ON MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

—Faustus' Sins and Salvation—

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INTRODUCTION

Marlowe's plays are the songs of youth. Like Lord Byron, he symbolizes the youth of his time. When we pass an eye over "Marlowe's mighty lines," we will feel a quenchless aspiration for the unknown world. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, which is his second play (its date is a much debated point), has such a tendancy.

Marlowe's intention about this play, as the Prologue shows us, was to present neither "The dalliance of love in courts of Kings"[1] nor "the pomp of proud audacious deeds"[2] in battle fields, but to "perform the form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad."[3] We are led to the small room of Faustus from the vast world of Tamburlaine. His first play, *Tamburlaine the Great* is the drama of "proud audacious deeds," in which Tamburlaine crosses swords with his enemies, while *Faustus* is the drama of consciousness, in which Faustus revels in necromancy for the mystery of the universe. In a word, the real power of crown in *Tamburlaine* becomes the desire and aspiration for indefinite knowledge in *Faustus*. In *Tamburlaine*, the sun is shining brilliantly but in *Faustus*, as in *Macbeth*,[4] a black night broods over this tragedy. It is not merely the darkness of night ; it is the darkness of hell. The protagonist is obsessed by the idea that he cannot eternally get away from hell. The two words "hell" and "despair" are obstinately repeated from the opening scene to the end. The hell in which Faustus is confined is the isolating world from heaven as well as from men. "At the end, as at the beginning," Levin says, "we find him alone in his study. Tragedy is an isolating experience."[5] Of various arguments about this play, what seems to me important is Faustus' sins and salvation. Santayana, stating the case for Faustus as a martyr to the ideals of the Renaissance, says that he is "damned by accident or by predestination ; he is browbeaten by the devil and forbidden to repent when he has really repented."[6] On the other hand, F. P. Wilson,[7] Mahood, Kocher and Douglas Cole[3] hold different opinions from Santayana's. Kocher says, "Faustus has free will, free capacity to repent. It is his own fault that he does not, and so he goes to a condign doom."[9] Mahood also puts it : "Throughout the tragedy, the obstacles to Faustus' salvation are raised only by him. He is always at liberty to repent and return, since Marlowe softens and almost erases the idea found in the *English Faust Book*, that the devils withold him by brute strength for such a course."[10] At all events, many questions will arise about whether Faustus is a truly criminal or not. Are these questions Marlowe's own ones?

It may be that Marlowe was unable to present characters without reflecting on himself ; he sets his eyes on the contradictory conflicts in his own mind, freshing them and makes characters. For Marlowe, the conflict among characters is the complication in his mind. In *Faustus*, however, the complication is not in the conflict among its characters, but in the mind of the protagonist. we could see the play as a faithful revelation of a mind in transition between two conceptions of the universe. Ellis-Fermor says : "As Faustus wavers between his good and evil angels, between God and the devil, so we may see Marlowe hesitating between the submissive acceptance of a dogmatic system and a pagan simplicity of

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outlook to which instinct and temperament prompted him."[11] *Tamburlaine* is not a tragedy in its true sense or at least in the full Shakespearean sense[12] ; what the ending of the play leaves us is simply the conclusion that death comes even to the mightiest. In *Faustus*, the ambition of the protagonist is clearly punished in the form of morality plays. We must pay attention, however, not only to the meaning that the form of morality plays show, but also to the conflict which is seen in morality plays. It is not conceivable that Marlowe, who was in arms against othodoxy in *Tamburlaine*, has yielded to it so readily. Throughout the play, we feel the mental agony of the dramatist who cannot completely believe in paganism, however desperately he pushes his attitude to its logical conclusion. Such agony, it seems, appears in various forms—subtle irony, ambiguity and paradox. It may be that they are Marlowe's own sufferings revealed in the drama. The problem of Faustus' damnation, therefore, should be approached not by a one-sided view, but in the light of two opposite opinions. The present writer will deal with this problem in the following chapters.

(NOTES)

1. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, ed. by F. S. Boas (Methuen, first published in 1932), Prologue, 1. 3. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in my text. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are from 1616 quarto.
2. ibid., 1. 5.
3. ibid., 11. 7-8.
4. See A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, (Macmillan, 1962), p. 279. "In the whole drama the sun seems to shine only twice."
5. Harry Levin, *The Overreacher*, (Harvard, 1952), p. 128.
6. Harry Levin, op. cit., p. 132.
7. F. P. Wilson, *Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare*, (Oxford U. P., 1951), p. 78. "In Marlowe's share of the play there is nothing of predestination and reprobation. He concentrates the human tragedy of Faustus and leaves us in no doubt that Faustus' will was free.
8. Douglas Cole, *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, (Princeton, 1962), p. 191. "Doctor Faustus is a man who of his own conscious willfulness brings tragedy and torment crashing ambitions and desires."
9. P. H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe*, (Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 108.
10. M. M. Mahood, *Poetry and Humanism*, (Cape, 1950), p. 70.
11. Philip Henderson, *Christopher Marlowe*, (Longmans, 1952), p. 130.
12. See Bradley, op. cit., p. 3.

CHAPTER I. FAUSTUS' AMBITIONS AND SINS

The opening scene by the Chorus, although it contrasts Tamburlaine's "proud audacious deed" with Faustus' retired life, suggests many points of similarity between two heroes ; like Tamburlaine, Faustus is low-born, but endowed with the natural gift of a brilliant mind. As Tamburlaine started life as a shepherd and became a ruler in the world, so Faustus "was grac'd with Doctor's name, / Excelling all"[1] by his own power. But learning was not a pleasant thing for Faustus. When he closes his life, he curses his alma mater : "O, would I have never seen Wittenberg, never read book!"[2]

Till swoln with cunning, of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
And, melting, heavens conspir'd his over-throw ;
For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy ;
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss :
(Prologue, 20-28)

The allusion to Icarus, a familiar Elizabethan symbol of selfdestructive aspiration, is emblematic of Faustus' career ; it is a question of flying too high, of falling from the loftiest height imaginable, of seeking illumination and finding more heat than light. In *Tamburlaine*, the emblem of tragic pride is Phaëthon, rashly attempting to drive the fiery chariot of the sun. These two symbols are those of soaring and falling. Faustus had to be visited with divine punishment because he flew beyond his reach.

Here we must take notice that the two sinister lines in which Faustus' ruin is stated show past tenses, although the Prologue is written in present tense on the whole. Bradbrook, pointing out these lines, says "intentional confusion of tenses."[3] The alternative between "cursed necromancy" and "his chiefest bliss" is set forth as the object of Faustus' deliberate choice. Bliss reminds us that magic is Faustus what a crown was to Tamburlaine, gold to Barabas, or companionship to Edward.

The curtain does not rise yet. The play is about to begin now. In a sense, the play has come to an end since Faustus' damnation is determined to happen inevitably. Therefore, what Marlowe presents is the suspense of a man who meets a downfall. When the Prologue is finished, the curtain goes up and Faustus is discovered in his study.

Faustus, turning from one book to the next, represents his own mental history, as the Prologue has begun the outward events of his life. But scholarship is rewarded by no greater satisfactions for Faustus than sovereignty is for Tamburlaine, or conspiracy for Barabas ; for even in the midst of his triumph, he is "but Faustus, and man."[4] This is the lamentation of a man who has found himself on the same level as before. The human greatness eulogized in *Tamburlaine* becomes the lamentation of human misery. It may be said that one of the causes which developed Elizabethan tragedies was the tension between human possibility and limitation. Of all the Elizabethan dramatists, Marlowe was probably the most sensitive to human possibility and limitation ; Marlowe's protagonists "like best that flyes beyond *their* reach."[5] Believing in human possibility, they soar to get the forbidden fruit. After that, however, falling and despair inevitably come. For Faustus, it seems, soaring itself was escape from despair.

Faustus was unable to submit to human limitation. He does not pursue knowledge for the sake of truth, but for power, superhuman power, the power over life and death. Faustus runs through all the drenches of human knowledge and finds them inadequate to his desire. Logic can only teach argument ; medicine stops short where human desire is most thwarted, since it cannot defeat death ; law is a mercenary pursuit, and divinity, which he comes to last, holds the greatest disappointment. As Helen Gardner says, it is grounded in the recognition of man's mortality and his fallibility.[6]

Quotating from the Vulgate "Stipendium peccati mors est."[7] and "Si peccasse negamus, fallimur/ Et mulla est in nobis Veritas,"[8] Faustus concludes that "Belike we must sin, / And so consequently die."[9] But the fact is that Faustus, at this point in his career, sees the imperfection, not the opportunity of redemption ; the first, from Romans vi. 23, concludes a chapter which stresses how the bondage of sin

by Christ's redemption ; in its complete form it reads, "For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."[10] The second, from I John i. 8, is a part of an antithetical construction ; the clause Faustus cites is followed by "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."[11] Faustus consciously shuts out the idea of eternal life which can be get through the sacrifice of Christ. Here we must paradoxically read Faustus' mind. This old scholar who has tried to "sound the depth of"[12] learning, has an intense desire to live perpetually. "We must die an everlasting death."[13] If so, Faustus must enjoy a transcient life. That is the only course open to him. It is not by logic, physics, law, and divinity, but by magic that he can enjoy life.

O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, and omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious artizan !
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command : ···
⋮
A sound magician is a demi-god :
Here, tire my brains to get a deity !

(I. i. 54-64)

Faustus has a thirst for knowledge. On the other hand, the thirst is inseparably related to power and pleasure. What magic gives to him is "profit, delight, and power." He especially thirsts after sovereignty ; his ambition is to become a "great Emperor of the world."[14] In his aspiration to be God-like Faustus chooses magic. Thus, when he aspires to be God-like, he hears the voices of two Angels.

The Good Angel says, "O, Faustus, lay that damned book aside, / ··· Read, read the Scriptures."[15] The Bad Angel says, "Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art ··· Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky."[16] The introduction of the Angels is Marlowe's innovation ; they do not appear in the *English Faust Book*. They are not tutelary spirits but the manifestations of Faustus' own contrary impulses. The Bad Angel is the incarnation of Faustus' instinct, or it is a spokesman for Marlowe himself, who, according to Thomas Kyd, used to "gybe at praiers"[17] and to "jest at the devine scriptures."[18] In a broader sense, it shows a mental attitude of the Renaissance people who were tormented by their doubts about Christianity and were in arms against it. The Good Angel is the incarnation of superego which tries to supress man's desires, or it shows the spirit of the Reformation. It is by the conflict between good and bad in Faustus' mind that the play can attract the spectators to the end, because the fall of the protagonist is told in the Prologue. Faustus is not a common Vice at all ; he, like Macbeth, does not comit a sin without hesitation. Once he comits a sin, he feels a guilty conscience. But in spite of Good Angel's admonition, he sends for two adepts of the black art, German Valdes and Cornelius. They are mysterious persons who never show themselves after their instruction in magic. They are, so to speak, Faustus' own Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. So far they have tempted him into magic. Faustus says :

Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me at the last
To practise magic and concealed arts.

(I. ii. 101-103)

But if the following lines were written by Marlowe himself, Faustus' sins, it seems, were originally brought about by the devil's enticement. Mephistophilis says :

> 'Twas I, that when thou wert i' the way to heaven,
> Damn'd up thy passage ; when thou took'st the book,
> To view the Scriptures, then I turn'd the leaves
> And led thine eye.
>
> (V. ii. 97-100)

At the same time, Faustus' sins were caused by his own will. He goes on talking to the two magicians :

> Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy,
> That will receive no object.
>
> (I. i. 103-104)

When he complains against Mephistophilis for his loss, the loss of eternal joy, Mephistophilis gives Faustus tit for tat :

> 'Twas thine own seeking, Faustus, thank thyself.
>
> (II. ii. 4)

Here are two opinions about Faustus' sins—one is that they were caused by the devil's enticement, and the other by his own will. The present writer emphasizes the latter ; the devil's enticement neither deprives Faustus of his free choice, nor shifts the responsibility to the devil. It must de remembered, however, that the dramatist presents the acts of devils which entice and rule man, although he emphasizes man's free will and responsibility. It seems that the dramatist offers to us the ambiguity that Faustus' sins were caused both by his own will and by the devil's enticement. This ambiguity will be considered when the problem of Faustus' salvation comes to the front.

(NOTES)

1. Prologue, 11. 17-18.
2. V. ii. 46-47.
3. M. C. Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, (Cambridge U. P., 1960), p. 149.
4. See I. i. 23.
5. *The Massacre at Paris*, ed. by C. F. Tucker Brooke, (Oxford U. P., reprinted in 1962), 1. 72.
6. See Helen Gardner, *The Tragedy of Damnation*, ed. by J. Kaufmann, *Elizabethan Drama*, (New York, Oxford U. P., 1961), p. 321.
7. I. i. 39.
8. ibid., 41-42.
9. ibid., 44-45.
10. The quotation is from *the Holy Bible* (Cambridge U. P.)
11. ibid.
12. I. i. 30
13. ibid., 47

14. I. iiii. 106.
15. I. i. 71-74.
16. ibid., 75-77.
17. Kocher, op. cit., p. 114.
18. ibid.

CHAPTER II. THE COMPACT WITH LUCIFER & ITS CONSEQUENCE

In response to Faustus' incantation, Mephistophilis appears. Faustus thinks that he has gained perfect control over the devil. But the appearance of Mephistophilis was "per accidens."[1] As Mephistophilis explains, devils appear when they hear "one rack the name of God, / Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ."[2] Faustus says, "This word 'damnation' terrifies not me"[3] since he "confounds hell in Elysium."[4] None the less, he has misgivings about the reign from which his ministering demon comes. Mephistophilis explains hell to Faustus ; Lucifer was once an angel "most dearly lov'd of God"[5] but he was thrown from the face of heaven because of his "aspiring pride and insolence."[6] Faustus asks : "And what are you that live with Lucifer?"[7] and the devil answers :

> Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
> Conspir'd against our God with Lucifer,
> And are for ever damned with Lucifer.
>
> (I. iii. 73-75)

The original meaning of "Lucifer" is the bearer of light, but he is now a prince of darkness. The repetition of the word "Lucifer" excites nostalgia for lost brightness. Where is the hell in which Mephistophilis is in torment? Throughout the play there is little stress on the more popular conceptions of hell as a lurid place of grotesque physical tortures. Marlowe presents hell as a boundless, everlasting spiritual pain : "Hell has no limits, nor is circumscribed/ In one self place ; but where we are is hell,/ And where he is, there must we ever be."[8] Mephistophilis, who tells about the falien angel, his lost celestial bliss and the pain of hell, seems to give a good lesson to Faustus. Damnation is more arwful for Mephistophilis because he has tasted the eternal joy of heaven. "Mephistophilis," Levin says, "proffers no tempting speeches and dangles no enticements ; Faustus tempts himself."[9] It seems, however, that his sincerity comes from the most cunning calculation ; Robert Heilman puts it : "Mephistophilis is the nearly omniscient stealer of souls urging Faustus to save his soul."[10] And Mephistophilis himself soliloquizes : "What will not I do to obtain his soul?"[11]

Mephistophilis reminds us of Porfiry with subtle insight and profound sympathy, the examining magistrate in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* ; the dialogues between Faustus and Mephistophilis resemble those interrogations in which Porfiry, teaches the would-be criminal, Raskolnikov, to accuse and convict himself.

In spite of Mephistophilis' confession, Faustus uses a grandiloquent phrase "Hell's a fable"[12] and postures, saying "Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude."[13] It must be remembered, however, that his high sounding words cast a gloom over him.

> Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub :
> Now go not backward ; Faustus, be resolute :
> Why waver'st thou? O, something soundeth in mine ear,

'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'
Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
To God? he loves thee not ;
The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub :
(II. i. 5-12)

Faustus does not blindly make a contract with the devil, but he runs down into that straight and narrow path, knowing that he is about to be damned. For this reason Faustus' career becomes more tragic. Faustus, like Macbeth, has to screw up his courage continually, and he must be claid in armour of logic to strengthen his swaying mind ; he says "God loves thee not" in order to justify his own act. His pride appears in this line, for he decides divine will by his own will. Divine mercy, if it exists, should not be decided by men. His pride also appears in the following line : "The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite." In this point, Faustus resembles Tamburlaine who decides divine will by his own will and behaves himself as he pleases. Under the name of will, Tamburlaine destroys the outside world, while Faustus does the inside.

On condition that he be enabled to "live in all volumptuousness"[14] for twenty years, and that Mephistophilis obey his commands and reply to his inquiries, Faustus is willing to sign a legal deed which empowers Lucifer and Mephistophilis "to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, fresh, blood, or goods, into their habitation whatsoever."[15] After his stabbing his arm, his blood congeals but he ignores the portent. Instead, with the supremely ironic and blasphemous "*Consummatum est*,"[16] Faustus completes the contract, using the very words with which Christ completed the work of Redemption on Calvary.[17] As soon as he finishes the contract, he sees the warning of the bloody inscription, "*Homo, fuge!*"[18] But he cannot turn to God who he thinks does not love him.

Now that Faustus has completed the compact with Lucifer, we are interested in the problem about whether Faustus will be saved or not. Before arguing the problem, we will examine the consequence of the compact.

It has already been mentioned that the first request Faustus makes is for a description of hell, a description which he refuses to accept in the very face of the devil who can best describe it. As second demand, Faustus calls for a wife, since, as he says, he is "wanton and lascivious."[19] But the devil cannot provide a wife, though he can supply the fairest of courtesans, since marriage is an institution divinely established by God —a sacrament—whereas, for Mephistophilis, it is "a ceremonial toy."[20] Faustus' demand to the devil is thus frustrated from the start.

This theme of the devil's impotence to provide anything sanctioned by God is brought to a climax in the following scene with Mephistophilis, which invokes the discussion of astronomy. Faustus is keenly aware that there are more things in heaven and earth than the trivium and quadrivium. But the discussion of astronomy dashes his hopes. "Tush!" Faustus cries impatiently, "these are freshmen's questions."[21] To the ultimate and most significant inquiry, "Who made the world?"[22] Mephistophilis refuses to answer, since devils are interdicted from naming God. Moreover, "Delight in the Seven Deadly Sins," Cole says, "is a far cry from the answer to who made the world, and it is not without point that, after this episode, Faustus makes no more speculative inquiries of any kind."[23] By the compact, Faustus has not taken the devil into his service, but he has become the devil's servant. Dancing and the Seven Deadly Sins which the devils show him are only pastimes. "When I behold the heavens, then I repent, / And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis."[24] As soon as the contract is

signed and sealed, he cannot but repent his own act and curse the devil.

1. I. iii. 48.
2. ibid., 49-50.
3. ibid., 61.
4. ibid., 62.
5. ibid., 68.
6. ibid., 70.
7. ibid., 72.
8. II. i. 122-124.
9. Levin, op. cit., p. 116.
10. Cole, op. cit., p. 204.
11. II. i. 73.
12. I. i. 128
13. I. iii. 87.
14. ibid., 94.
15. II. i. 110-111.
16. II. i. 74.
17. See John xix. 30. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished : ..."
18. II. i. 87.
19. ibid., 143.
20. ibid., 149.
21. II. ii. 55-56.
22. ibid., 69.
23. Cole, op. cit., p. 214.
24. II. ii. 1-2.

CHAPTER III. THE POSSIBILITY OF SALVATION

One of the main dramatic tensions throughout the play is provided by the possibility of Faustus' repentance. If the possibility were not real, neither the admonitions and urgings of the Good Angel nor the manifest concern of the devils to lure and frighten Faustus away from godly thoughts would have any dramatic meaning or validity. In chapter III, this problem will be dealt with.

After the sealing of the diabolic contract, Faustus suffers a change ; Faustus asks the devil to "be a spirit in form and substance."[1] As Boas points out, throughout the play "'Spirit' means devil."[2] He has become not only a man but also a devil. When the Bad Angel says to Faustus, "Thou art a spirit ; God cannot pity thee,"[3] he answers back : "Be I a devil, yet God may pity me ; Yea, God will pity me, if I repent."[4] The Bad Angel has the last word : "Ay, but Faustus never shall repent,"[5] to which Faustus gives a despairing assent : "My heart is harden'd, I cannot repent."[6] Repentance wipes out sins. What, then, prevents Faustus from repenting his sins? It is his deep-seated conviction that he is cursed. Fearful echoes always thunder in his ears. "Faustus, thou art damn'd!"[7] Faustus, like Macbeth, sees an illusion : "Swords, and knives, / Poison, guns, halters, and envenom'd steel are laid before me to despatch myself."[8] In fact the illusion is "The very painting of his fear."[9] Here Faustus

realizes that God has not mercy on him. Hereafter, he is always obsessed by despair. "Faustus' inability to repent," Kocher successfully argues, "arises from this failure to believe wholly and passionately in the mercy of God. Dwelling upon the vileness of his sins and thinking that they can never be pardoned, he despairs and is lost."[10] Despair is "die Krankheit zum Tode." Despairing that he cannot be saved, Faustus asserts himself. As Mahood says, Faustus' despair is pagan and stoical rather than Christian.[11] Now is the time when he must throw himself in the presence of God.

Another question is whether Faustus ever temporarily repents and then relapses. Faustus assumes a defiant attitude : "I am resolv'd ; Faustus shall not repent."[12] And he returns to the catechising of Mephistophilis, for this is a means by which he softens his despair. The replies to his questions, as the above mentioned, do not satisfy his intellect ; they are all "slender trifles Wagner can decide."[13] And he speaks to Mephistophilis in a defiant manner : "Tell me who made the world ?"[14] The devil curses, "Thou art damn'd ; think thou of hell."[15] Faustus himself gives the answer, "Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world."[16] Faustus comes near to understand that the love of God who made the heavens and the earth for man can overcome his despair. And then two Angels appear. This is the forth and last conflict. The Bad Angel whispers, "Too late,"[17] and the Good Angel encourages Faustus, saying "Never too late, if Faustus will repent."[18] In spite of the Bad Angel's threat "If thou repent, devils will tear thee in pieces,"[19] Faustus calls upon Christ.

> O, Christ, my Saviour, my Saviour,
> Help to save distressed Faustus' soul !
>
> (II. ii. 85-86)

For all that, not Christ but Lucifer, Belzebub and Mephistophilis appear in order to drive his thought out of the protagonist's mind.

> Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just :
> There's none but I have interest in the same.
>
> (II. ii. 87-88)

How should we interpret this irony ? Does God purposely pretend not to notice Faustus' cry for making a trial of Faustus' mind? Or cannot Christ save him as Lucifer says? Of course, we must acknowledge that Faustus constantly waves and changes his mind ; by the devil's logic and threats, he changes his mind and pledges allegiance to Luciffer. None the less, we cannot but think that Faustus could be saved if the devils did not appear. As stated above, Faustus' sins were caused by his pride and by Mephistophilis' enticements. In a like fashion, Marlowe presents, it seems, both Faustus' hardness and the devils' threats on the problem of Faustus' salvation. It must be remembered, however, that devils neither deprive man of his free will nor throw the blame on him although their threats and enticements are the conventions of Morality Plays. Therefore, we must pay attention to the balance of dualism, the dualism of man's will and of devils' actions. It was Faustus' own will that was emphasized on his sins. On the problem of Faustus' salvation, the devils' actions as well as his will seem to be emphasized. A subtle balance is kept between these two aspects, so that we cannot avoid ambiguity about whether Faustus' stubbornness prevents his salvation. This ambiguity is seen again in the final Act.

We are here brought face to face with the problem of the comic scenes in which Faustus has part and its relation to the tragic action which begins his dream and ends in his downfall. It is generally said

that Marlowe's authorship of the comic scenes is dubious at best. But W. W. Greg puts it: "There is no reason seriously to doubt that he planned the whole, or that whoever collaborated with him carried out the plan; nor are there serious indications that later revisions substantially distorted its structure."[20] At all events, we will look at the comic scenes as they are.

As we have already seen in chapter II, the comic scenes show the real nature of Faustus' bargain. But Faustus in these scenes is not a man with an aching heart, but he is really gay and cheerful. The buffooneries and follies of Faustus are the kinds of medicines for him to avoid despair. When these medicines are out of stock, he acknowledges the current of time which will deprive him of the staff of life. After selling a horsecourser an illusory horse, he is prompted to some serious meditation by the parting words of the buyer: "Now am I made man for ever."[21]

> What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemn'd to die?
> Thy fatal time doth draw to final end;
> Despair doth drive distrust unto my thoughts:
> Confound these passions with a quiet sleep:
>
> (IV. v. 29-32)

It has already been mentioned how the possibility of repentance has not become actual for Faustus because of his despair, his presumption and his fear of the physical violence used by the devils. All these factors now merge into the climactic crisis of the last Act, where the Old Man urges Faustus to call for mercy and avoid despair. He is "the exemplary figure whom Marlowe employs as a spokesman for Christianity and a counterweight for the ideal of pagan."[22]

The Old Man encourages Faustus, saying that "Yet, yet, thou hast an amiable soul,"[23] and prevails upon him to leave magic. Faustus cries, "Damn'd art thou, Faustus, damn'd; despair and die!"[24] and tries to dispatch his own life with the dagger which Mephistophilis gives him. But the Old Man snatches it from him and says: "Oh, stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!/ I see an angel hover o'er thy head, /··· Then call for mercy, and avoid despair."[25] The Old Man's admonition brings a ray of hope to Faustus. As soon as the Old Man leaves him alone, he is thrown into despair.

> Accursed Faustus, where is mercy now?
> I do repent; and yet I do despair:
> Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:
> What shall I do to shun the snares of death?
>
> (V. i. 78-81)

Faustus does not affirm his own act at all. Indeed he is sorry for what he has done, saying "Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears."[26] At the same time, however, he is plunged in despair, thinking that God will never pardon him for his sins. This scene may be said the variation of Act II. ii, where Faustus called on Christ. Faustus, repenting of his sins and despairing of heavenly mercy, stands on a forked road which will lead him to the nether world or to the land of the living. It is Mephistophilis who breaks this situation.

> Thou traitor, Faustus, I arrest thy soul
> For disobedience to my sovereign lord:
> Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy fresh.
>
> (V. i. 82-84)

By the threat of the devil, Faustus, just as he did in Act II. ii, begs pardon of Lucifer, drawing up a new contract. Moreover, he bids the devil to torment the Old Man who tries to dissuade him from obeying Lucifer, and requests Helen of Troy as his paramour that he may divert his mind. Once again we must denounce him for his weak will. Why, then, does Mephistophilis give him a dagger? Why does the Old Man go his way at this very moment? Indeed the Old Man complies with Faustus' request, "Leave me a while to ponder on my sins,"[27] but he goes away "with grief of heart"[28] as if he saw through Faustus' mind. Does the Old man leave Faustus alone, knowing that he cannot resist the devils' temptations? Under these circumstances, we cannot clear up ambiguity.

Helen whom Mephistophilis invokes by charm in order to satisfy Faustus' mind is "fairer than the evening's air/ Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars."[29] But she is only a devil incarnate, not a substantial. Helen of Troy was "used by Elizabethan writers as a symbol of a destructive beauty and sinful pleasure."[30] Therefore, it may be said that she is only a fleshy wanton who decoys Faustus from the way of salvation. At the same time, we must pay attention to the fact that "she is a symbol of the pagan Greece, well loved by Marlowe."[31]

Seeing their infernal meeting, the Old Man says, "Accursed Faustus, miserable man, / That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of Heaven ; / And fliest the throne of his tribunal-seat"[32] and makes his exit glorying in his strong belief which bids defiance to the devils' tortures. At last Faustus has been forsaken by his guardian.

With every scene the drama accelerates its tempo, reaching a climax with the final monologue. And we share the suspense with the protagonist whose contract expires at midnight. Faustus desperately confesses : "Faustus' offense can ne'er be pardoned : the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus."[33] Two scholars extend a last helping hand to Faustus : "Yet, Faustus, look up to heaven ; remember God's mercies are infinite."[34] "Yet, Faustus, call on God."[35] By these persuasions, Faustus, breaking his oath that he never talks of God, calls upon God. So far we have seen that Faustus called upon God three times after his compact with Lucifer, and that each time he was threatened by the devils. The devils' appearance gratifies the expectation of the spectators who think the same thing will happen again in this scene. Now the devils do not threaten him with mere words, but they check the way of repentance by force.

> … Oh, my God, I
> would weep! but the devils draws in my tears.
> ⋮
> … Oh, he
> stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands ; but see,
> they hold 'em, they hold 'em !
>
> (V. ii. 57-61)

Here we will be impressed not with Faustus' stubbornness but with the devils' strength. Marlowe never "softens and almost erases the idea found in the *English Faust Book* ; that the devils withhold him by brute strength from such a course."[36] It is true that we must rebuke him for his weak will yielding to the devils' threats, but God kept his lips shut tight when he called upon God three times, and only the devils appeared! Calvin thought that "God gave grace only to those men whom in his unsearchable wisdom, he had elected salvation."[37] Neither Faustus nor any other character in the play never makes us feel that God loves men and is loved by men. We are never persuaded that God is a Father

who looks with tenderness on his erring children of the earth. When we read Goethe's *Faust*, we will find God's love ; the Lord says : "I soon shall lead him to a clear morning."[38] "While Man's desires and aspiration stir, / He cannot choose but err."[39] Throughout the play Faustus looks free, but we cannot but think that Faustus is a captive buffeted by fortune. Where is the grace of God which is often mentioned by the Good Angel, the Old Man and two scholars? Indeed the Old Man flies to God, glorying in his strong faith, but he does so *after* Faustus made his exit. Under these obscure circumstances, Faustus is required to believe in God.

After calling upon God, Faustus is told by the Good Angel that he has "lost celestial happiness."[40] Faustus is alone in his study as at the beginning. After twenty-four years of volumptuous life, like the twenty-four hours of the day, he is back where he started. To each of us, as to Proust on the death of his grandmother, it conveys the realization that we are truly alone.

The monologue begins with an intense and futile battle against time. The awareness of inevitality is brought home by the clock striking the hour. As Edward calls to the sun "stand still you watches of the element,"[41] so Faustus pleads desperately to the spheres of heaven.

> Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
> That time may come, and midnight never come :
>
> (V. ii. 140-141)

Such a miracle can be done only by God and the spheres go on revolving. Soon he will be tormented but Faustus, unlike the Old Man, is not armed with faith. Suddenly he seems to witness epiphany. "See, see," he exclaims, "where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!"[42] But the blood of Christ, which could save Faustus, is not given him. For the last time Faustus repeats the pattern of incomplete repentance ; he calls on Christ, the devil rends his heart, and his final prayer is for the devil's mercy rather than God's : "Oh, spare me Lucifer!"[43] The striking of the half-hour alerts him to temporal consideration : "O no end is limited to damned souls."[44] Damnation is an unlooked-for way of transcending limits and approaching infinity. The protagonist once said,"after this life, there is any pain?"[45] but now he prays God to "impose some end to *his* incessant pain."[46] The desire of Faustus who aspired for immortality has been granted. What a different immortality it is! Now that things has come to this pass, Faustus wants to be changed into a beast, for when beasts die, "Their souls soon dissolved in elements."[47] Faustus, who asserted himself by despair, wishes self-effacement now.

> O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
> O, soul, be changed into little water-drops,
> And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found !
>
> (V. ii. 187-190)

At the clock strikes twelve, with thunder and lightning, the leaping demons enter to carry him off, and his very last word is the shriek, "Mephistophilis!"[48] Suppose we compare the death of Faustus with that of Tamburlain and of Othello, we will acknowledge that they are conscious of their own roles in the world to the last extremity and die a solemn death or face it without fear, while Faustus is struck with fear, everlasting fear, and makes his definitive exit through the monstrous jaws of the hell-mouth.

What do we feel when the curtain falls? Boas says : "With all the horror of the closing scene, of the two tragic purgative emotions, pity and fear, it is the former that has the chief mastery over us at the end."[49]

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough,
That sometime grew within this learned man.

(Epilogue, 11. 1-3)

As Boas says, there is the note of pity that is heard in the three first lines in the Epilogue. Appoll's laurel-bough that grew within Marlowe, it seems, was destined to put forth many a new and brave shoot. But within about a year, Marlowe lay dead in Deptford, and for him, as for his Faustus, the branch was cut for ever. Dramatic convention requires moral at the end, and the dramatist writes the Epilogue in obedience to it. But Faustus' pride in the Prologue, "swoln with cunning, of a self-conceit, / His waxen wings did mount above his reach,"[50] is substituted for "unlawful things/ Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits."[51] If the *English Faust Book* says, "give none the blame but thine own self-will, the proud and aspiring mind,"[52] Marlowe's *Faustus* says, it seems, "curse thyself, curse Lucifer/ That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of heaven."[53]

(NOTES)

1. II. i. 97.
2. F. S. Boas, *Christopher Marlowe*, supplementary note xv. (Oxford U. P., 1960).
3. II. ii. 13.
4. ibid., 15.
5. ibid., 17.
6. ibid., 18.
7. bid., 21.
8. ibid., 21-23.
9. *Macbeth*, III. iv. 61. (The Arden Shakespeare).
10. Kocher, op. cit., p. 107.
11. See Mahood, op. cit., p. 74.
12. II. ii. 32.
13. ibid., 49.
14. ibid., 68-69.
15. ibid., 75.
16. ibid., 76.
17. ibid., 81.
18. ibid., 82.
19. ibid., 83.
20. Cole, op. cit., p. 216.
21. IV. v. 20.
22. Levin, op. cit., p. 127.
23. V. i. 43.
24. ibid., 64.
25. ibid., 68-72.
26. ibid., 55.
27. V. i. 75.
28. ibid., 76.

29. ibid., 120-122.
30. Cole, op. cit., p. 222.
31. Kocher, op. cit., p. 115.
32. V. i. 127-129.
33. V. ii. 41-43.
34. ibid., 39-40.
35. ibid., 55.
36. See Introduction, (Notes 10).
37. Kocher, op. cit., p. 109.
38. Goethe, *Faust*, Prologue in Heaven 75-76. The quotation is from Kenkyusha English Classics: *Marlowe's Tragical History of Doctor Faustus and Goethe's Faust*, Part I.
39. ibid., 11. 75-76.
40. V. ii. 110.
41. *Edward the Second*, ed. by Brooke, op. cit., 1. 2055.
42. V. ii. 149.
43. ibid., 153.
44. ibid., 175.
45. II. i. 136.
46. V. ii. 172.
47. ibid., 182.
48. V. ii. 194.
49. Boas, op. cit., p. 218.
50. Prologue, 11. 20-21.
51. Epilogue, 11. 6-8.
52. Wilson, op. cit., p. 78.
53. V. ii. 184-185.

CONCLUSION

The Tragical History of *Doctor Faustus* is the dramatized autobiography of Marlowe's mind, and it is a written confession of the soul which is tormented with the conflict between God and devils. It may be said that Marlowe wrote *Tamburlaine the Great* from a heterodoxical standpoint and for that reason he blames himself by writing *Doctor Faustus*. It may be also said that the play shows the fear of the dramatist as a rebel from the laws of Christian cosmos. Though the dramatist scorned Faustus' paganism, yet he could not help protesting it, and he must have been aware of his own attitude like this. The ambiguity found on the problem of Faustus' sins and salvation, it seems, is due to the mental agony of the dramatist who "was bound to Christianity by the surest of chains—hatred mingled with reluctant longing, and fascination much akin to fear, however desperately his desire to be free."[1] It is true that Faustus turned from God and God did not turn from Faustus, but in the final scene, we could see a startling paradox that Faustus was betrayed by God, though Goethe's Faust is saved by his efforts and by God's grace: "Whoe'er aspires unweariedly is not beyond redeeming. / And if he feels the grace of Love that from On High is given, / The Blessed Hosts, that wait above, / Shall welcome him to Heaven."[2]

The dramatist, who was called an Atheist, may be compared with Baudelaire who gave a tribute

of praise to devils. T. S. Eliot says about Baudelaire's satanism.

> Satanism itself, so far as not merely an affection, was an attempt to get into Christianity by the back door. Genuine blasphemy, genuine in spirit and not purely verbal, is the product of partial belief, and is as impossible to the complete atheist as to the perfect Christian. It is a way of affirming belief.[3]

Marlowe may have believed in God not through the action of the Spirit, but through the strength of devils. T. S. Eliot continues.

> So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good ; so far as we do evil or good, we are human ; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing : at least, we exist. It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation ; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation.[4]

This may be also applied to Marlowe. He presented, it seems, this "capacity for damnation." On the other hand, however scornfully Marlowe rejected the Christian system intellectually, it still had a powerful hold of some sort on his imagination and emotion. It seems that Marlowe knew which way he should take, the way of God or of Devils ; no mattter how intellectually he protests Faustus' behaviour, he lets Faustus fall into hell!

(NOTES)

1. Kocher, op. cit., p. 119.
2. Goethe's *Faust*, II. ii. 936—941. (Kenkyusha English Classics, Part II).
3. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, p. 421.
4. Eliot, op. cit., p. 429.

Christopher Marlowe

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