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## Assignment on dr faustus as a tragedy

If the play "Dr. Faustus" is a tragedy then undoubtedly its character Dr. Faustus is a successful tragic hero. After going through the whole play, its plot, techniques used by the writer and character analysis of Dr. Faustus, any critic can safely say that Dr. Faustus falls in the category of best tragic heroes just like Oedipus Rex. Aristotle has appreciated the tragic character of Oedipus Rex in his book "Poetics". In fact, whenever he talks about an ideal tragic hero, he refers to Oedipus Rex. Meaning thereby, Oedipus was the best tragic hero in the eyes of Aristotle when he wrote "Poetics". Even after Aristotle, many scholars including critics have appreciated it. However, it cannot be denied that the majority of critics feels that Oedipus Rex has no role in the play and he is just a puppet in the hands of gods. Let us leave Oedipus Rex for some other day and talk about "Dr. Faustus". Before going in detail, it is important to mention here that there is no new definition of tragedy and tragic hero; if there is any, it is not important for us as we are bound to define Dr. Faustus as a tragic hero keeping in view the parameters, given in "Poetics" by Aristotle. We may have another choice; we may talk about Shakespearean tragedy or any modern tragedy and compare it with "Dr. Faustus" but the basic elements of a tragic hero are the same. Hence, conventional definition, given by Aristotle, is enough to discuss whether Dr. Faustus is a tragic hero or not. Click here to read summary of Dr. Faustus from an external website. If you have read "Poetics" then its Chapter XIII should be in your consciousness, where Aristotle in detail motions all the characteristics of an ideal tragic hero. We are not going in detail about these characteristics; whether they are right or wrong, it is not our concern. We are here to judge whether Dr. Faustus fits in those characteristics or not. Characteristics of an ideal tragic hero are He should be a nobleman.Character should neither be pious nor a complete sinner.He should fall from prosperity to adversity.His sufferings are necessary; however, death is not essential in every case.Although he should suffer, yet he must suffer because of his wrongdoings and not because of circumstances. It is necessary for every writer to keep in mind the above said key elements if he wants a perfect tragedy and an ideal tragic hero. It seems that Christopher Marlowe had the knowledge of all these ingredients; that is the reason his character "Dr. Faustus" fulfills all these necessary requirements of a conventional tragedy. Firstly, from the very beginning of the play, spectators witness that Dr. Faustus is a nobleman. He is famous. He is not a common person but an extraordinary scholar, having knowledge of every field of life. We can also not say that he is a poor man as he is a well-known person of his locality. He, somehow, fulfills the requirement of a tragedy as far as the character's noble birth is concerned. If it is not the case, many writers, including Shakespeare have changed the taste of tragedy by presenting common persons from everyday life such as whores, butchers, cobblers, etc. They have proved Aristotle wrong and demonstrated that catharsis is possible without "depicting a character of only noble birth". In the case of Dr. Faustus, when spectators watch the sufferings of Dr. Faustus, they feel pity for him and at the same time fear for his wrongdoings. Hence, in both the cases Dr. Faustus has the ability to become a tragic hero. Secondly, when we find that Dr. Faustus is going to sign an agreement with Lucifer/Mephistopheles somewhere in his heart, there is fear of God. He knows that he is going to follow the wrong path. He knows the boundaries of God and feels that only these can take him to the right path. No doubt, he signs the agreement and this act makes him a sinner but it does not mean that he is entirely an evil kind of person. Any person, having a prudent mind, can say that it is just a simple mistake. He wants to get more and more knowledge. He selects black magic because he wants powers too. In the end, we find him repenting on his sins. Although, he becomes arrogant yet this is what Aristotle calls "Hamartia". It is the "err" of Dr. Faustus, which leads him towards his destruction. There is hardly any critic, who says that Dr. Faustus is purely bad or evil kind of person. Most of the critics agree that Dr. Faustus is the combination of both good and evil, due to which he perfectly fits for tragedy and becomes a perfect tragic hero. Thirdly, there is no denying the fact that Dr. Faustus falls from prosperity to adversity. He signs the agreement, enjoys life, does what he want and ultimately suffers. In the start, he is prosperous but at the end of the play, we see his miserable condition. Hell becomes his permanent destination. Suffering is one of the most important ingredients of tragedy because catharsis always depends on suffering. In this play, Dr. Faustus, in the climax, cries. He seeks help but cannot find any refuge. Spectators cry with Dr. Faustus. He regrets but no help reaches for him. Finally, he meets with his death. Notwithstanding, it is not the death of Dr. Faustus, which frightens us but his everlasting agonies. His sufferings in the eternal world terrify us. Dr. Faustus, in this way, justifiably completes this requirement of tragic hero too. As regards the last element of tragedy, circumstances on no occasion are responsible for the downfall of Dr. Faustus. Christopher Marlowe has very beautifully knitted this element of tragedy. Examine in detail the character of Dr. Faustus from any perspective, you would witness that it is one and only Dr. Faustus, who is responsible for his destruction. Unlike Oedipus Rex, he has free will. He chooses black magic just because he wants powers and knowledge. On many occasions, a good angel warns him but he does not seek forgiveness from God. Even, he makes fun of the old man, who advises him. He blindly follows evil just to enjoy the luxuries of life. Thus, circumstances by no mean are responsible for the fall of Dr. Faustus. His own desires force him to choose the wrong path. Like so, Dr. Faustus also fulfills this requirement of an ideal tragic hero. Suffice is to say that Dr. Faustus is a perfect tragic hero. In the traditional definition of tragedy, we do not find any loophole in his character. He is noble by birth. (even if he is not noble he fits for tragedy....see successful plays of Shakespeare such as Othello, in which a moor is picture-perfect tragic hero), he is not too good nor too bad, he falls from prosperity to adversity and at the end he suffers because of hamartia (his hamartia is his pride). All these components of tragedy make Dr. Faustus a wonderful and everlasting tragic hero. Due to the availability of these elements of a tragic hero in Dr. Faustus, students of English Literature would keep seeking guidance from this character forever. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, the Tragic Hero, is a fascinating must-read chef-d'oeuvre featuring Dr. Faustus as the protagonist and a knowledgeable who decided to sell his soul to the devil to gain knowledge. He enters into an agreement that lasts for twenty-four years. He is optimistic about himself. His quest to acquire skills leads him to a horrible ending when he goes to hell following his malicious killing by the Lucifer. Though many interpreters of this character view him as a misguided sinner, there is sufficient evidence that depicts Faustus as a tragic hero as revealed in the paper. A tragic hero is an individual who evokes people's pity as well as their terror because he has both good and bad characteristics. The first instance, which portrays Dr. Faustus as a tragic hero is that he evokes the listeners and the readers' pity. It creates some form of connection between the audience and the character. Before joining Lucifer, he was working as a normal individual doing his studies in law, medicine, and theology. The mistakes that he does are just the same as those that any other person can make. Like any other normal human being, he is optimistic and ambitious in life aspiring to gain more knowledge. As human beings, people sympathize with the doctor because he had made the wrong decision in life by choosing Lucifer instead of God. Therefore, people wish that he finds the truth and accepts to repent his sins and come back to God. His fate is dreadful and hence the people's pity for him. At the end of the play, he is destined to lose his life and taken to hell because of his decisions that they made. Even though Faustus has committed many evils, people pity him and want God to forgive him rather than being so fierce to him. Therefore, the tragic hero character is manifested at the end of the play where Faustus pleads with God to forgive him and liberate him from the hand of the devil. He says, "My God, my God, look not so fierce on me (Marlowe Act 5 Scene II line 181). The fact that Faustus is a scholar is stated twice, first, in the opening and then at the end of the play. This clue demonstrates the scholar as a tragic hero for the readers and the audiences to sympathize with him throughout the play. For instance, at the beginning of the play, Faustus is a person who is prosperous and well known. His reputation is known as a well-respected professional. For instance, he presents his speech to students and servants in different areas of scholarships. This demonstrates his level of intellect. For example, he says, "philosophy is odious and obscure, both law and physics are for petty wits" (Marlowe Act 2 scene I Line 109). Furthermore, in the closing line of the play, his colleagues lament about their fallen hero and scholar. This lamentation and sorrow show how they lost an individual that had a positive impact on their life's and the careers of many students. They lament," yet for he was a scholar once admired, for wondrous knowledge in our German schools" (Marlowe Act 5 Scene III Line 18). This happens even after Mephistopheles had made efforts to warn him that his soul was to be damned. Again, this depicts him as a tragic hero rather than a misguided sinner. Tragic hero character is also manifested in Dr. Faustus' mistaken choice. He decided to exchange his soul with knowledge from Lucifer. This choice is what makes him die. It leads him to downfall. The agreement blinds him. Therefore, he is not able to choose what is wrong or right. For instance, when approached by the good angels, he is blinded and thus goes into the ways of the devil. This decision brings agony to his life when he is taken away by the devil after the elapse of the twenty-four years that they had agreed. He says, "shall I make spirits fetch me what I please..." "I will make my servile spirits to invent" (Marlowe Act 1 Scene I Line 88). This quest to know more is evident in the first Act where he says that, even though he is skillful in sciences, he still wants to know more. The desire of most human beings usually is to learn and acquire skills and knowledge to the maximum level. However, Faustus desires make him choose wrong ways without feeling guilty, which is depictive of a tragic hero rather than a misguided sinner. He is hasty in his ambitions for honor and power; which makes him rush in the decision. For instance, he says, "...and chase the Prince of Parma for our land and reign sole in of all the provinces" (Marlowe Act 2 Lines 79). The quest and desires for power and honor make him refuse to repent his sins and come backlght. He fails to decide between the ways of the Lucifer and the path of God making him end his life tragically as a hero. Faustus tried to achieve his goals deciding something on his own. The heroic behaviors illustrate a manifestation of the Renaissance period where science shadowed most of the lives of people. Therefore, he was aspiring to set free of fate and decide his destiny on his own. He makes his own decisions to join Lucifer without anyone compelling him to do so. A good illustration of this is when he demands that Mephistopheles goes to inform the devil about his intentions and desires. Mephistopheles is told to, "Go, bear these tidings to great Lucifer, "say he surrenders up to him his soul." He further says, "So he will spare him for four and twenty years, letting him live in all voluptuousness" (Poster 6). This is the message that Dr. Faustus sent Mephistopheles to tell the Lucifer about his desires and the will of becoming one of his children to be allowed to be his follower (Marlowe Act 1 Scene III lines 91-104). Therefore, Dr. Faustus was not the kind of a person that could not live an opportunity, without utilizing it. Therefore, by following the ways of Lucifer, he has contended that he would conquer all and raise his destiny in life. Consequently, he vowed to work for the Lucifer. He, therefore, demonstrates the character of a tragic hero. He was a hero, but because of this decision, he ends up losing his life and even the knowledge and the power and the honor that he looked and aspired to get. Faustus can also be argued to be a misguided sinner in the sense that, he decided to go the ways of Lucifer and yet he knows about the existence of God. It is the work of the devil to mislead him to make him fail to enter heaven. The desires he develops of amassing more knowledge and skills to conquer destiny and to have power are all works of the devil. His conscious and the fact that he was knowledgeable, he could have resisted the power of the devil to come into his way and instead stick to his work. However, regardless of this, I contend that I can describe Faustus as a tragic hero. He is devoted to the devil. This devotion hinders him to choose from what is right and wrong and leads to him to his downfall. The drama as presented by Marlowe is optimistic. The character Dr. Faustus is optimistic about life, and this makes him or drives him in the wrong direction. Therefore, I can argue that Marlowe teaches Christians how they can build a strong Christian faith and seek salvation. Therefore, a tragic hero is used to depict the downfall of a tragic hero. Dr. Faustus encounters a very stronger tragedy compared to other people or scholars below him. His wrong choices in life make him experience misery after leading a happy life working as a researcher in different fields. It is his error in his judgment, which brings a harrowing ending of his life (Potter 124). He decided to go against his fate and decided to follow his own free will by wanting to be the master of his fate. The decision he makes is the basis of his downfall and vanishes. This has been depicted and illustrated by the drama. Hence, I agree that the play has more sufficiently revealed the aspect of a tragic hero than a misguided sinner in Dr. Faustus. Works Cited Foster, Brett. "Sympathy for the Devil: The Lives & Afterlives of Christopher Marlowe." Common Review 5.4(2007):6-16. Print. Marlowe, Christopher. Doctor Faustus the Tragic Hero. London: Routledge, 1998. Print. Potter, Lois. 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