

RENAISSANCE ELEMENTS IN DOCTOR FAUSTUS:

The Renaissance in literature refers to the revival of art, culture and learning in Europe spanning roughly from 15th to 17th century. It was a period of fundamental change in human Outlook once dominated by religious dogma and Christian theology. The age was marked by a great yearning for unlimited knowledge; love for worldliness; love for beauty, respect for classicism, skepticism and individualism etc. It was also marked by a Machiavellian influence.

Christopher Marlowe himself was a true product of the Renaissance. Therefore, it was usual that his play Doctor Faustus would certainly contain Renaissance spirit. In the play, we truly notice some renaissance elements that characterise Dr. Faustus as a Renaissance man.

' Craving for knowledge infinite ' is one of the most important traits of Renaissance. This characteristic has been property injected in Faustus. He has achieved mastery in almost all branches of knowledge; yet he remains a man only. Faustus wants to be a demi- god, and so he sells his soul to Lucifer who will teach him all about black art enabling Faustus to be as Powerful as Jove in the Sky. After selling the soul to Lucifer, he first wants to know about the mystery of the Universe, and the position of Hell from Mephistopheles , the agent.

Faustus' longing for material prosperity, for money and wealth, has been expressed in the following lines where he desires to gain the lordship of Embden, a great commercial city-

" Of wealth!

Why, the signatory of Embden shall be mine".

Faustus further wants to enjoy a splendid life full of worldly pleasures with the help Mephistopheles and his group. He says,

" I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all the corners of the new found world,
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates." These lines also bear another inherent trait of Renaissance i.e. Love for adventure.

Faustus' eagerness to get 'the most beautiful German maid to be his wife and Helen to be his paramount and to find Heaven in her lips' proves his love for beauty along with love for sensual pleasures. He says to Mephistopheles, " For I am wanton and lascivious
And cannot live without wife."

Dominance of Classical literature, art and culture is one of the prominent features of the Renaissance. And it is frequently expressed by Faustus in his allusions, examples and references. For example, Faustus says, " Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenone's death?"

In the Renaissance, the unique talents and potential of the individual became significant. The concept of personal fame was much more highly developed than that of the middle ages. Actually, Faustus is an individualistic tragic hero. His tragedy is his own creation. He doesn't think like traditional heroes. He therefore crosses his limit and meets his tragic end. It is the Renaissance spirit that has made Faustus fascinated by Supreme Power. Faustus says,

"A sound magician is a mighty God,
Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity."

Faustus, like a Machiavellian hero, wants to reach his goal by any means, even by selling his soul to Devil. Thus, the Machiavellian idea 'ends justify the means' is much appropriate to him.

Finally, we must say that Faustus is a faithful embodiment of the Renaissance. He bears all the characteristics of the age. Marlowe has portrayed Faustus with great care and interest. So, the remark "Marlowe is a martyr to everything - power, curiosity, knowledge, enterprise, wealth and beauty" is very much apt and suggestive.