as a person who cannot obey God's word, even though he is apprised of it. So, Faustus

¹⁰ Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, lectures on the English renaissance literature, University in Zenica, 2007/2008.

¹¹ Park Honan, *Christopher Marlowe-Poet and a Spy*, Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 212.

may be predestined to damnation even before he speaks and wicked to criticize or niggle over the Bible in any case.¹²

The first scene starts with Faustus' soliloquy and we see that no further study gives him pleasure so he decides not to read any more:

Then read no more; thou hast attain'd that end

A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit (I. i. 10-11)

However, Faustus tells us what is most desirable for him at the moment, those are magician books:

These metaphysics of magicians,

And necromantic books are heavenly;

Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters

Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires (I. i. 49-52)

He continues to explain his attitude towards magic and occult and says that he wants to "gain a deity" which means that he wants to gain power in order to become a god:

Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man,

A sound magician is a mighty god

Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity. (I. i. 62-64)

With this speech, he takes a step he never retraces: he implies that magic offers powers ascribed in the Bible (in the Book of Jeremiah, chapter 10, lines 1-6) to God alone. A Good Angel warns him to desist, but an Evil Angel urges him on: "be thou on earth as Jove is in the

¹² P. R. Sellin, *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance*, American Historical Association, 1974. p. 72.

sky". Marlowe leaves us in no doubt that Faustus' pursuit of magic puts his soul into jeopardy.¹³

Faustus as a theologian is disappointed with the religion and decides to reject it, and to seek knowledge from devil. The idea to practice magic is presented to him by Cornelius and Valdes, who are known for practisizing the damned art. Faustus decides to summon Mephistophilis, a servant of Lucifer. Left alone by fellow scholars, Faustus appears to conjure up an ugly devil, whom he bids return in the shape of a Franciscan friar, which "suits a devil best". This scene shows us how far Faustus is prepared to go to mitigate the horrors of hell. Mephistophilis is presumably ugly and Faustus does not want to see the world as it is but as he wants it to be. He sees the devil's true shape, but instead of running away, he orders Mephistophilis to change his appearance which makes it easier to look upon him.

Faustus attempted to study Lucifer on comparative basis with God. When he speaks with Mephistopheles he asks about God and devil:

FAUSTUS: was not that Lucifer an angel once?

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God

FAUSTUS: How comes it, then that he is prince of devils?

MEPHASTOPHILIS: O, by aspiring pride and insolence;

For which God threw him from the face of heaven. (I. iii. 64-68)

Mephistophilis exposes the horrors of his own experience in offering guidance to Faustus. He even tells Faustus to abandon his "frivolous demands". But Faustus refuses and displays the blindness as one of his characteristics. Faustus' devil is very honest in admitting

¹³ Park Honan, *Christopher Marlowe-Poet and a Spy*, Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 214.

that he is miserable to be in Hell. “How comes it then” asks Faustus, “that thou art out of hell?”

MEPHASTOPHILIS: this is hell, nor am I out of it.

Think'st thou that I, who swathe face of God,

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,

Am not tormented with ten thousands hells

In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

O, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,

Which strike a terror to my fainting soul! (I. iii. 74-80)

If a devil can find that hell reigns where there is no peace with God, why can't Faustus?

CONSPIRACY THEORY

Doctor Faustus is based on one of the greatest controversies of Middle Ages: God and Satan are in alliance against mankind. Christopher Marlowe got the idea of conspiracy from the Bible, the Book of Genesis, Chapter 11- the Tower of Babel. For the first time the idea of a city was introduced, humans wanted to build the tower as high as the heavens. God came down to Earth to see this creation and said that humans are truly unified since they spoke same language, so he decided to create differences, so that humans could not understand each other anymore. According to humanist's mind this was a conspiracy against mankind.

¹ The whole world spoke the same language, with the same vocabulary.

² Now, as people moved eastwards they found a valley in the land of Shinar where they settled.

³ They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them in the fire.' For stone they used bricks, and for mortar they used bitumen.

⁴ 'Come,' they said, 'let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top reaching heaven. Let us make a name for ourselves, so that we do not get scattered all over the world.'

⁵ Now Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower that the people had built.

⁶ 'So they are all a single people with a single language!' said Yahweh. 'This is only the start of their undertakings! Now nothing they plan to do will be beyond them.'

⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language there, so that they cannot understand one another.'

⁸ Yahweh scattered them thence all over the world, and they stopped building the city.

⁹ That is why it was called Babel, since there Yahweh confused the language of the whole world, and from there Yahweh scattered them all over the world.¹⁴

¹⁴ <http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=1> (14.06.2008)

In the prologue of the play, the Chorus informs us about the conspiracy in heaven:

Till swoln with cunning, of a self-conceit

His waxen wings did mount above his reach,

And, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow; (Prologue, 20-22)

We are here presented with the Icarus theme, since Icarus was flying too high and his waxen wings melted under the strong sunshine. He was not flying to sun, but to God, to Apollo, and no person should ever face Apollo. Icarus challenged Apollo and everything he discovered died with him in the deep sea.

Just like Icarus Faustus wanted to see God, so he became a victim of God's conspiracy. He also wanted to get answers to his questions but he is tricked because Satan never gives him any answers. Moreover, according to the contract made with the Lucifer, Faustus can ask whatever he wants, but whenever he asks a question connected to heaven, hell and God he does not get any answer:

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Faustus, I swear by hell and Lucifer

To effect all promises between us made.

Faustus: Then hear me red them. On these conditions following:

First, that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance.

Secondly, that Mephastophilis shall be his servant, and at his command.

Thirdly, that Mephastophilis shall do for him, and bring him whatsoever.

Fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible.

Lastly, that he shall appear to the said John Faustus at all times, in what form or shape soever he please (I. v. 96-103)

But, why then is the devil in control in sexual matters? Denied a wife three times, Faustus is made to feel disgusted by sex. Having bargained for 24 years of “all voluptuousness” he is resolved by a “hot whore” and then appeased by promises:

FAUSTUS: let me have a wife, the fairest maid in Germany;

for I am wanton and lascivious, and cannot live without a wife.

MEPHASTOPHILIS: How, a wife? I prithee Faustus talk not of a wife.

FAUSTUS: nay, sweet Mephastophilis, fetch me one, for I will have one.

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Well, thou wilt have one, I'll fetch thee a wife in the devil's name.

[Enter with a DEVIL dressed like a woman, with fireworks]

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Tell, Faustus, how dost thou like thy wife?

FAUSTUS: A plague on her for a hot whore! (I. v. 140-148)

Could it be that Mephastophilis cannot produce a wife for Faustus because marriage is sacrament?¹⁵

In the final act Faustus is desperate enough to commit suicide but the devil tricks him again and to prevent him from repenting he sends Helen of Troy:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?

And burnt the topless Towers of Ilium?

¹⁵ The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Greenblat, W. W. Norton & Company Limited, Volume 1, 2000. p.1004.

Sweet Helen make me immortal with a kiss;

Her lips suck forth my soul, see where it flies! (I. xii. 81-84)

Whenever Faustus thinks about repentance, Mephistophilis threatens to tear him into pieces; furthermore he cannot speak nor ask about heaven or God because the devil will not listen to it. When Faustus cries out for Christ to save him, Lucifer and Beelzebub enter the stage to “tell thee thou dost injure us”. Then Lucifer starts his display of the Seven Deadly Sins and Faustus is once again convinced in devil’s power, but it does not take him long to see that he was deceived.

The mysterious Old man appears in the last act. He comforts Faustus, who is ready to commit suicide and repent, with words:

I see an angel hovers o’er thy head

And with a vial full of precious grace

Offers to pour the same into thy soul (I. xii. 44-46)

Mephistophilis hurries Faustus to sign another blood bond because Faustus is on the edge of repentance and that means that the devil would be left without his soul. Mephistophilis gives a dagger to Faustus in order to cut his arm and sign another bond.

He confesses to his friends that he thought about repentance but he was too scared since “the devil threatened to tear me in pieces, if I named God”. At the end we hear that he was torn to pieces:

FIRST SCHOLAR: Come, gentlemen, let us go visit Faustus,

For such a dreadful night was never seen;

Since first the world's creation did begin

Such fearful shrieks and cries were never heard:

Pray heaven the doctor have escap'd the danger.

SECOND SCHOLAR: O, help us, heaven! See here are Faustus' limbs,

All torn asunder by the hand of death (V. iii. 264-300)

This is not the tragedy of an overambitious man; it is the tragedy of talented man. Life of philosophical pleasures is the only life because only knowledge creates balance, peace, harmony and pleasure.

FAUSTUS AS A GENUINE SCHOLAR

Faustus could never be a divine scholar because he is always a renaissance thinker. No matter how much he studies he is always dissatisfied with the amount of knowledge:

Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin

To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess (I. i. 1-2)

This is the very first line that Faustus utters, from which we see that he cannot decide the subject of his studies he wants to study in depth. His dissatisfaction categorises him as a thinker not a believer, which is the very essence of a philosopher. His role models are Aristotle and Protagoras:

Yet level at the end of very art,

And live and die in Aristotle's works (I. i. 4-5)

The Middle Ages believed that all knowledge was encompassed within Aristotle's works.¹⁶

Faustus' concerns during the discussions with devil are intellectual, for example he wants to know the geographical location of the Heaven and Hell:

MEPHASTOPHILIS: So, now, Faustus ask me what thou wilt.

FAUSTUS: First, I will question with thee about hell.

Tell me, where is the place that men call hell?

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Under the heavens.

FAUSTUS: Ay, so are all things else; but whereabouts? (I. V. 114-118)

"Faustus argues about the nature of the punishment of devils which he considers to be more freedom than punishment."¹⁷ This way of thinking corresponds with Milton's theory.

¹⁶ Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, *From Renaissance to Classicism*, Univerzitet Džemal Bijedić u Mostaru, 2006. p. 61.

Faustus also asks devil about the world's creator:

FAUSTUS: Tell me who made the world?

MEPHASTOPHILIS: I will not.

FAUSTUS: Sweet Mephastophilis, tell me.

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Move me not, for I will not tell thee.

FAUSTUS: Villain, have I not bound thee to tell me anything?

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Ay, that is not against or kingdom; but this is.

Think thou on hell, Faustus, for thou art damned. (I. v. 242-248)

Eventually, he is dissatisfied with the devil on the same basis as he is dissatisfied with God, Faustus as a real thinker cannot believe it without a trial. He always had his academic attitude and he never approached spiritual matters spiritually but philosophically. This attitude is the one that Marlowe wanted his audience to have, realistic attitude and rational thinking.

After Faustus has reviewed all the branches of academic knowledge he came to magic. Magic has always stood as a promise to take the individual beyond the present limits of knowledge.¹⁸ More particularly, it offers the very powers in which Faustus has found orthodox knowledge to be deficient: the philosopher's stone might give immortal life; and necromancy might raise the dead.¹⁹ Early in the play, before he makes the pact with the devil, doctor Faustus is full with ideas for how to use the power that he wants. He hopes to resolve the mysteries of the universe and to rearrange the map of Europe.

¹⁷ Dr. Shahab Yar Khan, lectures on English renaissance literature, University in Zenica, 2007/ 2008.

¹⁸ Ian Watt, *Myths of modern individualism*, Cambridge University Press, 1966. p. 37.

¹⁹ Ian Watt, *Myths of modern individualism*, Cambridge University Press, 1966. p. 38.

Faustus is indeed tragic hero and he is worthy of our sympathy. We do not know how he exactly died because Marlowe did not tell us that explicitly, but he uses interpellation as a powerful tool to show us Faustus' final hour:

[The clock striketh twelve]

O it strikes, it strikes! Now body, turn to air

Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.

[Thunder and lightning]

O soul, be changed into little water drops,

And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found.

My God, my God, look not o fierce on me!

[Enter devils]

Adders and serpents let me breathe awhile!

Ugly hell gape not! Come not Lucifer!

I'll burn my books-ah, Mephastophilis!

[Exeunt with him.] (I. xiii. 105-113)

His ending words are similar to his previous demands in a way that he utters them as though he could reverse the events and the course of his destiny. Having squandered all his magic powers on practical jokes and entertainment, Faustus regains his eloquence in the final scene, just as his doom approaches.

This is one very strong poetic scene in English renaissance tragedy which depicts a man who desperately wants to stay alive and seeks salvation knowing that it is too late for him. His fate on the one hand is utterly cruel, harsh, and unjust, and on the other mysterious

and inevitable. Faustus is a protagonist whose character flaws lead to his downfall. The logic he uses to reject religion may be flawed but there is something impressive in his ambition, even if he pursues it through diabolical means.

The only experience that Faustus really enjoyed in was the appearance of Helen of Troy. She inspired him to imagine the classical past scenario:

I will be in Paris, and for love of thee

Instead of Troy will Wittenberg be sacked.

I will combat with weak Menelaus,

And wear thy colours on my plumed crest.

Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel (I. xii. 89-92)

His ability to imagine a scene such as this made him forget about his damned destiny for a moment. This shunning of reality is symbolized throughout the play. Faustus displays a certain naivety in his approach to the demonic, since he cannot accept the fact that is indeed as bad as it seems, and this attitude just pushes him more forward into the darkness. Earlier, he seeks transcendence through magic instead through religion. Now, he seeks it through female beauty, as he asks Helen to make him immortal by kissing him.

Faustus' final speech is very emotionally powerful scene in the play where we can see how his despairing mind rushes from idea to idea. One moment he is begging time to slow down and the next one he is imploring Christ for mercy. One moment he is crying out in fear and the next one he is begging to have the eternity of hell lessened somehow. This passion of the last Faustus' speech makes us wonder why Faustus does not repent earlier in the play. We have seen how the devil tricked him every time he tried to repent but is there more than just the devil's involvement? Early in the play Faustus deceives himself into believing that hell is

not so bad or that it does not exist, as he says to Mephastophilis “hell is a fable”. Faustus’ loyalty to Lucifer could be explained by the fact that he is afraid of having his body torn apart by Mephastophilis.

The Christian doctrine holds that one can repent for any sin no matter how grave that sin is, up until the moment of death and be saved.²⁰ It could be possible that Faustus does not actually repent but that he only speaks about the possibility of repentance. However; the lines such as:

O, I’ll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?

indicate that he did repent but some unseen force, whether inside or outside him, prevents him from giving himself to God.

²⁰ <http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=1> (14.06 2008)

CONCLUSION

From the first lines of *Doctor Faustus* it can be seen that it is not an ordinary play. Marlowe has combined some elements of Greek drama with elements of medieval mystery and miracle plays. For example, *Doctor Faustus* starts with Chorus telling us what the play is not about instead of its usual function of telling us what the play is about. So, the Chorus tells us that the play is not about war, romance, adventure nor court conspiracies. These were the four favourite themes of the Elizabethan drama. We see that the play is about events in doctor Faustus' life but we do not know if he is a good or bad character, this judgement is entirely on the audience. This shows us that drama is, for the first time, about individualism, and for individualism we do not need a good story but philosophy. Faustus is an iconoclast, which means that he is nonconventional man, a man of religion but nonconventional. For true knowledge you have to be nonconventional because tradition and conventional things are not more important than human being. In the medieval system, tradition and authority, not individual inquiry, were key. Faustus considers and rejects this medieval way of thinking. He decides to accept no limits or traditions in his quest for knowledge.

Doctor Faustus in its form is a very good illustration of all components which make a good renaissance drama. In addition to prologue, epilogue and chorus we see the elements of morality plays such as the good angel and the evil angel. The tragedy also has some comic scenes and characters and it is often said that *Doctor Faustus* has a very powerful beginning and ending while its middle part has shallow comic scenes where Faustus acts like a comedian or like a fool. Once he actually gains the power his horizons seem to narrow. Faustus never took control over his magical power in order to achieve something magnificent but instead he

makes practical jokes. It is possible that Marlowe wanted to draw a distinction between Faustus' wish that came true and the ideal that his wish represented once.

Inconsistencies like this one and the fact that there are two texts of *Doctor Faustus* are main reasons why most critics believe that Marlowe either had a collaborator or that some parts of *Doctor Faustus* are corrupt by writings that cannot be Marlowe's.²¹ The first of these, the so-called "A-text", was published in quarto in 1604. A second and larger version of *Faustus* or the so-called "B-text" appeared in quarto in 1616. The idea of an individual selling his soul to the devil is an old motif in Christian folklore and Marlowe's Faustus is the first famous version of the story. The phrase "Faustian bargain" has entered the English lexicon, and it stands for any kind of deal made for a short term gain that comes with great costs in the long run.

To make *Doctor Faustus* a true tragedy Christopher Marlowe created moment beyond which Faustus could no longer repent, so in the final scene he is conscious of his damnation. The subtle, complex consistency of Marlowe's Faustus, its representativeness of men and women in general, its lack of dependency on moral evaluation, as well as the poet's use of farce and comedy in aid of tragic effect were all to be gifts to Elizabethan and later dramatists.

²¹ Park Honan, *Christopher Marlowe-Poet and a Spy*, Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 202.

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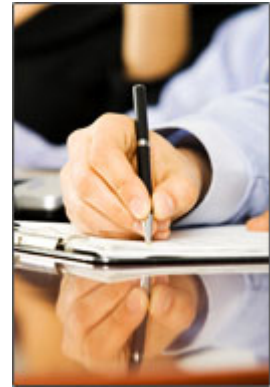
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