
UNIT 2 THE TRAGIC DRAMA OF *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit discusses how *Doctor Faustus* emerges as a great tragedy. The focus is on how it is modelled after a Christian morality play and how the play transcends the morality ethos within its structure to become a great human tragedy.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Doctor Faustus was written for the Admiral's Men and was staged in 1588. It's first Quarto edition was published in 1604. Several reprints of this Quarto appeared subsequently with some interpolations. However, in 1616, an enlarged edition of the

play was published containing many comic scenes absent in the 1604 edition. Contemporary editions of *Doctor Faustus* depend on both the 1604 and 1616 versions of the play.

2.2 DOCTOR FAUSTUS AS A TRAGEDY

One has to wade through several conflicting traditions to look at the dramatic core of *Doctor Faustus*. The influence of the traditions of orthodox Christianity, of the Reformation the Renaissance, of Paganism, of individualism and the incipient scientific modernity is exhaustive in the play. One is lost in the pervasive or conflicting claims of these traditions. However, the strength of the play lies in its disturbing impact on the audience, whether Elizabethan or modern a fact that vouchsafes that the play is not exhausted by the claims of a specific tradition but has an essential drama and a tragic rhythm.

Undoubtedly, *Doctor Faustus* explains a moment in history. Its tragedy is, irreducibly, a national or cultural predicament. As a dramatic genre, it has all the essentials that go with it. The play's power to disturb the audience is the power of its specific genre. Consequently, one has to see, in the first instance, how tragedy is a powerful discipline in a particular point of time and place and, secondly, how *Doctor Faustus* comes to realize the power of tragedy.

2.3 DOCTOR FAUSTUS AND THE MORALITY TRADITION

There is nothing new about the dramatic story of *Doctor Faustus*, – the story of human presumption, temptation, damnation and fall being the essential narrative of the mystery, miracle and morality plays. *Doctor Faustus* does not deviate either from the narrative or the thematic strain of the Christian drama preceding it. There is little drama in the divinely ordered destiny of man excepting the allegorical interplay between the forces of good and evil. The human situation is a pathetic comedy of evil, the evil that man, at best, could be tempted to, that all that man is capable of in his comic impotence is wrath and despair. The comic imbecility of man however, is a part of the divine totality of purpose as reflected in the world, the natural universe and history. As such, evil is not an antagonist but simply a lack or deficiency of being that is taken care of in the ultimate divine order where all being is ultimately good. Douglas Cole sums up the Christian dramatic tradition of Marlowe who chooses to transform the German Faust legend into a tragedy:

The English morality is staged as a homiletic allegory. Within its transparently didactic framework, the personifications of abstract vices and virtues contend for the allegiance of the central figure or figures that represent man. The characteristic plot is a contest, and its characteristic movement is from the seduction of mankind by vice to the salvation of mankind by virtue and repentance. The fundamental issue of the morality play is thus always the same, and it is by definition a serious one. The fundamental evil involved, sin in one or another of its particular forms, is always the same, and just as serious. But the dramaturgical expression of the issue and the evil, drawing from the heritage of the mystery plays, combined with moral gravity and comic effect; the comedy of evil persisted along with the allegory of evil; like the allegory, it found its support and basis in the doctrinal and homiletic formulation which was responsible for the morality tradition.¹

For his tragedy, Marlowe had to contend with a comedy and an allegory of evil, a didactic contest for dramatic conflict and homiletics for dramatic resolution. The dramatic thrust of the morality play was towards a slapstick in order to demonstrate human frivolity. The human protagonist suffers immensely but the suffering is retributive and axiomatic rather than real. The Faust legend Marlowe uses in the play eminently fits into the morality comedy form, for the necromancer, Faust, who sells his soul to the devil for swinish pleasures, effectively illustrates the human predicament in the morality plays.

2.4 THE HEROIC CHARACTER OF *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

Obviously, Marlowe had not chosen to write another morality play to demonstrate the all pervasive divine providence though he sticks to its narrative and, to an extent, to its comedy. While being subordinate and adherent to doctrinal Christianity, Marlowe's Elizabethan protagonist, Faustus, a representative morality figure, has grown privy to the national and cultural self-assertiveness characteristic of the Elizabethans and to their Renaissance inspired humanistic aesthetics and intellectuality. The difference perhaps, lay more in Marlowe who, his theological training and scholarship notwithstanding, is a more aggressive representative of the aspiring and critical humanism. The comic imbecility of the representative human figure as presented in the Christian drama was definitely an anathema to Marlowe. In recasting the Faustus legend, Marlowe infused a heroic element in the Faustus narrative. The forces of evil are internalized in the human protagonist to the extent that man does not solely depend on the external temptation of evil. Similarly, the forces of good or of Christianity are made a part of the internal being of the protagonist. The earlier allegorical contest between the forces of good and evil in the human space becomes a fact of an irresolute coexistence within man and their competing claims always running short of a convincing victory of one over the other. Man is not a passive recipient of good and evil but can actively pursue them. Apparently, the human protagonist exercises choice and assumes responsibility but the choice does not negate the responsibility. The human consciousness which posits a diversity of feelings and aspirations generates suffering. Suffering is inevitable to a perceptive mind in a situation where cultural and intellectual aspirations are keenly felt. The condition of a perceptive individual in an aspiring culture resists, impulsively, any diactically formulated definition of his being. The resistance is unsuccessing in the given totality of the human situation but the struggle, and even the eventual failure, elevates man to a higher realm of heroic and critical activity. Such a human condition is tragic, for the greater the human abilities and endeavours, the greater is the self-lacerating human suffering and extent of failure.

2.5 THE TRAGIC PREMISE IN *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

What Marlowe attempts in *Doctor Faustus* is a tragic vision of heroic human possibilities. In the very tragic premise, Faustus is just the antithesis of the protagonists of the morality plays. Where his predecessors were passionless, Faustus, like Icarus, attempted, as the Chorus puts it, "to mount above his reach". If Morality heroes are self-effacing human beings, Faustus is superhuman in his ambitions. Though the condition is human, man could be as omniscient as God by virtue of his learning and, reasonably, should be as omnipotent as God. Where humanness does not limit Faustus' achievement, why should he be limited in power by the human condition? "Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man" whereas his power should reach out "as far as doth the mind of man"² (Act I, Scene i, 22 and 58). Faustus aims simply

All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings
Are but obey'd their several provinces.
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;...³
(Act I, Scene i, 55-56)

The gap between the power Faustus can reach out to by virtue of his learning and the power of God could be filled by the “heavenly” necromancy, the black art opposed to God and forbidden to man. There is a specific way to human learning even in the much cherished new learning of the times. Necromancy is no tribute to human excellence and if there are limits to human learning or excellence, it is no reflection on the cherished humanist goals of the times. In his infinite ambition, Faustus degrades the human condition and his religious sacrilege is an accentuation of his human degradation.

2.6 THE STRENGTH OF TRAGEDY

Tragedy is essentially an interrogative process. The dramatic fusion of ideas, and action itself, presents a critical perspective of one on the other. Drama becomes tragic when it fights a limiting or unlimiting structure or formulation. Though as a dramatic narrative, *Doctor Faustus* is a Christian morality play, the evolution of *Doctor Faustus* as an intensely heroic protagonist begins the refashioning of the morality play. The play is a human tragedy for not only is Faustus tragically constituted in his boundless ambitions but, at the same time, the play questions the effectiveness of the cultural aspirations that shape his ambitions. Resultingly, the play provides a complex interaction between the human dimensions of the dramatic character and the ambiguities and ambivalences of the cultural situation the character is placed in.

2.7 ACT I : DOCTOR FAUSTUS : THE UNSCHOLARLY ATTITUDE

Much of the play is set in motion by the chorus itself – the dramatic premise and its ensuing implications in the narrative that Faustus in his attitude to religious and humanist learning, his twin accomplishments, lacks authenticity and has set on an Icareseque journey of self-destruction. As he proceeds to dismiss all disciplines of learning one after another in the beginning of the play, he betrays, professedly, ignorance rather than knowledge.

Bartlett Giamatti sums up Faustus' learning:

When he says Philosophy is limited, we see a man who confounds Aristotle with Peter Ramus, a man who treats the deep questions of being and not being and the technique of disputing well as if they were the same. When he says medicine is limited, we see a man who confuses gold and health, alchemy and physic, and who finds medicine wanting because it is not miracle, a lack he will remedy by turning to magic, miracle's parody. The soaring language does not offer us an ennobling spectacle; rather the opposite.⁴

Faustus' tragedy, Phoebe S. Spinard observes, is that of a “dilettante” who chooses not to choose. Faustus is merely a “dabbler in books who thinks himself an expert in all fields of knowledge”, “a seeker after surface show who will not bestir himself to look for the roots of things”. He is not “just a bad Christian; he is a bad humanist.”⁵

Where knowledge should be strength it turns out to be a weakness in *Doctor Faustus*. Knowledge is power but the desire for knowledge for the sake of power demeans both knowledge and power. In fact, the sixteenth century witnessed a certain conflict between the contemplative and the utilitarian ends of knowledge. The orthodox Christian religion definitely erred in its absolutist approach to knowledge as contemplation, driving many a scholar into the ways of the world. Faustus, like many Renaissance inspired scholars, betrays a utilitarian weakness for knowledge. This has made the disintegration of humanism far more easy than that of orthodox Christianity. "Faustus' plenty makes him poor" – this is the tragedy of *Doctor Faustus* and of his age too.

The subversion of knowledge Faustus intends has serious personal overtones for him. The new aesthetic and intellectual game plan entails reformulation of his identity by the newly felt desires and ambitions, an identity culturally so well fixed by his learning and vocation and constituting his very being. His heterodoxy require a basic transformation in his being and reformulation of his thought processes and beliefs. But Faustus simply walks past himself, a self so entrenched in orthodoxy, and is driven back continually to the untransformed self. Heterodoxy is easy to desire but difficult to cultivate and far more difficult to assimilate.

It is clear from the beginning of the play that Faustus is tragically deficient or too distracted for the great act of transformation he sets up for himself and for which he is otherwise well-equipped with his qualities of mind, temperament and training. The profound scholar that he is, Faustus is scared that his scholarship, in its true implications, might thwart his desires. He substitutes "conceit" for resolution and fantasy for the hard facts of knowledge. Faustus has no response to what the Good Angel has to say but the words of the Evil Angel are always appetizing. While he requires to "Read, read the scriptures" as the Good Angel points out to his unscholarly inclinations, he is easily "glutted with Conceit" with the words of the Evil Angel. Desire and Conceit do not generate determination. As Valdes tells him and as Faustus repeatedly tells himself, he has to be "resolute" but Faustus cannot unlearn all his learning, though, at the same time, he is not able to realize his learning. A victim of the tragic division between the contemplative and functional needs of learning in his time, Marlowe's Faustus has to begin his education after his learning is over. Experience is a greater teacher than the book could ever be. Curiously enough, Mephostophilis, the great champion of Christian heterodoxy, begins to teach Faustus, not the virtues of religious revolt but those of the orthodox religion – that Lucifer preceded Faustus in his revolt of "pride and insolence" and that hell is no land of freedom and aspirations but simply the agonizing "loss of the eternal joys of heaven" and its "everlasting bliss".

Act I establishes Faustus' tragedy. The subplot of Wagner, the scholars and the clown dramatizes Faustus's predicament in very crude terms. The clown "would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of Mutton" and would raise the devils effortlessly. What Faustus aspires through his studious revolt is farcical.

2.8 ACT II : THE UNFOLDING OF FAUSTUS' TRAGEDY

Act II unfolds Faustus' tragedy in greater detail. The egocentric self-temptation of Act I gives way to an agonizing conflict between the religiously constituted self and the aberrations of its human impulses. In the opening soliloquy of Scene i, of Act II, Faustus defines his own tragedy

Now, Faustus, must
Thou needs be damn'd and canst thou not be sav'd.

.....

Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub:
 Now go not backward: no, Faustus, be resolute:
 Why waver'st thou? O, 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;
 The god thou serv'st is thine own appetite...
 Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub:
 To him I'll build an altar and a church,
 And offer lukewarm blood of new born babes⁶ (II, i, 1-15)

Faustus has damned himself through his egocentric indulgences and is beyond repair. The incorrigible state makes Faustus despair in God, a despair that makes him continue his self-indulgence for which the king of devils provides the fascination and the means. Obviously, despair is not totally the resulting state of his self-indulgences but has rather shaped his self pursuits. Faustus' state of mind transcends his mental frame and is, possibly, rooted in his particular religious persuasion. The new protestant faith of the Elizabethans experiences a chasm between God and his worshippers, having repudiated the intermediary role of the Holy Roman Church and its order of the saints, rituals and other processes of salvation. In the sceptical mood about the Catholic Church's religious practices, a faith in God and His Justness came to be intertwined with a certain despair in God. Despair reflects a fear of God and the want of a satisfying or self-fulfilling experience of Him. Faustus's despair and his refusal to believe in his salvation, as the orthodox church would ordain him, leading to the kind of blasphemy he makes, is closely associated, as critics like C. Lily, B. Cambell and C.L. Barber view, with the protestant "casuistry". The protestants looked upon conscience as a more effective way, than the prescribed rituals, of reaching God. Marlowe does not champion the protestant's individual path to God, but uses blasphemy in the Faust legend for dramatising heroic possibilities of the Renaissance inspired aspirations. Significantly, Faustus does not express faithlessness in God. He wants to be like Him, and, as despair sets in, he only feels that God would not love him and wonders whether He could harm him after he has deserted Him for the company of Mephostophilis.

As despair leads to the self-indulgent belief that divine providence as well as the divine wrath cannot reach him, Faustus signs the pact with the devil giving away his soul in return for his services.

However, Faustus' pact with the devil is as self-indulgent as his rejection of divinity, both being subject to human vacillation. As Faustus fluctuates between despair and repentance, so does he flee from the devil, and surrender to the devil alternately renewing his contact with the devil after every bout of repentance. The pattern of self-willed despair and damnation becomes so intense and pervasive that in a given moment, he feels despairingly damned and also, self-assuredly, defiant of divinity. His "blood congeals" when he signs the pact and feels his arm inscribed with a divine warning – "Homofuge", Man flee, but there is the self-assurance that his senses have deceived him and, even if he were not deceived, he would not flee from the pact.

If divinity is unsatisfying and, thus frustrating, so is the devil unable to answer or give every thing he asks for. If he could retain his faith in God in spite of despairing and rejecting Him, he would stick to the devil for whatever it could give him for there is no alternative to God and the devil; he is born and bred in the realm of God but has chosen to live defiantly and voluptuously in the realm of the devil.

The morality structure of the play minus the morality kind of a submissive hero but one with an individualistic conceit builds up the tragedy of Faustus. It is not totally Faustus' sinful conceit that gives the particular kind of tragic agony to the play. In his conceit, Faustus looks askance at God and conventional Christianity as to why they seek the abject surrender of man and thus degrade him particularly when man is made in the image of God and craves to be like Him on the earth: "Be thou on earth as Jove

is in the sky.” Marlowe lends justification to this human aspiration in the evolution of the Faustus character. Faustus’ impulsiveness, conceding a certain measure of human fallibility, is the intensity of the human bitterness – Marlowe holds out for a dramatic statement. Marlowe’s reported atheism has nowhere touched the point of faithlessness in God but faith in God to Marlowe, as to Faustus as well, could be born of the excellent human potentialities, that should, essentially, reflect divine omnipotence. Nicholas Brooke writes:

The dramatic tension of the Faustus story as Marlowe presents it lies primarily in the fact that Faustus is determined to satisfy the demands of his nature as God had made him to be himself a deity and that is forbidden: and it can only be achieved by a conscious rejection of the God who created him in his own image but denied him (as much as Lucifer) fulfillment of that image.⁷

Consequently,

...Faustus’s self-damnation is wholly positive, achieved by an assertion not a failure of Will...Faustus’s Hell is not a place of torture, it is Hell only in that it is an absence of heaven. It is an extreme of anti-God whose nature is deliberately opposed to the Angels’ joyous submission to the service of omnipotent Heaven is the subjection of self, Hell in this sense is the assertion of self...Marlowe’s philosophical position is that man has certain overriding desires whose realization is denied by any form of servitude, and the order of God is, as Milton’s Satan observed, an order of servitude.⁸

The tragedy in *Doctor Faustus* gains strength in this rigidity of protest. The protest is made in the agonising awareness that it entails the deprivation of heavenly joys. Faustus cries out in desperation:

When I behold the heavens, then I repent,
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast depriv’d me of those joys.⁹ (II, ii, 1-3)

Faustus’s rebellion is a desperate one for it loses more than it gains. But Faustus “is resolved” and shall “never repent”. He sees no reason either to “die” or to “basely despair”. For all its deprivation, his human condition has its own promise:

Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander’s love, and Oenon’s death?
And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes,
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephostophilis?¹⁰ (II, ii, 25-30)

Even Christ cannot save Faustus, as Lucifer says, as His “justness” precludes those like Faustus who are assertive of their worth. Faustus belongs to Lucifer who championed a similar protest against God earlier and experiences heavenly deprivation but pursues his freedom.

The dramatic causes provided through Faustus’s ambitions and the temptations of the devil do not stand out as significantly as contributory causes as does Faustus’s self-determination to protest against God.

2.9 ACTS III & IV : THE COMIC DIVERSION OF TRAGEDY

Act II unfolds the total tragedy of *Dr. Faustus*. Both Act I and II dramatize the rigour and tenacity of Faustus’s rebellion against his own rootedness in orthodox religion

and against his deeply cherished heavenly joys and against his frustrating sense of their deprivation. However, while Faustus's rebellion is heroic in its assertion of the human spirit, the course of Faustus rebellion through the third and the fourth acts is totally unheroic. Faustus seeks and Mephistophilis plans, rather a series of comic indulgences mainly to distract the former's mind from the tormenting religious awareness. Faustus has no choice but to delude and delight himself in trivial and vicious pleasures. He tells Mephistophilis.

Sweet Mephistophilis, thou pleasest me;
 Whilst I am here on earth, let me be cloyed
 With all things that delight the heart of man,
 My four and twenty years of liberty
 I'll spend in pleasure and in dalliance¹¹ (III, I 58-62)

“Pleasure” and “dalliance” become the course of Faustian revolt – pomp and display in the courts of Europe, vengeful humiliation of the papal court in Rome. As a scholar set to question the divine omniscience, in the beginning of the play, Faustus sought indulgent knowledge and half-truths. Now, a confirmed rebel, Faustus remains a voluptuary. Marlowe did not draw the rebellious Faustus heroically but his point was that his act of rebellion, whatever may be the course of it, against God is immeasurably heroic, for few would dare such a rebellion. Greater rebels than Faustus, as in Marlowe's other plays like *Tamburlaine* was far more limiting in their ambitions and tasks.

2.10 ACT V : THE TRAGIC DENOUEMENT OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

Further, as Faustus reaches his rebellious or tragic death in Act V, the nature of his death and the attendant torment bespeaks a magnificent tragedy, if not that of a magnificent tragic hero:

But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus...Gush forth blood instead of tears!¹²
 (V, ii, 41-42)

The tragic conflict does not abate until the end. Faustus seeks an alternate heaven through the devilish Helen:

Her lips suck forth my soul: See where it flies!
 Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
 Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
 And all is dross that is not Helena.¹³ (V, i, 102-105)

Faustus knew that his revolt against God does not go beyond a futile gesture of defiance but the gesture is not only characteristic but worthy of Man given his magnificence. Faustus dies questioning the very validity of human existence:

Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
 Or why is this immortal that thou hast?

 This soul should fly from me, and I be chang'd
 Unto some brutish breast! all beasts are happy

 O soul, be chang'd into little water-drops,
 And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!¹⁴ (V, iii, 175-190)

2.11 MARLOWE'S ACHIEVEMENT IN *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

The inevitable question that arises at the end of the play is: Faustus's achievements and failures notwithstanding, what does Marlowe achieve in the play with its morality structure and theme, the irrepressible and wayward hero and the farcical subplot. The play itself is very weak in form, more a cluster of scenes with no intelligible act division. The poetry and the elevated dramatic style belongs more to the individual passages than to the play. There is no progressive dramatic action with the prologue enunciating the tragic fate that awaits *Dr. Faustus* in the beginning itself and with Faustus himself presenting his tragic predicament from beginning to end.

Doctor Faustus is essentially a static play of tragic irresolution. In fact, the play stagnates so much in the middle sections of the third and fourth acts, which are meant to distract Faustus, that it distracts the audience as well.

Marlowe has a twofold aim in the play. He would write a morality play and hence the substantial stasis and comedy and the undramaticity of the play associated with the morality tradition. In writing the morality play, he would rewrite the human story which has become very thoughtful, spectacular and poignant. To the comedy of evil, Marlowe adds a heroic tragedy. The twofold play, as J.P. Brockbank observes, serves a purpose for the audience:

In fear we acquiesce in the littleness and powerlessness of man, and in pity we share his sufferings and endorse his protest.¹⁵

2.12 *DOCTOR FAUSTUS* : APPEAL TO 20TH CENTURY

Though loose in form and disjointed in its dramatic power, *Doctor Faustus* has tremendous appeal to the audience. In fact, the play is nearer to the psychic experience of the modern man who experiences a split personality and copes with it through the stratagems of neurosis à la Faustus. For Kenneth L. Golden,

Like modern man, Faustus is the victim of a Splitting of the will. He rejects Christianity because it would hamper his boundless desires, Yet he also cannot escape Christianity, or at least certain aspects of it – especially guilt and The sense of sin that leads to despair. The Psychological law embodied in the common dictum “Genius to madness is near allied”, Jung found occurring again and again in the sense that the conscious and the unconscious elements of the psyche exist in a compensatory relationship.... Faustus' neurosis – the split, dissociated nature of his psyche – is a match for any of the “double Thinking of the modern mass mind.”¹⁶

In evolving the emerging duality of the Elizabethan mind, Marlowe anticipates the depth psychology of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung:

Both Freud and Jung see Unconscious as a timeless realm or, to put it another way, one containing the past, the present and the future. Further, even the so-called conscious mind is not separated from the unconscious in any absolute way and contains opposites existing side by side.¹⁷

2.13 REFERENCES

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2.14 KEY WORDS

1. **Casuistry:** Derived from Latin *casus* meaning case, the word pertains to the application of moral principles, largely in theology, to singular cases of conscience. The protestant focus on individual conscience in deciding religious matters as against the authority of the church in such matters has brought the phrase, protestant casuistry into popular case. Since moral or religious law is always abstract, hence the need for casuistry. Even early

Christianity depended on casuistry for solving the individual religious problems of the people. St. Paul used casuistry at great length in his first epistle to the Corinthians to define the moral law on the eating of sacrificial meat, on work and virginity etc.

2. **Farce:** Latin *Farsa* from *farcire*, to stuff viands. Originally an interlude between the parts of a serious play, farce as a form of comedy presents a boisterous action. Rarely an independent play, even a good comedy like Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Twelfth Night* are difficult to imagine without the element of farce that abounds in these plays.
3. **Icarus:** Son of Daedalus in Greek mythology. Daedalus, along with his son, Icarus, having incurred the wrath of King Minos, for their cunning activities flee by fastening wings to their bodies. Rather overambitious, Icarus flies very near the sun. His waxen wings melt under the heat of the Sun and Icarus falls into the sea. Since then, Icarus becomes a synonym for an overreacher.
4. **Necromancy:** Derived from the Greek *nekros*, a dead body, necromancy is the art of divining the future by consuming up the spirits of the dead and questioning them. Though the practice had been in vogue right from the times of ancient Greece, it was only in the middle ages, that it acquired an anti-religious character and came to be viewed very seriously by the Christian Church.
5. **Neurosis:** Dissociation of personality due to the existence of complexes. When complexes become incompatible with the conscious part of the personality, the dissociation of personality takes place creating a personality split with the incompatible complexes seeking an indirect expression. In the modern world, one does not suffer from a conflict of conscious compulsions but from neurosis, the human personality seeking an indirect or vicarious expression of multivalent feelings. The term was made popular by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, psychologists in the early part of the 20th century who are responsible for the science of mental health called psychoanalysis.
6. **Skepticism:** A critical attitude in philosophy that ranges from refusing to admit the possibility of knowledge to subjecting every claim of knowledge to strict proof. The third century Greek philosopher, Sextus Empiricus, Rene Descartes in the seventeenth century and Bertrand Russell in the 20th century championed skepticism. Over the centuries, skepticism or skeptical attitude is instrumental in checking all extravagant claims to knowledge.
7. **Slapstick:** Knock about comedy. Slapdash methods. Originally a slapstick was a wand made of two flat pieces of wood with a handle. It was used by the harlequin in a pantomime. When he struck one of his companions, the slapstick made a loud report.

2.15 QUESTIONS

Questions

1. Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as a play in the English Morality Tradition.
2. Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as an Aristotelean tragedy.
3. Discuss how *Doctor Faustus* illustrates English protestianism.

4. Critically examine how *Doctor Faustus* attempts to depart from a comedy of evil to become a tragedy of human heroism.
5. Examine Marlowe's intellectual and dramatic achievement in *Doctor Faustus*.
6. Examine *Doctor Faustus* as a tragedy of Neurosis and relate it to the predicament of contemporary man.

2.16 ANNOTATIONS

Annotate the following passages with reference to the context.

- a. Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escap'd the Plague,
And thousand desperate maladies been eased?
- b. Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
- c. The Emperor shall not live but my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany
- d. Away with such vain fancies, and despair:
Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub.
- e. The god thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fixed the love of Belzebub.
- f. Homo, fuge: whither should I fly?
- g. If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.
My senses are deceive'd here's nothing writ:-
- h. Tush, these are trifles and mere old wives tales.
- i. Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just:
There's none but I have interest in the same.

2.17 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. C.L. Barber. "The form of Faustus' fortunes good and bad" *Drama Review*, 8,4, 1963-64. Pp.92-100. Discussion of Faustus' revolt in terms of Calvinist protestianism.
2. Golden L. Kenneth. "Myth, Psychology and *Doctor Faustus*" *College Literature* 12,3, 1985, pp.202-10. Discussion of Unconscious split personality and Neurosis.
3. Clifford, Leech. *Marlowe: A Collection of Essays: Twentieth Century views*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964. Along with an introduction by Clifford Leech, there are essays by T.S. Eliot, Una Ellis Fermor on Marlowe, and essays by JP Brockband and W.W. Grag on the damnation of Faustus, besides the critical essays by the critics on the other plays of Marlowe.
4. Judith, O'Neill. *Critics on Marlowe*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969. The book presents a survey of the significant criticism on Christopher Marlowe from the Elizabethan times to the contemporary times.