
UNIT 2 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit elaborates Act-wise summary of the play. It also offers a critical analysis of each Act for the students to understand meanings underneath the story.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Dear students, Unit 1 must have exposed you to all the necessary preliminary information about the play prescribed in your syllabus i.e. *Dr. Faustus*. It also gives you a bird's eye view of the other plays written by Marlowe. I am sure that a thorough reading of Unit 1 must have helped you picture Marlowe as a man and as a playwright. You are also apprised of the social, political and religious contexts in which Marlowe's fiery imagination unfurled. The spirit of Renaissance, the trends and demands of Elizabethan theatre, the mushrooming of English tragedy and comedy, emanating from the Greek and Italian tradition yet acquiring a unique English character, is also elaborated upon. A short discussion of all the six plays of Marlowe gives you an idea as to how Marlowe started a new trend, both in thought and technique, in matter as well as manner and left a trail to be followed by others. All the six plays of Marlowe have one thing in common – he was least bothered with the routine, ordinary and mundane areas like manners and habits, customs, traditions and rituals. What fascinated his unique sensibilities were the cravings and dilemmas of a human's soul. Men in relation with others of his clan didn't interest him. Rather, man's relation to God and to the universe was his favourite area to fathom.

2.2 MARLOWE'S APPEAL IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Marlowe in particular and the Elizabethan tragic vision in general, which began with the Renaissance, has a great appeal to the contemporary readers. The mental divide that Faustus feels also applies to the spilt self of modern man in today's world of scientific advancements and modern technology. *Tamburlaine*, *Dr. Faustus*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* are dramatic approximations of the modern man's mindset, his struggle to cope with the complex environment around him. The contemporariness of these dramatic

figures is striking, if we forget their Elizabethan lineage. In an age of nuclear technology, we are still groping and struggling to come to terms with the notion of immense human potential pitted against the situational and contextual restrictions, leading to paradoxes. We have to reconcile these paradoxes and ironies to maintain our sanity.

2.3 CONTROVERSY REGARDING THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF *DR. FAUSTUS*

The exact date of publication of *Dr. Faustus* is not clear and difference of opinion prevails on this front. Hence it has become a subject of great controversy. But the critics agree that this is the second play by Marlowe and must have been written after *Tamburlaine*. *Dr. Faustus* was written for a theatre company of the name The Admiral Men and was staged in 1588. The first printed edition of the play was the Quarto edition of 1604. Several editions of the play were reprinted after this quarto edition, with many interpolations. Finally, an enlarged edition of the play appeared in 1616 containing many comic scenes absent in the 1604 edition. If we go by Boas' contention, the date of composition of the play cannot be earlier than 1592. The basis for this argument is that Marlowe's play was based on the *German Historia Van De. Johann Fausten*, which was first published in 1587 in Frankfurt. As Marlowe didn't know German, this play is very unlikely to be an inspiration for *Dr. Faustus*. Marlowe's source book must have been the English version, the *History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr John Faustus* published in 1592. Going by this version, the play must have been written later than 1592. All this has given rise to a lot of debate regarding the date of composition as well as publication of the play. But considering the authenticity of the evidence that the play was first staged by Lord Admiral's company in 1588, we may assign the date of composition to sometime between 1588 and 1590.

2.4 THE LEGEND OF FAUST: MARLOWE'S INNOVATION

That Marlowe has based his play on the famous German legend translated in English as *Faustbuch*, is true in itself. But it is also true that Marlowe has fused in the play a new breath with regard to the character of Dr. Faustus, the plot and the technique. Above all, he has shrewdly diminished the role of the supernatural (the German story tilted very heavily towards the supernatural and presented the character of Faustus as a wicked magician) and rather places the spiritual dilemma of Dr. Faustus at the centre of the play. Marlowe avoided the risk of deviation and therefore the play has no sub-plots barring some comic scenes which do not disturb the focus on the character of Dr. Faustus. Marlowe has no doubt transformed a common-place story into a great tragedy for all times to come. The reason why Dr. Faustus is so rich and intense is that diverse and many conflicting traditions manifested in the character of Dr. Faustus. The influence of the traditions of orthodox Christianity, of the Reformation and Renaissance, of Paganism, of newly found individualism and the arousal of scientific temper and a curious questioning spirit, explains the inadvertent confusion in the play, *Dr. Faustus*. This actually needs to be understood to get at the dramatic core of the play. Marlowe has remarkably aroused feelings of pity and fear, quite intrinsic to Aristotle's basic concept of a tragedy. Marlowe has maintained a subtle balance, in that he did not divorce from the convention altogether but at the same time infused novelty in the erstwhile dull and unadventurous legend of Faust. As such, the earlier morality tradition is also not totally overthrown. The essential human traits like presumption, temptation, confusion, damnation and fall, which form the crux of earlier mystery, miracle and morality plays, are central to the story of Dr. Faustus too. The interplay of the forces of good and evil, as old as humanity itself, finds a full expression in *Dr. Faustus*, but with a difference. Here, Marlowe shows the forces of good and evil not as mere external forces but as internalized in the human protagonist. Accordingly, Dr. Faustus is not tempted only by the external evil forces for signing the pact with the devil, in fact evil has roots inside him too. Same is true of the forces of good or of Christianity, which are shown as being part of the internal being of the protagonist. This shift in the play gives a fresh psychological meaning to the story of *Dr. Faustus*. What is new in Marlowe's story is that man is not a passive recipient of good and evil, but is an active participant in these. Therefore though the pattern of the morality play is kept intact, yet Faustus is an antithesis of the significant protagonists of the morality plays. If morality heroes were self-effacing human beings, Faustus is an

embodiment of self assertion and overriding ambition. Faustus aspires to gain command over the entire universe. Let us take the play Act-wise and try to build a critical appreciation of the succession of events and their significance to the overall structure of the play. But before we start this exercise, let me presume that you have read the text already. It is important to read the text as a critical understanding of the play can never be developed without it.

2.5 ACT 1 – SYNOPSIS

Prologue: The play starts with the Prologue presented by the Chorus. The Chorus apprises the audience of the basic tenets of the plot. It announces that the poet has no inclination to sing of wars, love and the great deeds of the royal kings and princesses. Instead, he presents the journey of a low-born man Faustus, from happy days to damnation. Faustus was born in the town of Rhodes in Germany, went to Wittenberg for higher studies and was sharp enough to attain proficiency in theology. Soon he mastered all the possible branches of knowledge like medicine, law and logic. He became inordinately ambitious and was soon swollen with pride and arrogance. His situation can be likened to that of Icarus who was given waxed wings to fly but blinded by pride he flew very near to the Sun. His wax wings melted, he fell down and drowned in the sea. Faustus, who was awarded the degree of doctorate, followed in the footsteps of Icarus in his ambition of becoming a super human, for which he practiced black magic and became a necromancer.

Act I Scene (i): Faustus is sitting in his study and ruminating about his achievements presented in a soliloquy (a soliloquy is a literary device in which a person is talking to himself/ herself all alone. It is often used as a device in drama to disclose the characters' innermost feelings). Dr. Faustus dismisses all the acquired branches of knowledge and learning one by one. He first considers logic and dismisses it saying that the only aim of logic is to swell the dispute, which makes it monotonous after a time. And moreover, Faustus has already achieved a benchmark in his disputing skills so he should look for something else. He then reflects on the prospects of practicing medicine, both from the monetary and social points of view. He agrees that Medicine has a tremendous potential to achieve miraculous cures which makes it one of the most fulfilling occupations but then the other part of his mind argues that he has already achieved the highest level in this profession too and has cured whole cities of incurable diseases like plague. But still it has not brought contentment. Then he shifts his attention to law. But very soon rejects law as too petty. Divinity, the study of religion and theology, he thinks offers dictums which are self contradictory and therefore totally irrational. He finds even theology redundant and turns to magic which allures him enough to achieve what he strives for :

“Oh, what a world of profit and delight/
Of power, of honor, of omnipotence/
Is promised to the stupendous artisan!

(I, (i), 30)

A sound magician is a might god (*Gill, Roma. Ed. Christopher Marlowe: Dr. Faustus. London: A&C Black Publishers Ltd, 2004, p.30*)

Wagner, Faustus's servant enters and he bids him to bring Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus's friends to lend him a helping hand in learning black magic. In the meantime, the Good Angel and the Evil Angel visit Faustus. The Good Angel urges him to forget necromancy and put aside his book of magic whereas the Evil Angel incites him to go ahead in the pursuit of magic. After they leave, Faustus weighs the prospects of both and decides in favour of practicing black art, quite excited at the prospects of great powers that magic will bring to him. By this time, Valdes and Cornelius arrive and both approve of Faustus's decision. They unfold a long list of wonderful powers that magic will bring to Faustus if he remains committed to necromancy.

Act I Scene (ii): This is a short scene. Two scholars, may be the students of Dr. Faustus, come to meet him. The servant Wagner, instead of giving them straightforward answers, makes a superficial display of his art of disputation, enough to misdirect and irk the two scholars. After a display of his vain knowledge, he finally reveals that Dr. Faustus is in a meeting with his two friends, Valdes and Cornelius. The two scholars are shocked to hear this as they fear that Faustus has fallen prey to the practice of black magic. The reputation of Cornelius and Valdes as black magicians is quiet wide spread, it seems. The two scholars plan to see the Rector so that Faustus can be dissuaded from his decision to study necromancy.

Act I Scene (iii): Faustus is found muttering a long passage in Latin to invoke the evil powers. A queer and ugly looking figure appears and says that his name is Mephistophilis. Faustus finds his appearance obnoxious and directs him to reappear in the guise of a Franciscan Friar. Mephistophilis obeys the command and Faustus asks many questions about Lucifer, the master of Hell. He is told that Lucifer was banished eternally from Heaven because he revolted against God. Faustus then enquires about Hell, its location and environment. To this Mephistophilis offers a vague and rounded answer saying that Hell is where God is not present. Ironically enough, Mephistophilis becomes nostalgic thinking of the priceless joys of Heaven. He receives a scolding from Dr. Faustus for being a traitor to his domain. He then sends Mephistophilis to Lucifer, with a proposal that Faustus will exchange his soul for 24 years of unlimited powers. Mephistophilis leaves and Faustus is left priding in his achievements. He imagines the glorious future that lies ahead of him by exercising the art of black magic.

Act I, Scene (iv): This comic scene is in a way a replay of the preceding serious scene. Here Wagner chides a clown, who is out of work, for being so desperate to sell his soul to the devil for a piece of mutton. Wagner asks the clown to serve him for seven years or he will be cursed to suffer. Wagner then gives the clown some money and threatens him that he will be carried away by the devils if he does not agree to his conditions. He then summons the devils, Biliol and Blecher, to scare the clown away. The scene echoes the scene between Faustus and Mephistophilis, though in a comic vein. It is included to offer comic relief to the audience and also to authenticate the developments in the preceding scene.

2.5.1 Act I: Critical Overview

The play starts with the Chorus chronicling the events related to the life of Faustus. According to the traditions of Greek Tragedy, Marlowe employs the Chorus to unfold the action of the play. Purpose is to provide the readers necessary exposition of the story. The function of the Chorus is fruitful. It is outside the direct action of the play and comments objectively on it. It addresses the audience directly and serves as a link between the audience and the events of the play. The Chorus also sets the tempo of the play by saying that it is an unusual, uncommon story of a low-born man Faustus, contrary to the general trends. The play is not about lofty affairs like wars or the gallant armies in the battlefields, the glorious love affairs of kings or the magnificent adventures of great heroes. The Chorus therefore, prepares the audience for a different kind of play, contrary to the established taste and expectations.

Act 1 unfolds Faustus's inner turmoil, which is a reflection of the conflict between Medieval morals and Renaissance ideas. The Chorus refers to the Greek myth of Icarus to comment on the character of Dr. Faustus:

“Till swollen with cunning, of a self conceit
His waxen wings did mount above his reach
And melting heavens conspired his overthrow” (1, (i), 27).

Whereas Icarus was punished for his disobedience to his father, Faustus is guilty of even a greater disobedience, rebellion against God. His sin is that he challenges the authority of God and tries his hand at something forbidden. Herein lies the contrast between the Medieval and Renaissance values: The

Medieval world rejected all that was not Christian whereas the Renaissance, a period of revival and rebirth of knowledge and learning, allowed people to question Divinity.

The appearance of Good Angel and Evil Angel can also be critically examined. They metaphorically, represent Faustus's perpetual struggle. The Good Angel tries to pull Faustus towards the long cherished and accepted Medieval values:

“O Faustus, lay that damned book aside
And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head
Read, read the scriptures: - that is blasphemy” (1 (i) 31).

The Evil Angel, on the other hand, signifies Renaissance value system: “Go forward Faustus, in that famous art/ Wherein all nature's treasures is contained” (1 (i) p 31). Renaissance values offer a great scope for the individuals to exercise choice. And Faustus sacrifices Medieval morals by affirming his preferences.

Another thing worth noticing is that blinded by his ambitious pursuit, the Renaissance ideals, Faustus does not notice Mephistophilis' nostalgia for Heaven. The devil himself is all praise for God and Faustus is too short sighted to notice this. Tragedy of Dr. Faustus is not the tragedy of an individual but a tragedy of the values that shape his ambition, making him blind to the simple truths of life.

2.6 ACT II SYNOPSIS

Act II, Scene (i)– Faustus is found alone in his study when the Good Angel and the Evil Angel make their second appearance. The Good Angel inspires Faustus to see the power of the divine whereas the Evil Angel lures Faustus to see the power that comes with wealth and material riches. Faustus, already inclined towards the devil, decides to ignore the advice of the Good Angel. He then summons Mephistophilis who tells him that Lucifer has agreed to his proposal. But Faustus has to sign the contract or his own blood. Faustus cuts his arm and as he begins to write, his blood congeals. It is God's way of warning Faustus not to enter into such a dangerous trap. Mephistophilis rushes to bring fire to make the blood flow. Faustus finishes signing the contract finally and opens his wish list in front of Mephistophilis. He asks about Hell but finds the description given by Mephistophilis unsatisfactory. He then asks for a wife. To this Mephistophilis responds by saying that he actually does not need a wife though he can bring him prostitutes every night. Faustus then demands books on the subject of animals, plants and planets to be arranged for him.

Act II, Scene (ii) – This scene presents Faustus repenting his decision of siding with the devil. The Good Angel and the Evil Angel make a third appearance on the stage. The Good Angel urges Dr. Faustus to repent and earn mercy of God. The Evil Angel reminds Faustus that he is extraordinary and not made for repentance: “Ay, but Faustus never shall repent” (II, (ii), 55.). Faustus experiences a massive disappointment realizing that he is damned. He then questions Mephistophilis about divine astrology but is disappointed with the answers. He feels that even Wagner could give better answers to such questions. Faustus again cries out for Christ to save him. Lucifer, the lord of Hell, appears and reminds Faustus that he is breaking his promise. To divert Faustus from his agony, he arranges an entertaining show of ‘Seven Deadly Sins’. These seven deadly sins are – Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth and Lechery.

2.6.1 Act II: Critical Overview

Main focus of this act is the allegory of Seven Deadly Sins. The earlier allegorical figures – the Good Angel and the Evil Angel appear again in this act twice. Now what is allegory? An allegory is the

representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms. It is a literary device used quite often by writers to represent abstract phenomena. In this case, the Seven Deadly Sins are personified. The tradition of personifying the Seven Sins was quite common in the medieval Drama. Marlowe uses this tradition effectively. Second noticeable thing in this Act is Faustus's conflict of conscience. Ultimately, the intervention of Lucifer and Beelzebub makes Faustus surrender to the devil. His fate is then sealed forever. This scene highlights the tension between the medieval beliefs and Renaissance ideals.

2.7 ACT III: SYNOPSIS

The Chorus again appears on stage to announce Faustus's rising popularity and his glorious pursuits. They announce that he goes to the top of Mount Olympus in a chariot drawn by dragons and studies the stars and other celestial bodies, thus quenching his thirst for an exploration of the unknown. Next he prepares to undertake a journey to Rome and be a part of the feast being arranged to honour St. Peter.

Act III, Scene (i): The scene reveals Faustus in Rome and telling Mephistophilis about the places he has been to. He has been to Treves, Paris, Naples, Venice and Padua. Mephistophilis describes the beauty of the city of Rome built on seven hills and suggests Faustus that they should go and meet the Pope and participate in the feast of St Peter's Day. Mephistophilis uses a magic spell and makes Faustus invisible for the sake of amusement. The scene is set in the privy chamber of Pope. The hall is full of Cardinals and monks who have come to attend the feast. Faustus, being invisible, is in a mood to play some pranks. As the Pope offers a dainty dish to the Cardinal, Faustus snatches it away, not once but several times which annoys the Pope. No one is able to see the mischief maker as Faustus is invisible. Finally the gathering concludes that this must be the work of some ghost who has come from purgatory. Faustus and Mephistophilis then start beating the friars and fling fireworks which makes them all take to their heels in fright.

Act III, Scene (ii): This is a short scene and introduces two minor characters Robin and Ralph. Robin is seen performing magic with the help of a book. He tells Ralph that he can conjure spirits. Ralph shows no interest. Robin tempts him to get Nan Suit, a kitchen maid for Ralph. Both of them then leave and decide to finish their cleaning job and later come back to resume their conjuring business.

Act III, Scene (iii): Robin and Ralph are seen again and this time they have stolen a silver goblet from a vintner at an inn. The wine seller demands his goblet back. At this Robin calls Mephistophilis to deal with the situation. He helps them, but Mephistophilis is furious with Ralph and Robin calling him all the way from Constantinople to perform petty tricks. He turns Robin into an ape and Ralph into a dog.

2.7.1 Act III: Critical Overview

The scene in Rome shows Faustus at his worst, indulging in petty tricks. Though the scene does not make it obvious, but one can find undertones of the Protestant and Catholic ideologies at variance. For instance, the teasing depiction of Pope must have delighted the Protestant audience who believed the Pope to be cruel and power hungry. Similarly the suggestion that the invisible attacker might be a spirit from Purgatory, must have appealed to the Catholic viewers. Ghosts existed in Catholic teachings and were believed to be the spirits of Purgatory.

2.8 ACT IV: SYNOPSIS

Chorus: The act opens with the Chorus declaring that Faustus is back from his trips abroad. His friends and relatives welcome him. His popularity is on the rise. The groups of gathered people admire him for his wisdom and scholarship. The Chorus announces that Charles V invites Faustus for dinner, so he may showcase magic tricks in front of the emperor.

Act IV, Scene (i): Faustus is seen in the court of Emperor Charles V at Innsbruck. The King appreciates Dr. Faustus for his unique magical powers and expresses his wish to see some proof of it. He says that he has nurtured a strong desire to see Alexander the great and his paramour. He wonders if Faustus could bring them back to life. Faustus uses his magical powers and fetches two spirits resembling Alexander and his paramour. The Emperor is delighted to see this.

Act IV, Scene (ii): Faustus starts worrying about the fact that his end is drawing near. Suddenly a horse courser enters and shows his keenness to buy Faustus's horse for 40 Dollars. Faustus agrees to the deal and warns the courser never to ride the horse in water. Faustus again feels troubled at the thought that his last day is nearing. He falls asleep. But he is woken up by the horse courser who accuses Faustus for cheating him. The courser rode the animal into a pond, it disappeared and he found himself sitting on a bundle of hay. Now when he pulls the leg of Faustus, he sees the entire leg coming off. This scares him beyond limit and he promises to pay Faustus 40 dollars more for mistakenly accusing him. In the meantime Wagner enters to tell Faustus that the Duke of Vanholt wants to see him.

Act IV, Scene (iii): At the court of Duke of Vanholt, Faustus asks the Duchess if she would want to eat something special. The Duchess desires to have grapes though it was the month of January and grapes were off season. Faustus sends Mephistophilis to arrange the fruit and to everyone's surprise, a dish of delicious grapes is presented before the Duchess. The Duke promises to reward Faustus.

2.8.1 Act IV: Critical Overview

We for the first time see, Faustus contemplating his end and acknowledging the limitations of his powers. Faustus has come a full circle from Act I where he refuses to accept his limited faculties: "Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man" (I, (i), 29). The Faustus in Act IV is able to see that he is but a man: "what are thou, Faustus but a man condemned to die?" (IV, (i), 78).

What makes Scene (ii) different from the other scenes is the fusion of comedy and tragedy. In most of the Elizabethan plays, the comic and the tragic scenes alternate, but in this play we have the tragic and the comic elements put together. The scene with the horse courser is mingled with the scene where Dr. Faustus speculates his nearing end.

2.9 ACT V: SYNOPSIS

Act V, Scene (i) Wagner enters and expresses an inkling that Faustus is soon going to die. He doesn't understand why Faustus is feasting and celebrating when his end is so near. Faustus enters with scholars, discussing who might be the most beautiful woman in the world. The scholars unanimously agree that it is Helen of Troy. Faustus promises to conjure the spirit of Helen for the appeasement of his scholar friends. Music sounds and Helen passes over the stage. The scholars are awestruck to see the unmatched beauty of Helen. They thank Faustus for allowing them to see this "paragon of excellence" (V, (i), p128). An old man enters and the scholars depart. The old man prompts Faustus to repent so that God may show mercy on him. This makes Faustus think about his sinful actions. He becomes so desperate that he prepares to commit suicide. The old man assures him that he still has a chance to win God's forgiveness if he repented. But Faustus finds himself so deeply trapped in the evil designs of Lucifer that he can see no way out. Mephistophilis who is witnessing all this threatens to tear Faustus's body to pieces if he showed any sign of disobedience to his Lord. Faustus is terrified and surrenders meekly to the devil. He even requests Mephistophilis to torture the old man who had tried to misguide him. But Mephistophilis tells him that it is beyond his powers to harm the old man because his faith in God was firm.

The distressed and weak-willed Faustus urges Mephistophilis to have Helen as his mistress. When she appears, Faustus is overwhelmed by her beauty. He says: "Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss"

(Act V, (i), 130). The old man reappears and urges Faustus to turn to God. He still has a chance to be forgiven. But to no avail. Faustus is totally in the clutches of the devil. The old man utters his disappointment and leaves.

Act V, Scene (ii): Faustus confides in the three scholars and tells them that he has sinned against God by selling his soul to the devil. His sin is so deep that it cannot be forgiven. He is unable to pray to God because the devil has taken total control over his soul. Faustus then bids the scholars to leave as he must face the wrath of God in the final moments alone. The clock now strikes eleven. Faustus has one bare hour to live. Every single minute becomes precious to him. He pleads in desperation to the ever moving spheres of heaven to stand still, so that time may cease. He appeals to nature to make the Sun shine forever so that it is perpetual day. Or else an hour may have the duration of a year, or a month, a week or even a natural day so that he could repent. For the first time, Faustus truly repents to God but it is too late now. As the clock strikes 12, he cries out to God not to look so fierce upon him. Thunder and lightning flash on the stage and the devils enter, choke him to death, tear his body to pieces and snatch away his soul to reside in hell eternally.

Final Chorus: This final episode of the play speculates over the spectacular rise and the tragic downfall of Dr. Faustus. The Chorus addresses the audience and warns them against the vicious ways of gaining power and station in life. Faustus's travails should serve as a great warning to the wise people never to attempt to tread into the forbidden and mysterious.

2.9.1 Act V: Critical Overview

We see an entirely changed Faustus here. Faustus, so excited at the idea of gaining limitless powers through necromancy for which he throws caution to the wind says: "Had I as many souls as there be stars/ I'd give them all for Mephistophilis" (I, (iii), 42). Here, he regrets his decision. He can now see that all his arrogance and to master the forces of nature had come to naught. His Dreams, aspirations, illusions and ambitions are all shattered.

The much celebrated and lofty scene where Faustus conjures Helen has great importance. It represents the pitiful condition of Faustus and announces his defeat. The scene ironically depicts Faustus's reduced stature from a seeker of pleasures of mind to the one who succumbs to sexual pleasures. Another question that needs attention here is, why only Helen? Why not some other woman? One can say that in choosing Helen, Faustus reasserts his Renaissance ideals. Renaissance shows a strong engagement with and glorification of the ancient classical art, mythology and beauty. Helen belongs also to the ancient Greek as a symbol of ultimate beauty.

In the last scene of the play, we have one of the important scenes in Elizabethan Drama. The poignant and heart-rending last soliloquy stands out as a remarkable scene. Packed with force, it arouses passion in a dramatic manner. The scene also brings out the doctrines of medieval Christian ideas of sin, hell, damnation and eternal suffering. Faustus despite all his Elizabethan will and ambition had to submit to the medieval philosophy of sin and redemption. The didactic note at the end of the play is in keeping with the tradition of morality plays advocating the doctrines of medieval Christianity.

2.10 LET US SUM UP

The greatness of Dr. Faustus as a play speaks for itself. The phenomenon that arrests the readers' attention from beginning to the end is the character of the hero. The pull of the opposite forces of curiosity and conscience in the mind of Faustus is effectively presented. Marlowe's Faustus is a bundle of contradictions – learned but skeptical, scholarly but short-sighted. He is a muddle of the characteristics of medieval Christianity and Renaissance adventure. The play offers a great scope for a view of Dr.

Faustus. When we approach the play from psychological perspective, it rises above the temporal and the contextual.

Marlowe successfully freed the Elizabethan heavy verse from conventional restrictions and formality. He made the use of blank verse flexible. Who can ignore ‘the mighty line’ (the phrase used by Ben Jonson for Marlowe’s vigorous blank verse) that revolutionized the Elizabethan stage? One could pay a tribute to Marlowe’s genius by citing Shakespeare’s great indebtedness to Marlowe. It was Marlowe who paved the way for Elizabethan Drama. In the words of William Henry Hudson “That Shakespeare, who must have known him well, and who probably collaborated with him, was at first profoundly influenced by him, is evident. His early blank verse is fashioned on Marlowe’s. His narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis* is in part at least inspired by Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*. His *Richard III* and *Richard II* are clearly based on the model of chronicle play provided in *Edward II*. Even in the *Merchant of Venice*, there are many details to show that Shakespeare wrote with the *Jew of Malta* in mind.” (Hudson, William Henry. *An Outline History of English Literature*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2015, p.57-58.)

2.11 KEYWORDS

Paganism:

Paganism refers to the religions of ancient Greece and Rome. A pagan is a man who believes in many gods. (polytheistic) but worships only one chosen God.

Aristotle’s concept of tragedy:

Tragedy, according to Aristotle, imitation in art with a serious purpose and written in a dramatic rather than narrative form. The aim of the tragedy is to arouse the feelings of pity and fear in the audience (catharsis) and to purge them of these emotions so that when they left the theatre, they felt light and cleansed.

Soliloquy:

The word Soliloquy comes from the Latin word ‘solo’ (to oneself) and ‘loquor’ (I talk). It is a literary device used by dramatists frequently when a character is talking to himself or herself, speaking aloud his/ her innermost feelings and through this mode familiarizing the audience with their state of mind.

Allegory:

Allegory is a literary device in which abstract ideas, principles and concepts are explained in terms of characters and figures. It is frequently used in literature and art for preaching a moral lesson or explaining some idea which is otherwise obscure.

2.12 QUESTIONS

1. What is the legend of Faust and how Marlowe uses it for his play? Explain.
2. What role does the Prologue play in the development of *Dr. Faustus*?
3. Trace the decline in the character of Dr. Faustus.
4. Consider the clash between Dr. Faustus the scholar and Dr. Faustus the man.

2.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Brown, John Russell. *Marlowe: Tamburlaine, Edward II and The Jew of Malta*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982
2. Furnham, Willard. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Dr. Faustus: A Collection of Critical Essays*. NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969

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4. Leech, Clifford. Ed. *Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays*. London: Princeton Hall, 1964



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