

The Divided Selves of Doctor Faustus

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Many interpretations of Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* would suggest that the character of Faustus is a man divided in a multitude of ways. This problem has been discussed from many perspectives including, but not limited to, a theological perspective, as an example of renaissance self-fashioning, and as a theatrical stylistic choice by Marlowe in order to arouse certain reactions from the audience. This essay will focus on the way in which Faustus' character is divided into three selves, corresponding to the use of first, second and third person pronouns. In order to support and elucidate the argument I will look at how these divided selves work in relation to each other from a Kantian perspective. These parallel strategies are different ways at looking at Faustus' inability, despite great effort, to maintain a coherent self. According to Kant one cannot have full control over oneself without true moral character, which is located as a part of the soul. I will argue that Faustus' moral character has been split when he rejects his past to live in twenty-four years of glory and sells his soul to Lucifer.

Faustus' so-called quest for knowledge appears like a misdirected quest for a balance inside himself and a concern for his exterior position in the world. His stated disbelief, or possibly a suspension of belief, in an afterlife spent in heaven or hell allows Faustus to justify his quests on earth. Faustus' uncertainty about the choice comes through with his three selves battling against the choice between power and faith, and sin and repentance. This battle tortures Faustus internally and brings to life his own personal hell, just as Mephistophilis warns him:

MEPHASTOPHILIS. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.

Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,

Am not tormented with ten thousands hells

In being deprived of everlasting bliss? (Marlowe 3.76-80)

To which Faustus replies “Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude, / and scorn those joys thou shalt never possess” (Marlowe 3.85-86). It is the third person that replies to Mephistophilis of the fortitude of this version of Faustus. Early in the play Faustus’ resoluteness is strong, but the divisions of Faustus’ selves, and how the first person Faustus is commanded by or draws strength from the third person Faustus, are clearer still when Faustus speaks to Mephistophilis in Scene 3 and says “I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live, / To do whatever Faustus shall command” (Marlowe 3.36-37). The first person “I” commands Mephistophilis to wait upon him, but it is the third person Faustus that is the one truly commanding.

A Kantian perspective provides the philosophical framework to analyze the divided character of Doctor Faustus. In order to discuss Faustus’ pronoun use one must talk about the way in which Faustus commands his internal and external self as well as the way he commands others and how these moments show Faustus’ internal and external divisiveness. Eric Entrican-Wilson distinguishes between Kant’s idea of self-command and what Entrican-Wilson calls “prudential self-management” (257). The latter “is self-control in the service of satisfying one’s inclinations” (Entrican-Wilson 257) and what Kant refers to as the “‘strength of soul’ which he identifies with the ‘strength of resolution in a human being endowed with freedom . . . and in the state of health proper to a human being’” (Entrican-Wilson 257). Self-command is related more to morality (autonomy), whereas “self-control” is something one might practice on a daily basis with little to no effort or thought process, sometimes failing and sometimes following through on the path to virtue (the idea of “virtue” will be expanded on later) (Entrican-Wilson 257). Self-

command is more complicated and powerful than mere self-control or self-legislation in its simplistic daily practice. Self-command is used to master one's inclinations by mastering a practical law that self-legislation has enacted but is not strong enough to continuously maintain (Entrican-Wilson 259). A person can say they will do something but the "doing" is the hardest part. A person's autonomy is related to self-command through the idea that "any agent that has an autonomous will has the capacity for self-legislation" (to give a practical law), but it is self-command that masters it (Entrican-Wilson 261). As per the Kantian definition in the *OED* "autonomy" is "the freedom of will which enables a person to adopt the rational principles of moral law (rather than personal desire or feeling) as the prerequisite for his or her actions; the capacity of reason for moral self-determination" (*OED*). It is important to keep in mind this definition of autonomy when discussing Faustus' desires, which at first appear counter to this definition. However, the latter part of this definition indicates that the moral aspect of autonomy is self-determining, and according to Kant "autonomy of the will is the property of the will by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)" (Entrican-Wilson 260).

As stated before Faustus has suspended a belief in heaven and hell, which allows him a temporary freedom from the laws that would bind his character if he believed in heaven and hell. However it is not enough to just suspend a belief, he must create a new law that allows him to continuously justify his actions. According to Kant's theories, Faustus must first create a practical law for himself as an autonomous agent and then enact the law through self-legislation. This is his own law by his own definition that he can now command. This is not just the inclination of desire for power; it is the enacted law and command of power. The renunciation of all other ways into knowledge takes place in Scene 1. Faustus begins to split his external and

internal versions of himself by renouncing manmade laws and natural laws (like life and death), and the ways of thinking that those in the “state of health proper to a human being” partake in (Kant in Entrican-Wilson 257). It is Faustus’ desire for omniscience that compels him to reject all the knowledge he has previously learned. It is significant that the soliloquy of rejection that takes place in Scene 1 is our first experience with Faustus. This speech immediately establishes the idea of a split self and is enacted for the most part (there are some first person references as well) in the second and third person internal, with the second person Faustus convincing the third person Faustus to

FAUSTUS. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin

To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess:

Having commenced, be a divine in show,

Yet level at the end of every art,

And live and die in Aristotle's works.

Sweet *Analytiks*, 'tis thou hast ravished me.

Bene disserere est finis logices.

Is, to dispute well, logic's chiefest end?

Affords this art no greater miracle?

Then read no more, thou hast attained that end;

A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit.

.....

Be a physician Faustus, heap up gold,

And be eternized for some wondrous cure.

Summum bonum medicinae sanitas,

The end of physic is our body's health.
 Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
 Is not thy common talk found aphorisms?
 Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,
 Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague,
 And thousand desperate maladies been eased?
 Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man. (Marlowe 1.1-23)

Faustus renounces all other ways into knowledge because he finds himself still “a man” (Marlowe 1.23) and says to himself “Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity,” thereby repressing the man that he is, to become the “god-like” other he desires (Marlowe 1.63). As much as Faustus would likely deny it, his life so far has been shaped by the knowledge that came before. His religious, classical, astrological, and theological studies have shaped his idea of himself and informed who he wants to be. By renouncing this knowledge he is in a way renouncing who he is. However, this previous “self” still exists and is, I would argue, represented as the Good Angel, the Old Man, as well as in his own speeches, which explains why these speeches are disjointed arguments between his “selves” at times. The glimpses of Faustus’ different selves occur when he is struggling between repentance to God or continued sin with Lucifer. For example, Scene 5 when Faustus says, “Now Faustus, must though needs be damned, / And canst thou not be saved” and Faustus’s other “self” replies, “Away with such vain fancies, and despair, / Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub” (Marlowe 5.1-2, 5.4-5).

Faustus’ renunciation enacts his self-conceited moral laws that exceed the paltry rules and laws of the common people. His renunciation is only the assertion of “his” law, not the continuous mastering of it. Faustus’ tirade against all the knowledge he has accumulated in his

life disconnects him from the realm where these man-made laws exist (he has “attained that end” [Marlowe 1.10] and therefore must move on) and relegates all other professions/trades to a “study that fits a mercenary drudge / Who aims at nothing but external trash! / Too servile and illiberal for me” (Marlowe 1.34-36). It is in this speech that Faustus’ failings as a doctor are pointed out (as there is no end to sickness and death and therefore there can never be a true mastery to being a doctor and saving lives) and his true ambition is alluded to, not just to be proficient at magic but to be as powerful as God. Only in that end is there an “end” to the omniscient knowledge that Faustus seeks. The passage in Scene 1 has a taunting affect to it with the second person Faustus accusatory of Faustus’ failures and belittling his status as a mere “man.” Now that Faustus has rejected the laws of mere man he can enact his own rule of moral law which he claims to be resolute. However, the enactment of his law is what he says will convince him of his virtue and, as this passage shows, at this point in the play Faustus is ambiguous about what he even wants to do with this new power:

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? (Marlowe 1.78-81)

It’s clear that Faustus’ desire lies more with the ability to self-command than the desire for anything in particular. The ability of self-command proves he is his own master. It is the frustration of being bound by another’s rules that turns him to the dark magic to only find out he is now bound by those rules. His mastering of dark magic was supposed to be the “end” of education for Faustus as he would then have omniscient knowledge. However, Faustus finds

himself constrained by yet another means of a superior power that is challenging the possibility of attainment of that end.

When Faustus tries to sign the blood contract his own body attempts to reject his denunciation of God and his former self when his blood congeals (Marlowe 5.62). Even after he has signed, when “Homo fuge” (“O man fly”) appears on his arm, the cracks in Faustus’s mind, because of the repression of his former self and God, continue to occur (Marlowe 5.77). Not only does Faustus’ other “self” question his decision but it manifests itself in his physical body as well. If desire, or lust for power and envy of God, is what causes Faustus to conjure the devil and sign over his soul, his pride is what causes him to reject repentance. As said previously, Faustus created a split between his “selves” by rejecting his past and the knowledge that came before his commitment to Lucifer (which includes religion and therefore God). In Scene 5 directly after the “Homo Fuge” warning Mephistophilis begins with distraction tactics to keep Faustus’ first, second and third person selves from discussing a possibility of repentance. Interestingly, Faustus signs the contract prior to making his demands that occur in Scene 5 (Marlowe 5.95-110). The signatory ceremony is a similar ceremony to baptism when one commits oneself to God prior to receiving eternal life in Heaven. Of course, baptism does not guarantee eternal life unless one follows the small print of the contract that says one will never commit a sin, or as in Faustus’ case, repent of those sins. This idea is parallel to Mephistophilis’ not following Faustus’ demands, because Faustus did not read the small print of the contract that states he shall not have or know anything that goes against Lucifer; similarly you cannot have eternal life in heaven if you sin against God. Once this occurs to Faustus it is only his pride and rationalization of what he has seen that keep him from repenting. For example when he says:

FAUSTUS. Have I not 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 Mephistophilis?

Why should I die then, or basely despair?

I am resolved! Faustus shall ne'er repent. (Marlowe 5.202-208)

Notice how in this one passage Faustus starts in the first person "I" and then reverts to talking about himself in the third person when he says "Faustus shall ne'er repent," as if the third person Faustus is preventing the "I" from repenting. This, I would argue, represents the repression of a version of Faustus that came before. The part that knows he can repent, the part that suspects if he was wrong about obtaining the kind of omniscient knowledge and power he imagined from Lucifer then he could be wrong about heaven and the possibility to redeem himself. However, the "I" maintains the self-command: "I am resolved" and the charade continues (Marlowe 208).

The connection of morality to Kant's concept of autonomy cannot be ignored. When Faustus seems to disregard morality completely how can one apply Kant's theory? Kant's theories are often contradictory or interwoven. For example when one speaks of the word "virtue," which according to Kant is what one is striving for on the moral path, the definitions are many. Why choose such an ambiguous word as virtue? According to the *OED*, definitions of "virtue" range from "a moral quality regarded (esp. in religious contexts) as good or desirable in a person, such as patience, kindness, etc.; a particular form of moral excellence" to "appl[y]ing to qualities conventionally regarded as vices or negative qualities, esp. with reference to certain circumstances in which such qualities may be beneficial" (*OED*). Kate Moran explains that

In the practical sphere, self-conceit is less an *inclination* [desire], and more precisely a mode of thinking about one's inclinations and moral choices. Notably, Kant refers to self-conceit as a *principle* of the will in the second *Critique*, whereas self-love is described as a determining *ground* of the will. Self-conceit, on this account, does not motivate directly; rather, it fortifies and legitimizes the choices suggested by the faculty of desire by recasting them as principled actions. Through rationalization and the construction of a delusion about [ones] native perfection, the conceited agent rationalizes [their] heteronomy into virtue. As Kant's early lectures put it, self-conceit involves 'tinkering' (*künsteln*) with the moral law. (429)

With this interpretation of Kant's theory in mind, we can see that Faustus has manipulated what virtue is to justify his actions. He has recast a virtue that could have been a vice or negative quality into the virtue that is beneficial to him in order to complete his education. Faustus' "self-conceit" is established in the opening chorus and sets the stage for him to recast his desires into "principled actions" (Marlowe p.20, Moran 429). Faustus must manipulate the standard or Godly moral law of virtue (or just apply another definition) so that he is able to command himself into a great "conjurer laureate" and fulfill all his desires, whatever those may be (Marlowe 3.32).

There is clearly a difference between a healthy human being who can practice self-control and Faustus, someone who has achieved a higher level of self-command through the manipulation of laws. Juan Prieto-Pablos argues that the circumstances of the strategy of self-reference is indeed unique to Marlowe's use of them in *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, especially in regards to the use of third and second person in relation to the more common first

person pronoun (66). As Prieto-Pablos states, many of the uses of first person are neutral uses of no particular significance as far as speech act is concerned (Faustus' use of first person when stating a command or declarative action will be discussed later). However, one could say it is the very neutrality of the use that exhibits the normative self of Faustus that these neutral "I" conversations stand for. For example when Faustus is having simple conversations with his colleagues he speaks in the first person. The first person normative in this case is his outward personification to a colleague and friend. Faustus is not just concerned about his soul but about his public external image. Faustus has finally decided "[t]o practice magic and concealed arts" so he can obtain riches (Marlowe 1.102). However, he says he will also share these riches with others "and reign sole king of all our provinces" (Marlowe 1.82-94). Therefore, while he does want power and all knowledge he also wants to do good deeds for others, which he sees as a virtue. However, he would do good only for the selfish reason that people will perceive him as a king and remember him after he dies, just as he wanted to help people as a doctor but the accolades were his prize. Valdes' conversation with Faustus after he finds out Faustus has decided to conjure supports the idea of the importance to Faustus of the external self when Valdes says, "Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience / [s]hall make all nations to canonize us" (Marlowe 1.119-120). Clearly, the desire for recognition shows how Faustus and his friends care about how their peers' view them, and if Faustus is not able to become any other kind of "laureate" in his life then he will attempt to become "conjurer laureate" (Marlowe 3-32). Besides, while he does conjure, he never acquires the object of his desire, indeed there is no actual object. What he desires most (beyond riches) is omniscience and omnipotence, which "ends" his quest and confirms that his decision to turn to the dark arts to begin with was a correct one. However, he can never have this knowledge, because knowledge of heaven or anything

heavenly is forbidden, as per the contract with Lucifer. Additionally, as said before, Faustus does receive confirmation of heaven through Mephistophilis' acknowledgement that there is hell.

Faustus' first question to Mephistophilis asks where this hell is located and Mephistophilis tries to explain:

MEPHASTOPHILIS. Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed

In one self place; for where we are is hell,

And where hell is, there must we ever be.

And to conclude, when all the world dissolves,

And every creature shall be purified,

All places shall be hell that is not heaven. (5.119-125)

Even though Mephistophilis will not outright state heaven exists, this answer should still be sufficient to deduce that hell cannot exist without heaven, and that therefore there is a heaven.

However, Faustus cannot accept this answer, since accepting a hell means accepting the possibility of a heaven, as each has its opposite and Faustus' pride cannot bear to be wrong, for he sold his soul to the devil with what seemed to be a disbelief in the possibility of a hell and therefore that there was no real chance of eternal damnation for him.

Faustus not only self-commands his own actions but attempts to command others in order to fulfill his delusions. For example he commands Mephistophilis to take the form of a friar as a way of collapsing and masking hellish morals with heavenly morals. Similarly Faustus compares "a sound magician . . . [to] a mighty god" and tells Mephistophilis that he "confounds hell in Elysium," as if magician and god, and heaven and hell are one (Marlowe 1.62, 3.59). It is of particular interest that Faustus speaks in the first person pronoun when demanding this of Mephistophilis. Faustus' external character and declarative action conversations are represented

by the “I” pronoun and must be deluded in order to fully command. It is the “I” Faustus that commands the change and that also calls his own words virtuous and heavenly at one point in yet another definition of virtue when he states:

FAUSTUS. I charge thee to return and change thy shape,
 Thou art too ugly to attend on me;
 Go and return an old Franciscan friar,
 That holy shape becomes a devil best.
 I see there's virtue in my heavenly words!
 Who would not be proficient in this art?
 How pliant is this Mephastophilis,
 Full of obedience and humility,
 Such is the force of magic and my spells.
 Now Faustus, thou art conjurer laureate
 That canst command great Mephastophilis. (Marlowe 3.23-33)

The Norton note explains that the use of virtue refers to “power” (Greenblatt, Eisaman-Maus and Logan 1135). Faustus has attained his version of virtue, which is proficiency in his ability to not only use the dark arts but to command. Additionally, at the very end of the passage Faustus shifts to speaking in the third person in order to figuratively pat himself on the back for this achievement. Juan Prieto-Pablois uses speech act theory to interpret Faustus' choice of the first person (in the non-neutral case) in order to give himself courage (68). It is indeed through the second and third person of this first incantation that Faustus is convincing the first person to perform when he says “Then fear not Faustus, but be resolute” (Marlowe 3.14).

Sophie Grays' position is that "Faustus's compulsive reiteration of identity is an [anxiety] about loss of control and lack of understanding of the relationship between words and reality"

(42). Faustus' repetition that heaven and hell are not real is a way to conjure into reality that he is right so he can put a stop to his inner turmoil. The power of words in the play is indeed important, since all Faustus need do to save himself is to repent aloud to God for his sins.

Faustus' constant references to "be resolute" can be seen as the positive affirmations Faustus needs in order for him to be continuously self-legislating, in order for him to master and self-command his divided self. According to Hegelian theory as explicated by David Duquette

the relationship between self and otherness is the fundamental defining characteristic of human awareness and activity, being rooted as it is in the emotion of desire for objects as well as in the estrangement from those objects, which is part of the primordial human experience of the world, which prevents individual consciousness from becoming free and independent. However, that other cannot be abolished or destroyed, without destroying oneself, and so ideally there must be reconciliation between self and other such that consciousness can "universalize" itself through the other.

(Duquette chp.4.para.3)

Faustus refuses to reconcile all the divisions of Faustus' consciousness, or the "other" which he represses, with his desire for the self that is all powerful and omniscient, because, I would suggest, they are irreconcilable. In addition, as this Hegelian passage suggests, Faustus cannot just destroy or permanently repress the self and the moral laws that existed previously, the self that recognizes a heaven and hell, and place the "other" in his consciousness, for this would be incomplete. Faustus' past must be reconciled with his future. He must choose God, not his desire for omniscience, in order to obtain his soul and spend eternity in heaven.

The act of self-command is circular in nature just as Faustus moves in his mind from resoluteness to despair and reaffirmation of his decision to turn to the dark arts, so do his selves talk to each other and encourage each other to remain resolute in his determination to remain within his contract with Lucifer. Stephen Greenblatt says that repetitious motivations are “the renewal of existence through repetition of the self-constituting act,” and that “the character repeats himself in order to continue to be that same character on the stage” (Renaissance 201). Much in the same vein as denouncing hell, when Faustus speaks his own name repeatedly in the second and third person he is trying to command himself or conjure himself into who he desires by repressing the former “self.” Additionally, Greenblatt quotes Marx as saying:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves . . . they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past.

(Renaissance 209-210)

This idea would take the power away from Faustus and place it in the hands of those classical and Greek scholars that helped create him, as well as God who created the world. Indeed Faustus asks this exact question of Mephastophilis:

FAUSTUS: . . . Tell me who made the world?

MEPHASTOPHILIS: I will not. (Marlowe 5.240-241)

Mephastophilis eventually replies all but confirming God and heaven when he says:

MEPHASTOPHILIS: Ay, that is not against our kingdom; but this is. Think thou on hell
Faustus, for thou art damned. (Marlowe 5.244-246)

Faustus is of the mind that he can make his own laws, and command himself into whom he pleases with the power he receives by selling his soul. Yet this “other” he desires, this omniscient and omnipotent god-like version of himself cannot be achieved, for he is not whole. He has split himself from his past and God. All he can do is continue to conjure “the spirits of the past” as he most literally does in Helen of Troy and others (Marlowe 12.81). He is in some ways, as Sophie Gray suggests, having an identity crisis (42). In attempting to create his own version of himself, he repressed what made him and became a soulless spirit, an empty vessel.

Greenblatt’s ideas of self-fashioning are strikingly compatible with Kantian structures of self-legislating and self-command and the way in which Faustus can be seen to perform these ideas. Greenblatt’s explanation of the connection between repetition and self-fashioning connect to the way in which historically paradigms of power “inculcate crucial moral values” (Renaissance 201). In his explanation “men are notoriously slow learners and, in their inherent sinfulness, resistant to virtue, but gradually, through repetition, the paradigms may sink in and responsible, God-fearing, obedient subjects may be formed” (Renaissance 201). Of course in Faustus’ case he has changed what those moral laws are by instituting his own moral laws and throwing off or splitting himself from the shackles of the traditional paradigms of power (religious, theological and political) used to inculcate these morals. However, how does one give oneself a law? Does Faustus just trade one paradigm of power for another? According to Enrican-Wilson:

Kant claims that the activity of giving a law involves (a) putting forward a proposition that represents a course of action as required and (b) attaching the proposition to a motivation to do what the proposition says must be done. He distinguishes between two basic types of lawgiving: ‘juridical’ and ‘ethical.’ Juridical lawgiving represents an action

as a duty, and it attaches the law to some ‘pathological’ motivating impulse, such as hope or fear. . . . From the perspective of ethical law, the ‘morality’ of one’s conduct depends upon one’s motivations. (262)

Faustus’ contract with Lucifer seems to qualify as “giving a law.” Indeed Faustus is the one that makes the proposition, not a paradigm of power (Lucifer), when he says:

FAUSTUS. 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 aid my friends,
 And always be obedient to my will. (Marlowe 3.90-97)

In a contradictory section of “The Metaphysics of Morals” Kant says on one hand that individual agents who can self-legislate cannot necessarily “legislate the moral law” (Entrican-Wilson 262). However they can “make decisions about particular policies of conduct (maxims’) and bind themselves by future performances by means of these decisions” (Kant in Entrican-Wilson 262). On the other hand in the “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals” Kant expounds on this idea to say that these maxims can qualify as laws when they follow the rules of the “Categorical Imperative” or “the supreme principal of morality” (Entrican-Wilson 263). The two rules the maxim must meet in order to qualify as law are that the act in question must be something that is “coherently . . . binding on all rational agents” and that the “formula of humanity” dictates that the policy must “treat all persons, including ourselves, as ends and never

as mere means” (Entrican-Wilson 263). It appears that Faustus’ contract with the devil to sell his soul could qualify as something that would be binding on all rational agents. However, does it qualify under the second restriction that would allow it to be a “practical law” that can be self-legislated and mastered by Faustus to begin with? Consider Faustus’ obsession with the “end” of things. There was no end to the constant fight against sickness and death as a doctor so Faustus abandoned that path. Theological, astrological and religious doctrine could not provide him with ultimate knowledge, thus he ends his quest for knowledge through those means. Faustus’ third person self begins his argument to convince his first person self when he says “Then read no more, thou hast attained the end; / A greater subject fitteth Faustus’ wit” (Marlowe 1.10-11). Faustus signs the contract, thereby surrendering his soul and states “this bill is ended” (Marlowe 5.74). In the contract itself it is Faustus that sets the limitation of twenty four years, thereby ending his life on his terms with the anticipation that by that time he will know all things and therefore have no use to continue living. It would seem that Faustus is indeed treating everything as if it has an end. In his final soliloquy Faustus is distraught at the idea that damnation will never end when he says

FAUSTUS. Impose some end to my incessant pain;

Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,

A hundred thousand, and at last be saved.

O no end is limited to damned souls! (Marlowe 13.91-93)

In the beginning of the play it is clear that Faustus does not fully believe there is a heaven and a hell; why else would he flippantly sell his soul to the devil? Even when Faustus is told by Mephistophilis that indeed there is a hell and heaven, even if in a metaphysical way, he refuses to accept it. To Faustus there is always an end. Even by the setting of a time limit Faustus is

enacting control over death so as to feel powerful in life. The only way one can truly justify Faustus' actions is to say that he truly believes that there is an end to all things and therefore would posit a practical law in order to see the "end" of things. Once he reaches the end of his twenty-four years his self-command in sticking to his practical law is so mastered that it is impossible to return and repent.

Faustus consistently wills himself to remain steadfast to his original contract, his enacted law. Patrick Frierson discusses Kant's theories on character. Frierson says that when Kant talks about character (the "character purely and simply," to be specific, as he has many divisions of character), the "'character purely and simply' of a person---'is moral' and 'shows what man is prepared to make of himself'" (624). In the footnote Frierson quotes Kant further stating that "[h]aving '*Character schlechtin*' [character purely and simply] involves simply tying oneself to any practical principles at all, even those that might be 'false and incorrect'" (624). Is Faustus not willing to make as much of himself as he can? Even if the reader or the Good Angel deems Faustus' principles to be false, Faustus is still following the practical law that he felt was the only way of making an end to his quest. Edward Snow describes Faustus' final soliloquy as "a nightmare of self-fragmenting solipsism, a final yielding of the mind to its own hypothetical terrors" (97). Indeed one can see the man divided turning in on himself when he says "Cursed be the parents that engendered me! / No Faustus, curse thy self, curse Lucifer, / That has deprived thee of the joys of heaven" (Marlowe 13.103-105). Kant says that having an evil character is better than not having a character at all, and indeed is to be admired, and according to Kant "having a character, would he be good or evil, he yet exhibits already strength of soul" (Frierson 626). Regardless of the quality of Faustus' character he is to be admired for fighting against the temptation to repent and for attempting to make his own way in the world. Unfortunately for

Faustus he was only deluding himself that the way was his and according to Marlowe it seems that there is no escape from the paradigms of power.

By Scene 12 the reader can guess that Faustus is doomed, for it seems that Faustus can no longer even see that other part of him that is capable of repentance when he says “Where art thou Faustus? . . . [damned] art thou, Faustus, damned; despair and die!” (Marlowe 12.38-39). Directly after, he contemplates repenting again, because of the Old man, whom I would suggest is an external manifestation of Faustus (it has been twenty-four years, so he would indeed be an old man). Faustus is so far from God that he can no longer see angels, just as he can no longer see the Faustus in himself that can repent, and it is the Old Man that must tell him “I see an angel hovers o’er thy head” (Marlowe 12.44). The split of the selves is complete and thus Faustus is damned. Indeed the tone of his last speech is that of tormented resignation and fear, and while he appeals to God he knows it is of no use, and by doing so he finally acknowledges he has deprived himself of “the joys of heaven” (Marlowe 13.105). Faustus finally speaks of God with confidence, even calling him “my God,” and offers to “burn [his] books” (Marlowe 13.110, 113). In the end it seems that he receives or accepts the knowledge of faith, but too late to reconcile himself and become whole.

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