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BALL, MARTHA CHARLENE. Tensions and Ambiguities in the Point of View of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. (1971)
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Critics have long disagreed over the religious viewpoint of Doctor Faustus. In the nineteenth century, writers tended to idealize Faustus and to see his ambitions and aspirations as justified and admirable. In the first part of the twentieth century, this Romantic view still prevailed. But towards the middle of the twentieth century, the opposite point of view began to emerge. Leo Kirschbaum, W. W. Greg, and James Smith are some of the critics claiming an orthodox Protestant outlook for Doctor Faustus. More recent critics have attempted to show that the play is divided in its intent and that it contains a tension between religious orthodoxy and protest against such orthodoxy.

This last position is the one supported by this thesis. The religious attitude of Doctor Faustus is indeed ambiguous. The ambiguity arises from the play's unresolved attitude towards its hero's damnation. First, the play implies that Faustus is predestined to be damned. It also implies that this damnation is justified. It invites its audience to accept and approve Faustus' fate. Yet it also implies that this fate is unjust, and it creates sympathy for him, even inviting approval of his rebellion against a world order which would arbitrarily damn him. These two

unresolved and conflicting attitudes cause the major tension in the play.

Further tension is created by the play's unorthodox use of morality form and conventions. The way morality elements are used even invites the proposal that Doctor Faustus is an inverted morality, as Nicholas Brooke claims. The traditional morality characters are used in untraditional ways. Especially does the devil appear in a paradoxical role. This unorthodox use of morality elements contributes to the dramatic tension and ambiguity.

Thus, Doctor Faustus does not have one consistent attitude, neither does it keep two opposing views in tension. It wavers from one view to another, and is weakened. It does not go beyond this conflict to reach a solution. At times, it rigidly protests its hero's damnation; but, at others, it just as rigidly accepts it.

TENSIONS AND AMBIGUITIES IN THE

POINT OF VIEW OF MARLOWE'S

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

by

Martha Charlene Ball

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE CONFLICT IN

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

Critics have long disagreed over the religious viewpoint in Doctor Faustus. In the nineteenth century, writers tended to idealize Faustus and to see his ambitions and aspirations as justified and admirable. They saw him as a Byronic or Goethean hero who struggles to assert his individuality against a hostile universe. An early critic, Henry Maitland, says that Faustus does not deserve the punishment he gets.¹ William Hazlitt describes Faustus as "gigantic . . . a personification of the pride of will and eagerness of curiosity . . . beyond the reach of fear and remorse."² J. A. Symonds sees the play as "the delineation of the proud life and terrible death of a man in revolt

¹ Henry Maitland, "Marlow's Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1 (1817), 393-4, in John D. Jump, ed., Marlowe: Doctor Faustus, Casebook Series (London: MacMillan, 1969), pp. 25-26.

² William Hazlitt, Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth, in Complete Works, ed. P. P. Howe, 20 vols. (1930-4), 6, 202-3, 207, in Jump, pp. 27-28.

against the eternal laws of his own nature and the world,"³ and Havelock Ellis sees Faustus as "a living man thirsting for the infinite . . . a hero."⁴ George Santayana, perhaps the most extremely Romantic of these, calls Faustus "a good Protestant" and "a martyr to everything that the Renaissance prized," and claims that the "devil represents the true good."

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Romantic view still prevailed. Una M. Ellis-Fermor sees the play as a protest against the "implacable paradox" of the universe; that is, the demands of God on the one hand; and, on the other, man's inability to meet those demands. Marlowe, according to this view, is a "Satanist" who "did not question the nature of the world-order. He saw it steadily and saw it evil."⁶ F. S. Boas says that Faustus has no need to repent,

³J. A. Symonds, Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama (1884), pp. 631-3, in *Jump*, pp. 35-36.

⁴Havelock Ellis, Christopher Marlowe, ed. H. Ellis (1887), pp. xxxviii-xxxix, in *Jump*, p. 37-38.

⁵George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1910), pp. 147-9.

⁶Una M. Ellis-Fermor, The Frontiers of Drama (London: Methuen and Co., 1945), pp. 149-52.

since he has committed no crime.⁷ Phillip Henderson sees the play as "a parable of the fight for intellectual freedom."⁸ And in the early 1950's, P. H. Kocher writes that Doctor Faustus represents Marlowe's "unremitting warfare with Christianity,"⁹ while Nicholas Brooke calls it a deliberate misuse of the morality form and says that "Marlowe chose deliberately to use the Morality form . . . perversely, to invert or . . . to satirize its normal intention."¹⁰

But towards the middle of the twentieth century the opposite point of view began to emerge. James Smith in 1939 describes Faustus as an allegory with an orthodox Christian attitude and says that Faustus is rightly punished for the sin of pride.¹¹ Leo Kirschbaum in 1943 asserts that "The Christian view of the world informs Doctor Faustus throughout--

⁷F. S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and Critical Study (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 211.

⁸Phillip Henderson, And Morning in his Eyes: A Book about Christopher Marlowe (London: Boriswood, 1937), pp. 310, 312, in Jump, p. 15.

⁹P. H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), p. 330.

¹⁰Nicholas Brooke, "The Moral Tragedy of Doctor Faustus," Cambridge Journal, 5(1951-2), 669.

¹¹James Smith, "Marlowe's Dr. Faustus," Scrutiny, 8(1939-1940), 36-55.

not the pagan view,"¹² and W. W. Greg in 1946 agrees.¹³ Other more recent critics who take this position are Helen Gardner,¹⁴ L. B. Campbell,¹⁵ Roy Battenhouse,¹⁶ and Douglas Cole.¹⁷ M. M. Mahood also sees the play as a comment on the divided state of the Renaissance soul, split between spiritual and earthly values.¹⁸

More recent critics have attempted to show that the play itself is divided in its intent and that it contains, in John Jump's words, "a tension between . . . protest . . . and . . . more orthodox, tendencies."¹⁹ Some critics have proposed that

¹²Leo Kirschbaum, "Marlowe's Faustus: A Reconsideration," RES, 19(1943), 229.

¹³W. W. Greg, "The Damnation of Faustus," MLR, 41 (1946), 97-107.

¹⁴Helen Gardner, "The Theme of Damnation in Doctor Faustus," from "Milton's 'Satan' and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy," English Studies, N.S., 1(1948), 46-66, in Jump, pp. 95-99.

¹⁵L. B. Campbell, "A Case of Conscience," PMLA, 67 (1952), 225-32.

¹⁶Roy C. Battenhouse, "Marlowe Reconsidered: Some Reflections on Levin's Overreacher," JEGP, 52(1953), 531-42.

¹⁷Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962).

¹⁸M. M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism (London: Cape, 1950).

¹⁹Jump, introduction, p. 17.

the tensions and ambiguities result from a conflict in Marlowe's own mind. J. B. Steane, for example, says that "instability is fundamental in the play" and adds that the "division and uncertainty" that exist in the play also existed in its author.²⁰ He also implies that Marlowe was struggling with a predestinarian concept of Christianity which he could neither accept nor totally reject: a "lurking sense of damnation precedes the invocation to Mephistophilis,"²¹ and Faustus feels "a deep sense of sinfulness" which "is not just the result of his dealings with the devil but [is] also the cause of them."²² Wilbur Sanders' concept of Faustus is similar to Steane's; to him, Faustus' "scepticism is accompanied by, perhaps derived from, a profound emotional involvement with the ideas he rejects."²³

This last position is the one that this paper seeks to support. The religious viewpoint in Doctor Faustus is indeed ambiguous. The ambiguity arises from the unresolved

²⁰J. B. Steane, Marlowe: A Critical Study (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), p. 164.

²¹Ibid., p. 159.

²²Ibid., p. 160.

²³Wilbur Sanders, The Dramatist and the Received Idea: Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 230.

attitude in the play towards its hero's damnation. First, the play implies that Faustus is predestined to be damned. It also implies that this damnation is justified. It invites its audience to accept and approve Faustus' fate. Yet it also implies that this fate is unjust, and it creates sympathy for him, even inviting approval of his rebellion against a world order which would arbitrarily damn him. These two unresolved and conflicting attitudes cause the major tension in the play. Further tension is created by the play's unorthodox use of the morality form.

Doctor Faustus, then, does not have one consistent attitude; neither does it keep two opposing views in tension. It wavers from one view to the other, and thus is weakened. It does not go beyond this conflict to reach a solution. In Ellis-Fermor's words, "Marlowe achieves, not a balance between two interpretations of the universe, but immobility and rigidity of protest."²⁴ The play does not even rigidly protest all the time; sometimes it just as rigidly accepts.²⁵

²⁴Ellis-Fermor, p. 142.

²⁵The problem of studying the play is further complicated by the fact that it is a fragment and has very likely been added to by writers other than Marlowe. No one knows what it would be like in its original complete form. (See Appendix.)

CHAPTER II

FAUSTUS PREDESTINED

When Doctor Faustus is sitting in his study at the beginning of the play, he glances at the Bible briefly before rejecting divinity. He quotes two passages: Romans 6:23, and I John 1:8; the first says, "The reward of sin is death";¹ the second, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us."² From these, he concludes, "we must sin, and so consequently die."³ Many critics (Roy C. Battenhouse, for example)⁴ have pointed out that Faustus does not complete either quotation, but that he rejects religion on the basis of half-truths. He does. The problem still remains, however, as Wilbur Sanders has shown,⁵

¹Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus: A Conjectural Reconstruction, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), I.i.40. This edition is the one referred to throughout this paper.

²I.i.41.

³I.i.43.

⁴Roy C. Battenhouse, "Marlowe Reconsidered: Some Reflections on Levin's Overreacher," JEGP, 52(1953), 531-42.

⁵Wilbur Sanders, The Dramatist and the Received Idea (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 243.

that according to the doctrine of predestination Faustus' conclusion is true for those who are not among the elect. If one is a reprobate, his destiny is sin and consequently death.

The play implies that Faustus is such a reprobate and is thus predestined to be damned. It does so by showing evil and evil's representatives as overwhelmingly powerful, and, conversely, by showing good and the powers of good as negligible. It also contains other qualities which occur in works having predestinarian tendencies. But before discussing these qualities, this chapter will briefly discuss the doctrine of predestination and its influence in sixteenth century England.

The Doctrine of Predestination

Predestination as a doctrine of the Christian church originates from statements made by Christ in the gospels and by St. Paul in the epistles. While remaining a central doctrine, it has received more emphasis at certain times in the history of Christianity than at other times. The Middle Ages emphasized it little; the Protestant Reformation stressed it more. Luther reached back to St. Augustine to find a

statement of the doctrine with which he was in accord; Calvin even more than Luther made the doctrine central in his theological system. Because of the spread of Calvinism, the doctrine of predestination became a topic of absorbing interest in the sixteenth century in Europe and in England as well.

The problem of reconciling the free will of man to the predestination and foreknowledge of God has always been a difficult one for theologians. The problem may be stated in the following way. If God possesses all knowledge and power, then He must know all things before they happen, and He must have been their Cause. Yet if God is not to be held responsible for man's damnation, then man must have some measure of responsibility for his own actions. Thus, God's predestination and man's free will appear as the two horns of a dilemma that believers cannot resolve but can only accept as a mystery of God that the imperfect human will cannot comprehend. The New Catholic Encyclopedia states the problem thus:

God sincerely wills the salvation of all men; . . .
There is neither predestination to evil . . . nor
. . . to any evil deed . . . Christ died for all
men without exception . . . Nevertheless, God has
decreed from all eternity to inflict eternal punishment for the sin of final impenitence, which He

has foreseen for all eternity. He is by no means the cause of the impenitence, but merely permits it.⁶

The Biblical basis for the doctrine of predestination is in the gospels and in the epistles of St. Paul. In Matthew 25:34 (King James Version) Jesus says, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Also, in Luke 10:20, He says, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Further evidence for the Biblical origin of the doctrine of predestination is the enigmatic statement by Jesus in Mark 4:11-12: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Evidence occurs also in the writings of St. Paul. In the Epistle to the Romans 8:28-30, he says,

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he

⁶A. G. Palladino, "Predestination in Catholic Theology," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Although the first statements of Jesus might possibly be metaphoric, the last is not, and the quotation from Romans clearly implies the idea of predestination.

While predestination has long been a doctrine of the church, it has not always occupied a central position of importance. At certain times it has concerned theologians more than at others. When it becomes a major preoccupation of religious thinkers and the central doctrine of a religious system, then the system is called a predestinarian one. Predestinarianism is the name of a view which makes the doctrine of predestination central to Christianity.

St. Augustine's teachings lean toward predestinarianism, although he does not follow the idea to its ultimate conclusion: that God is directly responsible for the damnation of some persons. To him, predestination means that only from God can any good come to man,⁷ because man's will is not free to choose good. Because of man's fallen nature, man does not have free will or free choice (liberum arbitrium). Man does, however, have freedom to do God's will (libertus

⁷E. M. Burke, "Grace," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

Christiana).⁸ St. Augustine emphasizes man's powerlessness and God's power, thus refuting the Pelagian heresy that man can respond to God's grace through his own efforts. St. Augustine insists that God alone can initiate man's salvation, and that if anyone is saved, or if anyone lives a good life, it is because God has given him the necessary grace.⁹ Despite his insistence on man's powerlessness, however, St. Augustine was not a predestinarian, for he did not put the responsibility for man's damnation on God.

Luther, in searching for a doctrine of justification with which he was in accord, went back to the teachings of St. Augustine. Luther was troubled by the church's practice of selling indulgences, and by its emphasis on good works as a means of meriting grace.¹⁰ He concluded that man is justified not by any deeds of his own, but by faith alone. He found the basis for his conclusions in the teachings of St. Augustine and in the gospels. Luther felt that man could not possibly merit salvation in God's eyes, no matter what good works he did, because the best of which man was capable was was so much below God that it was insignificant. Therefore,

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰H. J. Grimm, The Reformation Era, 1500-1650 (New York: McMillan, 1954), p. 102.

faith was the only means by which man could be saved. Luther based his doctrine on Romans 1:17: "That man is justified by faith alone."¹¹ He stated that God freely forgives sins without taking into consideration man's merits. Luther accepted the doctrine of predestination.¹² He believed, however, that the fact that a person became concerned over his election was an indication that he had been elected.¹³

Augustine and Luther did not concern themselves with the non-elect.¹⁴ Calvin, however, followed the doctrine of predestination through to its ultimate conclusion that God in eternity decided the fate of all persons.¹⁵ Furthermore, Calvin said that God decreed the fall of man in eternity and decided that He would elect some of the damned for salvation.¹⁶ Calvin says that God made this decision arbitrarily, without considering the merit of individual persons. Calvin's doctrine is a grim one, as he himself admitted, calling it the

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 103.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 352.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 353.

decretum guidem horribile.¹⁷ It is, however, only the doctrine of St. Augustine and of certain passages in the Bible carried to their ultimate conclusion.

The doctrine of predestination, then, as it re-emerged in Reformation theology, was a grim and difficult one, and one which caused much concern among theologians and among laymen as well.

Predestination in England

England was receptive to Calvinist thought before the reign of Queen Elizabeth. During the reign of Edward VI, John Bradford's writings on predestination and election show Calvinist ideas,¹⁸ as do the works of Bishop Hooper.¹⁹ During the Catholic reign of Queen Mary, many Protestant exile groups allied themselves with European Calvinist communities.²⁰ Also during her reign a confession of faith was

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸John Bradford, The Writings of John Bradford, M. A., ed. for the Parker Society by Aubrey Townsend (Cambridge: University Press, 1848; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), pp. 211-219.

¹⁹John Hooper, The Early Writings of John Hooper, D., ed. for the Parker Society by Samuel Carr (Cambridge: University Press, 1843; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), p. 264.

²⁰Charles Davis Cremeans, The Reception of Calvinist Thought in England (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 36.

signed by Bishops Farrar, Hooper, and Coverdale, as well as Rogers, Bradford, Philpot, Crome, and Saunders in 1554, which is similar to the creed of Calvin's Swiss Reformed Church.²¹

In Elizabethan England, Calvinism was the most influential system of religious thought.²² Henry Hallam, in The Constitutional History of England, says, "The works of Calvin and Bullinger became the textbooks in the English Universities. Those who did not hold the predestinarian theory were branded with reproach by the name of Freewillers and Pelagians."²³ Calvin's own writings were widely read, as were those of his successor in Geneva, Theodore Beza. The extent of their writings' popularity may be seen by examining the Short-Title Catalogue, edited by Pollard and Redgrave, which lists books published in England, Scotland and Ireland, as well as books published elsewhere in English, between 1475 and 1640.²⁴ It lists ninety-six different editions of the

²¹Ibid., p.34.

²²Ibid., p. 60.

²³Henry Hallam, The Constitutional History of England (New York, 1880), I, 230, in Cremeans, p. 60.

²⁴A. W. Pollard and C. R. Redgrave, eds., A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1926), passim.

works of Calvin and fifty of Beza's. No other foreign theologian had as many books published in England. Furthermore, between 1548 and 1600 no other writer had nearly so many publications in English as Calvin did.

Not only were the writings of Calvin widely published and read, but his influence pervaded much of the religious writings of the time. It appeared in theological publications, in popular religious tracts, and in popular dramatic works. For example, the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 show Calvinistic influence, especially Article XVII, on predestination and election.²⁵ The Lambeth Articles of 1595 are more clearly Calvinistic. Five of the articles state, first, that salvation results neither from faith nor good works, but only from the will of God; second, that the elect compose a set number which cannot be increased or diminished; third, that all others besides the elect will be condemned; and, fourth, that grace is not given to all men; and, fifth, that some men have not the power to be saved.²⁶ The Lambeth Articles were adopted by the Church of England as a result of a debate at

²⁵Thomas Rogers, The Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England; An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, ed. for the Parker Society by J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge: University Press, 1854; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1960), pp. 142-158.

²⁶Ibid.

Cambridge in 1595 which was settled by a conference between representatives of the University, the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, and other clerics.²⁷ The nine Articles were signed by the Archbishop, the Bishop of London, and others. They were later suppressed by Queen Elizabeth, but the fact of their adoption by the Church of England shows the extent of Calvinistic predestinarian influence in English theology. Even though one were not a Calvinist, he could not ignore the doctrine of predestination.

The influence of predestinarianism also appeared in many popular religious tracts. The popularity of such writers as William Perkins and Arthur Dent attests to the wide acceptance of predestinarian ideas. Perkins wrote many tracts, including The vvhole treatise of the cases of conscience, which was "published for the common good, by T. Pickering" in 1608.²⁸ It was Perkins whose works in the early seventeenth century outsold Calvin's.²⁹ Another popular religious writer was Arthur Dent, author of The Sermon

²⁷Cremeans, p. 76.

²⁸William Perkins, The vvhole treatise of the cases of conscience (London, 1608).

²⁹Short-Title Catalogue, passim.

of Repentaunce and of The plaine-mans pathway to heauen, subtitled Wherin euery man may cleerly see whether he shall be saued or damned. The latter is a dialogue in which a character representing theology names the characteristics of the saved as distinguished from those of the reprobate. Dent's works were extremely popular. The Sermon of Repent-
aunce had appeared in twenty-one editions by 1670, and The plaine-mans pathway went through a total of twenty-four editions.³⁰

Another indication of the prevalence of Calvinist predestinarian thought is the fame of the story of Francis Spira. Spira's story was widely known throughout Europe and England; it was the most famous of the "cases of conscience" known.³¹ Spira was a man who believed himself damned for having committed an unforgivable sin, and who thus fell into the most dangerous sin of all, despair. It will be helpful at this point to summarize his story. Francis Spira (Francesco Spiera), born in 1502, was a lawyer in Citadella, Italy. He became a Protestant, and was so outspoken that he was called before the papal legate in Venice and charged with heresy.

³⁰Short-Title Catalogue, passim.

³¹L. B. Campbell, "A Case of Conscience," PMLA, 67(1952), 231.

As a result of interrogation and threats, he recanted. He was fined thirty ducats and ordered to make a public recantation, which he did. His conscience, however, soon began to torment him, and he became convinced that the wrath of God was turned against him. He became ill as a result, and his family moved him to Padua, where they hoped the doctors would be able to cure him. But he became worse: he could not sleep, he had an unquenchable thirst, and he thought of nothing but what he believed to be his sin and its punishment. Many scholars at the University of Padua came to see him. They counseled him to ask for God's mercy and not to sink into despair. Many people--both Catholic and Protestant--came to hear the scholars exhort him. But their exhortations had no effect. He was convinced that God had no mercy for him, that he was not one of the elect. He had visions of devils and said that they had hardened his heart so that he could not believe in the mercy of God. He tried to commit suicide. Finally his family moved him from Padua back to Citadella. He died twenty days after his return, in 1548.³²

Four of the persons who visited Spira wrote down his story. The four were two Italians, Pietro Paolo Vergerio

³²Ibid., pp. 225-6.

and Matteo Gribaldi; a Scotsman, Henry Scrimgeour; and a Pole, Sigismund Gelaus.³³ In 1550, all of their accounts were collected and printed in Geneva, and Calvin wrote a preface to the collection.³⁴ Gribaldi's account, the first to be published in English, was printed in Worcester, also with a preface by Calvin.³⁵ The second edition was printed in 1570 in London.³⁶ Thus the story of Spira was spread over Europe and England, and with the particular endorsement of Calvin.

Many references to Spira occur in the writings of the time. For example, Lady Jane Grey in a letter mentions "the lamentable case of Spyra of late."³⁷ Edwin Sandys referred to Spira's "fearful" end in his sermons,³⁸ and Thomas Rogers mentions Spira in his Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles.³⁹

³³Ibid., p. 227.

³⁴Ibid., p. 229.

³⁵Ibid., p. 230.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷John Fox, The Actes and Monumentes of the Church (London, 1576), I, 1351, in Campbell, p. 230.

³⁸Edwin Sandys, The Sermons of Edwin Sandys, D. D., ed. for the Parker Society by John Ayers (Cambridge: University Press, 1841; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), p. 362.

³⁹Rogers, pp. 59; 142.

Spira appears as a character in a drama by Nathaniell Woodes, The Conflict of Conscience, which is based on Spira's life.⁴⁰ The main character is named Spira in the prologue of the first edition, but his name is changed to Philologus in the play because, as the author says in the prologue, people would be better able to identify with a character with an abstract or symbolic name than with one representing a real person.⁴¹ The plot follows the basic line of Spira's story except that in the second edition Philogus repents in the end and is saved.

Thus it can be seen that much concern existed over the doctrine of predestination in England during the sixteenth century and that both religious and secular works show this concern.

Predestination in Doctor Faustus

Doctor Faustus is a drama whose emotional impact partially depends upon the ideas of predestination, election, reprobation, and damnation that are implicit in its

⁴⁰Nathaniell Woodes, The Conflict of Conscience, in A Select Collection of Old English Plays, ed. R. Dodsley and W. Carew Hazlett (1874-96; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1964).

⁴¹Nathaniell Woodes, The Conflict of Conscience (Oxford: University Press for the Malone Society, 1952).

treatment of its subject matter. Although these ideas do not comprise an intellectual argument for a predestinarian view, they still pervade the atmosphere of the play.

Certain traits occur in works of literature which contain a predestinarian view. The autobiography of John Bunyan, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners and his The Life and Death of Mr. Badman; as well as Nathaniell Woodes' The Conflict of Conscience have these qualities in common with Doctor Faustus. In all these works, three main characteristics are apparent. First, the individual man, represented by the protagonist, feels himself isolated from others. He may live in close community with other men, but he does not feel that he is part of his community. He feels set apart either because of his superior intelligence and learning, or because of the heinousness of his sin, or because of both. Contributing to the isolation of the protagonist is the relative unimportance of the other characters as compared to him. He is the most important character, and the others only act as foils to him or serve as part of the background. Second, the central character feels himself to be remote not only from other men but also from God. He feels that God is far away and that no one, not even the representatives of the church, can help him approach God.

Furthermore, he feels that he himself is incapable of reaching God through his own efforts. According to Calvinist theology, his assumption is correct, since man is saved exclusively by faith, and this faith is a gift from God, given without any regard for man's merits. Man's merits, indeed, cannot help him at all, since he can do nothing good on his own without God's grace. The central character is thus in a dilemma: thrust upon his own resources, he finds that he is incapable of saving himself through his own efforts. Furthermore, not only does the central character feel himself remote from God, but also God himself is far away. He does not appear as a character, and those who speak of Him do so with awe, telling of his wrath and His justice, His omnipotence and His hatred of sin, rather than of His love and forgiveness. Third, the central character feels that the devil has power over him. He senses the immediate presence of the powers of evil at all times, and he feels their presence and influence more than those of the powers of good. Thus, in a work which contains a predestinarian view, these three qualities will be apparent. The main character will sense that he is isolated from other men, that he is isolated from God, and that he is threatened and influenced by the devil.

These qualities are evident in Doctor Faustus. First, Faustus is set apart from other men by reason of his superior intelligence, learning, and ambition. Also, the play dramatizes Faustus' isolation from other men by having him die alone. And the dramatist shows Faustus as a unique and isolated figure by making him the most fully drawn character in the play, a rounded character more than an abstraction. Second, Faustus is set apart from God. His isolation from God is represented in the drama by the absence of God as a character, and also by the other few and ineffective characters who represent God. Third, Faustus feels himself surrounded by and influenced by devils. The characters who represent evil are stronger and more effective in the drama than those who represent good, and there are more of them. They seem to have more power than the representatives of good; they claim it themselves, and the other characters, as well as Faustus, also claim it for them. Finally, certain technical directions of the play imply a predestinarian view. The timing of one scene and several stage directions imply it. These three qualities, then, as well as the technical directions, imply that Faustus is predestined to be damned, and that Doctor Faustus is a predestinarian drama. So far as it partakes of these qualities, it is.

It may be interesting to compare Doctor Faustus with a play which has a completely different point of view. Everyman⁴² was written about a century earlier than Doctor Faustus; and, although Everyman is older, it is less typical of the morality play in many ways than Doctor Faustus is. Everyman is one of the few morality plays with a Catholic rather than Protestant inclination,⁴³ and its point of view stands in strong contrast to the implicit Calvinism in Doctor Faustus. Since the two plays share a similar subject, although they are different in other respects, a comparison may help to point up certain important Calvinistic traits in Doctor Faustus.⁴⁴

In Everyman, the individual human being, represented by the character Everyman, is alone in the face of death, but this isolation is not like Faustus'. One reason is that Everyman is by definition all men. If all men are alone, then no one man is set apart from his fellows by his aloneness. Being alone is a bond with other men; it is a human

⁴²Everyman, in The English Drama: 900-1642, ed. Edd Winfield Parks and Richmond Croom Beatty (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1935), pp. 57-79.

⁴³W. Roy Mackenzie, The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory (Boston: Ginn, 1914), p. 12.

⁴⁴See also David Kaula, "Time and the Timeless in Everyman and Doctor Faustus," CE, 22(1960), 9-14.

condition which all have to face. Another reason that Everyman's solitude is not like Faustus' is that Everyman does not face a hostile supernatural world. Even Death is not menacing, but simply inevitable.

If Everyman is not isolated as Faustus is, neither is he remote from God. God is present at the beginning of the play, and He presides over it to the end through his representatives Confession, Good Deeds, Knowledge, the Angel, and the Doctor (presumably a doctor of theology). The representatives of God are eloquent, and they speak with authority, unlike those in Doctor Faustus. They represent what is real in the play, and Everyman never doubts that what they say is true.

God and the powers of good are strong and present in Everyman. Even though devils appear in other moralities, in Everyman the Devil and the powers of evil are nonexistent. Death, though frightening to Everyman, is not an evil and destructive being, but a servant of God. Even the allegorical characters which represent worldly things--Goods, Fellowship, Kindred and Cousin--and the characters representing personal attributes--Strength, Five Wits, Beauty, and Discretion--are not evil in themselves, but simply inadequate for salvation. Nowhere is Everyman told that he must renounce them; they simply desert him in the face of death.

The world of Everyman, then, is orderly and harmonious. God rules with love and mercy; and salvation, though not easy, is at least possible. No fiends hover in the background, and the individual man, though alone, receives aid and advice. His soul is not divided. He desires the good; and, when he knows what it is, he seeks it out. Implicit in the play is the belief that if man seeks salvation, he will find it.

Not so in the world of Doctor Faustus. First, Faustus is isolated from other men. His superior intelligence and knowledge set him apart from others, and so does his ambition. He wants to be superior to other men, and he wants his excessive desires for power, knowledge, and pleasure to be gratified. But his character sets him apart as well. He appears not only as a type (the proud man) but also as a distinct personality. He is arrogant, vain, egotistical, yet fearful, abject, and self-despising. He is a complex character as well as a specialized type or representative of a class. Furthermore, his isolation is symbolized by his dying alone. Everyman has with him Good Deeds, an abstraction, but still a character in the drama. Faustus has no one. The Students in the final scene desert him out of fear. His only companion throughout the major part of the play is

Mephostophilis. Much of the awful effect of the final scene depends on the solitude of Faustus as he utters his final soliloquy. Faustus, then, is isolated from other men by virtue of intelligence and knowledge, because of his character, and because all his companions desert him at his death.

Faustus is isolated from his fellowmen; he is also remote from God. God never appears in the play as He does in Everyman. When any of the characters mention Him, they do so in terms of His wrath, His power, His justice, and His condemnation of sinners. The Old Man speaks of grace, and Faustus tries to pray for grace and mercy, but the forgiving and merciful God seems remote. The only time in the play that God seems to be present is in Faustus' last soliloquy when he seems to see God's "ireful brows" and His arm outstretched to destroy. If God is present here, it is as a judge, not a savior. A forgiving God is remote and seemingly impossible for Faustus to reach.

Not only does God not appear; but only two representatives of God appear in the play, the Good Angel and the Old Man, as opposed to the many such representatives in Everyman. These two appear but briefly; and, for the most part, they are weak and unconvincing. It is true that, in literature, characters representing goodness are usually less impressive

or less dramatically interesting than those representing evil. But even if such characters lack vividness, they do not usually lack the conviction of their words as these characters do. The Good Angel and the Old Man appear to believe that Faustus' damnation is irrevocable, and their words reflect such a conclusion. The Good Angel is less a separate character than a part of Faustus' mind, in which the two Angels symbolize a conflict. The Good Angel, therefore, is weak because Faustus' conscience is weak. The Old Man does have some strong and effective lines when the devils come for him in Act V, scene i. His speech beginning: "Satan begins to sift me with his pride/ As in this furnace God shall try my faith" (lines 121-122) is dramatically strong, and the last line: "Hence hell! for hence I fly unto my God" (line 126) has the sound of certainty and of confident faith. The speech contrasts with Faustus' vacillating and fearful words a few lines earlier: "I do repent, and yet I do despair" (line 70). Yet the Old Man, with his confident faith, is still a minor character who does not appear long enough to weight the play in his direction. Also, his words of faith are strong, but his words of admonishment to Faustus are weak. He seems to be pleading for what he already knows is impossible. His statements about Faustus' damnation are in positive form:

"This magic . . . will charm thy soul to hell/ And quite bereave thee of salvation" (lines 38-39), "Then, Faustus, will repentance come too late,/ Then thou art banished from the sight of heaven" (lines 44-45), and his last lines: "Faustus, I leave thee, but with grief of heart,/ Fearing the enemy of thy hapless soul" (lines 67-68); while his statements concerning Faustus' possible salvation are worded in conditional form: "thou hast an amiable soul/ If sin by custom grow not into nature" (lines 42-43) and "this my kind rebuke,/ . . . may amend thy soul" (lines 52-53; underlining not in text). He never says that Faustus will be saved if he repents but only implies that he may be and that he surely will be damned if he does not. So, even though the Old Man speaks for God, he only reinforces Faustus' doubts about his ability to be saved. The representatives of God, then, are few, and of little help to Faustus.

But if there are few representatives of good in the play, there are many representatives of evil. Devils appear frequently in the play, and one of them (Mephostophilis)⁴⁵ is the strongest character in it. Besides Mephostophilis, other devils or evil spirits are Lucifer, Beelzebub, the Bad

⁴⁵Mephostophilis is the spelling of the devil's name in the 1616 text, which Greg follows. In the 1604 text, the name is spelled Mephostophilis, Mephastophilis, or Mephastophilus. In neither text does the spelling Mephistophiles occur. See Greg, Doctor Faustus, 1604-1616, Parallel Texts Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 39-40.

Angel, the Seven Deadly Sins, and innumerable minor devils. The representatives of evil appear more frequently and for longer periods of time than do the good characters, and they are stronger dramatically. It is true that devils frequently dominate the action in earlier morality plays. Yet in Doctor Faustus, they exert an influence and authority that no one in the play challenges. The Old Man does face them when they come to carry him off, but it is significant that he can only passively resist them; he cannot drive them away. And no angels appear to do battle with the devils as they do in The Castle of Perseverance. Lucifer and Beelzebub, in brief but dramatic appearances at crucial moments (when Faustus calls on Christ and after the Old Man has been tortured), are authoritative and unopposed. Again, when they appear with Mephostophilis in Act V, scene ii, they seem to control the situation. Their language is menacing; Lucifer's, in particular, is full of hissing s-sounds that suggest his incarnation as the serpent: "Thus from infernal Dis do we ascend/
To view the subjects of our monarchy,/ Those souls which sin seals the black sons of hell" (lines 1-3).

The other representatives of evil also have a strong effect. There are many of them, and they assert their presence boisterously, thus creating an atmosphere of pervading

evil. It is true that the Bad Angel and the Seven Deadly Sins are not characterized with detail nor are they given any particularly menacing lines or any authority. The Bad Angel, however, has the advantage over the Good Angel when they first appear in that he speaks in positive terms--"Go forward Faustus," (I.i.72)--while the Good Angel speaks in negative ones--"O Faustus, lay that damned book aside/ And gaze not on it" (lines 68-69). The Seven Deadly Sins, on the other hand, have no direct authority. They do, however, produce an effect of abundant evil because they are boisterous and because there are so many of them. Furthermore, they may have an indirect influence on Faustus.

Sherman Hawkins has suggested that Faustus in the course of his life exemplifies each of the Seven Deadly Sins, and that his life takes on the same pettiness and vulgarity that the Sins reveal in this scene.⁴⁶ He shows wrath, for example, when he puts horns on the knight's head, and he panders to gluttony when he brings grapes to the Duchess of Vanholt. Pride, of course, is with him from the beginning. Even when the Sins are not physically present, their influence is felt.

⁴⁶Sherman Hawkins, "The Education of Faustus," SEL, 6(1966), 193-209. See also, Warren D. Smith, "The Nature of Evil in Doctor Faustus," MLR, 60(1965), 171-175.

The comic devils serve the same purpose as the Seven Deadly Sins in that they give the effect of a world populated with aimless and uncontrolled evil. Therefore, the representatives of evil in the play are many, the more important of them speak with authority and with dramatic effect, and even the less important of them leave a strong impression by their very presence. They all contribute to the sense of pervading evil.

The representatives of good may have little or no power over Faustus, but the representatives of evil have much. This point strongly weights the play in the direction of a predestinarian view and, moreover, implies that the devils have power over Faustus and exert this power until no other conclusion to the play seems possible other than the one it has. That the devils have power over Faustus can be concluded because many of the characters say that they do, because some of the stage directions imply that they do, and because the timing of one scene implies also that they do. The play, then, not only implies that Faustus is not one of the elect, but it also implies that he has actually been abandoned by God, and turned over to the powers of the devil.

First, many of the characters in the play say that the devils have such power, and that Faustus has been given over

to them and abandoned by God. The devils themselves claim it. Mephostophilis, in the last act, claims to Faustus that "when thou tookst the book/ To view the scriptures, then I turned the leaves/ And led thine eye" (V.ii.92-94). Lucifer, when Faustus calls on Christ, appears and says, "Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just" (II.ii.86), implying that Faustus has been turned over to the powers of evil. That the devils claim such power may well indicate that they are trying to deceive Faustus into believing in their power, but other characters in the play besides Faustus believe in it as well. That the devils claim such power, then, does not constitute proof that they have it, but their claims in conjunction with the beliefs of the other characters in those claims indicate that some truth exists in the claim.

Faustus does indeed believe that he is controlled by devils, and that God has abandoned him. Like Spira and Philologus, he says that he cannot repent because his heart has been hardened. In Act II, scene ii, he starts to repent; at the words of the Bad Angel, "Thou are a spirit; God cannot pity thee" (line 13), he desperately maintains that God can pity him even though he might be a devil (line 15). But when the Bad Angel says, "Ay, but Faustus never shall repent" (line 17), he despairs, saying, "My heart is hardened, I

cannot repent" (line 19). Again, in the scene with the students in Act V, Faustus says, "I would weep, but the devil draws in my tears . . . I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold 'em, they hold 'em" (V.ii.55-58). And again, in his final soliloquy, he says, "Oh, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?" (line 143), implying that actual hands are pulling him down. Faustus, then, believes that he cannot do anything to save himself because he believes that he is controlled by devils.

Not only does Faustus believe that devils control him, but other characters in the play also believe it. They either say or imply that he is damned and that no hope exists for him. The Prologue of the play prepares for a story of the predestined damnation of Faustus by saying that "heavens conspired his overthrow" (Prologue, line 22). This statement implies that God actively worked to damn Faustus. The two Angels imply the same thing when they appear in Act V, scene ii, just before Faustus' final soliloquy. They alternate in telling Faustus that he has lost all hope of heaven and must go to hell. The Bad Angel says, "[thou] Gave ear to me,/ And now must taste hell's pains perpetually" (lines 99-100). The Good Angel says, "Oh, thou hast lost celestial happiness,/ . . . Hadst thou affected sweet divinity/ Hell or the devil

had had no power on thee" (lines 104-107), implying that the devil now does have such power, and that he has had since Faustus first rejected the study of divinity. The Old Man, who first pleads with Faustus to repent, says to him after the Helen of Troy episode, "Accursèd Faustus, miserable man,/ That from thy soul excludst the grace of heaven" (V.i.118-119), implying that Faustus is cursed. The students (V.ii) refuse to stay with Faustus. One of them says, "God will strengthen me; I will stay with Faustus" (line 75), but another warns him, "Tempt not God sweet friend" (line 76) and says they all will go into the next room and pray. They appear to believe that Faustus is so contaminated that being in the same room with him might bring disaster to themselves. They have no confidence that he may be saved. Their attitude contrasts sharply with that of the advisors of Philologus in The Conflict of Conscience, who argue with him that he can be saved despite his insistence that he cannot. Philologus' friends leave him with hope, but the students accept Faustus' own conclusions and seem to believe with him that he has been given over to the devils. The other characters in the play do, therefore, believe in Faustus' damnation.

Not only do the words of the characters imply that Faustus is controlled by the powers of hell, but the timing

of one scene implies it, as do several stage directions. When Faustus calls on Christ in Act II, scene ii, three devils appear. What sounds like a genuine prayer--"O Christ, my saviour, my saviour! help to save distressed Faustus' soul" (line 84)--does not get the expected results. Christ does not answer, but Lucifer does. This scene recalls the one in The Conflict of Conscience in which Philologus, trying to pray, sees Beelzebub inviting him to a feast.⁴⁷ The scene in Doctor Faustus, however, is much more impressive because three devils enter instead of one, because the audience as well as Faustus sees them, because they speak and behave in so menacing a manner, and because they not only invite Faustus to an entertainment, but actually present it to him onstage. It is, of course, the Pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins. The scene is doubly convincing of the devils' power because, before they appear, the Good Angel has just told Faustus, "Repent, and they [the devils] shall never raze thy skin" (II.ii.83). The appearance of the threatening devils appears to contradict the Good Angel, and to reinforce Faustus' already strong belief in their power.

⁴⁷The Conflict of Conscience, ed. Dodsley, V.v., p. 138.

Also, some of the stage directions in Act V in the B text imply the great powers of the devil over Faustus. After the students leave Faustus and Mephostophilis tells him that he has no hope of salvation, the Good and Bad Angels appear and show him the throne of Heaven and the pit of Hell, telling him that he has lost the one and gained the other. Furthermore, the entire second scene of Act V in the B text is surveyed by Lucifer, Beelzebub, and Mephostophilis from a position above the action. They view the student scene, the display of Heaven and Hell, and Faustus' final soliloquy. Their presence here implies their power, as they sit or stand above and watch the action that they themselves have set in motion.

It is true that Faustus may believe in his own damnation because he has given in to the sin of despair. It is also true that the devils may claim power over him in order to deceive him; in fact, this is more than likely. But that the other characters in the play also seem to believe in Faustus' damnation, and that none of them argue convincingly with him that he can be saved, seem to indicate that his damnation is a fact. If Faustus is not damned, why does no really strong character appear to argue for his possible salvation, as in The Conflict of Conscience? The Good Angel

speaks platitudes at the beginning, is proved wrong at one crucial moment, as mentioned above, and joins the Bad Angel in condemning Faustus towards the end. The Old Man begins by trying to save Faustus, but then gives up. (Does he give up because Faustus has committed an unforgivable sin?) The students desert Faustus, with only a token attempt to convince him that he might be saved. Since all these characters seem to believe in Faustus' damnation, he can hardly be blamed for believing in it himself. Neither can the reader.

Some evidence exists, then, for stating that Faustus is a reprobate given over to the powers of hell, and that he does not have the ability to repent. As mentioned earlier, Doctor Faustus is not a theological work, and so it does not contain a carefully reasoned-out argument for any theological position. But the emotional effect of the play does produce a sense of predestinarianism, of evil pervading, of damnation without recourse.

CHAPTER III

FAUSTUS' DAMNATION

Doctor Faustus seems to be predestined to be damned, and, on the one hand, his damnation appears to be justified within the context of the play. Yet, on the other, it appears to be protested against. In fact, the play's attitude toward Faustus' damnation is its central conflict. Because this attitude is not resolved, the play has a sense of unresolved tension and ambiguity.

Damnation Justified

The play accepts the possibility that Faustus may be a reprobate beyond the hope of redemption. It even accepts the paradox that Faustus' damnation is his own fault even if God ordained it from all eternity. Within the context of the play, Faustus' damnation seems to be justified. The audience is encouraged to accept the basic assumptions of Christianity as the conditions of the play--the primary one being that the salvation of his soul is the most important concern that a human being can have. Leo Kirschbaum, as well

as others, has emphatically pointed this out.¹ The play takes pains to show him as deserving what he gets. It does this in several ways. First, it shows him as having made a bad bargain. The emptiness and triviality of the conjuring scenes point out the folly of his decision to practice magic, and they reinforce the judgment against him. Second, the play never actually shows him repenting. He never does, in spite of what Santayana claims.² Faustus does threaten to repent, wavering back and forth throughout the play; and, in the final scene, groveling most abjectly. But he only once addresses an actual prayer to God, and after two lines of it he stops when he sees the devils approaching. His repentance in the last scene is not perfect contrition, but only "Judas' repentance"--fear of punishment.³ A possibility of his repenting seems to exist, as L. B. Campbell points out.⁴ Such a possibility is created by the author's suspense-

¹Leo Kirschbaum, "Marlowe's Faustus; a Reconsideration," RES, 19(1943), 225-41.

²George Santayana, Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1910), pp. 147-9.

³See Paul N. Siegel, "The Damnation of Othello: An Addendum," PMLA, 71(1956), 279-80.

⁴L. B. Campbell, "A Case of Conscience," PMLA, 67 (1952), 219-239.

building techniques, such as the foreshortening of time in Faustus' last soliloquy. The scene takes place in exactly one hour by the clock in the play, but it actually lasts a much shorter time. Also, the half-hour stroke is closer to the end of the scene than it is to the beginning. From eleven o'clock to half-past eleven is thirty lines, while from half-past eleven to twelve midnight is only twenty lines. Thus time is compressed for dramatic effect. Also, Faustus' frantic back-and-forth waverings throughout the scene create suspense. This back-and-forth motion is physical as well as symbolic, for his words put together images of height and depth, heaven and earth; they also imply that he gestures up or down at the appropriate time. For example, "Oh, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?" (V.ii.143) suggests that the actor must raise his arms and then lower them. The attention of the audience is focused on Faustus' waverings, and it seems almost possible that he can, if he will, be saved. Yet the possibility is illusory because of all that has gone before which has pointed to Faustus' damnation.

But the main way in which the play shows Faustus as deserving his fate is by ridiculing and satirizing his pride at every available opportunity. It shows him, in fact, as a

well-known type of sinner--the proud man, the prototype of Lucifer himself, who would not accept his rightful place but who in trying to rise above it found himself in hell instead. As an example of a man who sins through pride, Faustus is shown as vain, superficial, egotistical, and pompous. His spiritual blindness is shown clearly for what it is. His pride and blindness are revealed through the particularly Marlovian comedy which T. S. Eliot calls "the serious even savage comic humour."⁵ This use of comedy is the most consistent way in which the playwright reveals the folly of his central character.

Faustus' first scenes are marked by irony, hyperbole, and a subtle kind of mockery that, as Eliot says of other works by Marlowe, just falls short of caricature. Faustus is seen as an extreme character, having much in common with the humor characters of Jonson. Faustus also resembles Barabbas in The Jew of Malta in the first scene as he sits in his study reviewing his acquired knowledge as Barabbas views his gold. In both plays, the "infinite riches in a little room" are present, but Faustus' are the riches of the

⁵T. S. Eliot, "Christopher Marlowe," in Elizabethan Essays (London: Faber and Faber, Limited, 1934), p. 28.

mind. In contrast to Barabbas, Faustus does not gloat over his intellectual treasures; he contemptuously tosses them aside. In this scene, he is treated much as Barabbas is; a hint of mockery is present in the tone. He is almost a parody of a scholar as he picks up one book only to dispose of it with dizzying swiftness and reach for the next. His extravagant outbursts and frequent boasting mark him as proud and almost at times ridiculous. "Sweet Analytics, 'tis thou hast ravished me!" he exclaims in a typical outburst; but his enthusiasm does not last. He leaps from philosophy to medicine to law in less than half a page, disposing of each with a pat, superficial phrase. He turns from philosophy because "to dispute well [is] logic's chiefest end" (I.i.8) and he can do that. Thus he reduces logic to sophistry. Medicine he turns down because he is already famous for his cures. Law, he claims, is too dull--"A petty case of paltry legacies!" he spits alliteratively, "Too servile and illiberal for me" (lines 30,36). The p's express contempt; the l's laziness. Over divinity he takes a little more time. The whole part of his soliloquy that represents his rejection of the various disciplines is begun and ended with a reference to divinity, showing that it has been his greatest interest. He hesitates longer over the

Bible than over the other books, but soon tosses it aside too, and takes up "necromantic" books, which he calls, ironically, "heavenly." They are, in fact, his substitute for the Bible. With them, he makes extravagant plans: "All things that move between the quiet poles/ Shall be at my command" (lines 54-55). He ends his soliloquy with a punning conceit: "Here tire my braines to get a deity!" (line 61) that is farfetched and pompous. The entire soliloquy serves as an introduction to Faustus as a character, and it establishes a definite tone of parody. The extravagant language and the hasty, cursory manner of Faustus, his extremes of enthusiasm and contempt, his frequent quoting in Latin all establish his character as energetic yet overly ambitious, shallow, and proud. The tone subtly mocks him. His movements as well as his language are exaggerated: if he does what the text calls for him to do, he picks up and throws aside books at great speed. "Bid on kai me on farewell, Galen come,/ . . . Physic farewell! Where is Justinian?/ . . . Too servile and illiberal for me./ . . . Jerome's Bible, Faustus, view it well./ . . . Divinity, adieu!/ These metaphysics of magicians/ . . . are heavenly" (lines 12-48).

Faustus again raves effusively a few lines later after the Good and Bad Angels enter. They make their perfunctory remarks as though they have done so many times before, and then they go out. Faustus appears to pay them absolutely no attention, but instead continues thinking about magic. "How am I glutted with conceit of this!" (line 76) suggests Faustus' gluttony for the idea of magic and the dreams of unlimited power, wealth, and satisfied curiosity which it promises, but the suggestion is made in terms of one of the Seven Deadly Sins. This speech expresses what he wants most. First, Faustus wants his spirits to "fetch me what I please;" second, to "Resolve me of all ambiguities;" third, to "Perform what desperate enterprise I will" (lines 77-79). Then he gives the details of these general desires. First, he will "have them fly to India for gold" and "Ransack the ocean for orient pearl;" they will "search all corners of the new-found world/ For pleasant fruits and princely delicates" (lines 80-83). The names of "India," the "orient," and the "new-found world" give an exotic flavor to the language. The long o sounds give a sense of wonder; "princely delicates" sounds sensuous, as if the things spoken of are being tasted in anticipation. The emphasis is on Faustus' desire for luxury. Next, he will have the spirits read to him "strange

philosophy," and tell him "the secrets of all foreign kings" (lines 84-85). The exotic appears for its own sake, and the emphasis is on Faustus' curiosity. Then he wants the spirits to make impractical displays of power in order to dazzle onlookers. To wall Germany with brass and to make the Rhine circle Wittenberg might have a practical military purpose, but to dress the students in silk is a plan for gaudy display only. Moreover, it comes as a digression between two military plans. The digression shows how excited and disorganized Faustus' mind is. It also shows that what he chiefly cares for about all his plans is luxury and display of power, more than for the actual power itself. His plans for attaining power are vague; but his plans for having luxury and making display are specific. When Valdes and Cornelius enter, Faustus tells them he wants to learn how to conjure: "'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me" (line 108), an extravagant exclamation that echoes his earlier utterance about philosophy. Faustus' unstable enthusiasm is underscored by the repetition. In all of his speeches in the first scenes, Faustus' extravagant language, his exaggerations and hyperbole, and his repetitions are used ironically. He is an

"overreacher" as Levin says,⁶ but his overreaching is not accepted uncritically; it is presented with a touch of mockery.

Faustus is again mocked in his first conversation with Mephostophilis. The conversation is in fact like a Socratic dialogue in which a questioner attempts to draw a statement out of his opponent by asking him leading questions. Faustus tries to beat Mephostophilis in a question-and-answer session, but the devil gets the better of the argument. Faustus has already gloated over the obedience of the spirit because he disappeared when Faustus told him to go and change his shape. "How pliant is this Mephostophilis,/ Full of obedience and humility!" (I.iii.29-30) exclaims Faustus in words which are intended to prove ironic. When Mephostophilis appears again, Faustus gets his first disappointment: Mephostophilis did not appear because he was subject to Faustus' conjuring, but because he, hearing Faustus deny God, rushed "in hope to get his glorious soul" (line 49). Faustus is shaken a little by this disturbing reminder of his soul, but immediately recovers and begins to try to trap Mephostophilis in an argument. He shoots questions, the answers to which he already

⁶Harry Levin, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952).

knows, and Mephostophilis gives the familiar answers:

Fau. . . . Tell me, what is that Lucifer thy lord?

Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.

Fau. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?

Meph. Yes Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.

Fau. How comes it then that he is prince of devils?

Meph. Oh, by aspiring pride and insolence,
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.

Fau. And what are you that live with Lucifer?

Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damned with Lucifer.

(lines 62-73)

The blank verse exchange from line 62 to line 85 is a balanced unit. Faustus repeats "that Lucifer" twice; his two questions: "Was not that Lucifer an angel once?" and "How comes it then that he is prince of devils?" are set against one another. Mephostophilis' first answers are each complete in one line; his third answer takes two lines, perhaps to represent his growing impatience. Faustus, impervious to Mephostophilis' emotion, throws him another one-line question, and Mephostophilis responds with a vehement outburst of three parallel lines that build up to a forceful climax. The three-times-repeated "Lucifer," echoing Faustus, gives a feeling of repressed rage and bitterness bursting forth. The two tones pull against each other in this passage. Faustus' tone is supercilious and self-satisfied; he has the air of an accomplished debater getting ready to trap his opponent.

Mephostophilis' tone, on the other hand, is tense and restrained at first, then vehement, stern, rebuking, and finally pathetic, though still full of dignity. It is throughout a serious tone with no hint of mockery. But Faustus is not impressed by the outburst; the irony is compounded because he is not. He questions further:

Fau. Where are you damned?

Meph. In hell.

(line 73)

Faustus then springs his triumphant final question which he expects his opponent will not be able to answer:

Fau. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?

(line 74)

Mephostophilis, quite exasperated with Faustus' quibbling, bursts out with his famous rebuking speech:

Meph. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.

Thinkst thou that I, who saw the face of God
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

(lines 75-79)

Then immediately he implores Faustus to give up his proposed pact with the devil, which he who knows the truth realizes to be frivolous. The tone is intensely serious:

Meph. O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.

(lines 80-81)

But Faustus is unimpressed; he is only somewhat annoyed because his argument did not conquer his opponent. He continues in his supercilious tone:

Fau. What, is great Mephostophilis so passionate
 For being deprived of the joys of heaven?
 Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude
 And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
 (lines 82-85)

The irony in these lines is obvious. It almost seems that the playwright enjoys seeing his main character walk arrogantly into a trap which he has by his own blindness set for himself. The entire passage achieves its ironic tone by the tension between the lines spoken by the two characters: the superciliousness of Faustus is set against the seriousness and growing anger of Mephostophilis.

The exaggeration and hyperbole which mark Faustus' manner return in his soliloquy in lines 101-113. "Had I as many souls as there be stars/ I'd give them all for Mephosphilis," he exclaims (lines 101-102). This statement, like the previous exaggerated language, is ironic in the context of the play; ironic in that Faustus is contemptuous of any considerations for his soul at the beginning of the play but becomes abject at the end. Again, Faustus continues to day-dream about the fantastic things he will do with the help of Mephosphilis: he will be "great emperor of the world" and will "make a bridge through the moving air/ To pass the ocean with a band of men"(lines 103-105). The vague, general wish for power is joined to a specific detail that, though related

to the general wish, has little to do with it. Most of Faustus' grandiose plans, in fact, are vague and unspecific; his specific plans are merely showy. He cares more for the appearance of grandeur than he does for actual power. He is clearly no Tamburlaine. "The Emperor shall not live but by my leave" is grandiose; "Nor any potentate of Germany" is rather puny. It is simply tacked on as an afterthought. Why does he limit himself to Germany? Because he has little awareness of what unlimited power would really mean. Thus, Faustus' hyperbole mocks his aspirations.

In the scene where Faustus signs the deed delivering his soul to Lucifer, he is alone in his study; and for the first time he voices doubts over his proposed bargain. His wavering back and forth is so obvious that it is almost a caricature; as in his first scene, the physical actions called for by his words would present an excessive amount of moving, turning, and gesturing that would border on the ridiculous:

Despair in God and trust in Beelzebub.
 Now go not backward; no, be resolute:
 Why waverest? Something soundeth in mine ears,
 'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'
 Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
 To God! He loves thee not:

(II.i.4-9)

His next utterance is the kind of exaggerated language that

is characteristic of him; it is also characteristic of Marlowe's use of the grotesque:

To him [Beelzebub] I'll build an altar and a church
And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes.

(lines 12-13)

The Good and Bad Angels appear, speak in turn, and go out; Faustus does not indicate that he hears anything of what they say except the last word of the Bad Angel: "wealth." Upon this word, Faustus seems to make up his mind. He becomes flippant, parodying Christianity: "Mephostophilis, come,/ And bring glad tidings from great Lucifer" (line 26), which echoes the Gospels. With "Veni, veni, Mephostophilis!" (line 28), he imitates the Latin services of the Church. When Mephostophilis arrives, he insists that Faustus sign the deed giving his soul to Lucifer in his own blood. Faustus tries to write, but his blood congeals. Mephostophilis rushes out and returns with fire. Faustus signs, and Mephostophilis says aside, "What will not I do to obtain his soul!" (line 71). The line seems incongruous with the previously established character of Mephostophilis, yet it falls in with the tone of burlesque that frequently appears in the play. Next, Faustus becomes depressed at the thought of what he has just done, and Mephostophilis says, "I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind" (line 80). Whereupon devils appear, give

"crowns and rich apparel" to Faustus (more empty show), dance, and disappear. Faustus seems puzzled rather than delighted; he asks, "What means this show?" (line 81) "Nothing Faustus," answers Mephostophilis, "but to delight thy mind," a repetition which sounds sardonic and increases the feeling of parody. "And let thee see what magic can perform," continues Mephostophilis, which immediately raises the question: is this all that magic can perform? The show is not so impressive if Faustus has to be told he is being delighted before he knows he is.

As soon as Faustus has read the deed aloud, he becomes more buoyant. He jokes: when Mephostophilis asks if Faustus delivers the document as his deed, Faustus answers, "Ay, take it, and the devil give thee good of it" (line 111). Then Faustus begins to quibble with Mephostophilis again; pretending to ask questions for information, but actually asking in order to win an argument. "Tell me," he asks, "where is the place that men call hell?" (line 114) He seems to remember the first argument they had, and to want to reverse the result. Mephostophilis gives him the famous answer:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place, but where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there must we ever be:

(lines 119-121)

Faustus begins to quibble: "I think hell's a fable" (line 125).

Mephostophilis is at first ironic: "Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind" (line 126). But Faustus persists and Mephostophilis appears to become irritated:

Fau. Thinkst thou that Faustus is so fond to imagine
That after this life there is any pain?
No, these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.

Meph. But I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I tell thee I am damned and now in hell.
(lines 131-135)

Faustus, however, wins the argument this time, even though by flippantly ignoring Mephostophilis' main point, and by quickly changing the subject:

Fau. Nay, and this be hell, I'll willingly be damned:
What, sleeping, eating, walking, and disputing!

(Now he shifts from blank verse to prose.)

But leaving this, let me have a wife, . . .
(lines 136-138)

The next example of Marlovian comedy used to belittle Faustus occurs in Act II, scene ii. Faustus is suddenly overwhelmed by the thought of damnation when Mephostophilis refuses to tell him who made the world. Mephostophilis angrily goes out, and the two Angels come in. The Bad Angel tells Faustus it is too late to repent; the Good Angel tells him it is never too late.

Bad Angel. If thou repent, devils will tear thee
in pieces.

Good Angel. Repent, and they shall never raze thy
skin.

(II.ii.82-83)

Faustus tries to pray. He calls upon Christ:

Fau. O Christ, my saviour, my saviour! help
to save distressed Faustus' soul.

(lines 84-85)

But just as the Bad Angel had predicted, devils appear, threatening Faustus. Their appearance is ironic, coming as it does just after Faustus' prayer. Their manner is threatening: they speak short lines to Faustus, with the effect of cornering him:

Beel. We are come to tell thee thou dost injure us.

Luc. Thou callst on Christ contrary to thy promise.

Beel. Thou shouldst not think on God.

Luc. Think on the devil.

Beel. And his dam too.

(lines 92-96)

The threatening effect of these lines depends on the progression from longer lines to shorter ones: from the first line of Beelzebub's, which is reproachful, almost politely so, with a justifiable sense of injury; to the last one, which is short, rude, with an unspoken implication of violence. The lines also have a grotesquely comic effect. Lucifer and Beelzebub are like two thugs closing in on their victim, Faustus, who fearfully gives in and recants. In fact, he overreacts, in a renewed flood of hyperbole:

Fau. And Faustus vows never to look to heaven,
Never to name God or to pray to him,
To burn his scriptures, slay his ministers,
And make my spirits pull his churches down.

(lines 98-101)

The repeated never, the close parallelisms, the rumbling of the last line with its effect of finality all make this speech sound like a formal vow or a ritual oath, but they also give it the effect of an almost hysterical display of panic. Faustus exaggerated and lied to himself at the beginning through desire and curiosity; now he exaggerates and lies through fear. Again, his next line is almost hysterical in its attempt to conciliate the devils, yet in its unfortunate choice of words it only angers them further:

Fau. That sight [the Seven Deadly Sins] will be
as pleasant to me as paradise was to Adam
the first day of his creation.

Luc. Talk not of paradise or creation, but mark
the show.

(lines 108-110)

Faustus here is like a babbling fool. The effect this scene produces is not sympathy for Faustus' fear and for the danger he is in, but is rather mockery at him.

The following display of the Seven Deadly Sins mocks Faustus in that it mocks his sins. Pride, Lechery, Gluttony--Faustus' most obvious sins--as well as the others are coarsely comic and thus show their debased nature. The Sins are neither threatening nor tempting. When they leave, Faustus declares, echoing his earlier words, "Oh, how this sight doth delight my soul!" (line 167) Lucifer says, "Tut Faustus, in hell is all manner of delight" (line 168), an

ironic statement, considering his threats moments earlier. That Faustus seems to accept this claim is even more ironic, considering his terror moments earlier.

The tone of parody that exists in the play, then, serves the purpose of holding Faustus up to ridicule and showing his pride and folly. Its use strongly implies that, within the context of the play, his damnation is deserved.

Damnation Protested

Even though the play encourages its audience to accept and approve Faustus' damnation, it does not do so wholeheartedly. The audience is also encouraged to sympathize with Faustus and to view his fate with misgivings. It may be argued that this is true of the central characters of any morality play or didactic work, or of any tragedy. Yet the sympathy that is evoked for Faustus goes beyond that which arises at the sight of an evil character or a foolish one getting his just deserts. And the response aroused by Faustus' fate is different from the one aroused by the fate of a character in a tragedy such as Macbeth. There are a number of reasons why the audience not only feels sympathy for Faustus but also regards his damnation as unjust. Sympathy is aroused because Faustus appears to be damned. He

seems helpless in the face of superior force which has conspired against him. He has been shown as deserving his damnation, true; yet at times the playwright seems to be on Faustus' side and against the forces which damn him. The playwright seems to oppose the rigid implacability of a God who predestines Faustus from all eternity. Yet at the same time he seems fascinated by the idea of damnation. Because enough evidence exists in the play to suppose that Faustus is a reprobate, reason to protest his reprobation also exists. The doctrine of predestination contains within itself its own criticism. The audience pities Faustus because grace seems so inaccessible and far away, while hell is so ready and near. Furthermore, the audience sympathizes with him because its members, to some extent, sympathize with and share his aspirations. And, in the same way, they share his sufferings. Both his aspirations and his sufferings are made immediate and real by the language used to express them so that even an audience which intellectually condemns Faustus will emotionally identify with him and feel sympathy for him.

First, the audience sympathizes with Faustus because he seems to be the victim of superior forces. The sight of so much power aligned against him creates a feeling of uneasiness. The overabundance of devils, the ever-present

atmosphere of evil, the brief, ineffectual appearances of those who are supposed to offer Christian counsel and support, the absence of any really sustaining and redeeming force in the play all contribute to a sense of excess. Moreover, the idea of heaven's conspiring Faustus' overthrow suggests that his predestination is unjust; it suggests a petulantly jealous deity who cannot endure to see a mortal encroaching on his territory. The spectacle of Faustus' damnation creates a reaction against it, especially since the Prologue states the situation in tragic terms:

Till, swollen with cunning of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow.

(Prologue, lines 20-22)

The audience also sympathizes with Faustus because they share to some extent his aspirations. They are made to share them by the exuberance, energy, and vitality of his language. The verse descriptions of what he plans to do are full of vivid images and splendid-sounding words. His desires have an innocent quality about them. His dreams of power share in the exuberance of Tamberlaine's, but he lacks that conqueror's single-mindedness. He flits from one grand scheme to another. Likewise, his dreams of pleasure are attractive, not repulsive like Sir Epicure Mammon's in The Alchemist or Gaveston's in Edward II. His curiosity is also

represented as attractive and natural. It is indeed true that these three impulses are suspect from a theological point of view--that they represent the three urges that Levin has written about. The desire for power is libido dominandi, the desire for pleasure is libido sentiendi, and the desire for knowledge is libido sciendi.⁷ But even though it is not likely that a sixteenth-century audience would have given these urges their whole-hearted approval as Levin suggests, still it is hardly possible that any human audience (except one composed entirely of Puritans) would not give them to some extent their sympathy. They would sympathize primarily not because the desires are natural but because the language is magnificent. For example, "All things that move between the quiet poles" (I.i.54) conveys a feeling of hushed awe by the beautiful juxtaposition of vowel and consonant sounds (long double o, long i, long o at the end); by the conjunction of move and quiet; by the indefiniteness yet infinite possibilities of all things; and by the suggestion of vast, still spaces of quiet poles. Faustus' enthusiasm at seeing foreign countries in his travels--Rome, the court of Charles V, and "the Great Turk's court"--is childlike and contagious. And the language of the apostrophe to Helen of Troy has so

⁷Ibid., p. 27.

often been commented on, both for its beauty and for its disquieting qualities, that it needs no new comment here.

In the same way, the audience is made to sympathize with Faustus' suffering through the language used to present it. First, Faustus' language makes him a real character and not just an abstraction. It is hard to sympathize with the sufferings of Philologus, but not with those of Faustus. His agonized waverings are real and painful; so are the constant reminders he gives himself of his coming fate. The Horse-Corser scene, for example, is commonplace in its humor, but it contains one effective speech, whose effect comes partly from the striking juxtaposition of the practical joke with Faustus' brooding over his approaching death. Faustus has just given the Horse-Corser the magic horse for forty dollars, but has told him not to ride the horse into the water.

H-Cors. I warrant you sir. O joyful day!
now am I a made man for ever.

Fau. What art thou, Faustus, but a man
condemned to die?

(IV.v.19-21)

The prose practical-joke scene is thus linked naturally to the brooding soliloquy, which continues. It is a short, melancholy poem which creates its mood of uneasy quiet by use of alliteration, repetition, and assonance:

Thy fatal time draws to a final end;
 Despair doth drive distrust into my thoughts.
 Confound these passions with a quiet sleep.
 Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the cross;
 Then rest thee Faustus, quiet in conceit.

(lines 22-26)

Then the Horse-Corser comes in again, wet; and the scene reverts to undistinguished comedy, and the language to prose.

The poignancy of the scene with the scholars has been commented on by Wilbur Sanders, who feels it to be superior to the final soliloquy in dramatic power.⁸ The scene is in prose; it does not contain any set pieces such as the one just quoted. Yet it does contain some of the same poetic devices. Repetition and parallelism are used to create a tone of sadness, regret, dread, and an effect of time passing quietly but inexorably. The speeches are frequently locked together by the repetition of words or phrases (as in the example just cited in the Horse-Corser scene). For example, when Faustus first appears upset, a scholar says, "'Tis but a surfeit sir, fear nothing" (V.ii.36). Faustus answers him with "A surfeit of deadly sin, that hath damned both body and soul" (lines 37-38). The second scholar tells Faustus to remember that God's mercy is infinite. Faustus answers, "But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the

⁸Wilbur Sanders, The Dramatist and the Received Idea (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 237.

serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus" (lines 41-42). The sentence is balanced by the repetition of Faustus. The next sentence--"Ah gentlemen, hear me with patience and tremble not at my speeches" (lines 42-44)--contains parallel verbs and prepositional phrases which contrast: "hear me," but "tremble not." The next sentence lasts for seven lines and contains many striking parallelisms and examples of balance. " . . . I have been a student here these thirty years, oh, would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book!" (lines 45-46). Wittenberg and book echo student. The rest of the sentence goes like this:

and what wonders I have done all Germany can witness,
yea all the world, for which Faustus hath lost both
Germany and the world, yea heaven itself--heaven, the
seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom
of joy--and must remain in hell for ever. (lines 46-51)

"All Germany" balances with "all the world," and both are echoed again in "both Germany and the world." Moreover, "yea all the world" balances with "yea heaven itself" and "heaven" is then elaborated on by a series of appositives: "the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy," which builds up to a peak of rhetorical power climaxed by "and must remain in hell for ever." This statement is again repeated and reinforced: "Hell, ah hell for ever! Sweet friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hell for ever?" (lines 51-52)

"Yet Faustus, call on God," murmur the Scholars (line 53).

But Faustus cries:

On God, whom Faustus hath abjured? on God, whom
Faustus hath blasphemed? Ah my God, I would weep,
but the devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood
instead of tears, yea life and soul! Oh he stays
my tongue: I would lift up my hands, but see, they
hold 'em, they hold 'em.

(lines 54-58)

The repetition of "God" and of "tears" as well as that of the parallel clauses beginning with "whom" and of the last "they hold 'em" reinforces the emotion. "I would lift up my hands" parallels "I would weep." Throughout the scene, Faustus' reference to himself in the third person creates a feeling of pity for him greater than that which would be aroused by the pronoun "I." He pities himself as he would pity someone else; he also sees himself as acted upon and controlled by forces outside himself, and he feels that he is incapable of an action necessary to save himself. Thus he speaks of himself in the third person, as of someone beyond his reach. This whole speech represents the emotional peak of the scene, and it describes well the spiritual paralysis which binds Faustus. Its tone is pathetic, fearful, with a sense of terrified importance; Faustus is locked in a conflict in which he can go neither one way nor the other, yet cannot endure where he is. He is here no obdurate sinner, proud and boastful, but a

* terrified prisoner of the despair into which he has locked himself by his own uncompromising rigidity. Yet is it his rigidity, or is it the playwright's? Marlowe gives no indication that Faustus could escape from the vise in which he is caught. The Scholars argue but weakly; they are overwhelmed by Faustus' own certainty of his damnation. They pity him, and so does the audience. Marlowe's characteristic mockery, by which he so skillfully burlesqued Faustus and his aspirations earlier in the play, is now completely gone. The tone he creates here is entirely serious, entirely sympathetic, not sympathetic to the bold aspirations of a would-be superman and conqueror, but to the sufferings of a man crushed by the inhuman machinery of an unrelenting universe. The doctrine of predestination here in this play at this dramatic moment receives one of its greatest treatments in a literary work. It is neither justified nor defied, but shown forth dramatically in the "rigidity of protest" of which Ellis-Fermor speaks. The rigid implacability of the universe as it appears in the play does not admit of any resolution of the paradox in which Faustus finds himself. Marlowe (or rather Marlowe in the play) may see the universe steadily, but he does not see it evil. He acquiesces to it, yet without being able to justify it. He is like the

Scholars, who cry, "God forbid!" yet who creep away into the next room, awed into submission by the realization of a paradox knotted too tight for them to undo.

Thus Faustus' damnation is protested, and the audience is made to feel sympathy for him and to feel uneasy at the spectacle of his damnation. Yet the playwright does not go so far as to commit himself on the side of protest. And the play gives no clue as to why he is unable to do so.

CHAPTER IV

THE MORALITY INVERTED

Doctor Faustus is, in some respects, a morality play, but it differs from the moralities in as many ways as it resembles them. Nicholas Brooke has claimed that in writing Doctor Faustus Marlowe deliberately inverted the normal purpose of the morality play; he sees the play as making a "deliberate mis-use of popular old-fashioned material" for the purpose of satire.¹ Without accepting this extreme view, one can still claim that Doctor Faustus is an inverted morality. It uses standard morality conventions, yet it uses them in new and unexpected ways. Much of the tension and ambiguity in Doctor Faustus arises from the way the play transforms morality elements without seeming to give reasons for the transformation. Why, for example, are the Good and Bad Angels so pale and superfluous as characters? Or why do the Seven Deadly Sins appear so briefly? And, most fascinating, why is the character of Mephostophilis so dominating in such an unexpected way? In Doctor Faustus, the conventions of the

¹Nicholas Brooke, "The Moral Tragedy of Doctor Faustus," Cambridge Journal, 5(1951-52), 662-87.

morality play appear, but with a new emphasis; their functions change wholly and their natures reverse. But this reversal of functions contributes not to clearly discernible purposes and effects, but to further ambiguities and tensions. The tension between the morality conventions that Marlowe uses and the unorthodox use to which he puts them is a major one of the play.

Stock Morality Characters: The Angels
and the Seven Deadly Sins

Many conventional morality characters appear in Doctor Faustus. The Good and Bad Angels, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the Devil all appear in morality plays. But their functions in Doctor Faustus differ from those which they had in the moralities.

The two Angels, for example, appear in The Castle of Perseverance, an early morality. In this play, Humanum Genus, or Mankind, is attended by his Good Angel and his Bad Angel. They each present their arguments to him; and, attracted by the promise of an easy life, he decides in favor of the Bad Angel.² Both Angels have considerable power in

²The Castle of Perseverance, in The Macro Plays: The Castle of Perseverance, Wisdom, Mankind, ed. Mark Eccles, Early English Text Society (Oxford: University Press, 1969).

the play. In the struggle that ensues for the soul of Mankind, they each lead an army of sorts: the Good Angel's forces are composed of Conscience, Confession, and Penance, while the Bad Angel's troops are the World, the Flesh, the Devil, and the Seven Deadly Sins.

As Douglas Cole has pointed out, many differences exist between the roles of the Angels in The Castle of Perseverance and in Doctor Faustus.³ In The Castle, the Angels talk to one another as well as to Mankind, and he talks back to them. In Doctor Faustus, however, they never speak to one another, but only to Faustus; and they never appear except in his presence. Faustus never speaks directly to them, either; nor does he even appear to notice their presence. Also, they have no physical contact with each other, unlike their counterparts in The Castle, who fight one another. Clearly, then, the two Angels in Doctor Faustus are less separate characters than they are two parts of Faustus' mind. James Smith has discussed them and other allegorical characters in Doctor Faustus, point out that, although a distinction between internal or psychological and external reality did

³Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 234.

not exist for the minds of the sixteenth century, still a character could represent both an external or objective reality and a psychological one.⁴ The Angels do this. In The Castle, the Bad Angel represents outside forces, while the Good Angel represents the conscience of the individual, or actions performed by him that would allow the grace of God to enter his soul. In Doctor Faustus, however, both of the Angels represent forces within one character which are engaged in a spiritual conflict. As characters in the drama, they are quite colorless and could even be lifted out without upsetting the structure of the play; what dramatic force they once had has been given to the central character of Faustus.

The Seven Deadly Sins also undergo a drastic change from the moralities to Doctor Faustus. In the moralities, they constitute real dangers. For example, in The Castle, they are the assaulting troops that try to storm the Castle, under the leadership of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. In other plays (Mary Magdalene, for example),⁵ they are

⁴James Smith, "Marlowe's Dr. Faustus," Scrutiny, 8 (1939-40), 36-55.

⁵Mary Magdalene, in The Digby Plays, ed. F. J. Furnival, Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1896; rpt. 1930).

cunning menaces that disguise themselves in pleasing attire and take attractive names to cover their real identity and thus to lure their victims to destruction. But, in Doctor Faustus, they are much diminished. Rather than threatening Faustus, they appear to him in a brief parade, as a show for his entertainment, as a reward and diversion for his reaffirming his oath to Lucifer. They are not disguised at all, but are very forward and open in their speeches to him. He is amused, but not tempted by them at all. They have been reduced from their former aspect of danger to one of insignificant, foolish vulgarity.

The Roles of Mephostophilis

The Angels and the Seven Deadly Sins, then, are less important in Doctor Faustus than they are in the moralities. Exactly the reverse is true, however, of the also traditional figure of the Devil. From a less than dominant role in the moralities, he has moved to a more commanding place in Doctor Faustus. And, while the morality devils are crude comic figures, Mephostophilis, although at times he does engage in fireworks and horseplay, is an imposing and dignified character. In fact, he is the most contradictory character in the play. He is both a stock comic devil and a serious

character, and the comic Mephostophilis has little in common with the serious one. As a serious character, Mephostophilis has three functions. First, he represents one part of Faustus' mind and thus is a projection of Faustus' own knowledge, beliefs, and limitations. Second, he exists in his own right as an independent character. Third, he acts at times as Faustus' conscience, being a more effective spokesman for God than the Good Angel, and is much less diabolical than his counterpart in The Historie of the Damnable Life, and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus, also called the English Faustbook.⁶ His friar's costume accentuates this role as Faustus' conscience and points up the irony of his playing this role. Thus Mephostophilis is an ambiguous character. His ambiguity both weakens and strengthens the play. It weakens it because too great a disparity exists between the comic-devil Mephostophilis and the serious Mephostophilis. But it strengthens it because of the irony in Mephostophilis' multiple roles.

Mephostophilis' first role is that of a stock comic devil. Like the devils in the morality plays, he plays destructive pranks, sets off fireworks, and enables Faustus

⁶The Historie of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus, 1592, ed. William Rose (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963).

spectacles for amusement. Yet contradictions exist between his comic character and his serious character. For example, in Act III, scene iii, the two clowns, Robin and Dick, have stolen a cup from a tavern and are being pursued. The vintner catches up with them and searches them. Robin, who has stolen one of Faustus' books of magic, speaks some conjuring words, and Mephostophilis angrily appears. "How am I vexed," he storms, "by these villains' charms!/ From Constantinople am I hither brought/ Only for pleasure of these damned slaves" (lines 33-35). In retaliation, he turns them into a dog and an ape. Here it is assumed that Mephostophilis is under the power of whoever speaks the charm. Yet earlier, when Faustus first conjures, Mephostophilis says that he did not have to come, but came of his own accord: "For when we hear one rack the name of God,/ . . . We fly in hope to get his glorious soul;/ . . . Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring/ Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity/ And pray devoutly to the prince of hell" (I.iii.47-54). The inconsistency may result from another writer besides Marlowe being the author of the comic scene. But, aside from this particular contradiction, Mephostophilis seems to be a different character in some scenes from the one he is in others. The fireworks and beating of bald pates seem out of character for the spirit

who says, "O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,/ Which strike a terror to my fainting soul" (I.iii.80-81). The reason for the apparent inconsistency may be that the play was written earlier in Marlowe's life, right after Tamburlaine, and that the playwright was not able to unite comic and tragic elements in a single character. Also, much of Mephostophilis' language and actions come directly from the Historie, and like other parts taken from this source, sometimes seem unprepared for, inconsistent, and of uneven quality.

Mephostophilis also represents a part of Faustus' mind. Thus he reflects what Faustus knows and believes. He knows only what Faustus already knows, as seen when Faustus asks for books of magic, astronomy, and botany; "Oh, thou art deceived," Faustus exclaims (II.i.176), when he sees them. Also, Faustus is disappointed when he questions Mephostophilis about the planets; he says, "These slender questions Wagner can decide" (II.ii.48). Faustus learns nothing new from his discourse with Mephostophilis.

As a character in his own right, Mephostophilis is the second strongest character in the play. He plays a much more dominant role in Doctor Faustus than he does in the Historie, or than devils do in the morality plays. He has some of the

most memorable lines in the play, and his presence onstage during most of the action contributes to his dramatic power.

It is as Faustus' conscience, however, that Mephostophilis plays his most impressive role. As discussed before, the characters who represent good in this play are far outnumbered by those who represent evil. Yet, as though to even the balance, the one most impressive and most frequently seen evil character is, paradoxically, at times an effective spokesman for good in the play while remaining the most obvious representative of evil. Mephostophilis makes his strongest impression when he warns Faustus against the bargain with Lucifer. He is far more dramatically effective than the Good Angel is, who appears seldom, says little, and speaks in negative terms far more than in positive ones. Mephostophilis, on the other hand, speaks strongly and with authority against Faustus' proposed pact. "Why this is hell, nor am I out of it" (I.iii.76) is clearly a warning, and Mephostophilis steps out of his character as devil to urge Faustus not to make the pact: "O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,/ Which strike a terror to my fainting soul" (lines 80-81). Later, he argues with Faustus about the existence of hell. Faustus asks where it is, and then says he does not believe in it: "I think hell's a fable"

(II.i.125). "Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind," answers Mephostophilis (line 126). Faustus questions him further: "Why, dost thou think that Faustus shall be damned?" (line 127). "Ay, of necessity," answers Mephostophilis, and indicates the scroll on which the pact was written as proof (lines 128-129). Faustus professes not to take him seriously, and Mephostophilis becomes more insistent:

Fau. Thinkst thou that Faustus is so fond to imagine
That after this life there is any pain?
No, these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.

Meph. But I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I tell thee I am damned and now in hell.
(lines 131-135)

But Faustus remains unconvinced: "Nay, and this be hell, I'll willingly be damned:/ What, sleeping, eating, walking, and disputing!" (lines 136-137). Far from leading Faustus to a disbelief in hell and to a frivolous attitude towards it, Mephostophilis tries to dissuade Faustus from his own preconceived notions. If Mephostophilis were to succeed in his attempt, he would have thwarted the purposes of hell, not have served them.

It is true that the Mephostophilis of the Historie also expresses regret about his own damnation; when Faustus asks him what he would do if he were a man in Faustus' place, he replies that he would humble himself to God and keep His

commandments.⁷ Faustus again asks him: " . . . tell me Mephostophiles, wouldst thou be in my case as I am now?" Mephostophilis answers him: "Yea, saith the Spirit (and with that fetched a great sigh) for yet would I so humble myself, that I would win the favour of God."⁸ Yet when Faustus says that he has time to repent then, Mephostophilis answers that his sins are so great that it is too late for him to repent. And at other times Mephostophilis taunts Faustus, reminding him of his pact, and telling him that he cannot expect God's forgiveness: " . . . as much it availeth thee Faustus, to hope for the favour of God again, as Lucifer himself."⁹ It is clear that in the Historie, Mephostophilis deliberately tries to incite Faustus to despair, whereas in Doctor Faustus, he does not. Mephostophilis' regret in the Historie is for himself; he expresses no concern for Faustus.

As a tempter, the Mephostophilis of the Historie is more diabolical than the one in Marlowe's play. The latter does not tempt Faustus at all. While the Mephostophilis of the Historie does tempt Faustus in order to take his mind off despair, he talks for pages about the skills and pleasures he

⁷Ibid., p. 97.

⁸Ibid., p. 98.

⁹Ibid., p. 94.

will give Faustus: "yea, Faustus, I will learn thee the secrets of nature . . . I will learn thee to go invisible, to find out the mines of gold and silver . . . we will go visit Kings at their own courts, and at their most sumptuous banquets be their guests."¹⁰ In Doctor Faustus, however, Mephostophilis seldom speaks of what advantages the pact and magic will give Faustus; the exception is when he tries to dissuade Faustus from wanting a wife. He promises Faustus the "fairest courtesans" and books of magic (II.i.150-168) less to tempt him than to make up to him for what he cannot have. Other than this, Faustus tempts himself; Mephostophilis merely acquiesces and does what he is told.

Mephostophilis, then, is a devil, but an ambiguous one. He does caper and play tricks; he does threaten and mock; he does tempt a little. Yet he is not so thoroughgoing in devilry as his counterpart in the Historie. And, as has been pointed out, much of the burden of supporting orthodox Christianity is thrown upon him.

Mephostophilis' costume reflects his ambiguous role as spokesman for both God and the devil. The friar's robe he wears comes from the Historie, in which he first appears to

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 101-102.

Faustus "in manner of a gray Friar."¹¹ After Faustus makes his pact with the devil, he commands Mephostophilis to appear always dressed like a friar "after the order of Saint Francis, with a bell in his hand like Saint Antony."¹² In the Historie, this costume is simply a reflection of the book's anti-Catholicism. In Marlowe's play, however, it has this meaning as well as two other possible ones. First, it means that Faustus cannot look on evil as it is; he must have it masked. He cannot stand Mephostophilis' ugly appearance. This ugliness is carried over from the Historie. In both the Historie and in Doctor Faustus, Mephostophilis first appears in a fearsome shape. In the Historie, he appears first as a dragon, then as a fiery globe, next as a fiery man, and last as a gray friar. In Doctor Faustus, a dragon first appears; then a devil, to whom Faustus says, "Thou art too ugly to attend on me./ Go, and return an old Franciscan friar,/ That holy shape becomes a devil best" (I.iii.24-26). The pun in the last line implies, first, that devils look best dressed as friars since the garments are appropriate to them, and, second, that friars are likely to become devils. When Mephostophilis appears, he is wearing the friar's robe, after having presumably changed to please Faustus. Yet

¹¹Ibid., p. 27.

¹²Ibid., p. 72.

another reason may exist for Mephostophilis' costume. Even though he is a devil, he speaks more forcefully against Faustus' pact with Lucifer than any other character until the Old Man appears near the end. Although Mephostophilis is not actually on the side of God and the forces of good, he does speak effectively for them at times, and thus he appears to be their spokesman at such times. The visual and dramatic effect of a character known to be a devil dressed as a friar and telling Faustus to leave his frivolous demands and return to God is strikingly ironic. Mephostophilis at times appears to play a double, paradoxical role. The irony in his playing such a role is a characteristically Marlovian kind.

Thus, Mephostophilis is an ambiguous character with several functions. He is a conventional comic devil; a projection of Faustus' mind, a serious character in his own right, and, at times, a representative of the powers of God--that is, Faustus' conscience. The irony of the devil speaking clearer and more forceful religious truth than the Christians is one of the best devices of the play, and one of the most characteristic ones of its author's mind.

Thus, the changes in the roles of the morality characters reflect the central ambiguity of Doctor Faustus. The Angels are not true morality Angels; the Seven Deadly Sins

are not the same Sins that appear in morality plays; and the devil Mephostophilis is not a conventional morality devil. All have had their roles diminished, reversed, or increased. This departure from morality conventions, as shown above, both weakens and strengthens the play. Especially it does so in the case of Mephostophilis. The discrepancy between Mephostophilis' conventional devil role and his strong and original role is a weakness in the play. Yet the irony created by his assuming a paradoxical role enriches the play. But the departure from convention in the case of the Angels and the Seven Deadly Sins does not so much enrich the play as deplete it. The Angels and even more especially the Sins seem superfluous; at best diverting and at worst distracting. They seem to be hangers-on from the morality tradition which are retained for no clear reason. Thus they contribute to the ambiguity of the play.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Thus it can be seen that Doctor Faustus contains unresolved tensions and ambiguities. The central tension of the play, as has been shown, arises from its unresolved attitude toward the predestined damnation of Faustus. The play has definite predestinarian elements, yet does not take a consistent attitude toward Faustus' predestination. It strongly suggests that he is predestined to be damned, yet it neither wholly accepts nor wholly protests against his predestination. At times it does both, but neither view is allowed to predominate. Thus, the play does not give its audience something to which it can respond as a whole. It rather gives them a fragmented vision which leaves them with a sense of incompleteness.

Another disturbing quality in the play is its use of morality elements. These traditional elements are used in unorthodox ways. The paradoxical use of traditional morality characters, most notably the devil, creates irony and makes the play intriguing; but reasons for this use do not exist within the context of the play.

Thus, the dramatic tensions and ambiguity of Doctor Faustus keep it from taking its place among the greatest, most well-thought-out dramas, but they do not keep it from continuing to interest readers and audiences. It is, after all, the main sixteenth-century drama outside of Shakespeare that still receives regular performances and attracts large audiences. Doctor Faustus has weaknesses. It lacks the clarity and force of a single vision. But its faults do not keep it from being a brilliant fragment and one of the most fascinating works of English literature.

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APPENDIX

PROBLEMS IN CRITICISM

Three main problems exist in any discussion of Doctor Faustus: the date, the authorship, and the text.

Both F. S. Boas and W. W. Greg believe that Doctor Faustus cannot have been written before 1592. This is the year in which The Historie of the damnable life and deserued death of Doctor John Faustus was published, as shown in an entry in the Stationer's Register in December, 1592.¹ This document, also called the English Faustbook, was translated from German by an unidentified P. F., and may have appeared earlier than 1592, since the entry is for the second edition. It is believed to be the immediate source for Doctor Faustus. Since much of Doctor Faustus comes from the Historie, it is not likely that the play appeared before the book. If the Historie appeared before 1592, however, then it is of course possible that Doctor Faustus did as well.

¹Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1576-1602, from Register B, ed. W. W. Greg and E. Boswell (London: the Bibliographical Society, 1930), p. 44.

Greg, however, argues that the style of Doctor Faustus is superior to that of Tamburlaine and thus concludes that Doctor Faustus must have been written much later. Tamburlaine is full of "rant and youthful crudity," he says; whereas Faustus shows spiritual maturity.²

On the other hand, P. F. Kocher³ and M. M. Mahood⁴ date the play earlier also on stylistic grounds. Mahood writes, "in the absence of conclusive evidence for a late date of Doctor Faustus, [the] natural kinship of the two states of mind suggests that the play was successor to Tamburlaine."⁵ J. B. Steane agrees, saying that Marlowe shrinks from Tamburlaine to Edward II, turning from idealism to cynicism and sadistic humor, and that Faustus is closer to Tamburlaine in every respect.⁶

The problem of authorship is also a difficulty in the discussion of the play. Dr. Boas attributes all the following

²W. W. Greg, ed., Doctor Faustus, 1604-1616; Parallel Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 9.

³P. F. Kocher, "The English Faustbook and the date of Marlowe's Faustus," MLN, 55(1940), 95-101, and "The Early Date for Marlowe's Faustus," MLN, 58(1943), 539-542.

⁴M. M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism (London: Cape, 1950).

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶J. B. Steane, Marlowe: a Critical Study (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), pp. 119, 165, 355.

to some other author besides Marlowe: the scene in the 1616 text at the Papal Court and at the Emperor's Court, and the dialogue in Act V, scene ii between the devils and between the Good and Bad Angels.⁷ He claims that these are by William Birde and Samuel Rowley because Henslowe made a payment to them for additions to Doctor Faustus.⁸

Greg claims that the whole play was planned by Marlowe, but that he had collaborators who followed his plans. But Greg attributes only about 825 lines to Marlowe, and assigns to others all of the comic scenes, the magic demonstrations, some of the Old Man's speeches, and Faustus' soliloquy that begins "Now, Faustus, must thou needs be damned . . ."⁹

Paul Kocher claims that some of the scenes are not by Marlowe but by Thomas Nashe¹⁰ because of the occurrence of certain phrases characteristic of Nashe. The only point upon which scholars agree seems to be that Marlowe did not write

⁷F. S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe; a Biographical and Critical Study (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 204.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Greg, p. 139. See also Greg, "The Damnation of Faustus," MLR, 41(1946), 99-100.

¹⁰P. F. Kocher, "Nashe's Authorship of the Prose Scenes in Faustus," MLQ, 3(1942), 17-40.

all of Doctor Faustus, but did write most of it and should be held accountable for it.

The problem of authorship is bound up in the problem of the text. The two versions which exist differ from one another in quite a few respects, creating problems of interpretation. The text of 1604, called the A text, was believed to be the authoritative one for a long time. The text of 1616, called the B text, was believed to contain the Birde and Rowley additions and to be an inferior version not directly from Marlowe's hand. Scholars now, however, believe the opposite. With the publication of Greg's Parallel Texts and his separately published reconstruction,¹¹ scholars have agreed with him that the B text is the more authoritative. Greg says that the A text is a shortened version for the stage, probably dictated by an actor, while the B text is taken directly from an earlier manuscript, the foul papers of Marlowe.

The A-text represents a report from memory of the play as first acted in London, shortened and otherwise adapted to the needs of a touring company and the taste of an uncultivated audience . . . The B-text . . . [is] of composite origin. Its main source was a collection of . . . 'foul papers,' . . . the original drafts of the scenes, from which, with some

¹¹ Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus: a Conjectural Reconstruction, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

revision, the official prompt-book had been prepared . . . the B-text (1616), so far as it reproduces the manuscript, contains an authoritative text of the original but unrevised version; whereas the A-text (1604) contains a corrupt and debased report of the play as finally revised and acted.¹²

Greg also says, "I do not believe that as originally written it differed to any material extent from what we are able to reconstruct from a comparison of the two versions in which it has come down to us."¹³ Greg gives a detailed line-by-line comparison of the two texts in his Parallel Texts, and also has compiled a conjectural version of the original play as he supposes it was first performed, in which he uses the B text in most cases, but substitutes the A text when he believes it to be better. In some instances, as J. B. Steane points out, Greg substitutes his own wording.¹⁴ Thus his reconstruction is in part subjective.

Therefore, no one can be certain what a final, authoritative version, approved by the author, would be like. No one can know, either, whether Marlowe's original version would have been any less fragmentary than the presently

¹²Ibid., p. v.

¹³Greg, "The Damnation of Faustus, p. 99.

¹⁴Steane, p. 119.

existing versions. The fragmentary quality of the play may have been part of it from the first, and may not have resulted from faulty reporting and additions at all. Certainly, this fragmentary quality, as well as the conflict between the existing texts, makes the play more difficult to interpret, and contributes to its ambiguity as it stands, aside from what Marlowe may have written.