**DR.FAUSTUS**

**CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Christopher Marlowe was the greatest predecessor of Shakespeare in English drama. Marlowe’s contemporaries praised him not as a dramatist but as a poet. Marlowe’s plays are made of imagination and passion which are the essence of poetry. Dr.Faustus is a successful drama and one of the greatest tragedies in the English language.

**Dr.Faustus,** is one of the best of Marlowe’s works. Doctor Faustus is the hero of the play.The whole play revolves around him. The supernatural characters like Mephistophilis,Lucifer,the good angel and the evil angel are helping to dramatise the struggle within his soul.

Faustus was born of humble parents at the town of Rhodes in Germany.Later he went to Westernberg to study in the university there. Soon he made wonderful progress in Theology and acquired a doctor’s degree.He surpassed other scholars.He felt proud of his knowledge.He is entirely dissatisfied with what he has has learnt at the university.He become ambitious.Only magic can perform what he longs for.He wanted to acquire super human powers.So he studied and practiced the art of black magic.He was like Icarus who aspired to fly too near the sun with waxen wings and fell drowned into the sea .Thus Faustus stands for the human thirst for knowledge and desire for power.To be a god on earth he is ready to sell away his soul to the devil.

**DOCTOR FAUSTUS AS A MORALITY PLAY:**

Towards the end of the century allegorical plays began to be popular.They were called morality plays.The conflict between good and evil angels is an essential characteristics of a morality play.We have both a conflict and a sermon in “Doctor Faustus”.Faustus is a tragic figure.He is daring to practice them.He wants to raise above the human condition.All these makes him a tragic hero.He has faith in God and His Heaven.He has a conscience. He believes in God and His Mercy yet he goes over to the Devil’s party.There is a great inner conflict rages within him.It is symbolized by good angel and the Old Man on one side and the evil angel and Mephistophilis on the other side.But he has gone too far.Mephistophilis threaten,persuades and tempts not to turn back or repent.We peep into the suffering of Faustus and feel for him.

**As a Renaissance Play:**

The Renaissance was essentially an intellectual awakening. Marlowe was a wit of the Renaissance.The Renaissance influence is seen in Faustus’ love of knowledge,in his desire for power and in his enjoyment of beauty.Faustus became a master of all the branches of knowledge.He surpassed other scholars.He felt proud of it.He became ambitious.He wanted to acquire super human power. So he studied and practiced the art of black magic.He was like Icarus who aspired to fly too near the sun with waxen wings and fell drowned in to the sea.Tasty fruit and the rarest dainties,silk gowns,the gold of the Indies,sparkling pearls,venetial argosies and all their valuable cargo fill his dream.He wishes to visit the finest towns in Europe and especially Rome.The beauty of nature,the beauty of the world, the beauty of woman all fascinate him.For him woman is the supreme embodiment of beauty.No woman of his time can please him. To Faustus,Helen of Troy is the symbol of Greek beauty seen through the prism of medieval chivalry.He cannot be happy unless he is a god on the earth and not mere Faustus.By mastering all subjects,still he is a god on earth and not mere Faustus.By mastering all subjects,still he is a common man. He wants ‘power,honour,omnipotence’.

As soon as he signs the contract,he asks where the hell is. Mephistophilis offers him some books.These books enable him to get gold as much as he likes, control the forces of nature ,raise spirits whenever he likes,deal with astronomy and provide information about plants ,herbs and trees.Faustus is delighted to have these books.

**The tragic end of Dr.Faustus**

As a common man he discloses the secret to his scholar friends only at the end.The are horrified.He has committed a sin worse than that of Eve and can never expect pardon from God.He appeals the moving spheres of heaven to stop their movement.He wishes the clock to stop and the hour to turn a year , a month, a week or atleast a day to have time to repent.In his imagination,he sees Christ’s blood trickling in the sky.He knows that a drop of it damnation.But he finds the Devil is there to prevent it and to tear him to pieces.He appeals to the mountains to fall down to cover him,to the earth to open wide and swallow him and to the stars to raise him up like a mass of vapour into depth of dark clouds to save him from the Devil.But all such hopes are in vain.The Clock strikes twelve.There is thunder and lightning.The Devils enter.They strangulate him with vipers and serpents and tears his body into pieces.They carry away his soul to hell for eternal damnation.Faustus’ tragedy is a soul’s tragedy, and it is the tragedy of Marlowe as well.

**THE CHORUS IN THE PLAY**

The Chorus was a necessary feature of the ancient Greek drama.The chorus was used to describe the scenes and the scenes and suggest and indicate the atmosphere of the play.

**The first choric speech (or) The Prologue**

The play opens with a choric speech.The purpose is to tell the audience, the life of Faustus which is not enacted on the stage.The poet doesnot have any intention to sing of battles like the battle of Thrasymene, or the great love affairs in the court of kings or of great heroes and their glorious deeds.On the contrary, he present the drama of life and fortunes of Faustus.

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**The Second choric speech:**

The Chorus appears again at the beginning of Act III. A bright chariot drawn by mighty dragons carried Faustus up to the top of mount Olympus in order to known the secrets of the starry heavens. Faustus was to home in eight days. Again he climbed high on a dragon to study cosmography. Now Faustus visits Rome to see Pope and his court and also to take part in the feast of St.Peter’s Day.

**The Third Choric speech:**

The Chorus appears again at the beginning of Act IV. Faustus is returnedto his home after an extensive tour and visits to the courts of many kings. His friends and relatives welcomed him affectionately.They wondered at his knowledge of astronomy. Even the Emperor Charles V invited him to perform some of his feasts. His performance pleased the Emperor.

**The Fourth Choric speech:**

The Chorus appears again at the end of the play.It moralises upon the tragic death of Doctor Faustus .Faustus was a learned man.He could have achieved more.But his inordinate ambition to gain power and position brought his eternal damnation.It is a warning to the wise people not to delve deep into forbidden or mysterious subjects.

**CHARACTER SKETCH OF MEPHISTOPHILIS:**

Mephistophiis is the lieutenant of the Prince of Hell.He is the spirit of darkness,physical as well as spiritual. Mephistophilis himself tells that he is a servant of Lucifer, the Prince of Devils, and he cannot carryout the commands of Faustus without the permission of Lucifer.He appears before Faustus in his ugly shape.Faustus orders Mephistophilis to come in the guise of a friar.He tells that the easiest way to call up the spirits of hell is to renounce faith in God and scriptures.In the night,Mephistophilis appears and inform Lucifer’s approval to serve him for twenty fouryears provided he is prepared to surrender his soul to the devil and renounce the trinity.Further he says that that should be written with his own blood in a deed of gift.Faustus accepts.Faustus asks Mephistophilis the fairest maid as his wife. Atonce Mephistophilis brings for him a Devil in the shape of woman. He asked Faustus not to think of marriage and if he desires he will have the most beautiful woman every night. Faustus realizes his position and promises never to name god or pray to him. Lucifer is pleased and entertains Faustus by showing him the seven deadly sins. Faustus is much delighted.

Mephistophilis helps Faustus in playing mischief upon the pope and the cardinals of Rome.When Robin and Ralph conjure,Mephistophilis appear before them.Mephistophilis is angry.He turns Robin to an ape and Ralph to a dog. From this learn that he is a servant to Lucifer, to Doctor Faustus and to all other powerful individuals.It is Mephistophilis who helps Faustus in showing his wonderful magic performances before the Emperor.Again he helps Faustus in entertaining the Duke and the duchess of Vanholt by bringing grapes in the summer. When the old man advises Faustus to pray God, Mephistophilis arrives. He threatens Faustus to tear his body to pieces.Faustus promises him to be loyal forever .In order to gratify Faustus ,Mephistophilis calls up Helen. Helen appears and enraptures Faustus.He kisses her. Mephistophilis seems to encourage the spirit of despair in Faustus. Therefore it is best to regard him as the spirit of negation and the teacher of despair.

**Describe the comic scene relating to the horse dealer:** Faustus and Mephistophilis are resting on a green spot.He wants to walk through the lovely green spot.Just then a with horse-dealer arrives.He wants to purchase Faustus’ horse for forty dollars.Faustus sells his his horse a warning that he should not ride the horse through water.The horse-dealer asks Faustus how to treat the house, in case of illness. Faustus gets angry and dismisses him.soon the horse-dealer returns ,weeping and crying.He rode the horse into a deep pond.The moment he was in the middle of the pond,the horse turned into a bundle of hay.He feels that he has been cheated.He wants his money back.Inspite of Mephistophilis’s warning he pulls Faustus’ leg.The leg comes off from the body.The dealer is frightened.He agrees to pay Faustus forty dollars more for his mistake.

**Describe the comic scene in Rome in the privy chamber of the pope of Rome:** Mephistophilis tells Faustus that they should see the pope participate in the feast of St.Peter’s Day.The pope , the Cardinal of Loraine, some friars and others arrive.The pope is going to hand over a dish to the Cardinal.The invisible Faustus snatches it away.The trick is repeated several times.Nobody ab le to find the mischief-maker.They conclude that it is thedoing of some ghost.To frighten the ghost away the pope crossed himself.soon they come back to sing the dirge and to curse theghost with “bell,book and candle.”But Faustus and Mephistophilis beat them and fling fire works among them.They all run away frightened