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In the B-Text of Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*, first performed in 1616 though written some twenty years earlier, we encounter a complicated version of the damnable Faust. In the centuries of criticism that accompany the play, Faustus has become a symbol of the damned. As the *Encyclopedia of Religion* notes, "Faust became a convenient symbol of deviant religious, scientific, and philosophical thought. He was identified with several of the most controversial thinkers of the sixteenth century: Paracelsus, Trithemius, and Agrippa" (Coudert). The play traditionally reads as a warning to us all—children of God—to resist the temptations of the Devil. In this manner, the play is understood and the book is closed. But is it really so simple?

Christopher Marlowe is lauded by historians for his genius and energy. In the introduction to his biography of the author, Park Honan writes, "Christopher Marlowe's life is the most spectacular of any English dramatist...Just as thrilling for modern sensibilities is his reputation as a spy, an unceasing blasphemer, a tough street-fighter and a courageous homosexual" (Honan 15). Such a description does not easily relate to the author of a simple cautionary tale. Given his immense skill, it seems too simple to confine the reading of his play to a single interpretation—nor does such simplicity seem likely from Marlowe. While many critics have taken varying stances in regards to the Faust story. Interpretations of the story by critics extend beyond a cautionary tale: critics Theodore Ziolkowski and Robert Lubin have tracked the development of the Faust story throughout its reiterations and the "Faustian bargain" has become common political

jargon. The many contexts in which we find the character of Faust influence our reading and understanding of the story's message and meaning.

From the moment that Faustus signs his deal with Mephistopheles, the religious and social context in which the work was written begin to inform our interpretation. Marlowe's play was written during the reign of Elizabeth I. The historical period in England was marked by the instability and redefinition of religious and political systems. While the relationship between the church and the royal family remained close and mutually influential, the terms under which both operated were changing. The Elizabethan period is regarded as a golden age in England's history which brought forth a unified Kingdom, the acceptance of a national religion after the religious wars, and the works of William Shakespeare. E. M. W. Tillyard introduces his analysis of the Elizabethan Era by noting that "People still think of the Age of Elizabeth as a secular period between two outbreaks of Protestantism: a period in which religious enthusiasm was sufficiently dormant to allow the new humanism to shape our literature" (Tillyard 3). The period is considered a time of humanism in contrast to the precedent religious and social unrest. Tillyard's vision of the Elizabethan period is far more precarious: "The new commercialism was hostile to medieval stability. The greatness of the Elizabethan age was that it contained so much of new without bursting the noble form of the old order" (Tillyard 8). In other words, England's foundation was based on the structure of its former monarchies; the introduction of the new idea of commercialism did not comfortably sit upon this foundation but instead threatened to topple the system over altogether. Tillyard argues that the relative calm was maintained because of the genius of Elizabeth's regime. The new freedom of thought did have its consequences and the works of dramatists like Marlowe reflect this period of tension and change.

The conversion of England from Catholicism to Anglicanism was profoundly influential on the lives and thoughts of the England. The Reformation was a political response to Henry VIII's deep animosity towards the Pope and the Catholic power. Yet, when England formally turned to Protestantism the transition did not profoundly change how the English practiced their faith. Tillyard states, "...one can say dogmatically that it [England] was still solidly theocentric, and that it was a simplified version of a much more complicated medieval picture" (Tillyard 4). This simplification occurred in the removal of figures of idolatry in churches and reinterpretation of certain rituals, but largely the two religions followed the same practices. However, the change affected scholars in terms of subject and focus. Without the oppressive force of the Catholic Church silencing scientific study, the uncertain relationship between religion and science opened a space for exploration. Marlowe's Faustus enters this space of uncertainty and challenges the religiosity of science.

Faustus's pursuit of knowledge leads him to signing a deal in blood. Initially, Faustus expresses hesitation specifically in signing his deal in blood. The issue begins when Mephistopheles appears to Faustus a second time (after his initial visit, it is established that Mephistopheles can provide Faustus the knowledge that he seeks but Faustus is not yet ready to make a deal.) Faustus calls Mephistopheles to appear because he is ready to make a deal. Mephistopheles reiterates that Faustus must "buy my service with his [Faustus's] soul," to which Faustus says, "Already Faustus hath hazarded that for thee," seemingly not understanding what more must be done for the deal to be made. It is at this point that Mephistopheles reveals the rest of the terms:

Mephistopheles: But, Faustus, thou must bequeath it (your soul) solemnly
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood,

For that security craves great Lucifer.

If thou deny it, I will back to hell (Doctor Faustus 2.1.34-37).

With the terms of the deal already set, all there is left to do is for Faustus to agree and sign his soul in his own blood. In response, Faustus asks again if Mephistopheles can supply him with his wish and then readily cuts into his arm and signs.

This moment of the legend has condemned Faustus to a symbol of the fallen child of God. However, from the opening of the play Marlowe portrays Faustus foremost as a scholar and so we must consider the historical significance of this association. Marlowe writes his play during a time of huge scientific strides¹ in the upended period following the schism between the Protestant and Catholic faiths. Writing for an audience whose minds are contemplating the future of science and religion, Marlowe presents us with more than a stereotype of the damned. Faustus is a character struggling to understand the relationship between his duty as a scholar and his religious duty. The uncertainty in these matters is what permits him to sign the deal with Mephistopheles. While there is doubt in Faustus's mind as to the religious permissibility of the act (as evidenced by his contemplations on redemption,) there is a supported sense throughout the play that Faustus denies the legitimacy of his pact. Faustus consistently asserts that he is not in danger of damnation or harm: "What power can hurt me? Faustus, thou art safe," "If heaven was made for man, 'twas made for me. I will renounce this magic and repent," "Yea, God will pity me, if I repent," "Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the cross; Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit" (Doctor Faustus 2.1.24; 2.3.11-11; 2.3.16; 4.5.26-27). Faustus does not accept that his days will end in damnation and he will enter the eternal tortures of hell.

¹ Inventions during the Elizabethan era range from bottled beer and William Lee's knitting machine to the first models of telescopes and compound microscopes.

Through extracting the notion of blood and the various scientific and religious meanings ascribed to the substance in Faustus's time, we discover grounds on which Faustus may deny the sanctity of his contract with the Devil. God's condemnation of Faustus's deal is clear by the end of the play when his body and soul are given to the Devil. Marlowe puts forth to his audience the question of the relationship between man and his God; how can we know what is permissible in the rapidly evolving world? As the possibilities of knowledge increase through science and religious politics expand, the Faustus character navigates a new set of decisions. Faustus's gamble thus lies in trusting the science of blood rather than obeying the laws of God.

Blood and Soul

Faustus's knowledge of the body and blood is not sacrilegious and complicates his decision to sell his soul. The introduction of Faustus from the Chorus explains his many successes saying, So much he profits in divinity

That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,

Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute

In th'heavenly matters of theology (Doctor Faustus 1.1.15-14).

These lines tell us that Faustus's education was chiefly religious ("So much he profits in divinity.") The most prestigious universities in Elizabethan England were closely tied to the political and religious spheres. For example, the school's history notes that "in 1530, Henry VIII forced the University to accept his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and during the Reformation in the 16th century, the Anglican churchmen Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley were tried for heresy and burnt at the stake in Oxford" (Oxford-asia.com). The education that Faustus thus received at

such an institution would have conformed to the accepted theology of the Anglican church. His mastery of theology connotes a familiarity with Protestant approved sciences.

We then meet Faustus as he sits in his study and contemplates his duty as a scholar. The conclusion that he reaches is that he should look to medicine saying,

Bid *Oeconomy* farewell

and Galen come.

Be a physician, Faustus. Heap up gold

and be eternized for some wondrous cure.

[*Reads.*] “*Summum bonum medicinae sanitatis.*”

The end of physic is our body’s health.

Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end? (*Doctor Faustus*, 1.1.13-17)

In this passage, Faustus interrogates himself and his duty. As a Protestant scholar, Faustus’s find that his duty lies in his service to the people. In his rejection of “oeconomy” (economy: management of resources,) Faustus turns to the first century Greek physician Galen. Notably, one of Galen’s better-known theories dealt with the circulation of the blood. For centuries, Galen’s theory had been taught throughout Europe. Galen connected the organs of the body with the soul through the idea that arteries and veins distributed blood and *pneuma* throughout the body. *Pneuma* was an air that circulated throughout and carried with it the energy of the soul where it was needed. Blood acted as a vehicle for *pneuma*, and in turn the *pneuma* was a vehicle for the soul. It is in this physical and theological distance between soul and blood that permits Faustus to conceive of his blood as an non-binding and unholy material.

It was the concept of *pneuma* that linked religion and medicine; the mystery of the origin of *pneuma* in the body was attributed to the mysteries of God’s relationship to man. Faustus, in

studying Galen, would have understood blood to be a substance of the body rather than the soul. In other words, without the admixture of *pneuma*, blood has nothing to do with the soul. Importantly, Galen determined that *pneuma* took the physical form of a “sort of potent mist” (Boylan 218) and thus was separate from blood that bled from the body. The popularly accepted concept of blood put forth by Galen supports a separation of blood and soul. For the purposes of Faustus, this division between soul and blood is useful as evidence that his soul cannot be signed over to the Devil through blood and, furthermore, that his deal with Mephistopheles is non-binding in any religious sense.

The line between science and religion is unclear in this understanding of the soul moving through the body. In Leviticus 17:11 (which would be included in the King James Bible,) it is written, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement.” Blood is thus undoubtedly connected to the life in the body. However, the blood that Faustus gives is outside of the body. The difference in these materials is understood through the escape of *pneumatic* vapor; blood, outside of the body, loses its vapor, warmth, and life.

Faustus’s preoccupation with science (and its potential consequences,) has its own context within the Protestant religion of sixteenth century England. While the thirteenth century Arabic scholar Ibn al-Nafis was likely the first to object to Galen’s ideas, the Church of England would credit William Harvey with the discovery of the modern circulatory system of blood in the latter half of the seventeenth century (Omar). Bertrand Russell argues that it was the liberalism of scientific study within Protestant countries by contrast to Catholic countries that allowed for Harvey’s findings (Russell). While Russell is careful to clarify that Protestant religions were not always more open to science than their Catholic counterparts, in the years after the schism,

Protestantism fought against the Catholic Church's silencing of scientific findings. In the Elizabethan era, during which Marlowe wrote, religion took a particularly detached position towards science—allowing the field the freedom of exploration. However, the Anglican Church and English monarchy were still mutually influential and thus it was understood that, ultimately, scientific advances would serve the purposes of the English state and church. The reworking of scientific ideas was thus often used by the church and the state to uphold the Anglican Church and English monarchy while undermining the relevance of Catholicism and devotedly Catholic European states. As a scholar, it is understandable that Faustus would be directly preoccupied with defining the new terms of theology and the relationship between science and religion during this period. Faustus follows the path of justifying the inclusion of science in religious discussion.

Unlike Catholicism, Protestant theologies attempted to reconcile scripture with recent scientific advancement. As Peter Harrison argues, “[M]odern science came into existence as a result of the emphasis of Protestants on the literal sense of the Scripture, their refusal of the earlier symbolic or allegorical interpretation, and their efforts at fixing the meaning of the biblical text” (Harrison). Rather than denying science altogether as heresy where it seemed to conflict with religious traditions, the moment of the Protestant Reformation allowed for a relaxing of limitations in order to reevaluate understanding of the intersection of science and religion. Boundaries between the two were pushed and the Bible was subjected to new interpretations thought to be truer to its intended meaning.

The substance of the body's blood is particularly relevant to the foundation of Protestantism and provides ground for understanding Faustus's willingness to sign his soul in blood. A contentious issue in the schism of the Catholic and Protestant religions surrounded communion and the Eucharist. By Catholic theology, the Eucharist of communion was a literal

transference of Christ's body and blood into the body of man. The process, known as transubstantiation, was understood to happen upon consuming the bread and wine of communion; as Bertrand Russell explains, "In transubstantiation, the attributes of the bread remain, but the substance becomes that of the Body of Christ" (Russell). Protestantism largely rejected the theory of transubstantiation on the grounds that claiming Jesus's presence could be reproduced by man was a blasphemous idea.

The arguments that Protestantism made against the legitimacy of the Eucharist began within the theological discussion and debate of Catholicism in the centuries before the separation. Caroline Walker Bynum chronicles this development in her book on blood before and during the Early Modern period.). Bynum notes the Man of Sorrows image which depicted Christ "from whose side blood poured...risen as well as suffering. This suffering Christ offers wounds and/or blood..." (Bynum 150). This image was particularly popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth century; Bynum chronicles the development of the Catholic rhetoric on blood. Even in the Catholic faith prior to the seventeenth century there is much debate over whether Christ's bloodshed should be a literal or symbolic cause of his death. Bynum includes arguments made by bishop Robert Grosseteste in the thirteenth century who claimed that "Christ died by divine power, not by loss of blood. The piercing of his hands and feet would not have caused enough bleeding to result in death in three hours, and Christ's loud cry on the cross showed that he was still fully alive. Hence he *chose* for soul to be separated from body" (Bynum, 101). Bynum also notes that this argument would be used during the following two centuries. Ultimately, the argument leads back to the idea of the eucharist. Those in favor of Grosseteste's argument could draw from it that Christ's blood is a symbolic representation of Christ's death and therefore so is the Eucharist. For Faustus, this argument, which has existed throughout the Catholic religion and into the moment of the Anglican

Church's separation, provides grounds for a symbolic understanding of blood. In terms of signing his deal, if Faustus's blood is merely symbolic and has no connection to his soul he can use it to trick Mephistopheles. Faustus's thinking would thus be that Mephistopheles is subject to faulty Catholic theology whereas Faustus has superior modern knowledge of blood and God. Though unrepentant or unaware, Faustus's decision to sign the deal in his blood without believing that he is legitimately signing over his soul demonstrates a hubristic view of his own knowledge.

Faustus's view of his own scholarly endeavors into science are rooted in a religious duty. As Faustus sits at his desk contemplating the meaning of his studies, he objects to a book of law, declaring it "too servile and illiberal for me." He then retrieves another book and says, "When all is done, divinity is best...Jerome's Bible, Faustus; view it well" (Doctor Faustus 1.1.35-36). Like a good Protestant, Faustus shows a devotion to the word of God above that of the men among him. The relative acceptance of medical science in Early Modern Protestant countries provides foundation for Faustus's interest in the medical field without the taint of the sacrilegious. As follows, Faustus's scientific understanding of blood is not damning and he uses this knowledge in conceptualizing the legitimacy of his deal with Mephistopheles.

When Faustus signs his soul to Mephistopheles, he understands that his blood, like the blood of Christ, is entirely human with no *pneumatic* component. As a scholar, logic would lead him to question the legitimacy of such a deal if the matter through which it is conveyed is only ceremonial. When Faustus cuts his arms and signs his deal, he says to Mephistopheles,

Lo, Mephistopheles, for love of thee,
Faustus hath cut his arm, and with his proper blood,
Assures his soul to be great Lucifer's,
Chief lord and regent of perpetual night.

View here this blood that trickles from mine arm

And let it be propitious for my wish (Doctor Faustus 2.1.52-57).

His words seem damning: he outright offers his soul through his blood. However, if he knows that his blood cannot tie his soul to the Devil, then he is simply tricking Mephistopheles at his own game. The likelihood of Faustus approaching the deal from a complex understanding of blood is supported by the conversation that ultimately convinces him to conjure Mephistopheles. In his search for knowledge he turns to scholars Valdes and Cornelius to point him in the right direction. Ultimately, he is convinced that his duty lies in pursuing knowledge to its fullest extent. This objective, rather than the damnation of his soul, is what motivates him to conjure Mephistopheles.

The understanding that is open to Faustus in this moment of theological change is that Christ's blood is not an example of the importance of blood as a material of the soul. Instead, Christ's blood is a symbol of his sacrifice. Any literal importance placed on the blood of Christ is thus seen by Faustus as a failure of interpretation. Man is not connected to Christ through his blood but through his soul. In combination with the scientific understanding that *pneuma*, and not blood, is the vehicle for the soul, the Protestant understanding of the symbolic importance of blood create grounds on which Faustus can deny the literal significance of his own blood.

Body and Soul

While Faust's blood may not put his soul in the hands of Mephistopheles, this relief does not answer the question of where the soul does lie. The emergence of Protestantism brought with it the opportunity to turn to science for questions about the soul. Faust takes advantage of this relaxation of religion's limits in order to explore the depths of science and its understanding of the soul. Before signing his deal with Mephistopheles, Faustus makes it clear that his ultimate project

is to reach the realm of God. To do so, Faust must yield his soul. Anglican Church's modifications to Catholic theology were not yet fixed during the Elizabethan era and so characters like Doctor Faustus could explore new paths towards yielding the soul. For Faustus, the realms of scientific study are promising, uncharted territories for understanding the soul.

Faustus demonstrates a preoccupation with the conjuring of life. As Faustus sits in his study in the first scene, he puts down his divine Bible and holds up a book of magic and says,

These metaphysics of magicians

And necromantic books are heavenly.

Lines, circles, letters, and characters--

Ay, these are those that Faustus most desire (Doctor Faustus 1.1.48-51).

The reference Faustus makes to necromancy has been damning for his character in popular analysis. However, we must consider the context in which Faustus is exploring necromancy. Catholicism of the sixteenth century was understood by Protestants to incorporate magic into religion where it did not belong. There was a desire to clearly divide magic and religion under Protestant theology but this division had yet to be defined. Thus, it was no longer exclusively clear what was and what was not permitted. E. M. W. Tillyard describes the tension of the Elizabethan era saying, "[T]hough there were various new things in the Elizabethan age to make life exciting, the old struggle between the claims of two worlds persisted and that to look on this age as mainly secular is wrong" (Tillyard 5). What he is referring to here is the tension between religion and science that persisted in the ages before Elizabeth I and before Protestantism. The Faust Book was written under the period of development in the first half of the sixteenth-century before Marlowe. This legend, the origin story of Marlowe's play, was translated from German by P. F. Gent and

first published in 1588. The Faust book translation reworks the German source material for its own purpose: as John Henry Jones notes,

[P. F. Gent's] translation is by no means exact. Like other Elizabethan translators, he felt free, even impelled, to improve on the original and tailor it to his own design...his departures from his source in these weightier sections are motivated by his own beliefs or incredulities and by a strongly developed dramatic sense which informed some important remodeling (Jones 12).

Jones later argues that Gent's changes "serve to illuminate two different but linked questions, the politico-theological sensitivity of the material and the persona and identity of the writer" (Jones 15). Like Marlowe, Jones's Faust is being written to reflect the historical moment in regards to politics and religion.

Thus when Faustus calls his necromantic books "heavenly" and talks about the divinity of metaphysics he is pushing back against contemporary disputed ideas about magical arts. Conjuring the dead may be one method through which to expand his knowledge and help to understand the soul. Faustus's interest in necromancy thus says far less about his interest in dark magic than it does about his desire to challenge the boundaries of permitted study. While Faustus still undertakes a certain amount of risk, his rejection of contemporary limitations on knowledge shows his determination to assert the religious realm of science.

Faustus tells us of his ultimate intention when he holds his book of magic and says, "A sound magician is a demigod. Here tire my brains to gain a deity" (Doctor Faustus 1.1.60-61). The line between magic and science is not so clear; astrology and cosmology may be perceived as magical but are also accepted realms of science. Once again, to understand the intention behind

this line we must consider the historical context. In the Early Modern period following the Reformation, the understanding of “magic” was changing. As Robert W. Scribner writes,

The Reformation removed this ambiguity [between religion and magic] by taking “magical” elements out of Christian religion, eliminating the ideas that religious rituals had any automatic efficacy, that material objects could be endowed with any sort of sacred power, and that human actions could have any supernatural effect (Scribner 475).ⁱ

The prohibition against magic can be found several times in the Bible² so the case against its involvement with religion is strong. Thus it seems peculiar for Faustus to claim that a “magician” could be divine. However, as Scribner says, popular magic during the centuries of the Protestant Reformation was a complicated issue. While there is little doubt Protestantism sought to clearly separate magic from religion during the Reformation, others argued that the two were compatible. Scribner explains this complex argument put forth by those in favor of adapting an accepting view of magic under Protestantism. The spells and charms that were used in magic, Scribner explains, used words from scripture and references to God; those opposed to magic called blasphemy but supporters of magic had a different understanding:

These are nothing but good words, their defenders claimed, which speak only of God, and what is done in God’s name must surely be proper and good; one should use the means provided by God, who has blessed all things on earth; one prays and calls upon God with such words, so why should one not use them for blessings and incantations? (Scribner 490).

² See Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Revelation 21:8; Leviticus 19:31; Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:6; Galatians 5:19-21, among others.

With this mode of argument, Faustus's use of magic through spells and charms can be understood to be in God's name and thus permissible. His characterization of a magician as a demigod is thus a redefinition of the profession: a person who practices magic is *not* a magician but a practitioner of God's word.

Of course, we cannot ignore that Faustus goes a step further by using spells to conjure. This is where Marlowe's choices are critical to our understanding. When Mephistopheles first appears, the scene includes the following dialogue:

Faustus: Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak.

Mephistopheles: That was the cause, but yet *per accidents*,

For, when we hear one rack the name of God,

Abjure the Scriptures and his Savior Christ,

We fly in hope to get his glorious soul. (Doctor Faustus 1.3.41-47).

In this scene, Mephistopheles says that it is not the magic of conjuring that brings him to Faustus but instead the intention to conjure. In other words, Mephistopheles is not conjured by but attracted to Faustus. In the English Book of Faust, it is Faust's conjuring which brings Mephistopheles to him. This deviation from the original text is significant to Marlowe's representation of Faustus. Mephistopheles reveals that conjuring is inconsequential and thus Faustus's charms—they yield no power. Marlowe answers the question for Protestantism as to conjuring—it is a fanciful practice; Devils appear on their own accord.

Aside from Faustus's conjuring, we may be inclined to question his occupation with cosmology and astrology which figures heavily into his scholarly persona. However, this too must be contextualized. While modern day perceptions of cosmology and astrology tend to involve a magic rather than science, the opposite was true during the sixteenth century. E. M. W. Tillyard

explains the importance of order during the Elizabethan era. This system of order affected all realms of life from soil and crops to mind and God; as Tillyard quotes from Elyot's *Governor*, "Every kind of trees herbs birds beasts and fishes have a peculiar disposition appropereed unto them by God their creator; so that in everything is order, and without order may be nothing stable or permanent." (Tillyard 12). Tillyard cites works by Shakespeare, Spenser, and Marlowe³ which all share the same concept of universal order and notes that even those with minimal education would have had a general understanding of the concept. It was the disruption of this order that was most terrifying to the English of the Elizabethan era.

The opposite of universal order is *chaos* which meant "the cosmic anarchy before creation and the wholesale dissolution that would result if the pressure of Providence relaxed and allowed the law of nature to cease functioning." Knowledge of the cosmos was critical to maintaining universal order. Thus, studying cosmology and astrology served to preserve order in all facets including a religious order.

When we consider more specifically what Faustus is studying when he explores cosmology and astrology, we see even more clearly that he has a religious objective. Relevant to the interests of Faustus, Robert Fludd was a cosmologist and astrologist of considerable notoriety during the sixteenth and seventh centuries. Fludd took up the projects of Galen during his education at Christ

³ Tillyard includes the following passage from Marlowe's poem *Hero and Leander*:

The goddess Ceremony, with a crown
 Of all the stars ; and Heaven with her descended :
 Her flaming hair to her bright feet descended,
 By which hung all the bench of deities.
 And in a chain, compact of ears and eyes,
 She led Religion. All her body was
 Clear and transparent as the purest glass,
 For she was all presented to the sense.
 Devotion Order State and Reverence
 Her shadows were.

Church College in England. His background in Galen, life's devotion to science, and contemporary period are similar to Faustus and Fludd's research and knowledge would thus likely be shared by Faustus. What he matriculated through this process was a complex theory of the microcosm and macrocosm.

Robert Fludd's understanding of the micro and macrocosms thus offers us insight into the ideas Faustus would have as a sixteenth century English scholar. As Joscelyn Godwin puts forth, Fludd believed that, "Any expansion of consciousness is an ascent through 'spheres' or spiritual states which the planets symbolize, and an escape from 'earth' of our physical being and shackling ego" (Godwin). In expanding into these other spheres through the consciousness, one hopes to reach the further realms of spirituality. In other words, it is *through the consciousness that one gets closer to God*. As Godwin puts it, "There writings of all traditions lend their support to this idea of the soul's ascent, which Fludd saw as the ultimate goal of man, as well as to the existence of unseen higher worlds compounded wither of finer states of matter (etheric, astral, etc.) or simply of different states of mind" (Godwin). Both Fludd and Faustus think in terms that are ultimate to the soul's ascent. Faustus operated in a period of scientific studies that devises and his scientific/theoretical contemporaries sought to devise the paths of the mind to get at the soul.

The embodiment of the soul brings together the realms of divinity and humanity; for Faust, this intersection is critical for his ambitions. Throughout the play, we consistently see Faustus fearing the wrath of Mephistopheles rather than the wrath of God. When an old devout man tries to persuade Faustus to renounce his alliance with the Devil, Faustus says,

Accursed Faustus, wretch, what hast thou done?

I do repent and yet I do despair.

Hell strives with grace from conquest in my breast.

What shall I do to shun the snares of death? (Doctor Faustus 5.1.64-67).

But when Mephistopheles hears of Faustus's desire to repent, he threatens to "in piecemeal tear thy flesh." This threat stops Faustus from any repentance and he again pledges his obedience to Lucifer. In this moment it is difficult to grasp why Faustus would be more concerned with the physical consequence to his body of his allegiance to Lucifer rather than the eternal damnation of his soul. As we have established, Faustus has grounds on which to doubt the legitimacy of his oath to Mephistopheles. If his soul cannot be transferred to Mephistopheles through the signing of blood, then why would he yet fear the wrath of Mephistopheles on his body? The answer lies in the complex understanding of the embodiment of the soul(s).

The science of the soul available to Faustus theorizes the embodiment of the soul. As we have already seen, Robert Fludd addressed the physical presence of the soul in the body. By Galen's theory, (which we know Faustus had at his disposal,) the soul had three parts in the body corresponding to the "three principal organs in the body (the brain, the heart, and the liver)" (Boylan 208). The physical existence of the soul was necessary to explain how the soul was relevant to the body. However, the soul also took an immaterial form which, corresponded to a "dualistic metaphysics." Fludd's understanding is pertinent to us because of his attention to many of Faustus's interests.

Faustus's theoretical understanding of his soul helps us to make sense of why he finds threats to his body more legitimate than the threat to his immaterial soul. In other words, Faustus's fear of being torn to shreds by Mephistopheles stems from a fear of losing control of his physically embodied soul. It is not just the pain of his body being harmed that prevents Faustus from openly seeking redemption from God; rather, Faustus does not believe that he has strayed beyond the path of God's light. Faustus has upheld his duty to God because his ultimate objective is to expand his

knowledge of science beyond what any human has yet achieved to discover the secrets of the soul. Faustus is not convinced that he merits the wrath of God though he *is* convinced that his soul is embodied and thus he must protect his body from Mephistopheles.

Twenty-Four Years

In negotiating the deal with Mephistopheles, Faustus requests to be served for twenty-four years. He presents the terms to Mephistopheles, thus:

Faustus: Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death
 By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
 Say he surrenders up to him his soul
 So he will spare him four-and-twenty years,
 Letting him live in all voluptuousness,
 Having thee ever to attend on me,
 To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
 To tell me whatsoever I demand,
 To slay mine enemies and aid my friends,
 And always be obedient to my will (Doctor Faustus 1.3.86-95).

Putting Faustus's affectations aside, why does he ask for such a modest amount of time? Mephistopheles has already boasted of the limitless gifts he can bestow upon Faustus; twenty-four years seems far too little time to cultivate the magnitude of this arrangement. However, Faustus is not seeking fulfillment of limitless desire; the request for twenty-four years is rooted in another objective. When presented with the opportunity of any number of years (perhaps Faustus could have asked for a hundred years, two hundred, or one thousand,) the plausible explanation for why

twenty-four years will suffice for Faustus is that at the end of these twenty-four years he believes his soul will live an eternal life in heaven. It is even more baffling to understand how twenty-four years of life would be acceptable to Faustus if he believes that once his time is up his soul and body will spend the rest of eternity in hell. It must be that Faustus intends for these twenty-four years to serve his pursuit of heaven. Twenty-four years seems sufficient if we believe that Faustus intends to spend those years in study of the spheres, macrocosms and microcosms, and the humors in search of how to yield his soul to God's grace. The body is, after all, temporary and ultimately a means to discovering the eternal soul. Faustus maintains an awareness that his body is a vehicle for the soul—as was taught by science and religion during the Reformation.

We cannot ignore that Faustus explicitly surrenders his soul to Lucifer when he makes his deal. Throughout his interactions with Mephistopheles, he says numerous times that he will give his soul to the Devil in exchange for this deal. It is significant that it is *only* in the presence (or encroaching presence) of Mephistopheles that Faustus makes these statements. The likelihood of his words being part of a performance for Mephistopheles's confidence is high: in the privacy of his study he continually acknowledges his ultimate desire for God's grace. When Mephistopheles departs after his first appearance, Faustus sits alone in his study and says,

Despair in God, and trust in Beelzebub.

Now go not backward; no, Faustus, be resolute:

Why waver'st thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears,

'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'

Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again. (Doctor Faustus 2.1.5-8).

This assertion that he will turn to God again is of great importance; the preceding lines are a sort of pep talk. Faustus wills himself to be resolute in joining with the Devil by focusing on the fact

that he will ultimately reject his allegiance and once again follow his God's light to eternal salvation.

Body and Soul Multiplied

Faustus's ability to direct his soul begins in the acquisition of knowledge. Interestingly, his next step is asking for a wife. Faustus puts his request to Mephistopheles saying, "[L]et me have a wife, the fairest maid in Germany, for I am wanton and lascivious and cannot live without a wife" (Doctor Faustus 2.1.135-136). Faustus asks for a wife to rectify his wantonness and lasciviousness rather than a prostitute or some other easy relation because such an arrangement would not fulfill his wish. It is not sexual gratification he seeks but religious sanctity. Mephistopheles, who has claimed his power so vast and grand as to assure the greatest pleasures to Faustus, responds, "Marriage is but a ceremonial toy, And, if thou lov'st me, think no more of it" (Doctor Faustus 2.1.141-142). When he describes the union of marriage as a "ceremonial toy," he attempts to distract Faustus from the significance of the joining of man and woman in God's sanctity. Protestantism changed the ceremony of marriage as it was practiced under Catholicism.

Significantly, the Reformation brought an end to the ceremony within the church walls. By disposing of the rituals of the marriage ceremony, the period of the Reformation created what Christine Peters calls an "ambiguity" around marriage (Peters 96). The Protestant critique of the Catholic marriage ceremony rejected the emphasis put on the social and political union of two people in the holy church. The Catholic system had, by Protestant evaluation, become too involved with the dealings of society outside of religious matters. Particularly during the Elizabethan era, Protestant England sought to separate what was religious from what was not. This is not to say that the church lacked influence. Protestants were still expected to consult the church but, theologically,

there was no attempt to make political matters religious. By reforming the ceremony of marriage, Protestantism sought in many ways to acknowledge the distinction between social and religious marriage matters.

When discussing the social implications of marriage, Peters argues:

It is this defining nature of marriage which accounts for its prominence in historians' assessments of the social impact of the Reformation. Such analyses have focused primarily on the development of a distinctly Protestant emphasis on companionate marriage as the basis for mutual spiritual support... One of the aims of the Reformation liturgical changes was clearly to bring the ceremony entirely into the religious sphere and to avoid contamination with material concerns (Peters 63).

As this excerpt shows, the Protestant idea of marriage re-centered itself on the religious significance of the union. Faustus, as a student of Protestantism living in a Protestant German state, would also understand marriage in religious terms. Faustus's interest in marriage in this historical context is a religious interest rather than a means for social gains; Mephistopheles cannot fulfill his religious needs.

Furthering the plausibility of a godly desire of Faustus's first request is the significance of a woman in the context of religious and scientific theory. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the expectation of marriage (both religious and social) was the conception of children⁴. Particularly for Protestants, childbearing was a duty to God. In fact, Protestantism rejected the necessity for clerical celibacy on the grounds that virginity did not bring a person closer to God.

⁴ In 1553, a Lutheran pastor named Otho Korber produced a pamphlet for women called *A brief account [of] how pregnant women should comfort themselves before and during childbirth, and entrust themselves and their child to the Good Lord through Christ*. Pamphlets and sermons on the topic of childbirth solidify the religious importance of childbearing.

Instead, the production and rearing of children that expanded God's devoted following and pleased him most. As Kathleen Crowther-Heyck notes, "Martin Luther (1483-1546) ...argued that pregnant women, women in labor, and nursing mothers were all doing God's work. He famously (or infamously) proclaimed that women should have as many children as possible"(Crowther-Heyck 907). The rejection of lifelong celibacy by Protestant theology further clarifies why Faustus seeks a wife first. A woman, unlike a man, is capable of creation in the womb. Throughout the Early Modern period, science and religion both held the idea that God was the ultimate creator of the worlds. The corporeal beings of man and woman are designed by God to multiply--the processes of conception and childbirth were thus divine. Faustus has thus far devoted his life to science and ignored corporeal duty to God to multiply. In seeking a wife, Faustus not only hopes to fulfill his religious duty--he hopes to exceed it.

The union of marriage also provides Faustus with the opportunity to overcome his weaknesses as a man. In the line, "I am wanton and lascivious and cannot live without a wife," spoken by Faustus, it is implicit what a wife offers. First, we must deal with the assertion by Faustus that he is "wanton and lascivious." The acknowledgement of wantonness is relevant when we consider the opinion of humanity and sexual desire during the Reformation. Protestantism dispelled the idea that a state of celibacy was in anyway superior to procreating. With this reformed understanding came a recognition of sexual desire as a necessary part of humanity. As a human, Faustus is by nature desirous of sex.

The assertion of desire makes him even more apt to be a servant of God: if he had remained chaste we could categorize him with the chaste priests of Catholicism and underrate his religious devotion. However, by searching for a *wife* as a solution to his natural sexual desire, Faustus is seeking the correct and righteous salve. Kathleen M. Crowther provides the following description

of the ideal Protestant husband-and-wife: “In the pious housewife who cleaned his [her husband’s] house and reared his numerous children they (sixteenth-century Protestants) imagined the disciplined female, firmly under the control of her husband, the sexual desires of both safely channeled into procreation.” (Crowther-Hyeck 118). Faustus’s search for a wife is the appropriate channel for his sexual desire.

In this scene, Marlowe shows the intersection of body and soul. Both the physicality and spiritual realm of the soul are expressed in Faustus’s request for a wife. In this moment, we see how science and religion work together to form each other. It is not enough for one or the other to conceptualize the soul; instead, it is the science of the body and religion of the spiritual that create an understanding of the soul. The soul itself is thus a crossing of religion and science. Behind Faustus’s scientific and religious conception of his soul is a subtext in which the English church and monarchy convey the *truth* of the soul, unlike Catholicism which, by contrast, does not allow for science to substantiate the soul.

“No end is limited to damnèd souls”

Marlowe’s Faustus is a character within a historical moment reacting to a conflict of religion. While Marlowe’s own religious identity, (or lack thereof,) may suggest certain things to us about the overarching perception of religion in the play, there yet remains a complex and highly attuned evaluation of the religious and political atmosphere of Early Modern England. Marlowe’s interest in the religious tale of Faust shows an interest with the conflicts and uncertainties of his time. Even if Marlowe was not himself devout, he understood that the audiences for whom he was writing were invested in correctly practicing Protestantism—believing that doing so would decide their eternal fate. Faustus in many ways represents a character at the center of the crossroads of

science and religion that occurred during the Reformation. With the disruption of religious stability, all things were called into question; boundaries had to be reconfigured as they were all, at least temporarily, destabilized. At each step of the story, Marlowe crafts a Faust character who is faced with these reconfigurations.

In the tragic conclusion of the play, we find that Faustus has misplaced his faith. As his twenty-four years come to an end, he realizes his error:

All beasts are happy, for when they die
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements,
But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
Cursed be the parents that engendered me.
No, Faustus, curse thyself; curse Lucifer,

That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven (Doctor Faustus 5.3.172-176).

In this scene, Faustus is faced with the reality that his deal with Mephistopheles was after all legitimate. Signing his soul in blood crossed the line into sacrilege and disregarded his faith in God. Faustus's faith in science over religious doctrine was in vain—his damnation was signed in the blood from his body which bears connection to his soul. Knowing this, we see Faustus desperately trying to place blame on others. First, he curses his parents for birthing him, he then briefly acknowledges his own guilt before settling on Lucifer as the ultimate culprit. The realization is even more clear in Faustus's final line: "I'll burn my books! O, Mephistopheles!" (Doctor Faustus 5.3.185). The books in which Faustus has put his faith have led him away from God. Though he had not intended to damn his soul, Faustus's deal with Mephistopheles signs his fate in hell.

Acknowledging the context of the story, and trusting Marlowe's ability as a playwright, we can readily identify how the choices Marlowe has made relate to his epoch. It is not by chance that Marlowe has chosen to rewrite the story of Faust—he has consciously placed Faust in the Elizabethan era. This historical figure, who once served as a religious warning for previous generations, is confronted with the reality of the sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Marlowe's task is thus not to recalibrate the cautionary tale but, rather, to expose the uncertainties in Faustus's path. Critic Alan Sinfield explains why Marlowe's play remains open for interpretation saying,

Even critics who believe Faustus is able to choose freely do not thereby prevent the play from provoking embarrassment about God. They cannot settle on the point at which Faustus is irrevocably committed...Such interpretive scope hardly makes for a persuasive theology. It may lead to the thought that there is no coherent or consistent answer because we are on an ideological faultline where the churches have had to struggle to render their notions adequate. It may suggest not only that Faustus is caught in a cat-and-mouse game played by God at the expense of people, but also that God makes up the rules as he goes along (Sinfield 360).

In this analysis of where the play leads us to ponder, we see the connection between Faustus and the playwright Marlowe. Like Faustus, Marlowe is living in an uncertain religious and political environment because of the decisions made between the church and monarchy. Sinfield argues that Marlowe's play can be read as a critique against the Anglican church because of the assessment of God that emerges from analyzing Faustus's wrongdoing. By such an analysis, the play is not a warning to readers in regards to crossing into the Devil's hold but rather a warning to Anglican theologians about the church's unstable doctrine.

Faustus's quest cannot be readily deemed sacrilegious: such a claim dismisses the complexity of the period in which Marlowe is writing. Instead, we must consider in what situations and with what subtleties Marlowe explores his Faustus. As we have outlined, Marlowe presents various political/religious concepts: blood, body, and soul. The common theme among these material concepts is that they exist in both religious and scientific contexts that collided during the early years of the sixteenth-century Protestant reformation in England. Marlowe's interest in the topics of science and religion came about in a time when the lay people of England were struggling to understand how their religion had changed and the effects of science. Faustus, a man devoted to science, is a member of this community. What makes Faustus worthy of the focus put upon him in this play is his desire to push as far as possible in all directions available to him. He makes use of the flexibility of limitations during the Reformation—nothing is off-limits to him if he can justify it as newly approved by the Anglican church.

We begin with Faustus's blood with which he signs into allegiance with Mephistopheles—blood is particularly easy to connect to the religious moment with the issue of the Eucharist. Dispute over the literalness of communion separated the Protestant and Catholic ideology and began the reevaluation of science's role under Protestant governing. The separation of blood and soul, in Faustus's journey, brings into question the location of the soul. In such a question is the irrevocable issue of science. Faustus is, after all, a scientist *as well as* a Protestant man.

In his final moments, Faustus realizes that his denial of blood's religious meaning was in bad faith. It is out of despair that Faustus says:

O, I'll leap up to heaven. Who pulls me down?

One drop of blood will save me. O, my Christ!

Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ.

Yet will I call on him. O, spare me, Lucifer (Doctor Faustus 5.3.144-147).

In performance, this scene has been interpreted as Faustus seeing the blood of Christ. It is thus a drop of Christ's blood for which Faustus begs. One drop of Christ's holy blood will spare Faustus of his sin. In other words, man and Christ are connected through the substance of blood; Christ's bloodshed extends beyond symbolic importance into a literal divinity placed onto blood. The reason Faustus's requests for salvation are not fulfilled may lie in his non-committal and desperate pleas. Even when Faustus directly addresses Christ to save his soul, his plea ends with a desperate cry to Lucifer. Faustus's despair is itself a sin and cannot get him salvation.

As we have discovered, Faustus finds grounds on which to justify his actions. Whether he is actually justified in his sanctioning becomes clear when, at the end of the play, his soul is taken to hell and his body is ravaged by the Devil. Marlowe, in effect, answers the question of how far boundaries can be stretched in this historical religious moment. Early Modern England is not free from the limitations governed upon man by God. This lesson of the play does not contradict with a simpler reading in which Faustus actively and knowingly rebels against God and religion. However, there is far more to be gained by understanding the nuances of Faustus's decisions as a scholar and Protestant during early modern England. Christopher Marlowe's rewriting of the Faust story conveys the atmosphere of social and religious uncertainty during and following the Protestant Reformation and confronts the consequences of this historical moment.

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