
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Divided Psyche: A Psychoanalytical Study of Dr. Faustus in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

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| ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the divided psyche of Dr. Faustus. He was a brilliant German scholar and the protagonist of the Elizabethan tragedy *Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe. Dr. Faustus' psyche was conflicted between id and superego, a theory by Sigmund Freud. Throughout the story, we see that Dr. Faustus is mostly ill-motivated by his instincts and is indifferent about morality. Though the Good Angel tried to guide him toward the right path, the Bad Angel misled him. The Good Angel and the Bad Angel both reflected the conscience and the evil instinct that he already had in him. Faustus's struggle was between the pursuit of worldly desires and moral considerations. By analyzing the text through the content analysis method, this paper made a connection between Faustus' divided psyche and his ultimate fate. His prioritization of the id over the superego led him towards damnation. Faustus only cared about his own amusement his whole life. At the last moment of life, he realized his mistakes and wanted to go on the path of morality, but it was already too late for salvation. The paper serves as a powerful commentary on the inner turmoil arising from the psyche's conflict between desires and moral values.

| KEYWORDS

Divided psyche, damnation, id, inner turmoil, morality, superego

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1. Introduction

Doctor Faustus is one of the best writings of Christopher Marlowe. Faustus was highly skilled but dissatisfied with the limitations of human knowledge and power. His psyche was confused about the choice between good and evil. Though he was good at various subjects like law, medicine, and theology, he turned to magic in his quest for ultimate power and knowledge. Faustus desired to transcend human limitations by seeking forbidden knowledge. His high ambitions led him to make his pact with Lucifer. His downfall highlighted the dangers of hubris.

Faustus struggled throughout the play by Good Angel and Bad Angel. Though he often contemplated repentance, he ultimately failed to turn back to God; this represents his damnation. From a psychoanalytical perspective, *Doctor Faustus* can be read as a study of internal conflict. Faustus constantly flirted with destruction. His refusal to repent reflected an unconscious desire for self-destruction. His ultimate fate drove him towards death. He had a dual psyche. His id was represented by his desire for knowledge, power, and pleasure. In contrast, the superego was represented by his urge to repent and seek salvation. The inner conflict happened between the desire of the id and the restraint of the superego. Faustus grappled with these forces, showcasing the internal struggle between personal

desires and moral values. He was never satisfied with his knowledge. Whenever he thought of doing a bad deed influenced by the Good Angel, the Good Angel always tried to stop him. In our project, we tried to show that the Bad Angel and Good Angel were not angels but Faustus's own inner voices and how the divided psyche caused the inner conflicts.

1.1 Problem Statement

This study has aimed to explore the internal psychological conflict through the character of Dr. Faustus in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The analysis will examine how the divided psyche drives Faustus' tragic downfall. Faustus' psyche was divided. There was an internal conflict in him. This conflict was held between power and morality. However, Dr. Faustus chose animalistic desires to address this conflict. Although morality warned him many times in the form of Good Angel, he did not obey it. Some researchers, like Okerlund Edmonds, have described the psychological dimensions of Dr. Faustus and the role of the Good Angel and Bad Angel. But no one worked the divided psyche of Doctor Faustus. Faustus' mind never listened to his superego. Rather, he focused on his id. A researcher like Okerlund also pointed out the folly of Dr. Faustus. A critic like Raj has described the play as a tragedy with various aspects. Though Faustus was good at many subjects like theology, physics, and law, he wanted to have unlimited power at a time through necromancy. Our study will look into Dr. Faustus' psychological conflict. We will address the dilemma of Dr. Faustus from the perspective of psychoanalytical study.

2. Literature Review

"A study of the themes in Dr. Faustus, a play by Christopher Marlowe" by Rathore has described the numerous themes of the play. It has examined the internal conflict doomed pursuit of knowledge and power that ultimately leads to his downfall. The themes of ambition, temptation, and damnation have been analyzed here. Rathore said, "Dr. Faustus is a brilliant scholar who becomes dissatisfied with his human limitations and longs for supernatural powers" (Rathore 496). He also talks about the relevance of the themes in the present time, as people still struggle with ethics and the pursuit of success. This paper has an overview of the themes but has not focused on the divided psyche of Dr. Faustus.

In a study on "*Doctor Faustus: A Study of the Tragedy with Various Aspects*," it was found that Faustus was a Renaissance hero, a medieval tragic hero, and he has thoughts of hell and heaven. All his misdeeds his character portrayed him as a tragic hero. So, Raj focuses on Faustus's downfall and makes him a tragic hero in this article. Raj said, "Faustus returns with Mephistopheles, both dressed as cardinals and posing as two fathers returning from a mission. All of this is pure slapstick comedy to the audience: it is also a comedy against Faustus" (Raj 923).

In the article titled "Marlowe Presents the Greed of a Renaissance Man in *Doctor Faustus*," Shrestha talks about Faustus' achievements, such as unlimited knowledge, individualism, and free play of mind, power, and pleasure. Shrestha mentioned that "Marlowe represents two different qualities like greed and pride in his main character, Dr. Faustus, which led him to his destruction" (Shrestha 35). Faustus only thinks about himself and ignores morality. His self-assertion and desire for possession were unlimited and extreme. In the Renaissance era, a Renaissance man was fascinated by new learning, as Faustus did. Shrestha mentioned that "By presenting Faustus a rebellious character, Marlowe is addressing the people's greed of Renaissance time to pass power, property, superiority and knowledge" (Shrestha 37).

Many critics have researched Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Scholars have given importance to the theme of *Doctor Faustus*, the internal conflict, the heroic figure of Dr. Faustus, the religious faith of Dr. Faustus, etc. Rohit shows the features of a "Renaissance Hero" and a "Medieval Hero" in Dr. Faustus. Another researcher, Raj, has focused on the character of Dr. Faustus, as Rohit does. Though Raj has put some tragic features of Dr. Faustus, there is a connection between his and Rohit's work. Karim and Tandon have described the character of Dr. Faustus from a religious perspective. Their discussion represented the effects of good works and bad works. In Okerlund's discussion, Marlowe's famous character, Dr. Faustus, is depicted as an intellectual folly. The chorus introduced Faustus with a tribute to his learning. He found medicine, logic, and law for his aspirations. Thus, he confirmed his position as an intellectual man. Shrestha has focused on Faustus's achievements. Two different qualities, greed, and pride, are shown in her research. Another researcher, Edmonds, described the internal and external self of Faustus. His discussion is different from others. Rathor, a researcher, has focussed on the themes in *Doctor Faustus*. In his

research, numerous themes have been described. Sahib and Jawad have shown the conflict between Good Angel and Bad Angel in Dr. Faustus. In spite of being a researcher of Dr. Faustus, there is a strong connection between their and Edmond's discussion. However, none has focused on the divided psyche of Dr. Faustus from a psychoanalytical perspective, which is the gap in my research.

2.1 Research Questions

The project aims to address and provide some level of clarification for the following questions:

1. How does Christopher Marlowe depict the concept of a divided psyche through the character of Dr. Faustus in *Doctor Faustus*?
2. Which part of the psyche plays a primary role in the resolution of the inner conflicts of Dr. Faustus in *Doctor Faustus*?

2.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

1. To explore the concept of a divided psyche through the character of Dr. Faustus in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.
2. To analyze the part of the psyche that plays a primary role in the resolution of the inner conflicts of Dr. Faustus in *Doctor Faustus*.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

In this section, we used psychoanalytical theory. Psyche means the totality of the human mind, surrounding the conscious and unconscious components. In psychoanalytical theory, the psyche is understood to include all mental processes, thoughts, emotions, and behavior. The psychoanalytical theory is developed by Sigmund Freud. This theory explains that human behavior is driven by unconscious motives and desires. This theory also provides a framework for understanding personality development. For this reason, Freud's psychoanalytical theory is also known as Freud's Personality theory.

Freud has divided his personality theory into three parts.

1. Id
2. Ego
3. Superego

Id refers to instinctual desires. The id represents the initial part of the human psyche. It seeks immediate gratification of basic instincts and desires, e.g., hunger, sex aggression, etc. Ego is the modified version of id. It functions both unconsciously and consciously.

The superego represents moral standards. It can help individuals understand and modify their moral standards. In Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, psychoanalytical theory can be applied. A detailed analysis of *Doctor Faustus* can be done based on the key concepts of psychoanalytical theory. The very first term of psychoanalytical theory is id, which represents Faustus's initial desires. He was not only thirsting for power and knowledge but also for sensory pleasures. Gaining power made him an incredible person. By this power, he was able to control the whole world. He decided to practice necromancy; he made a pact with Mephostophilis to gain supernatural abilities. Basically, Faustus wanted to gain unlimited knowledge and supernatural power in a very short time. So, Faustus's id sought immediate satisfaction. He was very much affected by his desires.

The superego represents Faustus's morality and religious teachings. This term was represented by the Good Angel and the old man. Guilt and shame have been expressed in Faustus's superego. His regression and damnation have been highlighted by the superego, which has attempted to control his actions. Psychoanalytical theory has been connected. He was a great representative character from the perspective of Freud's psychoanalytical theory.

3. Research Methodology

The chapter supports the research methodology for our topic, and we chose the content analysis method. Content analysis is a research method that investigates content such as books, speeches, articles, interviews, etc. It helps in the categorization of textual, visual, or audio data to understand the patterns, themes, and meanings ingrained into the material. The qualitative content analysis method focuses on the specific elements as well as on the meaning and the context of the content. It is widely used to study how information is understood and transmitted in a variety of fields like literature, psychology, media studies, etc.

Content analysis allows us to systematically examine the texts. We find themes, symbols, patterns, etc, by classifying the information. This is important in literature because writers include deeper meanings and subtext in their writings. This analysis is important to reveal these hidden meanings.

Through content analysis, we can compare different texts of the same writer. We can also compare the works of different writers. In literature, we can analyze the content of literary works and draw a connection between the content and the broader historical context using the content analysis method. Content analysis is significant for interpreting different branches of knowledge. It also helps in the selection of the theory for theoretical framework in research. It is a powerful method. It enriches our understanding of literary works. That is why we use the content analysis method in research.

The text is about a divided psyche, and it is described from a psychoanalytical perspective. There are some important lines that directly address our title. For this study, we have chosen thirteen different contents from the text that will be analyzed in the discussion chapter. After analyzing those contents, we will be able to establish a link between the psychoanalytic perspective and the divided psyche of Dr. Faustus.

4. Discussion

This chapter explores the psyche and fate of Dr. Faustus through five sections. We discuss his desires, his divided psyche, a psychoanalytic interpretation of his ultimate fate, and the interpretation of key quotations to better understand his inner conflict. Through these discussions, we uncover Faustus' ambition, inner turmoil, downfall, and ultimate damnation.

Faustus' ambition is evident from his declaration:

"A sound magician is a mighty god; Here tire, my brains to get a deity!" (Marlowe, 1.1.61-62)

For Faustus, magic represents ultimate knowledge and power, something that elevates him beyond ordinary men. His belief in the transformative power of knowledge aligns with the Renaissance humanist movement, which emphasized intellectual greatness. However, Faustus doesn't seek knowledge for enlightenment but for dominance, revealing his insatiable ambition.

His internal struggle is illustrated through the exchange between the Good and Bad Angels:

"O Faustus, lay that damned book aside..."

"Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art..." (Marlowe, 1.1.69-74)

The Good Angel urges Faustus to abandon necromancy, warning that the pursuit of forbidden knowledge will endanger his soul. The Bad Angel, however, tempts him, glorifying magic as a path to fame and power. This battle between good and evil mirrors Faustus' divided psyche—his moral consciousness (superego) and his reckless desires (id).

Faustus indulges in fantasies of limitless power:

"Shall make spirits fetch me what I please..." (Marlowe, 1.1.77-82)

His greed is boundless—he wants gold from India, pearls from the ocean, and knowledge beyond human limits. However, he is blind to the cost of his desires. This monologue captures his pride and belief that magic will make him godlike, reinforcing his tragic flaw: overreaching ambition.

As time passes, Faustus misuses his powers for petty tricks. He humiliates the Pope, deceives a horse-courser, and mocks the Emperor's knight, showing his descent into frivolity. He revels in temporary pleasures instead of seeking meaningful wisdom. His moral decay deepens as he ignores the consequences of his actions.

Faustus' internal conflict resurfaces when confronted with the reality of his fate:

"What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemned to die?" (Marlowe, 1.15.21-26)

He begins to realize that his powers are fleeting and his soul is doomed. His past actions, driven by arrogance and hedonism, now haunt him. He recognizes that he is not a god but a man who has sold his soul for temporary gains. The weight of his choices leads to despair, yet he hesitates to repent. Even when the old man offers him a final chance at redemption, Faustus remains conflicted:

"O friend, I feel Thy words to comfort my distressed soul. Leave me awhile to ponder on my sins." (Marlowe, 1.18.65-67)

This moment shows that Faustus is not entirely lost—he still acknowledges morality. But his hesitation highlights his inner turmoil. He is torn between the possibility of salvation and the fear that he is beyond redemption. His inability to commit to repentance seals his fate.

His despair deepens in his final hours:

"Now hast thou but one bare hour to live, And then thou must be damn'd perpetually..." (Marlowe, 1.19.134-141)

As the clock ticks down, Faustus desperately wishes to stop time. He realizes his greatest weakness—despite all his magic, he cannot control time or escape death. His arrogance turns into regret, but it is too late. He cries out to God for mercy, but his earlier rejection of faith leaves him helpless.

In his final moments, he is overtaken by terror:

"My God, my God! look not so fierce on me! Adders and Serpents, let me breathe awhile!" (Marlowe, 1.19.187-190)

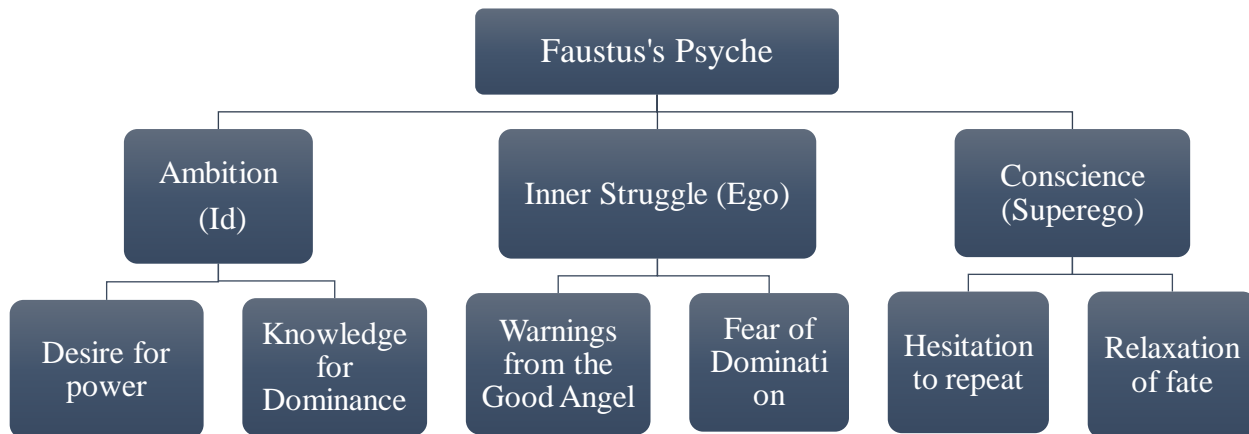
He pleads for another chance, but the devils come to claim him. He finally understands the gravity of his sins, but his fate is already sealed. The last thing he wishes for is to burn his books—a symbolic rejection of the path he chose. But by then, his damnation is unavoidable.

The tragic irony of Faustus is that he had several opportunities to repent, but he always hesitated and took the path of his impulse. His divided psyche is torn between ambition and morality, which prevents him from making the right choice. His story serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked ambition, the consequences of forsaking morality, and the fleeting nature of worldly pleasures.

In the end, Faustus' downfall is not just because he made a deal with the devil—it is because he refused to believe in the possibility of redemption until it was too late.

4.1 Divided Psyche and Dr. Faustus

In *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe explores the inner conflict of a man torn between ambition and morality. Faustus' divided psyche is represented by the Good Angel and Evil Angel—not as external beings but as voices within his mind.



The **Evil Angel** reflects his **id**, the part of him that craves power and pleasure:

"Go forward, Faustus... Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky, Lord and commander of these elements." (Marlowe 76)

Meanwhile, the **Good Angel**, his **superego**, urges him to resist temptation and seek redemption:

"Lay that damned book aside... Read, read the scriptures; that is blasphemy." (Marlowe 76)

Faustus is caught in a cycle of doubt. He wants limitless power, knowing it could lead to his downfall:

"For, ere I sleep, I'll try what I can do: This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore." (Marlowe 79)

Even as he wavers, his id keeps pushing him forward:

His confusion intensifies. When he sees *Homo, fuge!* (Man, flee!) inscribed on his arm, he doesn't know where to turn. He debates whether hell is even real:

"I think hell's a fable." (Marlowe 91)

Faustus' divided psyche also appears in his longing for love. He asks for a wife, but Mephistopheles dismisses the idea:

"Marriage is but a ceremonial toy." (Marlowe 92)

Faustus craves both earthly pleasures and emotional connection, showing his inner conflict.

Even at the brink of doom, he feels the pull of repentance:

"O, Christ, my savior, seek to save distressed Faustus' soul!" (Marlowe 96)

Yet, his id keeps him trapped in sin. He chooses lust over redemption, kissing Helen of Troy:

"Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss." (Marlowe 139)

As the end approaches, he realizes the weight of his choices:

"Damn'd art thou, Faustus, damn'd; despair and die!" (Marlowe 138)

He wants to repent but believes it's too late:

"Accursed Faustus, where is mercy now? I do repent; and yet I do despair." (Marlowe 138)

In his final moments, he longs to escape fate:

"Now, body, turn to air... O, soul, be changed into little water-drops and fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!" (Marlowe 146)

His divided psyche, torn between ambition and redemption, ultimately seals his tragic fate.

4.2 Psychoanalytic Study of Dr. Faustus

A Psychoanalytic study involves analyzing a text through the psychoanalytic theory. This theory originated from the work of Sigmund Freud. His theory focuses on the psychological motivations, unconscious desire, and internal conflict of characters. Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, from a psychoanalytic study, would search for the psychological rates of the protagonist's actions, inner conflicts, and motivations. Dr. Faustus is actually a quest for power and knowledge. Another desire controlling can be viewed as a manifestation of his unconscious desires. His agreement with the devil represents his attempt to cover human limitations. He wants to fulfill his ambitions. His character can be described through Freud's Theory. This analysis would draw on Freudian Psychoanalytic theory of the human psyche. The elements of the theory are id, ego, and superego.

We will explain his desire, repression, and unconscious mind. At the very beginning of the novel, we see that Faustus has a thirst for excessive power and knowledge. He is actually hungry for limitless knowledge and supernatural powers. These represent the primal urges of the id. He is driven by a desire to cover human limitations. He wants to achieve God like abilities. Besides, Faustus decides to make an agreement with Lucifer only to get more power, which can be seen as his id's dominance. He prioritizes pleasure and power by selling his soul. He always finds a way to fulfill his desire. Basically, Faustus's actions are marked by impulsiveness. This represents his id. However, Faustus's Downfall can be seen as a manifestation of the id. This id brings his self-destruction. The ego is conducted based on the principle of reality. It tries to satisfy the id's desires in a realistic manner. Faustus's initial scholarly pursuits and ambitions for greatness can be seen as his ego, which tries to fulfill his id's desires for power and knowledge. He also uses his ego to justify his Lucifer. He thinks that the benefits of unlimited knowledge and power bear the moral and spiritual costs. This is a function of the ego. However, Dr. Faustus's ego is the part of his psyche that tries to mediate between his desires and moral considerations. The superego represents the social and parental standards of behavior. Faustus's superego can be seen when he expresses doubt about his agreement with Lucifer. His superego tries to remind him of the moral consequences. His superego mainly includes his soliloquies where he thinks of repentance, the Good Angel's advice urges him to turn away from bad works, and his final hours when he realizes the gravity of his everlasting damnation. Faustus's actions suggest a self-destructive impulse. His quest for ultimate knowledge leads him toward his own destruction. It highlights a

subconscious desire for destruction. Besides, throughout the play, Faustus experiences moments of fear and guilt about his agreement with Lucifer (a devil). This emotion can be seen as his superego. It reflects his morality, which he struggles to suppress, but he cannot escape from there ultimately. This play also describes Faustus's internal struggles with fear and anxiety about his luck. These emotions express the psychological distress of his existential choices.

4.3 Ultimate Fate of Dr. Faustus

Doctor Faustus sold his soul in exchange for unlimited knowledge and worldly power. Faustus had to pay a terrible price for abjuring God and leaving the path of virtue. In the closing scene, Dr. Faustus passes away as a miserable man without any hope of redemption. The soliloquy of Dr. Faustus just one hour before the end time reveals his regret for his actions. The climax is when he appeals to be saved from hell at the last minute. The impending doom drives him to desperation. He wants to hide from the wrath of God as well as of the Devil. He realizes his mistake and becomes very desperate to escape from the everlasting damnation.

The sense of morality rises in him. God is good and forgives those who repent. He is willing to listen to his super-ego and repent to God. He regrets always listening to the id and ignoring the super-ego. The fear of hell is killing him mentally. He curses his choices and pleads for more time. When the clock sticks half past eleven, he thinks of every possible as well as impossible way to avoid the punishment. We see a very strong portrayal of the super-ego in the closing scene of the play and the consequences of ignoring it in the beginning. Faustus' only wish now is to get his body turned into air so that Lucifer may not catch him. He also wishes to transform himself into little drops of water that will disappear into the waters of the ocean beyond the reach of the devil. But he is unfortunate that there is no power that can save him from the ultimate damnation. Faustus is too late to repent. His prayers have no validity at this ending point in time. If he had listened to his super-ego a long time ago, he could have avoided his doomed fate.

5. Conclusion

Christopher Marlowe's depiction of a divided psyche in *Dr. Faustus* is a central thing that demonstrates the character's inner conflict and moral struggle. Faustus was confused between his ambition and the awareness of the consequences of his actions. He desired power and knowledge. His psyche was divided between his ambition and moral and religious values. Though he was rich in learning, he was poor in desire. Throughout the play, Faustus experiences moments of clarity where he accepts the folly of his agreement and considers repentance. Above all, Faustus repeatedly denied these realizations, passing out pride and ambition. Faustus was actually unable to fully commit to either repentance or his agreement with Lucifer. Moreover, Faustus's hubris and thirst for knowledge and power complicated his psyche. Faustus was driven by an unsatisfied desire for power, knowledge, and control over supernatural forces. His pride led him to reject the limits of human achievement. He chose to align with dark forces and sold his soul and the devil. This decision shows an aspect of Faustus's psyche. Throughout the play, Faustus is haunted by moments of doubt and guilt. In the final act, Faustus' inner conflict intensified as he neared the hour of his damnation. The primary part of the psyche that played a role in the resolution of the inner conflicts of Dr. Faustus was the superego in *Doctor Faustus*. But he never prioritized his superego. He did not care about moral values. He always prioritized his id, the animalistic instinct. The Good Angel and Bad Angel symbolized his inner psyche, which appeared before him. Unfortunately, he never listened to Good Angel and became excited to get gold from India, pearls from the oceans, and tasty delicacies from far away. Ultimately, the final hour approached, and Faustus was left alone in his room to face doom and damnation. The prioritization of the id led him to his ultimate downfall.

5.1 Limitations of the Research

This research finds limitations in secondary sources. There are only a few documents published in this field.

5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

There can be multiple grounds opened by this research, such as,

- I. The Reflections of Freudian Unconscious in Dr. Faustus

- II. The Spirit of Renaissance in Dr. Faustus
- III. Dr. Faustus, A Humanist Persona.

These areas are open for future researchers.

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