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Dr Faust, by Christopher Marlowe, an everlasting story of the greed of the human mind and spirit throughout history

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Abstract Dr. Faust was written during the period of Humanism and Renaissance, with an everlasting value throughout history. It describes the never ceasing desire of the human soul and mind to try to lurk for things beyond the grasp of the human ratio. The author, Christopher Marlowe gave the seal of eternity to this book, by characterizing his main character with all the possible wishes that one can dream of. That is why Faust has got the PhD on law, medicine, theology, logics... Further on he met Mephistopheles, the main devil that reminds him of the seven deadly sins trying to change his mind in order to make him aware of the consequences waiting for him. But our main character continuous to be even more stubborn in his requests, thus he makes the pact for 26 years with the devil being aware of the fact that he will never be brought back his own soul. Unfortunately, we meet these kinds of people every day, with enormous wishes, ideas, needs, style of life, and communication with others, with pathological needs to give the impression of being the best. Being categorical on their needs and requests, what is even worse moving and communicating within the circles full of people like themselves, makes them extremely dangerous. But the good has always fought the evil, and the good always prevails. Faust just before dying asks to see Helen of Troy, but it is too late!

Key words: human soul, evil, lust, requests, danger

This tragedy, without any doubt, is one of the most attractive ones, due to its dialectical way of rendering of events, at least so comprehended by the majority of the readers through time and place. This way of writing is extremely famous, throughout history, and it is going to remain like that due to description of the real way of the human mind and soul throughout ages, the way it has always been observed and continued to exist ceaselessly. In ancient tragedies, in front of the audience appears the chorus, telling in a very short way the main happenings of the drama, in order to prepare the audience what the topic is about. And as far as this tragedy is concerned, it deals with the main protagonist throughout all the play. Thus, the reader gets so well acquainted with the limitless desires of the mind of the human being, even though with this character he reaches the requests and their realization which are beyond the grasp of the human mind.

The main character is born in Germany, by parents of lower rank. He managed to finish the first period of his life in an excellent way, extremely successfully. So, he is send to his cousins to continue his studies at the Wittenberg university, where he almost endeavours every new thing, thus very quickly finishes so many universities and furthermore granted PhD`s on those scientific branches. So his learning and getting acquainted with so many new things make him bored and extremely dissatisfied with all this quantity of knowledge that he seemed to lose the real essence of their quality…Is this feeling being too tired of something that seemed normal to him for a normal human being…Is this a dissatisfaction of his cousins that brought him up and maybe
being unaware of the scientific heights that their nephew was achieving…Is Faust spiritually hurt or even destroyed as an epilogue of what he was doing, contemplating, lurking for something that even he himself could not define.

So many desires, so many unclear and unanswered things were going through his mind…But one thing should be taken for granted, he knew and had everything except being happy. Did he really felt the need of being a child of extremely rich and clever parents? Whom did he have to talk to about his extraordinary needs??? For the reader, the more one gets acquainted with the new things, which are as old as the existence of humanity, seem to be rather normal, because Faust is represented as a real God. So, this is also one of the reasons why he feels like a God, but unfortunately, a useless one. Can a lack of happiness, being raised by his cousins who were not even aware of what is going on with their nephew, knowing the core of everyone keep a human mind sound, or it would be much natural to say – sound?

People have always striving for an abundance of things, no matter if these are of material or even spiritual nature. People have always wanted luxurious life, big houses, gardens, modern furniture, nice clothes with expensive labels on them, huge cars the airplanes. But not our character. The good old saying states very humanly that one extreme gives birth to another one. So, pact with Lucifer is the desperately wanted thing. The fact that this subject reminds us of so many similar characters that we remember since our early childhood. It has also to be stressed that immortality has always tried to weave the web of immortality into the mental, as well as the spiritual life of the people. What would have happened if people lived forever, that is why this story is so attractive, its didactic message is that generations die after generations and there should be a way to give space to the other people to live. But unfortunately, these processes fall into oblivion into the mind of the extremely clever person Faust.

Throughout history, in different myths of different nations, there are lots of people like Faust. One of the most enigmatic characters from my childhood is, without any doubt the figure of Atlas. He was very famous for his enormous strength because of the condemnation to hold the whole world on his shoulders. He was an extremely clever person and was supposed to have invented astronomy. He was also an extremely robust figure, a father of several daughters. According to Greek mythology, it was his name that was used from ancient times till nowadays a compilation of maps and land drawings. It also has to be mentioned that Atlas used to hold the celestial spheres, but as a matter of fact he was condemned to hold the celestial spheres. As a matter of fact, the famous condemnation of Atlas was ‘to carry the weight of the world on one’s shoulders’.

And what is the condemnation of our hero “Doctor Faustus”, nothing but to get rid of all the beauties that life could have offered him, he was extremely clever which means extremely mighty. Faust, the character created by Christopher Marlowe is a real modern man, whom everybody would have dreamt of having him a friend, to learn from him, or to boast with him. What is more, everybody would at least once in one’s life to be Faust. This reveals a new quality that must be stressed. Faust, apart from being brave, is very truthful. He speaks exactly what he thinks. His behaviour is an extremely realistic mirror of his soul and mind. Unfortunately, in our times, this is a characteristic, we are all longing for, that is disappearing.

The other story, also a very famous one is the one about Daedalus and his son Icarus. It is interesting to mention the fact that this story has been used in Classical Literature, as a symbol of the fading of the ancient Greek poets and Ovid as well, in his famous Metamorphoses.

The more comparisons one tries to do with Dr. Faustus, sorrier one will feel about our main character. Daedalus used to be a very famous craftsman on architectural pieces that he gave shape to, which were very beautiful and unique. He built a huge labyrinth to imprison the ancient Minotaur, half man half one-eyed bull monster, but he, Daedalus went inside himself to save the labyrinth and defeat the Minotaur. He created two enormous wings of feathers, joined by wax to the body to escape from the island, so he ordered his son not to fly near the sun or the sea, because of the heat
and the depth. So, there are people who go much further with their ideas, wishes and their realizations. But is there a man who would not like to fly???
Icarus put on the wings but went so close to the sun, that the wax melted, and he drowned into the sea.

Where and which are the criteria that the reader should use to analyze Faustus. From the beginning of the history of mankind, greed has existed and has manifested itself in so many known and unknown forms. Faust should be forgiven because he is just a human being, not being able to be satisfied by the other human being. Faust tried to find a way that would overpass the reality he was caught in. He offered his soul to Lucifer who is the master of the other devil Mephistopheles. But he made a bargain by offering his soul to exchange of twenty-four years to possess all the knowledge about black magic. The bargain is done. No space to change the mind. But a lot of pace for the doctor to ask as many questions as he was interested in, such as what nature is, what created the Universe, what created nature, and so on and so forth. With the time passing by, the Doctor signed the contract in his own blood.

Mephistopheles takes Faustus to Rome where he meets the Pope than he visits Germany and meets the German Emperor, Charles V and a lot of other desires which are being fulfilled. After numerous adventures, when the end of the contract is just about to finish, we see the real intentions of Doctor Faustus. He wants to meet Helen of Troy. And this is one of the saddest parts in the whole book, which reveals the real heart of Faust.

"Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships, And burnt the topless towers of Ilium--

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.--
"[kisses her]"
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.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wertenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!"

This is the moment when and where the reader feels sorry for Doctor Faustus. This is the moment that people love to see beautiful things, Helen was an extremely beautiful lady, but she caused the war of Troy. Who gives us the right to judge the others. Why do we never give the freedom of our souls to judge on the behalf of ourselves.... How much do we try to be good....Why is it so difficult....Why do we hurt the others in the majority of cases....Do we love our own selves really, or we only pretend to do so. It is very difficult to love and to respect the other, let us prove that we are human beings with big hearts and not hidden beasts. I love Dr. Faustus and the way the author achieved his goal in reflecting the world through the book...At least he manages to make us aware of the humans dressed in devil's clothes...
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