

ABSTRACT

Striving in Faust:

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In Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* the character of Faustus is defined by the striving that leads to his fatal despair. After the Enlightenment alters the course of Western thought, the experiences of Goethe's Faust reveal that intellectual striving may lead to the brink of despair, but the greater sin is to act on that despair and to stop striving. This thesis explores how striving can be either a source of damnation or salvation in these two important works based on the Faust legend.

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STRIVING IN FAUST

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INTRODUCTION

The Faust story originated in German chapbooks that featured a magician named Faust making a pact with a demon named Mephistopheles. The Faust character was damned at the end of these stories as a punishment for his dealings with the demon. The first inspiration for the Faust story may have come from the tale of Simon Magus in the book of Acts. Simon Magus performs great deeds of sorcery, and after his conversion, he offers to pay the apostles to teach him how to perform miracles so that on whomever he “lay hands, may receive the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:19). This tradition became one of the first tales of Christian heresy. Subsequent authors wrote about Simon Magus and expanded his story until he became the prototypical Faust figure. He was said to have had a concubine named Helen just as Faustus does in Marlowe’s work (Parker 228). Simon’s story serves as an archetype for other “Magus” tales of Faustian deals with the devil, such as the German chapbook that first depicted Faust.

The first Faust chapbook was published by Johann Spies in 1587 in Frankfurt am Main. It was meant as a warning to all those who might attempt witchcraft and make deals with the devil (Mason 3). “P.F. Gent” translated the Spies chapbook into English and it was published by Thomas Orwin in 1592 (Fehrenbach 326). However, there may have been another, earlier publication of the English Faust book dating back to 1588. John Henry Jones theorizes that this earlier Faust chapbook was the basis for Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, but that it has since been lost (Fehrenbach 327).

Marlowe would have encountered the Faust book during his university studies. Goethe would not have had access to either of these chapbooks, however, since by

Goethe's time those early versions had been lost. Instead he used a source by Nikolas Pfitzer published in 1674, which was loosely based on the earlier sources (Mason 5).

Christopher Marlowe was an Elizabethan playwright and contemporary of Shakespeare. He was born in 1564, and died only 29 years later in mysterious circumstances, stabbed in the eye in what was alleged to be a quarrel over a bill, but could have been part of a conspiracy involving Queen Elizabeth's secret service (Nicholl). Many critics point to Marlowe's imprudent decisions throughout his life, and comment on how his plays are filled with figures enraptured by things and experiences beyond their reach, and the tragic end to which such striving leads. The protagonist of *Tamburlaine*, for instance, seeks ever greater military conquest and proclaims himself superior to God before he dies of an illness. The Jew of Malta in the play by the same name has his great wealth taken from him and leaves death in his wake as he fights for revenge and to reclaim his riches, before he is finally executed. Marlowe's overreaching characters are punished for their striving.

Marlowe wrote his *Doctor Faustus* between 1588 and 1592 (Bowers 195). The authorship of *Doctor Faustus* has been the subject of scholarly debate because there are two extant versions of the play. The A text is 600 lines shorter than the B text and some have suggested that A is a "bad quarto," having been printed from an actor's recollection rather than from the manuscripts of Marlowe himself (Bowers 195). However, the A text was published in 1604 before stricter censorship was imposed in 1606. This has led some to argue that the B text, published in 1616, was altered in order to conform to the new standard in censorship. Some also argue that following Marlowe's death another author added some of the farcical scenes involving Robin and Rafe that are expanded in the B

text. I have chosen to use the A text of Christopher Marlowe's play because it was selected for the Norton anthology and because the expanded roles of Robin and Rafe do not relate to my thesis (Norton 1023).

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born in 1749 and was a polymath. He was the most important writer of the *Sturm and Drang* movement before creating Weimar Classicism. Moreover, many consider one of his last masterpieces, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, to be a work of Romanticism. Goethe was also active in many different pursuits ranging from statesmanship to the sciences, and as he continued to strive for more and more knowledge, he took his most famous character along with him. Goethe first began to write about Faust when he was a young man and he continued to develop the play over the course of his long life. Indeed, *Faust Part II* was only published after his death at the age of eighty-three.

Goethe began his lifelong work on the Faust story with the "Urfaust" which he worked on between 1771 and 1775. This contained some scenes that would later become a part of *Faust, Part One* and it represents the very beginning of his journey with the Faust story. Goethe published *Faust, a Fragment* in 1790 and then expanded it into *Faust, Part One*, which was published in 1808. It told the story of Faust making a deal with Mephistopheles, falling in love with Gretchen, an innocent village girl, contributing to her death, and bearing witness to her salvation. *Faust, Part Two* was completed the year before Goethe's death and it was published posthumously in 1832. It tells the more diffuse tale of Faust traveling from an Imperial seat to Ancient Greece where he falls in love with Helen of Troy. At the end of the work he is saved by the intercession of Gretchen, who has forgiven him.

This thesis examines how Marlowe and Goethe deal through their Faust stories with humanity's urge to strive after things beyond their reach. I found that the Renaissance writer Marlowe condemns striving in his Faust. Faust is an overreacher and his striving is a display of hubris. *Doctor Faustus* is reminiscent of a morality play and it cautions its audience away from the striving that eventually damns Faustus. Mephistophilis fell with Lucifer when his master strove to overthrow God. Now Mephistophilis is a conflicted demon wanting to warn Faustus about damnation and yet needing to win Faustus' soul for Lucifer.

Goethe's story does not operate within the same orthodox Christian context. In the "Prologue in Heaven" God identifies striving as the highest human virtue. Faust is a striver, just as he is in Marlowe, but in Goethe that makes him a better human being. Faust can only be damned if he ever stops striving. Goethe's Mephistopheles does not fit into an orthodox demonic hierarchy like Marlowe's did. Instead he struggles to bring Faust contentment, but instead only provides opposition for Faust to strive against.

As an English and German major I chose this topic because it allowed me to look at a work from the Elizabethan stage as well as a work from German classical literature, which are in my opinion two of the most fascinating and influential literary movements of their respective languages. Also, because I am a member of the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, it seemed fitting to study a story as universal as that of Faust's striving from an interdisciplinary perspective.

CHAPTER ONE

Doctor Faustus in Marlowe

With his *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* Christopher Marlowe resurrected a genre that had been long absent from the English theater. Mystery cycles used biblical characters and situations to relay biblical lessons to a mostly illiterate audience. These performances were staged during holy days. The men of the town would assume different roles in the show and act on moveable stages that were wheeled around the village. The holiday determined the subject of the performance. Each group of performers would perform the same scene throughout the day beginning early in the morning, and after every performance they would move off down the road and perform for a new audience that had just watched a different group perform. Sometimes these skits would form a sequence that would tell a long biblical story with each set of performers depicting a different part of that story.

Later, the morality play would replace the mystery cycle. Morality plays related allegorical, non-biblical stories that were meant to instruct the audience on how to live their lives. They were not limited to canonical texts but were based on theological ideas, and biblical figures were replaced with other more general characters representing such concepts as ambition, vice, and charity. Churches used paid actors instead of the townspeople and clergymen who performed in the mystery cycles, and the plays took place on one stationary stage rather than on moving stages throughout town.

The most popular morality plays depicted the interaction between the “everyman” character, and a specific sin or sometimes the more general character “Vice” (Cole 241). Just as in the mystery cycle tradition, the morality play contained didactic elements, the purpose of which was to instruct the audience about the evils of sin and the path to righteousness. The everyman figure was either damned through his sin or saved by his repentance (Lunney 33). The consequences of sin were explained to the audience more often by means of monologues spoken directly to the audience explaining what the character had done wrong and what would happen as a result of that sin rather than by acting out a plot with a complex narrative sequence of cause and effect (Cole 241) (Lunney 77).

The morality play was popular in the fifteenth century but had fallen out of favor in the years before Marlowe reexamined the genre (9 Deats). The influences from that tradition on Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* are clear: “The supernatural context of Faustus’ tragedy, and the central importance of theological concepts of evil and suffering within that context, distinguish it from all other tragedies of the time, and suggest a relationship to the English morality play” (Cole 231). However, the everyman of the morality play becomes an exceptional man in the character of Faustus.

Morality plays used a character embodying a particular sin in order to push the everyman towards that particular sin. The character might be named for the sin, like Avarice or Pride, but could also be named Vice and represent all of the temptations that one could fall into. After facing temptation it was necessary for the everyman to deliberate over his fate with Good and Evil Angels that would try to convince him of

what to do. The everyman character, however, was not fully developed. He remained generic; indeed, he had to in order to be able to represent all of the audience members.

In *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe used the motifs of the morality play, but he gave Doctor Faustus an Elizabethan complexity. Realistic human emotions motivate this new substitute for the everyman, and the plot is more developed than that of a morality play. Unlike in a morality play, Faustus' sin now comes from within him. What in a morality play would be depicted as an external demon, Faustus now possesses as a part of his character. In morality plays the everyman was not distinguished by any extraordinary abilities or ambitions. The figure of Faustus, on the other hand, is: "Excelling all, whose sweet delight disputes / In heavenly matters of theology" (Doctor Faustus Prologue 18-19). Faustus is no longer generic, but is defined by his ability and ambition. His striving results in imprudent actions and ultimately damns him (Cole 232). It damns him precisely because the demon is no longer an outside force, but an internal sin for which Faustus is responsible but for which he does not, or cannot, repent. Why he cannot repent is central to his character and the reason why he is damned.

What modern thinkers would consider to be "striving" or "ambition" was depicted as the vice of great pride or "self-conceit" in the character of Faustus, making the connection between the Renaissance play and the earlier morality plays clear: "Till, swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit, / His waxen wings did mount above his reach, / And melting heaves conspired his overthrow" (Doctor Faustus Prologue 20-22). Here Faustus is explicitly linked to Icarus, a character from Greek mythology famous for his overreaching as he attempts to fly with wax wings. However, he flies too close to the sun

and his wings melt. Icarus dies because he strives for something beyond his human limitations. Before the reader is introduced to Faustus, therefore, Marlowe has already established the danger of striving.

Pride was one of the seven deadly sins, and so having the pride to assume that his striving would be fruitful damns Faustus because Marlowe was working from the perspective that man cannot achieve anything worthwhile without God. Despair is the ultimate sin because it prevents the despairing person from seeking forgiveness: “It is a religious despair of salvation, seen as springing from the primordial guilt of Pride but sufficiently recurrent in the play to justify our regarding it as Faustus’ main transgression” (Sachs 626).

The concept of pride as a sin that leads to despair did not begin with Marlowe. Marlowe would have studied “cases of conscience” at Cambridge’s Corpus Christi College. The “case of conscience” described an historical or fictional character’s struggles with moral and theological issues and was prevalent in Calvinist and Puritan literature. The “case of conscience” detailing the life of Spira, a 16th century Italian who went through many of the same developmental steps as Faustus, was widely known and John Calvin wrote a preface to it. Spira was quoted to have said: “I feel my heart hardened that I cannot believe or hope in anything ... of the mercy of God (qtd. in Campbell 226). This parallels what Faustus says to the Evil Angel: “My heart’s so hardened I cannot repent!” (Doctor Faustus 5.194). Some accounts of his life have Spira meeting with an old man who urged him to turn to Christ shortly before his death, however the Old Man’s entreaties were unsuccessful and Spira subsequently attempted suicide and died twenty days later (Campbell 226). This scene is reminiscent of the scene

between Faustus and the Old Man that occurs near the end of *Doctor Faustus* where Faustus is given one last opportunity to repent. Rather than listening to the Old Man's pleas Faustus continues in his despair. At the time Marlowe was writing, Spira represented the consequences of despair, and such stories could have influenced Marlowe and led him to connect the concept of striving and despair (Campbell 219-239).

Faustus is initially driven away from God by his pride and later by his despair. Arieh Sachs argues that the Reformation and specifically Calvinist theology led to a greater emphasis on the idea that man could not achieve anything worthwhile outside of the grace of God (Sachs 626). The idea of man's dependence on God for accomplishment binds the longing for achievement to pride and helps to explain why some Renaissance literature reacted against the burgeoning humanistic spirit. This has led Robert Ornstein to accuse Marlowe of being an anti-humanist (Ornstein 1381).

Doctor Faustus, as with many of Marlowe's other dramas, is built upon the limitations of mankind, and the danger that comes from attempting to exceed those limitations. Though this might sound unfamiliar to post-Enlightenment readers, it concurred with the popular opinion at the time.

Marlowe wrote *Doctor Faustus* after the humanist movement had been established. Marlowe's work was still being published in black-letter printing in 1631, almost 40 years after the playwright's death. Black-letter typeface had been the standard until the early 16th century when roman type became more fashionable. Works intended for a more intellectual audience were printed in roman typeface and cheaper works intended for the middle and lower classes, like Psalters and collections of ballads, were printed with black-letter printing. This indicates that many uneducated people enjoyed

the ideas presented in *Faustus*, including its critique of striving. Marlowe's play became popular in theaters in part due to the special effects that were used with Mephistophilis' magic. However, the play had enduring popularity with the middle and lower classes in printed form. This indicates that the themes of the play resonated with the people who bought the cheaply printed copies of the play. They enjoyed reading about *Faustus* as he was punished for his striving (Sachs 634).

After the Chorus recites the Prologue, Scene 1 begins with *Faustus* alone in his study, looking through his books. He has received a doctorate and studied logic in Aristotle, but he is disappointed because he has only learned how to debate. He then studies philosophy, and then moves on to medicine, law, and theology. He has pursued each of the fields of study before the play begins and has just come to the study of religion as the play opens. He could have found contentment in any of the individual fields that he looks into, but he wanted something more than what the field could offer. This becomes most clear in his study of medicine. He has learned to heal the sick, but he only delays their inevitable deaths: "Yet thou art still but *Faustus*, and a man. / Couldst though make men live eternally, / Or, being dead, raise them to life again" (1.24-26). He has mastered human medicine but strives for more.

Doctor Faustus mocks God from the very beginning of the play. He begins his first scene by shouting blasphemies into an Elizabethan world bloodied by religious persecution:

The reward of sin is death? That's hard.
... If we say that we have no sin,
We deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us.
Why then belike we must sin.
And so consequently die.
Ay, we must die an everlasting death.

What doctrine calls you this? Che sera', sera'

What will be, shall be! Divinity, adieu! (Doctor Faustus 1.40-48)

He bids “adieu!” to divinity before his first monologue is over after having decided that, because he cannot help but sin, he is already damned (1.48).

When reading Romans 6.23, his first conscious decision is to read the first half (“The reward of sin is death”) but to discontinue his reading before finishing the entire verse (“but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”). He bases his initial despair and his fall on this intentionally faulty premise. He chooses not to acknowledge the rest of the verse and the responsibility that that would leave him with. He excuses his desire to strive by indicating that his damnation is guaranteed whether or not he strives.

Faustus acts on his pride by putting aside “the thought of the inconceivable future” and he later “cringes before his self-imposed destiny” (Ornstein 1380). His ambition comes into conflict with his religious belief system and he must make a choice before the play can begin in earnest. He needs to determine the value that striving holds for him and weigh that idea against the value of his eternal soul. He could choose to accept the whole verse of Romans and his salvation, but he does not. By making this choice he is not damned by outside forces but he damns himself. Ignoring the second half of the verse excuses his ambition by freeing him from guilt. It does not absolve him of sin, but it makes any additional sin inconsequential because his fate is already determined. The decision to ignore the consequences of his actions removes any moral restrictions from his striving.

The consequences of Faustus' striving are made clear by the Good and Evil Angels that appear after Faustus decides to turn to the occult. The angels are reminiscent

of a Christian morality play and are Marlowe's own addition to the story told in the Faust Book of 1592 upon which the play *Doctor Faustus* was based (Fehrenbach) (Thoms). They initially appear to be autonomous beings and perhaps actual angels, and yet they introduce no new information to the story, but rather attempt to pull Faustus towards righteousness or towards evil. The Good Angel represents the common wisdom and speaks for the frustrated audience. Faustus has just concluded his long monologue. He reads first from the Vulgate and determines that he is damned no matter what he does. Then he opens "necromantic books" and calls them "heavenly" (*Doctor Faustus* 1.50). He has just proven his confusion and the Good Angel now seeks to differentiate between the Bible and the magical tomes he consults. The Good Angel wants Faustus to complete the verse from Romans that he stopped reading. Faustus knows that the Good Angel makes logical points, and that the words "necromantic" and "heavenly" cannot describe the same book, so here the Good Angel expresses Faustus' conscience:

O Faustus lay that damned book aside,
And Gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head:
Read, read the Scriptures; that is blasphemy (*Doctor Faustus* 1.70-73).

Here Faustus hears a clear directive that would save his soul. The Good Angel specifically refutes Faustus' assertion that the magic book is heavenly by calling it "that damned book". The Good Angel represents what the rational and logical mind of Faustus would have understood if he had not chosen to ignore the scripture.

The Evil Angel speaks second, and echoes what Faustus has contemplated in his monologue:

Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,
Wherein all nature's treasury is contained;
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,

Lord and commander of these elements. (Doctor Faustus 1.74-77)

The Evil Angel refers to the fact that Faustus sees one that delves into the occult as a “studious artisan”, making his work “that famous art” (1.55). Faustus has also coveted the wealth of knowledge contained within that art, the “treasury” mentioned by the Evil Angel. Faustus had said that the occult would bring him an “omnipotence” that the scholarly Faustus would have seen as a treasure (1.52-54). Furthermore, the second half of the Evil Angel’s dialogue echoes lines that Faustus had said previously, “A sound magician is a mighty god./ Here Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity” (Doctor Faustus 1.62-63). The Evil Angel powerfully presents Faustus’ ambition to him and reinforces what Faustus already intends to do. In the same way that the Evil Angel refers to Jove rather than the Christian God, Faustus refers to “a mighty god” which assumes one god out of many. When the Evil angel says that Faust can: “Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,” this tempts Faustus with the sin of Adam and Lucifer (1.76). Faustus has echoed that sentiment throughout the play so this idea is not the Evil Angel’s. The dialogue between the angels is not the advice of spiritual beings as it would have been in a morality play, but it represents the choice that the free mortal Faustus has to make. He counsels himself on the one hand against taking his heresy further, but he is driven on the other hand to seek out greater power and mastery, and it is this side of his mind that wins out.

Faustus decides to replace theology with the study of the occult because he wants to achieve without God. Human pride and ambition lead him into the occult before Mephistophilis ever arrives. The illusion of Mephistophilis’ servility will enslave Faustus himself. Faustus summons Mephistophilis by name (Doctor Faustus 3. 22).

Since the Evil Angel has only repeated back to Faustus what he has already uttered in his monologue, Faustus, knowingly and imprudently, takes on a great evil himself. Since he makes the mistake of believing that he must suffer for all eternity under any circumstances, then this new sin makes no difference.

After Faustus summons Mephistophilis, he once again exhibits his own pride by asking the frightening and demonic Mephistophilis to change into the shape of a Franciscan Friar (Doctor Faustus 3.23). Faustus' sees his own power manifested in the fact that he is obeyed by the demon. The idea of a man instructing a satanic figure to take on a disguise, and especially one that represents the Church, differs from the conventional view of Satan as a trickster. The trickster Satan usually appears in disguise in order to gain access to a victim. For instance, in the *Faerie Queen* the evil sorcerer Archimago, a satanic figure in the story, assumes various shapes when he encounters the Redcross Knight. However, rather than portraying the demon as a shape shifter and master of lies, Marlowe alters this trope. The disguise that Mephistophilis takes on is another manifestation of Faustus' consent to be deceived. Faustus uses his free will to relinquish his power throughout the story and is ultimately defeated because of it. This is reminiscent of Faustus refusing to read the second half of the Romans verse. However, it allows Faustus to strive without feeling responsible for the damage he does to his soul.

Over the course of the story Faustus's pride and reluctance to accept responsibility develop into despair. From the moment Faustus draws his own blood to take the demonic oath his days are numbered. He reads the bargain to Mephistophilis:

First, that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance.

Secondly, that Mephistophilis shall be his servant and at his
command.

Thirdly, that Mephistophilis shall do for him, and bring him whatsoever.

Fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible.
Lastly, that he shall appear to the said John Faustus as at all times, in
what form or shape soever he please.

I, John Faustus of Wittenberg, doctor, by these presents, do give both
Body and soul to Lucifer, Prince of the East, and his minister Mephistophilis;
And furthermore grant unto them that, for four and twenty years
Being expired, the articles above-written inviolate, full power to fetch
Or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods,
Into their habitation wheresoever (Doctor Faustus 5.96-109).

Despite the binding tone of the contract it can still be broken by God because the play takes place in a world understood through the “fundamental Christian outlook which prevailed in the western world from the decline of Roman secularism to the disintegration of the dogmatic tradition” (Sachs 627). Furthermore, if God could not break the contract then Mephistophilis would have no reason to continue to try and corrupt Faustus.

However, the contract cannot mention God’s power because it is written by Mephistophilis and throughout the play Mephistophilis shows that he is incapable of attributing anything to God. This indicates that Faustus could still find salvation through the grace of God but he is hard hearted. That will later lead to the despair that will prevent him from reaching heaven.

As twenty-four years elapse Faustus rejects opportunities to repent and be saved. He has always been able to ask for God’s help and reclaim complete control. Ending his striving and acknowledging his human limitations will save his immortal soul. If it were not possible for him to be saved, then Mephistophilis would not be threatened whenever Faustus nears salvation. However, he does not recognize the signs that repentance and salvation are possible. His despair blinds him. Shortly after he makes his bargain with Mephistophilis he expresses the idea that “hell’s a fable” (Doctor Faustus 5.125). He takes the evidence of hell, Mephistophilis’ existence, and decides instead to

embrace ignorance. This unwillingness to accept the reality of his fate, and to come to terms with what he has agreed to, is another example of his imprudence. He has the power and freedom to acknowledge the truth, he is even urged to by Mephistophilis, but he decides to ignore reality by denying the existence of hell, and Mephistophilis responds by saying: “Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind,” coming close to warning Faustus (5.127). Faustus desperately clings to his denial: “Why? Thinks though then that Faustus shall be damned?” (5.128) Less than twenty lines earlier Faustus promised his soul to Satan and now he refuses to acknowledge that he will be damned. Faustus does not want to accept the cost of his striving.

Later, Faustus asks Mephistophilis to tell him of the heavens. Faustus does not ponder heaven and the theological facts pertinent to his fate. He uses the word heaven in the plural and wants to know about the astronomical reality of the sky. When he says “When I behold the heavens, then I repent,” he does not mean that he will repent when he beholds the biblical heaven (5.177). Instead he means that he will repent when he beholds “the heavens” as in the astronomical place. This in itself would not provide him evidence of his position in relation to God and Lucifer. His relationship to the heavens only tells him about where he is compared to the earth: it is willful imprudence. However, even if he did have evidence of the existence of heaven, it could do nothing for his faith. If a demon cannot convince him of hell’s reality, then nothing can convince him of heaven’s.

Furthermore, he cannot see heaven, but only the stars in the sky, and he does not make an attempt to pray and communicate with heaven in the same way he tries to understand the skies, or even in the way that he summoned Mephistophilis. Mephistophilis however understands that Faustus’ sin comes through his pride and

subsequent despair. When Faustus even comes close to repentance and salvation Mephistophilis reminds him of his desire to strive by elevating his status as a human and at the same time degrading heaven. “[Heaven] was made for man, therefore man is more excellent” (5.185). However, Mephistophilis does not realize just how highly Faustus estimates his own abilities. Faustus reasons that, as a man, he can achieve heaven: “If it were made for man, ‘twas made for me: / I will renounce this magic, and repent” (5.185-186).

Mephistophilis is threatened as Faustus begins to think of heaven as a possibility. This threat of possible repentance causes the Good and Evil Angels to reappear to Faustus. The Evil Angel reminds Faustus that according to the first condition of the deal he made “Faustus may be a spirit, in form and substance” and so he argues that Faustus is therefore not able to reach heaven (5.96). Faustus believes in the power of a human man to accomplish all things through striving. He sees Mephistophilis as an assistant, but he strives as a human. The Evil Angel cannot deny his great ability to strive so instead he denies Faustus’ humanity. Mephistophilis appeals to Faustus’ first sin of pride when Mephistophilis says that man is more excellent than heaven. The Evil Angel refers to the deeply rooted and fatal sin of despair when he says “Ay, but Faustus never shall repent” and in that brief scene keeps Faustus on the path to damnation, leading Faustus to say “My heart’s so hardened, I cannot repent!” (5.194-195).

Earlier Faustus had refused to read the second half Romans 6.23, “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our lord,” because he wanted to live in easy ignorance (5.194). After Mephistophilis refuses to acknowledge how the world was created, and by whom, Faustus becomes irritated and tells Mephistophilis to go to hell,

the hell that Faustus claims not to believe in. As usual, the Good and Evil Angels come to him in his time of crisis but Mephistophilis, who is bound to Faustus' command but not bound to obey the meaning behind the command, comes back from hell and brings Lucifer to assist him. Lucifer in turn, parades the seven deadly sins before Faustus in an effort to convince Faustus to continue his wicked life (5.240-340).

The suspense of *Doctor Faustus* results from Faustus being offered opportunities to repent, drawing closer to salvation, and then at the last moment rejecting it. After having chosen damnation twenty-four years before, Faustus pays for his despair. Despite the pleas of the Old Man near the end, Faustus is not saved. His death is not a murder by Lucifer and Mephistophilis. It is a suicide. Mephistophilis even gives Faustus a dagger as the latter sits talking to the Old Man who understands that the only hope for Faustus' salvation is repentance (12.42). Faustus finally sees something of the problem that he faces and yet is too near death to further delude himself: "I do repent and yet I do despair" (12.54). In his final monologue, it is clear that Faustus knows what will happen to him, and what could stop it. But his despair has lasted so long that his false feeling of powerlessness, and distrust in God, prevents him from attaining salvation:

O I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah my Christ-
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ?
Yet will I call on him- O spare me, Lucifer! (12.69-73)

Faust cannot decide whether to call upon God or Lucifer in his last moments. He goes back and forth several times because his despair overwhelms him.

After cursing his parents Faustus corrects himself: "No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer," and finally sees his own culpability (Epilogue. 104). Unfortunately for

him, it is too late and after a life of striving he is dragged into hell. The last line of the play underscores the cost of striving. Faustus is damned because he used his life “[t]o practice more than heavenly power permits” (Epilogue 8).

CHAPTER TWO

Mephistophilis in Marlowe

The German chapbook did not thoroughly develop the character of the demon in Faust (Parker 228). In Marlowe's source, the English translation of the Spies chapbook, the demon is one dimensional and unambiguously evil: "the Spies chapbook makes no bones about it that Faust 'desired to summon the Devil before him'" (Mason 122). The Spies chapbook and its English translation had a simple moral: one should not sell one's soul to the devil or one will be damned to hell. Marlowe complicates that moral and creates a different version of the demonic character than was depicted in the Faust chapbooks. To signify this he even changes the name from the German chapbook's Mephistopheles to Mephistophilis.

No one in the English theater had ever plumbed the depths of the demonic character before Marlowe. Morality plays downplayed the role of the devil, casting the villain as "Vice" or another named sin to represent the temptation of humanity (Cole 24). An actual character called Lucifer appeared in only nine morality plays and had long been absent from the theater when Marlowe decided to write *Faustus* (Cole 239).

The tendency under Elizabethan censorship was to avoid religious iconography, especially florid depictions of hell, since it was associated with Catholic excess. This suppression led to the popularity of secular dramas. Since Marlowe could not use props and set decoration to depict hell for his audience, he used his poetry. A figurative hell could escape the censors (Parker 239). Marlowe uses his famously powerful blank verse to transform his Mephistophilis into a suffering demon.

“Now Faustus, what would'st thou have me do?” are the first words with which Mephistophilis introduces himself to Faustus (Doctor Faustus 3.35). His next line asserts his servile status under Lucifer. Faustus asks Mephistophilis why he has come and he replies “I am a servant to great Lucifer...No more than he commands me must we perform” (3.40,42). As a demon unlike any other on the English stage, Mephistophilis presents an unfamiliar set of problems to the audience. Is Mephistophilis a servant of Lucifer, and thus thoroughly evil, or does he act out of his own volition? Throughout the play, the question about whether Mephistophilis was able to strive is a complex one: at times, he seems to be in complete subservience to Lucifer, and at others he seems to be struggling to save Faustus from his despair. Answering the question of the agency of Mephistophilis is necessary in order to determine the extent of his responsibility for Faustus' despair and what Mephistophilis himself strives for.

The question of Mephistophilis' striving is posed from his first appearance. The extent to which Mephistophilis follows Lucifer's striving, and the extent to which he acts of his own volition are also immediately brought up and determine to what extent Mephistophilis had striven for himself before his fall. When Mephistophilis speaks of what he is impelled do he uses the pronoun “we.” It is unclear if the other party is meant to be Faustus, Lucifer, or both of them. It could also refer to other servants of Lucifer but in this context Mephistophilis acts alone. Perhaps Mephistophilis does not act of his free will, and so did not strive and induce his own damnation. However, after Faustus asks if Lucifer sent Mephistophilis, the demon contradicts himself as he switches pronouns again saying, “I came now hither of my own accord” (3.44). This shifts the power from two lines before when Mephistophilis was forced to obey the commands of another. This

quote indicates independence. Faustus is dejected to hear that he was not the direct cause of Mephistophilis' appearance: "Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak" (3.44). But Mephistophilis' next line indicates the manner in which he arrives: "per accidens / For when we hear one rack the name of God... We fly in hope to get his glorious soul" (3.46-49). This further confuses the source of Mephistophilis' action and makes it seem that an unknown force, perhaps something born in Mephistophilis or Lucifer's powers, compels Mephistophilis to go to Faustus. Already Mephistophilis has made the nature of his striving unclear for Faustus and the audience, but his status as a demon could clarify how culpable Mephistophilis was for his own striving.

One of the first questions that Faustus asks Mephistophilis is about the nature of the demon itself: "Tell me, what is that Lucifer thy lord?" (3.62). Mephistophilis identifies Lucifer as "commander of all spirits" (3.63). He later describes himself as one of the "Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer / Conspired against our God with Lucifer / And are forever damned with Lucifer" (3.70-72). It is interesting here that Mephistophilis still identifies the Christian God as his own God, indicating that he and perhaps the other demons have lost their free will that they initially used to conspire against God in the fall with Lucifer, and that they realize the folly of their mistakes. Mephistophilis at one point in time had free will, and the ability to strive. However, he has imprudently misused that free will and aligned himself with Lucifer's great striving. As a result Mephistophilis is damned. Though he is a servant of Lucifer, Mephistophilis feels remorse for having followed Lucifer as he shows when he identifies himself as an "unhappy sprit" and then goes on to detail his suffering in hell (3.70, 3.74). Mephistophilis identifies Lucifer as the overreacher that Mephistophilis followed into

damnation. This foreshadows Faustus' later decision and compares the human need to strive to the blasphemous acts of Lucifer. These two battling identities within Mephistophilis have long puzzled audiences.

By following Lucifer, the tragic overreacher, Mephistophilis shares Faustus' weakness. This weakness has led Mephistophilis to despair just as Faustus follows suit (Deats). Marlowe reveals the sin of Mephistophilis that binds him with Faustus when he describes Lucifer as: "O, by aspiring pride and insolence/ For which God threw him from the face of heaven" (3.67). Because Mephistophilis has indulged in his own striving, he is now an associate of Faustus and can aid in Faustus' own striving. At the same time, Mephistophilis illuminates the dangers of Faustus' ambition through his own example of striving that led to ruin.

Victorians called Mephistophilis the "melancholy demon" because even Faustus taunts him for lamenting his fate (McAlindon 38). Mephistophilis says:

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

This is bad salesmanship. If Mephistophilis sincerely means to bring Faustus into Lucifer's grip, then revealing how much he suffers by not being able to be with God is a very bad way to go about it. This defining passage further suggests a split in Mephistophilis' most vital being. He has followed his ambition and now suffers in despair. Unlike Faustus' situation, repentance is not an option for Mephistophilis. There is no escape from his eternal punishment, and if salvation is a possibility he is not aware of it. Faustus is following the path of Mephistophilis and Mephistophilis wants Faustus

to be aware of Faustus' future. Mephistophilis is disturbed even at the mention of hell and tries to change the subject. It seems that to blaspheme Lucifer's domain is forbidden, but his depictions of an eternity in hell foretell the possible fate of the free and thus still salvageable Faustus.

For Mephistophilis, every moment is spent in the agony of hellfire. After Faust asks him about the location of hell, Mephistophilis says:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
In one self-place; but where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there must we ever be:
And, to be short, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that are not heaven (5.120-125).

Mephistophilis is a complex character who suffers as result of his actions. He even goes so far as to show compassion, and cautions Faustus about the pain he will endure in hell by describing his own state of constant torture. In Mephistophilis, Marlowe introduced a new variety of demon: "Never in English drama before Marlowe had a devil acted in such a way, nor is there the slightest hint of anything like this in Marlowe's source" (Cole 205).

Mephistophilis strives to fulfill Lucifer's desires. He explains that he wants Faustus' soul for Lucifer in order to "[e]nlarge his kingdom" (Doctor Faustus 5.40). As a subject of Satan's he seeks to expand the borders of his lordship's domain.

Mephistophilis' assigned mission is one of colonization using the soul of Faustus, just as the Elizabethans were colonizing the known world. His success would win Lucifer a great prize and a great mind, but he still shows an interest in ensuring that Faustus understands the consequences of striving (Deats).

Faustus tries to assume power beyond what is rightfully his. Reaching beyond his natural bounds violated the natural order that many Elizabethans used to understand the universe. As a former angel, Mephistophilis had a great deal of power over the subordinate orders of life. However, he was limited by God and by challenging God he oversteps his limits. Faustus strives initially to subvert the natural limits of human knowledge and achievement in his academic studies. He wants to use his medical prowess to defeat death, but he cannot. Faustus then challenges the basis of the universe and the most fundamental element of natural order by challenging God's power just as Mephistophilis has. That is significant because the terms of the oath would endow Faustus with powers similar to those of the demons that he would one day live among: "Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance" (5.96). He was put at the same level as Mephistophilis and would be damned in the same way for the same sin. Mephistophilis lives the life that Faust will live if he does not repent.

Mephistophilis seems almost reluctant to claim Faustus' soul as he describes the pain and torment of damnation. He also seems interested in proving the reality of hell in order to be sure that Faustus is responsible for his own damnation. The complex mental processes that obscure the actions of Mephistophilis are never fully or clearly revealed to the audience. Mephistophilis is unable to tell Faustus who made the world because the truth would indicate the greatness of God (5.241).

Mephistophilis indicates indirectly that Faustus has hope and foretells the future of despair in his actions when he refuses to mention God or God's works. He does not answer the questions that Faustus poses about religion. By failing to describe the creator of the earth, Mephistophilis points indirectly to the power of God. However,

Mephistophilis could be earnestly struggling to damn Faustus and sees danger in answering questions that pertain to God. Mephistophilis could also be bound to answer Faustus and yet as a demon cannot credit God with anything. Any of these possibilities indicates that Mephistophilis treats Faustus with honesty that would belie the common name for Satan as the “spreader of lies.” If Mephistophilis does not lie to Faustus, then Faustus becomes responsible for his despair. Mephistophilis cannot use deception to push Faustus to damnation. Faustus is responsible for his own fate and his damnation was a result of folly that came from his ambition and striving.

When Mephistophilis cannot answer Faustus’ question about the origins of the Earth, Faustus tells him to go to hell and begins to contemplate salvation again: “Ay, go accurséd spirit, to ugly hell, / Tis thou hast damned distresséd Faustus’ soul: / Is’t not too later?” (5.245-247). As Faust nears the brink of salvation and rejects Mephistophilis, Mephistophilis is under great duress to choose a course of action. He decides to take Faustus’ command literally. The oath binds Mephistophilis to obey the commands of Faustus not necessarily Faustus’ intent. Mephistophilis is torn and decides to follow the literal order and go into hell to call upon his lord, Lucifer. Faustus’ question about whether God created the world leads to Mephistophilis summoning Lucifer. Faustus is in danger of being saved and realizing God’s power to help him.

When Faustus is in real danger of salvation Mephistophilis does not directly intervene and that sheds light on the relationship between Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Instead he calls upon Lucifer to work with Faustus and presents the seven deadly sins to Faustus. Lucifer cannot forcibly compel Faustus to comply but he can more powerfully

tempt Faustus than Mephistophilis can because his powers are greater. Mephistophilis summons Lucifer to tempt Faustus and Faustus falls back into Mephistophilis' control.

It is possible that over the course of his twenty-four years of servitude even the patience of Mephistophilis wears thin. The sympathy that Mephistophilis has shown begins to wear off. Mephistophilis also begins to grow irritated at Faustus' despair. Initially Faustus saw Mephistophilis as "[f]ull of obedience and humility" (McAlindon 39). Those positive attributes are not joined by the everlasting patience of divine grace. Faustus nears hope and then reaches the greatest despair just before the end of the play.

Faustus draws closest to his salvation with his conversation with the Old Man. He acknowledges the truth of the Elder's words and the truth of his possible salvation: "I do repent and yet I do despair:" (12.54). This presents the greatest danger of failure that Mephistophilis has yet faced. Only after this moment of greatest clarity for Faustus does Mephistophilis threaten Faustus by saying, "Thou traitor... Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy flesh." (12.57-59). Mephistophilis had never before threatened Faustus with anything besides the consequences of his own choices. However, this phrase itself could be a reflection of Faustus' own fear as voiced by the Evil Angel earlier in the play as he said, "If thou repent, devils shall tear thee in pieces" (5.254). Just as Mephistophilis manifested Faustus' darkest desires he can show Faustus his greatest fears and yet deliver on neither of them. Though he may now attempt to damn Faustus in earnest, as he seems to have been doing since he called upon Lucifer, he has not despaired of Faustus' salvation as he had despaired of his own. If he needs to threaten Faustus then redemption is still possible for him.

Salvation is always a clear possibility for Faustus. The Old Man is the great nemesis of Mephistophilis and offers Faustus his best chance to achieve salvation. Mephistophilis is a servant of Lucifer bound to act on Lucifer's behalf in the conquest of souls. Mephistophilis encourages Faustus' unrepentant striving but knows the consequences of that striving. Like physical manifestations of the Good and Evil Angels, both Mephistophilis and the Old Man know the power and joys of God. Unlike Mephistophilis, the Old Man does not struggle to usurp the power of God but allows the grace of God to be made clear through his actions. He represents an unfailing loyalty to God. That stands in contrast to the wavering empathy and lingering agony that plagues Mephistophilis.

Mephistophilis removes the physical limitations from the sin. Through Mephistophilis Faustus' striving is unleashed. Through that freedom Faustus accomplishes nothing great, gains no greater understanding and is only able to taunt the Pope and serve the Emperor rather than take their places. Though Mephistophilis removes the limitations on Faustus, he also makes an effort to be sure that Faustus always knows that his power is earthly and cannot extend into things related to God. Giving Faustus greater abilities serves the purpose of giving Icarus bigger wings that would only ensure a harder fall into hell. In this play striving is futility.

Even the half-hearted efforts of Mephistophilis to present Faustus with the possibility of salvation are in vain. Marlowe took some of these ideas from the morality play tradition but revitalized them through the revolutionary character of Mephistophilis. In an almost human struggle Mephistophilis illustrates the consequences of striving and what will happen if Faustus continues following his path. All striving that is not directly

towards God in the way that the Old Man's striving was, amounts to nothing more than the comedic struggles of Robin, Rafe, and the Clown. Great striving renders Faustus and Mephistophilis foolish and the only consequence of that striving is utter despair and the surest path to damnation. Like Mephistophilis before him, Faustus attempts to usurp some of God's power. Though Mephistophilis frees Faustus to be able to sin and strive without physical human limitations, Faustus makes his own choices and eventually despairs. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* is the tragic history of Mephistophilis re-experienced by the pinnacle of modern humanity.

CHAPTER THREE

Faust in Goethe

In Marlowe, striving leads to despair and damnation. Faustus, as a human, is not worthy of the knowledge and power that he craves, because human beings cannot achieve without God. In Goethe's *Faust*, striving leads away from the despair of stagnation and is even mandated by God. In the two hundred years separating Marlowe and Goethe, Faust climbs from hell to heaven.

The two plays have similar scenes that introduce the two Faust characters. Each one carries on a monologue in his chamber listing his failed pursuits and ambitions. Marlowe's Faustus ends the play torn apart by demons and dragged into the pit of hell. However, in Goethe's rendition, the Eternal Feminine guides Faust into heaven. Faust's striving intensifies throughout the play until he reaches perfection on his path to paradise (Gillies 218). The years separating Goethe's and Marlowe's Faust stories took Europe through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, two eras that glorified human striving. It seems then that the journey of Faust followed the journey of Western thought.

Marlowe's impulse away from human ambition and striving would not have agreed with Goethe's post-Enlightenment worldview. The early German Enlightenment philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz introduced a powerful optimism into philosophical thought. He saw this as the "best of all possible worlds" and posited that the world was created by a benevolent God (Robertson 212). Immanuel Kant followed him and defined the Enlightenment in his essay "What is the Enlightenment," in which he exhorted individuals to think for themselves. Kant's description of the Enlightenment

stresses self-motivation: „Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit“ (Enlightenment is the emergence of humanity from its selfimposed tutelage) (Kant). He helped shape the world view that called for independent knowledge revealed through human effort. He saw rational thought as leading toward truth and moral rectitude. Though Faust falls far short of Kant’s moral standards, his striving toward greater experience and understanding classifies him as a figure influenced by Kant’s view of the Enlightenment. Kant and Leibnitz shared the view that the world was perfectible through human efforts. In this context, striving is not a sin but the only path toward perfection.

It is important to note that the pre-Goethe Faust stories that punished striving diminished in popularity following the Enlightenment. In 1683 Johann Georg Neumann wrote in his *Disquisitio Historica prior de Fausto Praestigatore* that he could not see why Faust was “worth making so much fuss about” (Mason 6). Why should a frustrated scholar in his study lament his limitations? Although the Faust story remained a staple of German entertainment, turning up in puppet shows for example, it fell out of favor with critics, who regarded it as an archaic symbol of quaint and fantastical medieval superstitions. Rational critics did not agree with the relationship between human striving and the influence of creatures of the underworld. This association was too critical of humanity’s efforts. The world was moving into agreement with Faust as he strove for more. He could no longer be damned.

The influential German literary critic Johann Christoph Gottsched died when Goethe was seventeen years old. Gottsched championed a strictly rationalist movement in German literature that rigidly adhered to the neoclassical example of the French

Golden Age dramas of Corneille and Racine. He tried to impose rationality on literature and wanted to remove literature's supernatural elements. In this he was extremely influential, and authors across Germany followed his recommendations on language and methods of storytelling (Atkins 2). Gottsched decried Faust as a fairy tale and wrote that it only appealed to the mob (Mason 6). The Faust story had fallen so far in esteem that it was relegated to children's puppet theaters, and this is how Goethe first came into contact with the story.

However, the Faust story had some supporters among the newer generation of German authors. The dramatist and essayist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing disagreed with Gottsched's rationalizing of German literature and his rejection of the Faust story. Indeed, in response to an influential Leipzig literary journal that claimed that no one could deny the great improvement that Gottsched had produced in German theater, Lessing confidently claimed that he must be that very "no one" (Lessing 24).

In this response, *Letter Concerning the newest Literature*, 17, Lessing decried the too realistic and constrained tendency of modern German literature under the influence of Gottsched. (Lessing 25). He argued that German literature should crawl out of the shadow of French literature and look to the English model instead. In contrast to Gottsched's love of French Golden Age drama, he praised Shakespeare who was Marlowe's contemporary. At the end of the letter Lessing suggests that the English and German traditions should come together and that Germans should produce a new Faust story. Lessing even wrote a humorous fragment of the Faust story in 1759, when Goethe was only ten years old, with the hope that a great German poet would come along and take up the work. The fragment, *Faust and the Seven Ghosts*, shows Faust having a

conversation with seven demons he has summoned to do his bidding. He tries to determine which of them is the fastest and they all give him riddle-like answers describing their speed. The final demon says that he is as quick as the passage from good to evil. Faust determines that that last demon is the swiftest. This fragment and Lessing's letter opened up the idea of rediscovering the Faust story after Enlightenment critics had belittled its mystical elements. Lessing also helped draw attention to the role of English theater by praising Shakespeare's work (Lessing 26). Goethe would later take the Faust story from its place in the repertoire of English drama and return it to its home country.

Johann Gottfried Herder was an influential literary critic and theorist in the 18th century. He helped initiate the *Sturm und Drang* movement and greatly influenced the young Goethe when he met him in Strassburg in 1770 (Robertson 276). Herder described the young Goethe as a man with "much feeling and at times too much feeling" (Piper 15). He educated Goethe on the importance of Shakespeare and inspired the poet's interest in the tradition of English literature and the Bible (Atkins 110). Herder shared the optimism of Leibnitz and argued that every culture has a fertile literary history, not just France and Greece: "Herder proclaimed that great literature cannot be imitative, but must reflect the particular psychology of the milieu in which it is produced" (Atkins 110). German literature could also draw upon its own literary models, he said, and could turn something from its past into a great modern work of art. Thinkers like Herder delved into the possibilities of humanity's potential and this sheds light on the optimism that distinguishes Goethe's Faust story from its predecessors. Since humanity has great

potential, then Faust has great potential, and as long as he strives toward fulfilling it, he is doing God's will.

Goethe's life reflected the striving that Faust exemplified. Goethe popularized the *Sturm und Drang* movement in 1771 when he wrote his drama *Götz von Berlichingen*. He wrote it less than a year after he began to learn from Herder, the theoretical father behind the movement. The *Sturm und Drang* tradition also informed his first international best seller, *Sorrows of Young Werther*, published in 1774. After that work Goethe moved on. Instead of finding contentment with his international best seller he continued to develop his literary style after he moved to Weimar. *Faust*, the work that he would continue working on throughout the rest of his life, found its first form in "Urfaust" written between 1772 and 1775 and thus squarely within Goethe's youthful *Sturm und Drang* period (Norton 506). This was the first instance of the Gretchen figure in any telling of the Faust story. It does not touch on Faust's salvation or damnation, and does not emphasize striving in the same way that his more developed *Faust* did. Gretchen dies at the end of the "Urfaust" but her salvation is not guaranteed.

After moving to Weimar at the request of Duke Karl August in 1775, Goethe filled many administrative positions in the small court (Piper 34). A friendship with Charlotte von Stein, seven years older than Goethe and married to a Weimar Baron, changed his life, as she introduced the importance of *Mäßigung*, or moderation, to the young poet. His developing classical interests led him to travel to Italy where he fell in love with classical architecture and poetic form. On his return to Germany he introduced a new classicism into German literature, defined by restrained characters that seek the good rather than fulfillment of personal desires.

Under the influence of Goethe and his friend and collaborator, Friedrich Schiller, the court of Weimar became a haven for artists and new literary development. The two poets defined themselves by their constant striving toward improvement, and it was Schiller that encouraged Goethe to take up his work on Faust again.

Faust, part II ends with Faust completing a public works project. This Faust character therefore fulfills the classical ideal by working for the good of others and moderating his personal desires. It was published fifty-seven years after the *Urfaust* was written since Goethe would stop work on the project for years at a time. The *Urfaust* itself was not published until 1886. After working on a fragment in 1790, Goethe did not resume work in earnest until 1797 at the urging of Schiller. *Faust, Part I* was published in 1806, a year after the death of his friend. However, the larger story would not see its end for thirty-five years. Goethe completed the much more restrained and structurally diffuse *Faust, Part II* in 1832 the year before he died, and it was published after his death. In the end Faust's young lover from *Part I*, Gretchen, intercedes on Faust's behalf after his soul has perfected itself through his striving.

The dual nature of Faust is vital to the understanding of his character. In the character's first scene he describes to his assistant Wagner how he and his father gave false hope of a cure to plague victims, and how ashamed he is of that failure: now he rejects God and religion. In Van der Laan's essay on Faust's divided self, he argues that Faust cannot act morally due to the conflicted nature of his soul (Van der Laan 455).

Faust himself cries out that

Two souls, alas, are dwelling in my breast,
And either would be severed from its brother,
The one holds fast with joyous earthy lust
Onto the world of man with organs clinging

The other soars impassioned from the dust
To realms of lofty forebears winging (Faust Part I 2.1112-1117).

His conflicted dual nature drives his character onward. This nature is both natural and divine, human and more. The constant internal conflict makes Faust's actions morally ambiguous: "[b]ecause of his inner division, his loss of unity and integrity, Faust becomes morally inert", but it drives him to strive (Van der Laan 457).

Goethe even adds God as a character to articulate the importance of striving. The "Prologue in Heaven" does not appear in Marlowe's work. However, the German puppet plays that Goethe witnessed in his youth, and that were indirectly influenced by the popularity of Marlowe's drama, featured a parallel scene, a Prologue in Hell, which was a comedic backdrop fixated on Faust's eventual damnation (Mason 4). Goethe instead moved his prologue to heaven and modeled it on the book of Job.

Goethe's "Prologue in Heaven" elevates the themes in the work to universal significance (Gillies 11). Before we ever meet the Faust character, it is clear that he is not just a man, but a symbol for the best of humanity. Modeled on the book of Job, the prologue has Mephistopheles and God discussing the fate of a human being. Mephistopheles makes a bargain with God that he can lead Faust astray and take his soul. God has nothing against Mephistopheles' attempts: after all, as God says, "man errs the while he strives" (Faust, Part I Prologue 317). It is clear that, for God, this striving is what makes a man human and gives him the possibility of redemption: "Soon I shall guile him so his spirit clears" (309). The man's actions determine how his soul will fare eternally, but the prologue allows us to enter the story with an optimism that was lacking in Marlowe's account.

Both Goethe's story and its biblical model feature an everyman character meant to represent humanity. In the Bible this role is taken by Job, a man respected by God for his devout nature. In *Faust* this everyman role falls to Faust, a man respected by God for his striving, even as God recognizes his failings. In both the Bible and *Faust I* the Lord first mentions the everyman character to the demon. To further indicate Faust's favored status under God, God refers to him as "Knecht" meaning servant, the same descriptor that God applies to Job in Luther's 1545 translation of the Bible (Job 1:8).

However, the exchange between God and the demon plays out differently in *Faust* than it does in the Bible. In *Faust* the Lord asks if Mephistopheles knows Faust, then Mephistopheles describes Faust as "the Doctor" before the Lord corrects him by saying "My servant!" (Faust I 298-299). The Lord does not see Faust in terms of his human occupation but in relationship to the divine. Though Mephistopheles means to degrade Faust and distance Faust from God in his description of Faust as a doctor, Mephistopheles also implies that Faust is a man seeking high ideals with all of his being (Davidson 8).

Both of these descriptors illustrate Faust's conflicted nature. The Lord sees Faust as a loyal servant. This makes Mephistopheles uncomfortable and he mocks Faust for his striving. Thus, very early in the play, Goethe has established the ultimate good and ultimate evil. The Lord then says that he trusts that Faust will develop through his striving and come through his confusion to become a productive member of society. Mephistopheles and the Lord strike a deal. The Lord bets that Faust will strive for as long as he has life. Faust will err but he must continue striving.

The events of the “Prologue in Heaven” establish striving as the primary good that can come through human effort, and the primary virtue that God believes that Faust possesses. However, in his conversation with Mephistopheles the Lord says that Faust will soon prefer uninterrupted rest. This hints at the despair that Faust will experience in the first scene and will prove to be the first great challenge faced by Faust.

In fact, Faust nears despair twice before the arrival of Mephistopheles. The small dark study that Faust is in as he begins to study magic starkly contrasts with the heavenly light of the prologue (Gillies 20). He has lived in academia for a decade, but he doubts whether he has accomplished anything worthwhile. After years of striving, he does not feel that he knows any more than he did initially or that he has done any real and tangible good for humanity. The occult could provide what Faust is looking for, and he decides to try magic (Faust I 376). This is where the roots of Faust’s strivings make themselves clear. He does not want to devote himself to academic learning; otherwise he would not have dabbled in magic in the hope of self-fulfillment (Gillies 21). Relinquishing scholarship proves his devotion to the act of striving. After dabbling in various subjects of medieval learning and achieving a doctorate, Faust has tried to use academics to answer life’s questions, but it has failed him. Then, after despairing of his studies, he decides to move on. If he had remained devoted to an activity that failed him he would have changed his loyalty from the pursuit of striving itself to the pursuit of academics and thus given up his chance to continue moving forward in his development. This mirrors Goethe’s transition as he moved between literary genres and styles and took up various scientific pursuits.

Faust escapes into nature by summoning the Earth Spirit to calm his confused heart (Davidson 11). The Earth Spirit is an original addition to Faust story and appears in the *Urfaust*, so this confrontation between Faust and the world had long held significance for Goethe. When Faust claims to be its equal, the Earth Spirit rejects him and belittles humanity. However, Faust continues striving.

Faust's student, Wagner, comes and reminds Faust of how empty the pursuit of rational learning is if it is devoid of meaning. Then he leaves and Faust is left alone. Wagner with his dry and circumscribed goals, could represent Gottsched, a man diametrically opposed to Goethe's ideas. An anecdote tells that when the young Goethe went to visit Gottsched, the older writer was wearing his dressing gown, and Wagner does the same when he meets with Faust (Gillies 25). Wagner seeks to know the world, but does not ask himself why he is seeking this. He does not question his methods, but represents a human will that is as different from Faust as Goethe was from Gottsched (Gillies 25). Wagner stagnates happily while Faust grows restless (Faust I 411).

Faust seems to have saved himself from despair by summoning the Earth Spirit, but the Earth Spirit devalues him. Wagner's shallow, hopeful mind distracts Faust from his despair, but only temporarily. Faust needs a master to help him on his journey. At this point in *Doctor Faustus* Marlowe depicts Faustus as summoning Mephistophilis. However, Goethe does not. Faust groans under his load (682). He fulfills the Lord's prediction and tires of his struggle. Faust contemplates suicide by poison, but it is not the act of an exhausted man, but the act of a man with no other options (Gillies 30). His dual nature can no longer bear the inaction of his academic life. The internal conflict that should drive him forward had become too much for Faust to handle: the conflict has

driven him into bitter inactivity. However, the very fact that his soul has two warring aspects saves him from his earthly despair and allows him to continue striving. Easter hymns interrupt his solitary contemplation and draw him back into society. The Easter hymns signify a rebirth for the despairing Faust and as his lips near the poison bowl he hears the words “Christ is risen” sung by a choir of angels (747).

Faust has already given up his study of theology but at this point he picks up and opens his Bible. His Bible has not been translated into German, as befits a play set before the Reformation, but the untranslated Bible could also be seen as reinforcing the fact that the play occurs in a pre-Enlightenment world. Faust’s questioning is therefore out of place in his society. He reads the book of John and actively takes control of the Bible as he translates the opening lines into “In the beginning was the deed” (1237). It seems as though Faust is attempting to wrest power away from God by using his active translation to weaken the Lord’s words, but it is another symptom of Faust’s confused striving that God treasures. Unlike in Marlowe, even this outrageous example of striving is condoned by God. Faust strives against the complicated universe of worldly knowledge and limited understanding of God. He struggles to quantify the world before him by himself. Goethe’s Faust does not in fact summon Mephistopheles as Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus did. Instead, Mephistopheles follows Faust home in the form of a poodle. Though he does not know it, Faust is already in the presence of Mephistopheles as he opens the Bible, but Mephistopheles cannot leave because he is trapped by the open pentagram on the floor. As the play continues, Mephistopheles means to bring Faust contentment in order to put an end to his striving, but he actually expands the sphere of Faust’s experience and opens up a new series of challenges for Faust to struggle against.

God had set Faust apart through his struggles against ignorance. Mephistopheles takes him from the small world into the large, and as Faust's powers and abilities expand, so do the challenges that he must face. However, the different situations that he encounters are never a match for his passion for striving.

With the help of Mephistopheles Faust can strive in new and greater ways. He now seeks entertainment and love. On Walpurgis Night Faust becomes lost in the underworld of witchcraft and magical spells. This forces Faust to look for some way to ground himself again. Faust's academic study had aged him beyond his years, but the witch returns his youth to him. Rather than providing him with contentment, his new-found youth gives him more opportunities to expand his experience to something beyond that which he had been able to attain before. Rather than taking his youth as a wish granted, and another step towards contentment, Faust uses his youth as a tool to strive with. Giving him what he wanted has altered, but not ended, his striving. This is partly because his goal is in the struggle itself rather than the attainment of a material good. Mephistopheles cannot understand this. Everything Faust attains becomes another step on the path that has no end, and it frustrates Mephistopheles. Faust's youth gives him years of further striving and allows him to approach Gretchen.

Gretchen represents the "gute Seele," an utterly pure character archetype from the classical aesthetic theories of Goethe and Schiller. When Faust looks into the mirror and sees the image of Gretchen, he does not see his own mortal perfection in the way that a non-magical mirror would present it. Instead the mirror holds a new challenge. Once again he is presented with his opposite and something new to strive against. Faust's entire career works as a part of a binary system. He needs contrast in order to face

something worthy of his struggle. He had felt two conflicted souls inside of him, and now that his abilities are greater his twisted soul meets a near perfect soul.

Faust strives with the Enlightenment spirit. He nears despair but finds new sources of hope or conflict that propel him onward. However, Mephistopheles, the creature that negates, ironically helps Faust strive for greater things. Faust is able to reach farther, and in Marlowe's worldview Faust would have fallen all the further because of his greater striving. In Goethe's play, Faust does not extend beyond the limits of the human being, but stretches those boundaries and reexamines what the human is capable of. Man gains power through Goethe's Faust, and the German folk tradition is brought into the Classical Era.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mephistopheles in Goethe

Faust embodies striving, the most basic trait of humanity and the divine spark embodied in man. Mephistopheles tries to cast a shadow over that spark. He is the true opposition to both man and God. He exists to suppress striving, creation, and progress: “I am the spirit which eternally denies” (Faust I 338). However, Mephistopheles’ destructive force works against his own designs and prevents him from achieving his stated purpose. He is meant to work against striving and the best part of humanity, but he provides something for God and man to strive against. Even the form of Mephistopheles’ activity runs counter to Faust’s. Mephistopheles counteracts Faust through the use of words rather than action while Faust favors action over words.

As we have seen, the idea of striving changed drastically from the time of Marlowe to the time of Goethe. The character of Mephistopheles reflects that change. Marlowe lived in a world of religious upheaval, where church structure defined the political landscape. The Church of England was still new and Marlowe’s nation had gone from state-endorsed Catholicism to Protestantism under Henry VIII and Edward VI, back to Catholicism with Mary I, and then back to the Church of England with Elizabeth I. During this time a deviation from the accepted religious orthodoxy could endanger a person’s life. Marlowe himself died while he was under investigation for atheism. Regardless of Marlowe’s personal creed, his play was written in a very religious context and his Mephistophilis was firmly situated in that world.

Mephistophilis is subject to Lucifer and worked to perform his duties well. Mephistophilis and Faustus both use black magic that Marlowe depicts as evil. The audience is left with little ability to interpret the magical manifestation of Mephistophilis' power as anything but a destructive and demonic force.

Goethe's Mephistopheles was not situated in a firmly structured demonic hierarchy. In fact, the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel was among many who saw Goethe's Mephistopheles as a philosophical demon rather than a strictly religious one (Wagner 148). Goethe even expressed disdain for the traditional image of demons. He criticized Martin Luther for a world view that was "always seeing devils, peoples the entire visible world with devils and personified it as the devil" (Mason 2). Goethe distanced Mephistopheles from traditional religious characters. He substituted the more mysterious and perhaps more acceptable cabbalistic practices in the sign of the Macrocosm for the purely satanic black magic of Marlowe (Mason 13). This freed Mephistopheles from weighty religious associations and allowed Goethe more creative freedom as a poet. He could then write moral ambiguity into his Mephistopheles.

As we have seen, the Enlightenment changed popular opinions about the Faust story. Many parts of the Faust story from the original chapbook were, by the time of Goethe, thought to be superstitious absurdities. The character of Mephistopheles in the chapbook drew the most criticism (Mason 6). Goethe did not have access to the original German chapbooks or to Marlowe's drama when he began his *Faust*. Those first chapbooks were lost and were only rediscovered years after Goethe had died (Mason 5). The only academic source material from the German Faust tradition that Goethe could have read was a Nikolaus Pfitzer chapbook called "Das ärgerliche Leben und

schreckliche Ende deß Ertz-Schwartzkünstlers Johannis Fausti¹” (Mason 5). Pfitzer’s work was a revision of Georg Widmann’s expansion of the original Faustbuch by Spies. Goethe checked it out from the Ducal Library in 1801, after he had written *Faust I* (Mason 6). Since Goethe drew from limited material he could bring a fresh perspective to Mephistopheles.

The sometimes diffuse structure of *Faust* and the ease with which the characters move through the smaller world of medieval Germany and, in *Faust II*, the larger world of classical Greece, supports the idea that mystical fantasy dominates *Faust* rather than a rigidly structured cosmology or demonology (Mason 173). While there are mentions of Lucifer in Goethe’s *Faust*, the relationship between Mephistopheles and the traditional “Lucifer” figure is not clear. Many scholars have theorized about the nature of that relationship. F.J. Schneider and Hans Albert Maier suggest that Goethe originally intended to have Faust summon Lucifer. Lucifer would then call upon Mephistopheles to work with Faust. They claim that Goethe later changed his mind and decided to use the *Erdgeist* to take Lucifer’s place (Mason 167). The use of the *Erdgeist* would give Goethe much more license to shape the character, and it would remove the repulsion that the name Satan or Lucifer brings with it (Mason 168).

Some argue that the character of the *Erdgeist* may have had more poetic merit than Lucifer, and some see the *Erdgeist* as better fitting into the cabalistic context (Mason 170-171). There are many theories about the connection of the *Erdgeist* to Mephistopheles and to the work as a whole, but most agree that there the connection is not arbitrary.

¹ The Contemptible Life and Awful End of the Dark Magician Johannis Fausti

Mephistopheles' relationship to God is much more clearly defined than his relationship to a classical Lucifer or Satan. In his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe suggests that Lucifer's rebellion created the world. The constant tension that Lucifer provides against God's creative impulse sustains life (Tantillo 461). Mankind is defined by its creative impulse so the work of Lucifer against God mirrors the work of Mephistopheles against Faust. Mephistopheles battles for Faust's soul but unlike Goethe's concept of Lucifer, he does nothing about the hopes and ambitions of the rest of the world. However, Mephistopheles does seem to relate to mankind more directly than God or the three angels of the prologue relate to mankind. The angels sing only of heavenly things, not of earthly matters.

Faust's "Prologue in Heaven" diverges from the story's biblical source. The book of Job depicts the fallen angel promising to make Job's life more difficult (Davidson 6). In the "Prologue in Heaven" Mephistopheles says that his pity for humanity "makes me want to plague them less" (Faust I 298). This line provokes the Lord to ask Mephistopheles if he knows Faust. It expresses some sort of inclination to help humanity and thus sets the plot in motion and begins to define Mephistopheles' role in the story.

Mephistopheles wants to corrupt humanity by giving men access to physical pleasures. God and the angels are not as aware of humanity and its trials as Mephistopheles is, and Mephistopheles genuinely intends to alleviate mankind's suffering. Mephistopheles arrives and begins talking of humans: "On suns and worlds I can shed little light, / I see but humans, and their piteous plight" and as he stands in the midst of God and angels he manages to steal the scene (279-280). Mephistopheles will

only win Faust's soul when Faust becomes content. Suffering would only prolong striving and give Faust more to strive for. Several lines later Mephistopheles says that Faust "finds no haven / of solace for his deeply troubled breast" and it is implied that Mephistopheles wishes to correct that (306-307). Rather than depriving Faust of his reasons to be thankful in the way that Satan did in the book of Job, Mephistopheles aims to prevent Faust from becoming godlike in his ceaseless striving and to that end, ironically, Mephistopheles has to make Faust happy.

God knows that Mephistopheles will seek to undo Faust's striving, and yet he likes Mephistopheles. Though Goethe might not have based his work on the ideas of his contemporary Hegel, Hegel can help shed light on how God works with Mephistopheles. Hegel posits that new creation, or synthesis, comes from the conflict between a thesis and its antithesis. This idea plays out in Faust. God specifically tells Mephistopheles:

I never did abominate your kind.
Of all the spirits of negation
The rogue has been least onerous to my mind
Man all too easily grows lax and mellow,
He soon elects repose at any price; (337-341)

Mephistopheles tries to negate Faust's activity. Thus Goethe's Faust story, and the character of Faust himself, is driven and defined by the interaction of polarities (Tantillo 460). Mephistopheles must work against striving. Ironically, that work against striving ensures that striving can occur. To relate this to the ideas of Hegel, Faust's striving becomes the thesis. Mephistopheles is the antithesis that struggles against Faust's striving. This allows Faust to strive anew and that new striving is like Hegel's synthesis. God believes that Faust needs to be pushed away from the striving inherent to his nature in order to realize striving's value and continue struggling. Faust needs something to

struggle against, and Mephistopheles provides that. This complements Faust's divided soul well and further spurs him toward greater development. Mephistopheles unwittingly works to encourage rather than prevent Faust striving. Mephistopheles wants to negate striving and life, but in the end he is the instrument through which God promotes striving and life in Faust.

But if Faust is a striver, indeed so much so that God uses him as an example, then where did Faust's dissatisfaction in the first scene of the play come from? If we follow the logic of Mephistopheles, it may have been produced by years of demonic influence. There is no way to know how many years could separate the events in the prologue in heaven from Faust's first lines, and Mephistopheles may have been at work in Faust's life the whole time. Mephistopheles may have driven Faust to despair. Later in the play Mephistopheles converses with a young scholar. He attempts to convince the scholar of the futility of learning, and tries to push the scholar towards the same mindset with which Faust began the play. Mephistopheles means to give Faust distracting pleasures, but it is reasonable to think that, in order to make room for himself and his work in Faust's life, he must first bring Faust to the point of despair. Then Mephistopheles can try to rebuild Faust in Mephistopheles' own image. Only later can the reader encounter Mephistopheles and be certain that he is now operating in Faust's life.

In Marlowe's story, Mephistophilis was summoned by Doctor Faustus specifically and first appears as a demon in all its theatrical horror. Goethe's Mephistopheles does not arrive in a cloud of fire and brimstone. He arrives as a dog, but not a hellhound or wolf meant to terrify the reader. The devil comes in the form of a poodle and follows Faust home from a festival. The only true invitation that Faust gives

is that he asks the dog to enter his living space. Faust is not aware that he has allowed a demon into his home. As an animal, the dog is inherently servile and dedicated to humanity. This much is true of a Mephistopheles who expresses a primary interest in the matters of man rather than the affairs of heaven. As a poodle he earns the trust of Faust. Mephistopheles lowers himself to the form of a beast and through this incarnation lays his trap for Faust's soul. However, he never understands the more noble part of Faust and assumes that humans are only governed by their animalistic impulses. He underestimates the heavenly striving in Faust and continues to do so even as he changes into human form (Gillies 54).

Faust wants the poodle to reveal its true nature and Faust attempts to use magic to provoke the demon to show himself (Faust I 1310-1321). In an ironic twist Mephistopheles takes the form of a traveling scholar, a person who could be subject to temptation and youthful follies, and a type meant to mirror Faust much in the way that the real young scholar will later mirror Faust. The traveling scholar also represents power through the use of cunning and a mastery of words. These qualities closely parallel those of Mephistopheles. Faust has been frustrated due to the lack of activity within his scholarly chambers and so Mephistopheles' form reminds him of that frustration.

Mephistopheles puts the power of words into full effect as he guides Faust through the pact that could determine the eternal condition of his soul. Faust supplies the conditions of the pact:

Should I ever take ease upon a bed of leisure,
May that same moment mark my end!
When first by flattery you lull me
Into a smug complacency,

When with indulgence you can call gull me,
Let that be the last day for me!
This is my wager! (1693-1698)

Mephistopheles then requests that Faust sign a contract that would hold him to the bargain he made, in blood, the very essence of the human: “a very special juice,” as Mephistopheles calls it (1740)

Faust is the ultimate doer of deeds and Mephistopheles counters this with words. Faust had tried to replace “In the beginning was the Word” with “In the beginning was the Deed” and rewrite the Bible in his own image (1224, 1237). Mephistopheles uses words, an inactive element that contrasts with Faust’s active nature. Words are the medium of discussion and so by using words powerfully Mephistopheles becomes the instrument of God, an interesting twist on the “logos”. He questions and allows for argument in all that he does. Mephistopheles had determined the nature of the wager with God, but he makes Faust think that Faust himself invented the terms; in fact Mephistopheles has been subtly working to set up a conflict that would drive Faust to further striving.

Mephistopheles once again uses the powerful tool of sophistry as he meets with the young scholar. He dons Faust’s robes as he then goes on to mislead the student who seems to represent a younger version of Faust (Davidson 32). The student cannot distinguish the teachings of a demonic figure from what he expected to learn in the university. Goethe suggests that the audience should be wary of this kind of intellectual power. The student arrives and eagerly trusts his future to Mephistopheles just because Mephistopheles is wearing a scholar’s robe. The substance of the character within the robe does not matter and the student knows nothing of Mephistopheles, but the artifice

itself contains enough authority for the scholar to trust the rest of his life to the man he speaks to (1875). The scholar's striving has brought him to the university. At the university the scholar has concluded that he will not have to strive for himself. Instead he will be able to learn from his professors rather than having to investigate the world with his own questioning mind. He will passively accept knowledge rather than actively seeking it (FaustI 1894). Mephistopheles has found Faust at the most desperate point of his life when he has decided to turn to a new source of knowledge, and the student is in a similar situation.

The student is initially wary of the darkened corridors that have helped sink Faust into a depression, but Mephistopheles suggests that the student will acclimate to the cramped and dismal atmosphere. Already, Mephistopheles has begun to restrict the student's urge toward freedom that would allow him to strive naturally. Mephistopheles details the faults of the major courses of study and peppers their descriptions with ideas that are meant to subtly lead the student away from striving and self determination. Logic will order the minutest details of his life until eating and drinking can only be done with deliberate care (Faust I 1921). This sets up the later confrontation that Mephistopheles stages as he tempts Faust with food and drink in Auerbach's Keller. He encourages the student to despair of learning while still asking the student to trust him and the University fully. The idea is anti-Enlightenment and runs counter to the ideas that motivate striving.

Mephistopheles then goes on to explain the deception that he has used against the student by saying that words can determine the shape of a system (1998). He tries his idea of using language to work against action, and then finally suggests that the end goal

of learning is not the striving itself, but to allow the scholar to seduce women. He tries to use the same sensual tactics to distract the student from his studies that he will attempt to use to distract Faust.

In the Auerbach's Keller scene which Goethe took from the chapbook, Mephistopheles shows his lack of understanding of Faust's character. Mephistopheles takes Faust to a boisterous pub and tempts Faust with the joys of food and drink. However, he does not only mean to try and let Faust fall into vice, but he also reveals what Faust's students do when they are not in class (Gillies 58). Faust has striven for years in the academic environment and endeavored to teach the students and help them strive for themselves, but in Auerbach's Keller he sees that they are occupying their time with wine and song rather than study. Mephistopheles tells Faust that he intends to: "show you merry company / How one may idle best and worry least; / The people here make everyday a feast" (Faust I 2158-2160). However, Faust does not succumb to this first temptation. This might reveal more about Mephistopheles than it does about Faust because Mephistopheles is incapable of understanding that Faust does not limit his worldly experience to sensual pleasures. Drunken debauchery could never satisfy Faust; however, after this scene Faust is able to leave the University world behind.

Mephistopheles is the opposite of Faust; however, his presence allows Faust to continue striving because Faust needs something to strive against. Mephistopheles does this with his use of sophistry. This runs counter to Faust's use of activity and action as a part of his striving. Nevertheless, this demon works against striving rather than promoting striving as Mephistophilis did. Mephistopheles runs counter to the

Enlightenment ideals and to the urge to create that defines humanity. The greatest threat that he poses to Faust is not Faust's damnation but his contentment.

As Goethe releases Faust from hell he liberates the rest of mankind and allows humanity to strive for itself. A representative of Enlightenment optimism, Goethe uses Faust to insist that the generations following his continue to strive toward ever higher things. He reassures the audience with the words "Man errs the while he strives" and by promising failure he excuses his audience for the mistakes that they will inevitably make (317). In his ascent from hell to heaven, Faust brings humanity with him, and without Mephistopheles' misguided attempts to bring Faust contentment, Faust would not be able to strive as much as he does.

CONCLUSION

The central tenet of Goethe's *Faust* is a direct inversion of the central tenet of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Striving damns Faustus but it saves Faust. However, striving does not just apply to the Faust character in these stories. Though Faust is a fully developed character in the works of both Marlowe and Goethe, he is also a representation of mankind and his struggle to strive is everyone's struggle. The demonic characters are also meant to represent, in the case of Mephistophilis, the ultimate consequences of striving and, in the case of Mephistopheles, the urge to contentment.

One of the first widely available Faust chapbooks, the "Historia von D. Johann Fausten" was published in Frankfurt am Main by Johann Spies in 1587. The original intention of the Faust story was to discourage readers from striving beyond the scope of what they as humans should be able to accomplish. The work's title page reads: "For the most part gathered from his own posthumous papers and published as a terrible and horrific example and a sincere warning to all the arrogant, curious and ungodly" (Columbia). The title page mentions Faust's arrogance and pride, but more importantly it contains a directly stated warning directed to all of the chapbook's readers: It warns against striving and the demons that promote it. The work was not meant to record the actions of one man, or simply create an interesting character, but was specifically intended to serve as a warning to others that may be inclined to strive as Faust did.

The Marlowe play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* also meant to caution every member of the audience. Though *Doctor Faustus* was written long after morality plays had become outdated, the tradition of the morality play is still clear in the story of

Doctor Faustus. The Good and Evil Angels make this connection explicit. The connection to the morality play tradition means that *Faustus* was intended to warn readers of the dangers of striving. *Faustus* is an extraordinary man, but he is still an everyman character. Though Marlowe has the skill to give Faust dimensions and complexities, he still represents the human being and the human's place under God.

Between Marlowe's writing and Goethe's, the Enlightenment changed the way striving was perceived. Great thinkers of the 18th century argued that man must question and strive. According to Immanuel Kant: "Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen! ist also der Wahlspruch der Aufklärung" (Have the courage to use your own understanding, is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment) (Kant). According to Kant one should not trust one's reasoning to a pastor or government official. Instead all individuals must reason for themselves, and strive to understand through their own efforts. Once again, the idea of striving is not restricted to a group of individuals, or a specific human being, but it becomes a goal that should be applied to all humanity.

Goethe's *Faust* is more complex than Marlowe's in form and meaning. It bears little resemblance to a morality play and does not include the Good and Evil Angels that connect Marlowe's play so clearly with the morality play tradition. However, the "Prologue in Heaven" allows Faust to fill the role of Job in the Bible. Faust is favored by God just as Job is. The biblical connection makes Faust's story applicable to all of humanity. Mephistopheles becomes Satan in the book of Job and so is representative of all the factors of life that can discourage striving. However, unlike in Marlowe's *Faustus*, the tension in the story does not arise through whether or not Goethe's Faust will repent. Goethe's Faust does not need to repent. He is not an inherently evil creature but has the

potential for good and reformation, and in the final scene of Goethe's great work the Angels bearing Faust's soul underscore this: "Whoever strives in ceaseless toil / Him we may grant redemption" (Faust II V.11936).

Marlowe's Mephistophilis represents what can become of one that strives in a world that rejects such striving. The end result is eternal evil and an existence dictated by despair, causing more despair and hopelessness in others. On the other hand Goethe's Mephistopheles represents the urge to inactivity and rest that opposes the struggle to improve the world and the human being.

The Faust story continues to change with changing times. It is not just about Faust, and not just about the human beings of the past, but also about how modern humanity will make its way into the future. Humanity must constantly seek improvement and though it will err, it can never cease its striving.

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