

Possible Thesis Sentences

1. *Doctor Faustus* is the tragedy of a man who in striving boundlessly misdirects great gifts of mind and spirit and hence progressively loses his soul by disintegration as well as by capture.
2. Marlowe's *Faustus* is a martyr to everything that the Renaissance prized-- power, curious knowledge, enterprise, wealth, and beauty.
3. *Faustus* is no ordinary sinner, but rather an impenitent and willful miscreant.
4. The only knowledge which *Faustus* achieves is of the chimerical, of phantasm, of false shows and masquerades, of cheap tricks and dumb shows.
5. Marlowe's play is primarily a study of the mind of *Faustus* himself: a *psychomachia* dramatizing the internal and simultaneously eternal battle between good and evil -- in *Faustus* and in all of us.
6. The admonitions of *Everyman* are those of *Doctor Faustus*:

The story sayeth: man, in the beginning
Look well and take good heed to the ending,
be you never so gay.

And in both plays, a man's soul is the stage; the forces from without correspond to forces within, and Heaven and Hell play for the victory.

7. How truly appalling are *Faustus*'s final cries -- he curses the parents who engendered him, he curses Lucifer, and (most justly) himself.
8. Instability is fundamental in *Doctor Faustus*, as a theme and as a characteristic of *Faustus* himself. *Doctor Faustus* is a play of violent contrasts within a rigorous structural unity. Hilarity and agony, seriousness and irresponsibility, the extremes of optimism and depression, enthusiasm and hatred, commitment to Hell and aspiration to Heaven, pride and shame -- these are the swings of the pendulum in *Faustus*' world.
9. The great reversal from the first scene of *Doctor Faustus* to the last can be defined in different ways: from presumption to despair, from doubt of the existence of hell to belief in the reality of nothing else, from a desire to be more than man to the recognition that he has excluded himself from the promise of redemption for all mankind in Christ, from haste to sign the bond to desire for delay when the moment comes to honor it, from aspiration to deity and omnipotence to longing for extinction.