

Dr. Faustus as a Tragic Hero Dr. Faustus the protagonist of Christopher Marlowe's great tragedy can be considered as a tragic hero similar to the other tragic characters such as Oedipus or Hamlet. For example, Faustus is of an ordinary German parent who goes to Wittenberg for higher studies mainly supported by his kinsmen. According to Aristotle, the tragic hero evokes both our pity and terror because he is neither good nor thoroughly bad but a mixture of both. Marlow's tragic heroes do not abide by all those conditions detailed out by Aristotle. Dr. Faustus who sells his soul to Lucifer in exchange of twenty four years of knowledge ought to have some special features in order to be considered as a tragic hero. With his yearning for knowledge, he proceeds to study necromancy. Such a hero, who is of noble birth, suffers from a change of happiness to misery because of his mistaken choice which is led by his hamartia (error of judgment). Like Macbeth, he is an ambitious hero. He sells his soul to the Devil to gain superhuman power. They agree partially. But he is great because of his scholarship. His is not noble birth.