

Dr. faustus as a tragic hero.

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Dr. Faustus the protagonist of Christopher Marlowe's great tragedy can be considered as a tragic hero similar to the other tragic characters such as Oedipus or Hamlet. Dr. Faustus who sells his soul to Lucifer in exchange of twenty four years of knowledge ought to have some special features in order to be considered as a tragic hero. But first of all let me present Aristotle's definition of a " Tragic hero" and then I will elaborate on each element in relation to the tragedy of " Dr. Faustus".

According to Aristotle, " the tragic hero evokes both our pity and terror because he is neither good nor thoroughly bad but a mixture of both; this tragic effect will be stronger if the hero is better than we are. Such a hero suffers from a change of happiness to misery because of his mistaken choice which is led by his hamarcia (error of judgment). The tragic hero stands against his fate or the gods to demonstrate his power of free will. He wants to be the master of his own fate. He decides to make decisions but mostly the decision making would lead to weakness or his own downfall. Now according to Aristotle's definition of a " tragic hero" it is time to elaborate on the clues in details in order to conclude that Dr. Faustus can also be a tragic hero according to following reasons: Firstly because Dr. Faustus as a tragic hero evokes our pity. We feel some form of connection with him because he has a sense of realism. Dr. Faustus makes mistakes which can be also all human condition. He wants to gain more knowledge that is also another part of human condition to learn and understand more. We sympathize with Dr. Faustus because his feelings are similar to other human beings at the end we really want him to repent in order to change his fate radically. We sympathize with him at the end of the drama when it is time for a farewell to

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his soul. Although he has done many faults but we really want God not to be so fierce towards a human being. He desires: O soul, be changed to little water drops And fall into the ocean. Ne're be found. My God, my God, look not so fierce on me! (Act V, Scene ii: lines 180-182) Secondly because Dr. Faustus is a well-known and prosperous character, so the reader notices to his reputation as a well-respected scholar inevitably. In Act I, Scene i ; he calls for his servants and students in his speech about various fields of scholarship which suggests him to be a prosperous intellectual. Philosophy is odious and obscure, Both law and physic are for petty wits, Divinity is basest of the three, Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile; 'Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me. (Act I, Scene i: lines 107-111) His reputation as a scholar has been mentioned both in the beginning and at the end.

It is one of the clues to present Dr. Faustus as a tragic hero so that the readers would be able to sympathize with him throughout the whole drama. In the closing lines the scholars put emphasis on this aspect more when they lament about their respectful professor's death. Yet for he was a scholar once admired For wondrous knowledge in our German schools, We'll give his mangled limbs due burial; And all the students, clothed in mourning black, Shall wait upon his heavy funeral. (Act V, Scene iii: Lines 14-19) Thirdly because Dr. Faustus' mistaken choice, exchange of his soul to Lucifer, results in his downfall.

His agreement with the devil blinds him in choosing between right and wrong. In the opening speech, in Act I, Faustus tells that he is skillful in different sciences but he wants to know more. FAUSTUS. How am I glutted

with conceit of this! Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please, Resolve me of all ambiguities, Perform what desperate enterprise I will? I'll have them fly to India for gold, Ransack the ocean for orient pearl, And search all corners of the new-found world For pleasant fruits and princely delicates; I'll have them read me strange philosophy, And tell the secrets of all foreign kings; I'll have them wall all Germany with brass, And make swift Rhine circle fair Witttenberg; I'll have them fill the public schools with silk, Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad; I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring, And chase the Prince of Parma from our land, And reign sole king of all the provinces; Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war, Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp-bridge, I'll make my servile spirits to invent. (Act I, scene i: lines 79-98) Actually the desire for learning is part of human nature but he chooses the wrong way without some sense of guilt.

His hasty desire for power and honor did not allow him to repent. He was so confused that he couldn't decide on following the ways of God or the path of Lucifer. Fourthly because Dr. Faustus wanted to support his own plot to make his own decision. This aspect of his character was as a result of the Renaissance period, unlike the medieval period, the dominance of fate upon human life became as a matter of ignorance. It was time for secular matters. Therefore, the dominance of sciences shadowed upon individuals thought . Dr. Faustus wanted to take destiny in his own hands to demonstrate the power of free will against fate.

A case in point is when he passionately demanded Mephistophilis to: Go, bear these tidings to great Lucifer: Seeing Faustus hath incurred eternal

death By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity, Say, he surrenders up to him his soul, So he will spare him four and twenty years, Letting him live in all voluptuousness; Having thee ever to attend on me, To give me whatsoever I shall ask, To tell me whatsoever I demand, To slay mine enemies, and to aid my friends, And always be obedient to my will. Go, and return to mighty Lucifer, And meet me in my study at midnight, And then resolve me of thy master's mind. (Act I, Scene iii: lines 91-104)

He did not want to be a puppet dancing to the strings of destiny, despite the fact that tragedy functions paradoxical towards human destiny. Hence according to the aspects which I elaborated on, I can describe Dr. Faustus as a tragic hero. Although he devoted himself completely to Lucifer, never choosing right and making a tragedy out of his own downfall, but I found the drama as an optimistic and didactic one. I believe that Marlowe wanted to teach Christian faith besides a chance for salvation. Marlowe uses the tragic irony of Dr. Faustus as his ultimate intention to illustrate the downfall of a tragic hero.