

MARLOW'S FAUSTUS: THE PERSONIFICATION OF PRIDE, CURIOSITY AND SENSUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Faustus, a man of great learning and scholarship, barter his soul to the Devil for twenty-four years in return for omnipotence and gifts that include the restoration of his youth and youthful pleasures. We see a "knowing" Faustus deliberately launching himself upon an evil course. He is a scholar empowered by his intellectual pride "swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit". He is not only seeker for power, but also a knower and a desirer to know. Faustus is the personification of the pride, of will and eagerness of curiosity, devoured by a tormenting desire to probe the secrets of the universe, and so enlarge his knowledge to the utmost bounds, and to extend his power with his knowledge. To attain this purpose, he defies all moral consequences and allies himself with the devil. He gets very little in return for the damnation to which he has agreed. He never becomes a real boss of evil who has sworn to serve him. He experiences a painful mental conflict between his godly and ungodly impulses throughout the period during which he practices magic since the desire to turn to God does not become totally defunct in him. Dissatisfied with his human status, he rebels against human limitations. He strives against human limitation to the point of selling his soul. But Faustus does not change his limitations for freedom; he merely changes one kind of limitation for another. He cannot have all the wants, for the satisfaction of some desires involves the frustration of others. There are some kinds of knowledge, like some kinds of experience, from which Faustus has shut himself off. He has not escaped the necessity of choice. His rewards are the delights of the imagination, sweet and terrible fantasies that have their climax in the vision of Helen. But knowledge and felicity Faustus exchanges for shadows, and for power to get slaver and eternal damnation.

He examines one by one the branches of higher learning. He finds inadequate and makes adverse comments on all other branches of human learning: "Philosophy is odious and obscure; medicine stops short where human desire is most thwarted; law is mercenary pursuit. He decides to "tire his brains to get a deity". The feats of secular learning are rejected one by one because their ends do not satisfy his demands. He does not pursue knowledge for the sake of truth, but for the sake of power—super human power, the power over life and death. Faustus sees extravagant visions of the power—the power to make men live eternally, and the power to bring the dead back to life—and is encouraged in his hopes and becomes so proud that the word 'damnation terrifies not him'. He rejects divine learning because it is based on recognition of man's mortality and fallibility. Leaving divinity to God Faustus dedicates himself to the devil. Rejecting fatalism of the doctrine, "what will be, shall be", he performs an act of his own will and chooses the devil and damnation. The superficial logic by which Faustus rejects the Scriptures and divinity is misleading, and only an excuse for him to fall victim to an irresistible temptation.

He visualizes the wonders that he will be able to work with the power of magic: "He dwells upon the benefits of magic, O, what a world of profit and delight, of power, of honour, and omnipotence, is promised to the studious artisan! (Act, 1, i. 51-53). This logic betrays not only a willingness to discard the scriptures, but also an attitude of mind that will gradually lead him to the sin of despair. In aspiring to be more than man, Faustus repudiates his humanity, and rebels against the ultimate reality. In his aspiration to as God "A sound magician is a mighty God" he chooses the not-God. It is inevitable that the choice of the not-God will lead not only to disappointment, but also to the deepest suffering. "The leap and longing are projections of Faustus' own aspirations and the universe is seen characteristically in terms of man's desire" (Steane, ND).

Human "limitations imposed by the world, heaven or hell, the limits within which humanity must be content to breathe" (Steane, ND). Both Faustus and Tamburlaine are inspired by a lust for power. Essentially the limitation in Tamburlaine is one that is outside man, while