

Scholarly Addiction: *Doctor Faustus* and the Drama of Devotion

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When The English Faust Book describes Faustus as addicted to study and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus depicts necromantic books as "ravishing," these texts draw on classical and Renaissance notions of laudable addiction. Following its Latin origin in contract law, addiction appears in sixteenth-century writings as service, dedication, and devotion. Tracing invocations of addiction from Cicero to Perkins, this essay explores the influence of Calvin and Calvinist-minded Cambridge divines through Doctor Faustus's preoccupation with the challenge of addicted commitment. If Calvinists praise committed devotion, Marlowe challenges such views by staging the terror as well as the wonder of addictive release.

INTRODUCTION

DOCTOR FAUSTUS, AS *The English Faust Book* (1592) claims, is "addicted." The book depicts how "Faustus, being of a naughty mind and otherwise addicted, / applied not his studies, but took himself to other exercises."¹ The scholar who should apply himself to the study of divinity is otherwise inclined, embracing alternate fields, as the infamous version of the legend by Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) depicts in detail. Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1604) opens with Faustus weighing the merits of divinity, a field in which he "profits," "the fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd."² But his very talents snare him, for, "excelling all" his peers, he becomes "glutted" with "learning's golden gifts" and begins to seek another form of scholarly sustenance, ultimately "surfeit[ing] upon cursed necromancy."³

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¹Jones, 92.

²Marlowe, 74 (*Doctor Faustus* prologue, lines 15–16). Hereafter cited as *Faustus*, with the standard act, scene, and line divisions. All citations are to this edition by Michael Keefer unless otherwise noted. Keefer prints the A text (although he occasionally prefers and prints a B-text reading of a speech) on the grounds that it is more authentic, while the B text shows signs of censorship and corruption. The essay follows Keefer in finding the A text more reliable, and also more germane to the essay's argument on Marlowe's engagement with Calvin.

³Marlowe, 77 (*Faustus* 1.1.18, 24, 25).

While Faustus's appetite for scholastic heights might seem distinct from narcotic addictions, his surfeit nevertheless resonates with modern notions of addiction as pathology. As Deborah Willis writes in her study of *Doctor Faustus*, "it is not hard to draw an analogy between Faustus's evolving relationship to magic and modern narratives of addiction."⁴ Marlowe's play, she argues, anticipates modern, medical definitions of the addict in staging the diminishing will of the individual in the face of compulsive behavior. Yet early modern addiction, as this essay will explore, also appears in *Faustus* and in a series of sixteenth-century tracts to be beneficial and even laudable. As a result of what could be called compulsive addiction, but which one might equally deem devotion or dedication, Faustus proves an able and talented scholar, adopting a profession for his "wit" and excelling in it.⁵ He thus fulfills the Latin root of the term, *addicere*, which emerges out of Roman contract law and signals the assignment of a debtor to a creditor's custody, or the formal delivery of a person or property as a result of a juridical decision. In Roman law, *to addict* was to bind someone to service, or to bind or attach oneself to a person, party, or cause.⁶ In its more expansive use, the term came to connote giving oneself over or dedicating oneself to a master, lord, or a vocation.⁷ Following these Latin origins, sixteenth-century writers deploy the term *addict* to designate service, debt, dedication, and devotion. In chronicling scholarly pursuits, for example, early modern translations of Cicero and Seneca invoke addiction to help account for the devotion necessary to follow an academic path. So, too, with Reformation theological texts from Jean Calvin (1509–64) through English Reformers such as John Foxe (1516–87) and William Perkins (1558–1602), in which addiction signals the state of deep dedication and surrender through which the believer receives grace.

Marlowe attended Cambridge at the height of the controversy over Calvinist theology, and his response to his education deeply marks his play.⁸ In exploring the influence of Calvin and Calvinist-minded Cambridge

⁴Willis, 144.

⁵Marlowe, 76–77 (*Faustus* 1.1.1–2, 11).

⁶*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "addict, *v.*"

⁷*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "addict, *adj.*," "< classical Latin *addictus* assigned by decree, made over, bound, devoted, past participle of *addicere* to assign, to make over by sale or auction, to award, to appoint, to ascribe, to hand over, surrender, to enslave, to devote, to sentence, condemn < *ad* ad- prefix + *dicere* to speak, say (see *dictum*, *n.*). Compare slightly later addition *n.*, addict *v.* Compare earlier interdict *adj.*"

⁸The term "Calvinism" arguably places too much emphasis on a singular theologian, and therefore, as Voak, xvii, notes, "'Reformed' is now increasingly preferred as the more satisfactory, inclusive alternative." This essay deploys both terms, recognizing the broader Reformed interests of Foxe and Perkins, while also emphasizing the specific influence of Calvin on their writings. On Calvinism in England, see Benedict; Kendall; Lake 1987 and 1988; McNeill; Milton; Stam; Tyacke. On the publication history of Calvin in England, see Stam, 10n15, 243–46.

divines on Marlowe, scholars have debated *Faustus's* staging of the doctrine of predestination and election, asking whether Faustus's damnation serves as a warning for spectators or a critique of Calvinist determinism.⁹ Reading the play as a drama about election (whether or not it endorses Calvinist theology) proves challenging, however, because, as Alan Sinfield has noted, "the predestinarian and free will readings of *Faustus* . . . obstruct, entangle, and choke each other."¹⁰ The play does not make its representation of reprobation or election clear, but instead elusively hints at and refuses to resolve this question.

Given the play's provocative but at times contradictory presentation of theological doctrine, it is worth considering the question of free will and determinism from a different vantage point. As the following pages will explore, the Calvinism of Marlowe's education proves useful because it illuminates not only the theological influences on his play, but also, more broadly, how he might have understood the nature of scholastic and theological commitment itself. Calvin, like his English followers Perkins and Foxe, outlines the doctrine of predestination and election through reference to — and celebration of — a single-minded devotion deemed addiction.¹¹ Faustus is, in line with this form of devotion, addicted to study, giving himself entirely to his chosen field: he signs a legal contract, professes his dedication, and exclusively commits himself to his studies. Marlowe stages scholastic devotion as a laudable addiction, drawing on classical and Christian evocations of the term, even as Faustus's choice of necromancy illuminates one of the dangers of such devotion: attachment to the wrong faith or field. Marlowe's Calvinist contemporaries acknowledge precisely this danger, suggesting how the surrender and release associated with addiction, while potentially saving, can lead to damnation when directed to the wrong spirits or forces. Thus one might be addicted to sin or carnal pleasures; or one, more

⁹See O'Brien; Hattaway; Riggs; Ornstein; Stachniewski; Nutall. On the ferocity of Calvinist theories of election, see Keefer in Marlowe, 41; Poole, 2006, 98; Honderich, 1–13.

¹⁰Sinfield, 236. Debating the play's staging of election, scholars turn to the two texts of *Doctor Faustus*, the 1604 A text and the longer, revised, and frequently dismissed as inferior 1616 B text, to assess how and why Marlowe (or others) might have revised his presentation of Calvinist theology. Leah Marcus, in concert with Keefer and others, deems the A text to be straight-line Calvinist Protestantism, while the B text proves Arminian in its acknowledgment of the believer's role in his own salvation.

¹¹While Reformers such as Perkins and Foxe demonstrate their engagement with Calvin's thought, Calvin also, notably, involved himself in English clerical concerns, dedicating one of his publications of 1548 to Lord Protector Somerset and offering him a letter of advice on reform that same year. Calvin received further encouragement from Cranmer, who asked him to write King Edward VI with frequency in order to help the Reformed cause in England. See McNeill, 310–11.

frequently, suffers from addiction to idolatry and popery, a condition Calvin writes of enduring before his conversion by God.

Tracing the invocations of addiction in the theological writings influential to Marlowe, this essay approaches *Doctor Faustus* not as a drama of election, but as one about the challenge of commitment. In drawing on and interrogating contemporary invocations of addiction, Marlowe stages Faustus's perilous attachment to bad religion, while never condemning his title character for his devotional aptitude in the first place. The tension of the play lies precisely in how Faustus's devotion and surrender to necromancy might have signaled his predisposition to what his contemporaries deemed a positive addiction, namely to God. To condemn Faustus's constancy to Mephistophilis or to necromancy more generally disregards the very predisposition for addiction that might have led him to God, for it is Faustus's paradoxical willingness to forego the exercise of free will, and his resolve to release into the supernatural, that marks him as open to receiving grace. His dedicated resolve might have flourished in the proper direction, as the play's epilogue notes: Faustus might have "grown full straight."¹² Instead, he follows magic and, as a result, the moralizing voice of the Chorus attempts to frame Faustus's path as pathological or sinful, deeming him a glutton who surfeits on necromancy.

Yet the play vigorously depicts Faustus's relation to magic as a sign not of his compulsive appetite, but of his scholarly drive. Even as the Chorus warns that Faustus serves as an emblem, an Icarus burned by magic or a fierce God, the play itself, this essay will argue, stages a different (albeit related) drama, one not preoccupied with magic — after all, Faustus's magic tricks have proved disappointing to generations of audiences — but with the struggle inherent to devotion. Overpowering dedication, and the individual release of oneself to an external force, is at once necessary, dangerous, and potentially pathological. If to early modern writers such surrender is often laudable and desirable, Marlowe, through Faustus, pushes early modern conceptions by staging both the wonder and terror of addictive release. That grace might enter in the form of the devil proves the play's most haunting challenge to Calvinist invocations of addiction. The drama of addiction thus hinges on the longing for, yet regret surrounding, true faith, as Faustus finds himself — through the very process that might have offered salvation — contractually bound to hellish companions instead.

ADDICTED TO STUDY

Tracking the first appearances of the term *addiction* in English reveals its use in two contexts: classical study and Reformed theology. Early modern translations of Cicero and Seneca both evoke addiction to study as a positive pursuit. In

¹²Marlowe, 171 (*Faustus* epilogue, line 1).

Cicero's *Panoplie of epistles* (1576), translated by Abraham Fleming (1552–1607), he recounts fondly the “knowledge, learning, and exercises, whereunto from my childehoode I haue been addicted.”¹³ The Latin original deploys the term *dedi* (dedicated), signaling that the early modern translator found “addicted” an adequate cognate. Further epistles underscore Cicero's attachment to study as a form of addiction. Writing of the “study, to which I was addicted,” Cicero calls scholarship the “letters to which I have ever been addicted.”¹⁴ Addiction here signals sustained attachment and devotion, as Cicero expresses his commitment to his course of study and his singular application of his talents. Cicero's son seems to have inherited, or reproduced, this addiction to study, at least according to a letter from Trebonius to Cicero; Trebonius, on seeing Cicero's son in Athens, reported him to be “a yong man addicted to the best kinde of studie . . . and of a passing good reporte of modesty: which thing, what pleasure it ministred vnto me, you may wel vnderstand.”¹⁵

Seneca, too, describes study as a form of addiction. In the translation by Thomas Lodge (1558–1625) of *The workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, both morrall and natural* (1614), the young philosopher pursues, as Faustus himself does, his studies against the wishes of his family: he “addicted himselfe to Philosophie with earnest endeour, and vertue rauished his most excellent wit, although his father were against it.”¹⁶ Just as Faustus challenges the promptings of his professors with his “wit,” and finds ravishment in his studies, so too does Seneca.¹⁷ Indeed, both descriptions employ the term *ravish* to describe an intense relationship to one's field of study. In doing so they suggest the force of scholarship in overwhelming, transporting, or capturing the scholar. Faustus, like Seneca, is carried away, but willingly and pleasurably. For both, the tension between family and worldly concerns, on the one hand, and the dedication to study, on the other, structures their understanding of vocation, further illuminating the exclusivity and captivation of addiction: “I will wholly dedicate my selfe, and . . . I will addict my selfe vnto studie. Thou must not expect till thou haue leasure to follow Philosophie. Thou must contemne all

¹³“Cicero to Appio Pulchro”: Flemming, 18. The Latin original reads: “iss studiis eaque doctrina, cui me a pueritia dedi”: Cicero, 1927, 1:224. This Loeb volume translates the phrase as “that study and that learning to which I have devoted myself from boyhood”: *ibid.*, 1:225.

¹⁴Cicero, [1620], 79 (“Cicero to Marcus Coelius Aedile Curule, Epistle 13”); *ibid.*, 266 (“Cicero to Aulus Torquatus, Epistle 4”). The Latin originals read: “studiosus studiorum etiam meorum” and “litterae, quibus semper studui”: Cicero, 1927, 1:132, 1:444.

¹⁵Flemming, 131 (“Trebonius to Cicero [8 June, Athens]”).

¹⁶Seneca, 1614, C3^v. This is a translation of Justus Lipsius's edition of Seneca's works, *Annaei Senecae Philosophi Opera, Quae Exstant Omnia, A Iusto Lipsio emendata, et Scholii illustrata* (1605).

¹⁷Marlowe, 76–77 (*Faustus* 1.1.6, 111).

other things, to be always with her.”¹⁸ This exclusivity — condemning other pursuits for one’s field — separates addiction from mere instruction. Seneca rejects other intellectual and presumably familial lures in favor of a singular relation to philosophy. Faustus, too, models such dedication. “I wonder what’s become of Faustus, that was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo*,” his friends demand.¹⁹ He retreats into necromancy, dismissing, as the opening soliloquy dramatizes, all other fields. Addiction to study is an extreme form of dedication, which requires one to clear away all other obligations.

Addiction, as deployed in these early modern classical translations, is a crucial component of scholarship: only with clarity and dedication can the philosopher find his calling. Furthermore, addiction represents a process of culling away rival pressures, be they worldly or intellectual. Lodge’s translation of Seneca’s essay “The tranquility and peace of the mind” reads, for example, “a multitude of bookes burtheneth and instructeth him not that learneth, and it is better for thee to addict thy selfe to few Authrs, then to wander amongst many.”²⁰ Addiction as dedication stands in contrast to flighty, unfocused pursuits: “He then that hath all his commidities in their entyre, may stay in the hauen, and addict himselfe readily to good occupations, rather then make saile and to go and cast himselfe athwart the winds and waves.”²¹ The scholar is not, Seneca argues, an explorer visiting new ports. One cannot “wander,” but one must hone, cull, and focus. Committing to one location, one “haven,” the scholar studies deeply. Wide-ranging study is a burden and distraction. Better to “addict thy selfe to few Authrs.” So, too, with Faustus who, in narrowing the available fields, announces he will “sound the depth” to find a pursuit that will envelop or ravish him.²² He will “profess” his art, proving a “studious artisan” and a “sound magician.”²³ From this vantage point of addiction, Faustus’s desire to “sound the depth” of his studies, and his interrogation of fields in search of the proper path, seems not fickle, but ultimately focused. Rather than choosing necromancy out of a kind of boredom, as Kristin Poole argues — “his descent into the black arts at first seems to be the product of his intellectual ennui, as he searches for new challenges and intellectual heights”²⁴ — he instead seeks his Senecan “haven.” While Poole’s

¹⁸Seneca, 1614, 296. The full quotation reads, “But as soone as I haue made an end of this (say wee) I will wholly dedicate my selfe, and if I can end this troublesom matter, I will addict my selfe vnto studie. Thou must not expect till thou haue leasure to follow Philosophie. Thou must contemne all other things, to be always with her.”

¹⁹Marlowe, 87 (*Faustus* 1.2.1–2).

²⁰Seneca, 1614, 644.

²¹*Ibid.*, 907.

²²Marlowe, 76 (*Faustus* 1.1.2).

²³*Ibid.*, 76, 80 (*Faustus* 1.1.2, 56, 63).

²⁴Poole, 2006, 102.

phrase “intellectual ennui” aptly accounts for Faustus’s fear of death and stasis, evident in his condemnation of divinity as “hard,” nevertheless he dismisses certain forms of scholarship not out of exhaustion, but because he seeks to immerse himself in a limitless field.²⁵ He needs to aim at the unknown, the unseen, and the unachievable.

Addiction, then, is a particular form of scholarship, as it involves commitment, focus, depth, and stillness. Of course, these authors also concede the dangers of such single-minded dedication. Seneca announces the dangerous power of addiction when he writes, for example, that one must be cautious in one’s pursuits: “For the minde being once moued and shaken, is addicted to that whereby it is driuen. The beginning of some things are in our power, but if they bee increased, they carie vs away perforce, and suffer vs not to returne backe: euen as the bodies that fall head-long downward, haue no power to stay themselues.”²⁶ Seneca teases out the complex relationship of surrender and free will in scholastic addiction. Initially, the addict exercises choice: in the beginning “some things are in our power.” One might choose one’s path, as Faustus does (he elects to practice necromancy over divinity). But, Seneca writes, once the mind heads in a certain direction, addiction can carry one away. Addicts “haue no power to stay” themselves. Momentum threatens but also fuels the addicted mind. Once on a path, the scholar progresses along it, gains speed, and moves forward even against his or her own will. Thus addiction is at once desirable, since it provides the dedicated resolve that propels the scholar forward, and potentially dangerous, since the power of addiction pulls one along the chosen path, for good or ill. The title of a text by the lawyer William Fulbecke (1559–1602) betrays this double link of addiction and study: *A direction or preparatiue to the study of the lawe wherein is shewed, what things ought to be obserued and vsed of them that are addicted to the study of the law, and what on the contrary part ought to be eschued and auoyded* (1600). If the pursuit of learning is admirable, then the deeper the devotion, the greater the addiction and the more accomplished the scholar proves. “Driuen,” “carie[d] away,” “fall[ing] head-long downward,” the scholar demonstrates a lack of control that’s admirable and overwhelming at once.

ADDICTED TO GOD

Seneca suggests scholarly addiction emerges from one’s choices: “the beginning of some things are in our power.” But Marlowe’s contemporaries would answer

²⁵Marlowe, 79 (*Faustus* 1.1.40).

²⁶Seneca, 1614, 515; Seneca, 1928, 1:124: “Commota enim semel et excussa mens ei servit quo impellitur. Quarundam rerum initia in nostra potestate sunt, ulteriora nos vi sua rapiunt nec regressum relinquunt.”

differently. Addiction — whether to divinity or necromancy, to scholarship or to sex — comes from predispositions; but these predispositions, at least in a post-Reformation Europe influenced by Calvin, come not from human will, but God's.²⁷

As with Seneca, Calvin praises addiction as a form of careful study, in this case not of philosophy, but of scripture: “they are then apt to receive the grace of the Gospell, which not regarding any other delightes, do wholly addict themselves and their studies to the obtaining of the same.”²⁸ Like Faustus, the believer dismisses all other fields and devotes himself to his chosen path. In the case of the Christian reader, the fruits of study lead to addiction to Christ: “Therefore no man shal euer go forward constantly in this office, saue he, in whose heart the loue of Christ shal so reigne, that forgetting himself, and addicting himself wholly vnto him, he may ouercome al impediments.”²⁹ Followers of Christ “addict themselves vnto him, so that they did acknowledge him to be that Messias.”³⁰

²⁷On the widespread influence of Calvinist theology in England, Benedict, in concert with Collinson; Tyacke; Lake, 1987, argues that the English church of the 1580s and 1590s “drew its theological inspiration from continental theology and was fundamentally Reformed in outlook”: Benedict, 232. Over half of Elizabeth's initial ecclesiastical appointments were returning Marian exiles steeped in the Continental Reformed faith, Calvin having welcomed them to Geneva during the period of their exile, where they were allowed to organize their own church: Benedict, 244; Stam, 11; McNeill, 311. This historiographical emphasis on the relationship of English to Continental theologians — in contrast to the earlier insistence on the distinction of the English church against both Rome and Geneva — has been especially valuable, Benedict argues, in breaking free of English historiographical “insularity”: Benedict, 232.

²⁸Calvin, 1584a, 364 (British Library 1005.c.14 has a printer error labeling page 364 as 348). In this edition of Calvin's *A harmonie upon the three Euangelists*, forms of the word *addiction* appear fifty-three times, as the Latin verb forms of *addicere* are translated into the English as “addiction” to express devotion to Christ, God, and scripture. Calvin's Latin reads, “eos demum ad percipiendam Evangelii gratiam esse idoneos qui posthabitis omnibus aliis desiderijs, ad eam potiendam sua studia & se totos addicunt”: Calvin, 1582, 175.

²⁹Calvin, 1584b, 457; Calvin, 1582, 597: “Nunquam ergo in hoc officio constanter perget, nisi in cuiuscorde sic regnabit amor Christi, ut sui oblitus, totumque se illi addicens, impedimenta Omnia superset.” Three versions of Calvin's *A harmonie upon the three Euangelists* appeared in England between 1580 and 1610. This long composite publication consists of two separately numbered parts, which may have been intended for separate publication: the translation of *A harmonie* by Eusebius Paget and *A commentarie vpon the Euangelist S. Iohn* by Christopher Fetherstone. This joint publication first appeared in 1584 with a variant edition that same year. In 1610 another edition appeared, printed by T. Adams.

³⁰Calvin, 1584b, 46; Calvin, 1582, 413: “tunc demum se illi addicere coeperunt, ut Messiam agnoscerent qualis iam illis praedicatus fuerat.” He also writes that “this interrogation importeth as much as if Christe did exhort him, to follow the Massias and to addict himselfe wholly unto him”: Calvin, 1584b, 235.

Further, “those are truly gathered into Gods sheepefolde . . . who addict themselves to Christ alone.”³¹ The singularity of the commitment is clear: one is addicted to Christ “alone” and “wholly.” Furthermore, addiction to God compels the believer to a path, eschewing individual thought or will in favor of discipleship. Calvin writes, “For whosoever doe simplye addict themselves to Christe, and doe not striue to adde anye thinge of their owne head to the Gospell, the true lyghte shall neuer fayle them.”³²

Throughout his Latin writings, including the biblical commentaries and sermons that comprise the vast majority of his published works in England and on the Continent, Calvin deploys the verb *addicere* to designate godly devotion, writing of the dedicated reader that he “se totos addicunt” (“addicted himself entirely” or “devoted himself entirely”).³³ These Latin commentaries appeared in multiple editions and translations in England, and dominated university libraries to the degree that, as Philip Benedict writes, “by the last decades of the century, Calvin’s works had eclipsed those of all other theologians in the library inventories of Oxford and Cambridge students.”³⁴ The importance of these English translations of Calvin, next to the French and Latin editions also published in England, can hardly be overstated. Between 1570 and 1590, forty-three editions appeared: “No author would be as frequently printed in England over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century as Calvin,” Benedict continues.³⁵ *Bibliotheca Calviniana*, the table of editions of Calvin by language, reveals the prominence of English editions within a European frame: they are second only to Latin and French (Calvin’s original languages), and far exceed German, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, and other European-language translations.³⁶

To study Calvin’s invocation of addiction in these publications is to find comfort in addictive surrender: being singularly focused, at the expense of other beliefs and relationships, brings the potential for redemption. Calvin writes, “GOD in his mercie dealt so louingly with his people, when he redeemed them, that is, that they being redeemed, should addict and vow

³¹Calvin, 1584b, 240; Calvin, 1582, 500: “eos in Dei ovile vere colligi, ut censeantur in eius grege, qui se uni Christo addicunt.”

³²Calvin, 1584a, 459; Calvin, 1582, 223: “Nam quicumque se Christo simpliciter addicent, nec quicquam è suo capite assingere tentant Evangelio, nunquam eos certa lux deficiet.”

³³On Marlowe’s direct engagement with Calvin’s *Harmonie*, see Streete.

³⁴Benedict, 245. On the rise of English Calvinism in the late Elizabethan period, Tyacke, 28, writes, “nowhere was that ascendancy more obvious than at Cambridge University.”

³⁵Benedict, 245. Benedict notes that six to eight of his books were produced each year, between 1578 and 1581.

³⁶*Bibliotheca Calviniana*, 2:839–42, 2:921–26.

them selues wholly to worship the aucthour of their saluation.”³⁷ Ministers of the word “may addict & giue themselues wholly to the Church, whereto they are appoynted.”³⁸ This reflexive construction — Christ’s followers “addict themselves” or “give themselves” to him and his church — might seem to indicate will and agency on the part of the believer in choosing the addiction. And Calvin does encourage his readers and audiences to foster the complete devotion encapsulated in addiction: his sermons and biblical commentaries repeatedly admonish listeners and readers to pursue utter devotion. But ultimately, he argues, addiction speaks not to individual will, but to God’s favor. Only those who are “disciples of God” can “addict themselves”; those who are “unapt to be taught” reject Christ: “it cannot be but that they shal addict themselues vnto Christ, whosoouer are the disciples of God, and that they are vnapt to bee taught of God who do reiect Christ.”³⁹ The appearance of a reflexive construction in his Latin and its English translation (“addict himself,” “addict themselves”) seems, on the one hand, to counsel the believer to prepare him- or herself for grace: “he must doe his diligence.” On the other hand, to modern readers the reflexive nature of the construction may be misleading in implying the believer’s role in his own addiction, since the agency of addiction does not lie with the addicted believer but in God’s grace. In this chicken-and-egg construction, those who are unapt to be taught cannot be taught, and those who reject Christ have been rejected.

Calvin’s language is subtle. His rhetoric suggests, at moments, a form of free will in which the believer might stray from addiction to Christ toward another, less laudable attachment: “they do corrupt the power of Christ, who are addicted to their belly and earthly things: hee sheweth what we ought to seeke in hym and for what cause we ought to seeke him.”⁴⁰ “We,” Calvin writes, “are ofte withdrawn” into lusts, being “addicted to [our] belly and earthly things.”⁴¹ But, at the same time, he makes it clear that only God can “correct that disease” before one can act: “because by reason of the grossenes of nature, we are always addicted vnto earthly things, therefore he doth first correct that disease which is

³⁷Calvin, 1584a, 47; Calvin, 1582, 20: “Deus tam benigne pro sua misericordia egerit cum populo ut eum redimeret: nempe ut redempti, se totos addicant & deuouent colendo salutis suae auctori.”

³⁸Calvin, 1584a, 148; Calvin, 1582, 68: “ut posthabitis omnibus aliis curis, se totos Ecclesiae, cui destinati sunt, addicant ac deuouent.”

³⁹Calvin, 1584b, 153; Calvin, 1582, 460: “Fieri non posse quin se Christo addicant quicunque Dei sunt discipuli, & Deo esse indociles qui Christum reiiciunt.”

⁴⁰Calvin, 1584b, 142; Calvin, 1582, 455: “quia enim Christi virtutem adulterant qui ventri & rebus terrenis sunt addicti, quid in se quaerendum sit & qua de causa quaerendus sit disputant.”

⁴¹Calvin, 1584a, 204; Calvin, 1584b, 142.

ingendered in vs, before he sheweth what we must doe.”⁴² Once God cures, he can “sheweth what we must do,” and “sheweth what we aught to seeke in hym.” In other words, one cannot even see the right path until God cleanses the natural depravity evident in one’s misguided addictions. The dedicated mind, with its resolution, is an illusion. Addictions are signs of grace or reprobation that one does not control.

Calvin establishes, then, a complex relationship between the compulsion to follow Christ and the lure of material life. On one level, these desires are clearly opposed to one another since one’s addiction, be it to Christ or to worldly pleasure, indicates elect or reprobate status. But on another, more fundamental level, Calvin acknowledges that everyone struggles with unadulterated addiction. Even the most faithful wrestle with competing desires. He claims, “It is true that the faythfull them selues are neuer so wholly addicted to obey God, but that they are ofte withdrawne with sinfull lustes of the flesh.”⁴³ One might aspire to be “wholly addicted” but might err. In other words, addiction to God and addiction to the belly are at once opposed and yet connected, as two sites for devotion that might both hold the believer. The tension between these two opposed forms of addiction can be reconciled only by acknowledging the inevitability of one’s dependence on God’s will. Humans, Calvin implies, struggle with some form of addiction. It is just a question of whether abandonment to addiction leads one to or away from God. Through grace, one might be able to embrace as firmly as possible servitude and obedience to God. This form of service and addiction is uplifting. The strength of one’s embrace of this addiction, however, depends on God’s grace. Without such a gift, one struggles with the earthly appetites and compulsions shackling the human body to its baser nature. The resulting addictions represent debasing tyranny.

This dangerous aspect of addiction appears in the English translations of Calvin’s French sermons. In his Latin writings Calvin deploys the term *addicere* routinely, and the English translation faithfully tracks the term, rendering it as “addiction,” as seen in the citations above. By contrast, sixteenth-century French lacks modern French’s *addiction* and *dépendence*. When Calvin attempts to describe the phenomenon of addiction, then, he turns to potential cognates in terms ranging from *adonner* to *attacher* to *dedier*. Yet his English translators reintroduce the term *addiction*, illuminating the absent presence of the concept in the French sermons. Translating *adonner*,

⁴²Calvin, 1584b, 142; Calvin, 1582, 455: “quia pro ingenii nostri crassitie semper rebus terrenis addicti sumus, ideo prius corrigit ingenitum illum nobis morbum, quam ostendat quid agendum fit.”

⁴³Calvin, 1584a, 203–04; Calvin, 1582, 94: “Verum quidem est, fideles ipsos nunquam ita in solidum addictos esse dei obsequio, quin retrahantur subinde vitiosis carnis cupiditatibus.”

a term that designates a willful giving over of oneself, Arthur Golding (1536–1606) turns to the term *addiction*, but only in special circumstances. Calvin, for example, uses versions of *adonner* 206 times in his *Sermons de M. Jean Calvin sur le livre de Job* (1563). In Golding’s sizable English folio translation (produced in six discrete impressions between 1574 and 1584 and amounting to what Stam calls a “bestseller,” which “achieved a popularity beyond that of any other Calvin commentaries”), he translates *adonner* as “addiction” in only three cases, each describing a special instance of attachment.⁴⁴ When Calvin writes, “Or nous ayant acquis si chèrement, il ne faut pas que nous soyons plus adonnez à nous mesmes, mais que nous soyons du tout dediez à son service,” Golding translates this as “hee hath purchased vs so dearly, we must no more be addicted to our selues, but be wholly dedicated to his seruice.”⁴⁵ Further, Calvin writes, “Et pourtant ce n’est pas raison que dorenavant nous soyons plus adonnez à nous mesmes: mais qu’un chacun soit prest de se dedier pleinement au service de Dieu,” and the translation reads, “it is not meete that henceforth we shoulde be any more addicted to our selues, but euery man should bee readie wholly to dedicate himselfe too the seruice of God.”⁴⁶ If active, dedicated devotion to God is the praiseworthy goal, Calvin here also describes an improper form of donation or giving over, a form deemed “addiction” in English, as in Latin. In this English version, “addiction” and “dedication” appear as synonyms, used interchangeably — one should not be “addicted” to the wrong path but “dedicated” to the proper course — and, at the same time, addiction indicates a potentially dangerous form of attachment. *Addicere*, *adonner*, and *addiction* signal mistaken

⁴⁴Stam, 114, 115. With two editions of *Job* in 1574, subsequent editions appeared in 1579, 1580, and 1584 (STC 4446, 4446a, and 4447). Golding dedicated his translation to Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. On the publication of these sermons in England, Stam, 101, writes, “In completely distinct type settings, each edition consisted of over 800 pages of closely-printed double columns. They represented large capital commitments in type, printing machinery, and paper, substantial labor costs for composition, printing, and collation . . . Elizabethan printers undertook such monumental tasks . . . not simply from religious zeal but also because a healthy reading audience made them worthwhile in financial terms.”

⁴⁵Calvin, 1563, 408; Calvin, 1574, 412. *Adonner* is a complex term, and appears to have a genealogy resonant with *addiction*. While signifying dedication, it also, according to La Curne’s *Dictionnaire historique de l’ancien* (and in concert with the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of *addiction*), denotes a potentially damaging inclination or passion. Modern French deploys the term *addiction* or *dépendence* for this harmful dedication: the French *addiction* appears to derive from English; but, as seen above, the French *adonner* becomes the English word *addiction* in Calvin’s translations, which then crosses back into French in its modified form of *addiction* as a pathological compulsion. French synonyms for *addiction* also include *attaché*.

⁴⁶Calvin, 1563, 408; Calvin, 1574, 412.

attachment to oneself and the world, even as this attachment might mirror a more desirable form of addiction to God.

Calvin warns of the dangers of this improper addiction because he experienced them, at least according to his account of his conversion. In the address to the reader prefacing his *Commentary on the Psalms* (first translated into English by Golding in 1571, following the Latin original published in Geneva in 1557 and again in 1564, and French editions in 1558 and 1561), Calvin offers one of his few explicitly autobiographical statements about his conversion. He claims that he had been groomed for the ministry from a young age, but his father decided he should study law instead. While he endeavored to satisfy his father's wishes, Calvin writes how "God with the secret bridle of his providence did at the length turn my race ageine the other way," toward divinity. Calvin expands, saying, "and whereas at the first, I was more strictly addicted to the superstitions of the Papistrie, than I might with ease be drawn out of so deep a puddle." His sudden conversion freed him from such bondage. God's grace literally turned Calvin around, redirecting and reshaping him: "he [God] sodenly turned my mind (which for my yeeres was over muche hardned) and made it easie to be taught."⁴⁷ Calvin here views himself as "strictly" or, in an alternate translation, "obstinately" addicted to the pope and superstitious belief.⁴⁸ By superstition he indicates, as Alexandra Walsham notes, devotion to relics, saints, and other material manifestations of faith: "The ease with which the populace had been deceived by these tricks was itself a just punishment from God for its gullibility and natural addiction to 'this most perverse kinde of superstition,' and to a carnal religion that revolved around visible, physical things."⁴⁹ Here Walsham's terminology draws attention to the link between religious devotion and addiction. Only with God's help to redirect and reshape him can Calvin relinquish his obstinate attachments: God did "turn my race" the right way; he "turned my mind" away from the papacy. God turns him around, softens his heart, and frees him from earthly lures so he can dedicate himself to

⁴⁷Calvin, 1571, n.p. For the original French, see Calvin, 1859, viii: "Dieu toutesfois par sa providence secrette me fait finalement tourner bride d'un autre costé. Et premièrement, comme ainsi soit que je fusse si obstinément adonné aux superstitions de la Papauté, qu'il estoit bien mal-aisé qu'on me peust tirer de ce boubrier si profond, par une conversion subite il donta et rangea à docilité mon coeur, lequel, eu esgard à l'aage, estoit par trop endurcy en telles choses"; for the Latin, see Calvin, 1564, iii: "Deus tamen arcano providentiae suae fraeno cursum meum aliò tandem reflexit. Ac primo quidem, quum superstitionibus Papatus magi[s] perfinaciter addictus effem, quam ut facile effet e tam profundo luto me extrahi, animum meum, qui pro aetate nimis obdurerat, subita conuersione ad docilitatem subegit." On Calvin's conversion, see Grislis, 57; Gordon, 33.

⁴⁸Quoted in Wendel, 37.

⁴⁹Walsham, 121.

the divine, a more compelling and liberating addiction.⁵⁰ As a result, after his conversion he “burned with so great a desire of profiting: that although I did not quite give over all other studies, yit I followed them more coldly.”⁵¹

Calvin’s English followers, including Foxe and Perkins, take up and extend his model of addiction to scripture and superstition, continuing to tease out the depravity inherent in “misguided addictions,” even as they trumpet the joys of addictive devotion to the divine. Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (arguably the second most influential religious book in Elizabethan England after the Bible, following a 1572 government order requiring copies to be placed in all cathedrals in the country) invokes the devotional aspects of addiction when he narrates the lives of Protestant martyrs such as John Frith (1503–33) and William Tyndale (1494–1536), two figures who dedicate themselves to the study of scripture. These Reformed theologians demonstrate the addictive potential celebrated by Calvin himself. Frith, Foxe writes, “began hys study at Cambridge. In whose nature had planted being but a child maruelous instructions & loue vnto learning, whereunto he was addict. He had also a wonderful promptnes of wit & a ready capacitie to receaue and vnderstand any thing, in so much that he seemed not to be sent vnto learning, but also borne for the same purpose.”⁵² Like Seneca and Faustus, Frith has a “promptness of wit” and proves “addict,” “borne” for rather than merely acquiring learning. Tyndale, too, proves addicted to study, which he pursues at Oxford: “where he by long continuance grewe vp, and increased as well in the knowledge of tounge, and other liberall Artes, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures: wherunto his mind was singularly addicted.”⁵³ Foxe praises the divine pursuits of Frith and Tyndale in terms that resonate with the scholastic addiction of Seneca and especially the devotional addiction of Calvin: these religious men are “singularly” focused, “borne” with

⁵⁰This sort of dedication appears in devotional texts in England, counseling the believer toward complete surrender to God. Becon, 123, writes of “true disciples” in this way: “thus: when a pure mynd is ioyned with the word . . . they suffer all things for the wordes sake, their study is wholly to loue & obey God, & yeldeth fruit a thousand fold.” Similarly, Gwalther, in his sermon on “The xvij chapter vpon the Actes of the Apostles,” writes how even grief should not compromise a believer’s devotion to God: “no affection ought to pull away men truly addicted vnto God, from him.”

⁵¹Calvin, 1571, n.p. For the original French, see Calvin, 1859, viii: “Ayant doncques receu quelque goust et cognoissance de la vraye piété, je fus incontinent enflambé d’un si grand désir de proufiter, qu’encores que je ne quittasse pas du tout les autres estudes, je m’y employoye toutesfois plus laschement”; for the Latin, see Calvin, 1564, iii: “Itaque aliquo verae pietatis gustu imbutus, tanto proficiendi studio exarsi, ut reliqua studia quanuis non abiterem, frigidius tamen sectarer.”

⁵²Foxe, 2:1031. On the publishing history of Foxe, see Freeman and Evenden; Highley and King; King; Knott.

⁵³Foxe, 2:1075.

aptitude, and “turned” by God. Foxe also, and indeed more frequently, illuminates the dangers of addiction as expressed in mistaken attachments, especially when the believer proves addicted not to God, but to Catholic idolatry: “these which addict themselues so deuoutly to y^e popes learning, were neuer earnestly afflicted in conscience, neuer humbled in spirite nor broken in hart, neuer entred into any serious feeling of Gods iudgement, nor euer felt the strength of the law & of death.”⁵⁴

Foxe’s contemporary, the Calvinist William Perkins — deemed by the end of the sixteenth century to be one of England’s most popular religious writers, with seventy-six editions of his work appearing before his death in 1602 — also highlights the danger of Catholic attachments over devotion to God.⁵⁵ “Perceived as translating Calvin for the masses,” as Poole puts it, Perkins praises those who “addict themselues vnto Diuinitie,”⁵⁶ yet cautions against the study of exegesis over scripture: “hence come dissentions and errors into the schooles of the Prophets, which cannot be auoided while men leaue the text of scripture & addict themselues so much to the writings of men, for thereby hee can more cunningly conuey strange conceits into mens minds: and therefore euery one that would maintain the truth in purity and syncerity must labour painfully in the text.”⁵⁷ The opposition of “purity and syncerity” to “errors” and “dissentions” indicates the struggle of addiction. Perkins, even more pointedly than Seneca, explores how addiction to scholarship can go awry when the object of study is inappropriate. Embracing Reformed theology, Perkins is particularly keen to encounter scripture directly. Study and translation of “the word of God” is the scholar’s appropriate calling. “The writings of men” only detract from the truth, and “popish writers” in particular lead audiences astray. Divinity students, he writes, “within this sixe or seuen yeeres, diuers haue addicted themselues to studie Popish writers, and Monkish discourses, despising in the meane time the writing of those famous instruments and cleere lights, whom the Lord raised vp

⁵⁴Ibid., 2:20. If for Foxe, as for Calvin and Perkins, idolatry represents one form of addiction, then an equally dangerous and rival form of addiction appears with excessive faith in one’s own will. Foxe, 2:1618, writes that those martyred under Queen Mary serve as examples to “inspire you so that ye be not addict to your owne selfe will or wyt.”

⁵⁵That so many editions saw print before Perkins’s death in 1602 is all the more surprising given that his first publication appeared in 1589. See Poole, 2011, 259.

⁵⁶Poole, 2011, 151; Perkins, [1590], 209. As Kendall, 51, notes, Perkins proves indebted to Beza as much as Calvin.

⁵⁷Perkins, 1606b, 31. Tyacke, 28, writes that, “symptomatic” of the Calvinist ascendancy at Cambridge was Perkins, “one of the most widely read English writers.” As noted above, Cambridge library inventories attest to the widespread availability of Calvin’s editions and translations: “By the end of the sixteenth century Perkins has replaced the combined names of Calvin and Beza as one of the most popular authors of religious works in England”: Kendall, 52–53.

for the raising and restoring of true religion, such as Luther, [and] Calvin.”⁵⁸ Religious dedication, indeed dedication to God, is no longer enough; one must turn away from the Catholic version of God to celebrate that of Martin Luther (1483–1546), Calvin, and his followers. Reformed writings, like scripture, ring with “true religion,” “cleere lights,” and purity. The *copia* of Erasmus (1466–1536) must cede to the crystalline prose of Luther.

If Catholic writings corrupt the reader, only godly conversion cures. As Perkins puts it: “Againe, after conuersion it is not an idle power in them: 1. Ioh. 3.9. *He that is borne of God sinneth not*, that is addicteth not himselfe, nor setteth himselfe to the practise of sinne; and the reason is giuen, because *the seed of God remaineth in him*.”⁵⁹ Commitment to God and interest in worldly pleasures prove mutually exclusive. Perkins writes, “the loue of the trueth, and of the world, the feare of the face of man, and the feare of God can neuer stand together. As also howe dangerous a thing it is to be addicted to the loue of the world: for it hath beene alwaies the cause of reuolt.”⁶⁰ This is the power of addiction — it is a singular devotion that defines someone, for good or ill. If Calvin understands abandoned devotion as a source of salvation as well as reprobation, Foxe and Perkins more explicitly praise addiction to God in contrast to errant addiction to Catholic idolatry.

Finally, Marlowe’s contemporaries warn against necromancy itself as a form of addiction. In *A dialogue of witches* (1575), Lambert Daneau (1535–90) writes of addiction to Satan in these terms: “whosoever were seruisable or addicted to Satan, were called by the name which is wel knowne and commune, that is Sorcerers,” who forged an “agrément with the diuel . . . & to be short, haue wholly addicted them selues to Satan.”⁶¹ The active “agreement with the devil” proves, however, a form of ensnarement in which the sorcerer is victimized by the devil: they “fall into the snares of Satan, and become Sorcerers, that is to say, addicted vnto Satan.”⁶² Condemning the sorcerer, Daneau includes a spirited call for another form of addiction, for if “the serpent is more addicted or subject to Satan, then the other beastes,” humans at least have the choice to turn away.⁶³ Here the story of a convert who embraces Christ delivers Daneau’s point: “that he was conuerted to the fayth of Christ, it is read of him how earnestly and diligently he was addicted to that studie [of necromancy], which afterwarde, through the great goodnesse of god, he forsooke and renounced.”⁶⁴ The parallels to Faustus are evident here. The scholar’s dedication, longing, and effort,

⁵⁸Perkins, 1606a, 97.

⁵⁹Ibid., 148.

⁶⁰Perkins, 1604, 619.

⁶¹Daneau, C1^r, C5^r.

⁶²Ibid., D7^r.

⁶³Ibid., E5^r.

⁶⁴Ibid., K4^v.

directed initially to the wrong field, shift to worship of God instead, through whose goodness the convert is saved.

ADDICTED TO MAGIC

If theologians from Calvin to Foxe and Perkins insist on the double-edged quality of addiction, as a firm commitment that may or may not lead to grace depending on the form of the devotion, Marlowe stages both the danger of choosing the wrong field and the struggle of committing in the first place. The play's opening acts, from the first scene to the signing of the necromantic contract, chart Faustus's devotional struggle as he seeks the addiction lauded from Seneca to Calvin and Perkins, hoping to lose himself in a vocation by relinquishing reason, soul, and body to a higher power. The play opens on Faustus sitting in his study, surveying a range of scholastic pursuits and famously dismissing them all as inadequate to his purposes. In doing so, he illuminates the challenge before him as he pursues a field of limitless endeavor. He wants to "level at the end of every art," namely aim at — but never reach — an end.⁶⁵ He therefore condemns those fields that limit his striving. Logic, medicine, law, and divinity fail to attract his devotion because they result in a mere "end" rather than an imaginative expanse. While Aristotelian logic might have "ravis'd" him at one point, it now bores him: "read no more: thou hast attain'd the end" of that field.⁶⁶ So, too, with medicine: "Why Faustus, hast thou not attain'd that end?"⁶⁷ These lines suggest the scholar's desire to strive forward rather than to complete his studies. Law and divinity, too, limit his striving. Law "fits a mercenary drudge / Who aims at nothing but external trash," while divinity offers apparent certainty: "we must sin, / And so consequently die. / Ay, we must die, an everlasting death."⁶⁸ If the audience might recognize divinity as offering unlimited grace (as the scriptural passage he reads goes on to promise), to Faustus its end in "everlasting death" mirrors the finality and near-sighted "aims" of other fields.

Faustus wants "to live eternally"; as Seneca writes, he wants "to be always with" the field of choice, perpetually moving forward so that, as Faustus puts it, "being dead," he might be raised "to life again."⁶⁹ If these lines seem blasphemous — he desires, after all, to raise the dead in the manner of

⁶⁵Marlowe, 76 (*Faustus* 1.1.4).

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 76–77 (*Faustus* 1.1.6, 10).

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 77 (*Faustus* 1.1.18). Goldman, 24, writes that Faustus's books "have ravished him, but he is also dissatisfied with them," for he wants something deeper in his studies than mere show.

⁶⁸Marlowe, 78, 79 (*Faustus* 1.1.34–35, 45–47).

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 77 (*Faustus* 1.1.24, 25).

Jesus — they also speak to his desire for scholarship to offer him an unending path for life. Of course, as Genevieve Guenther argues, Faustus seems to crave a resolutely material life, seeking not everlasting salvation in heaven but instead life on earth, thereby making his comment doubly blasphemous.⁷⁰ He wants to raise the dead back into their own bodies, she writes, not into heavenly union. But what Guenther underplays, and what is notable in this opening soliloquy, is Faustus's striving. His experience of embodiment is not static or fixed, but mobile, for lack of curiosity or ambition is a kind of death, a mere "attain'd end."⁷¹ By "end," as Edward Snow argues, Faustus signals a "termination" rather than "an opening upon immanent horizons." As a result, "having 'attained' [an] end means that he has arrived at the end of it, used it up, finished with it."⁷² Magical texts, by contrast, allow him to imagine an unachievable, continually receding goal, a mystical form of knowledge just beyond his reach: it is "necromantic books" that "Faustus most desires," for they are "heavenly."⁷³

Faustus ultimately chooses necromancy because it offers not dominion but the ravishment of addiction: "'Tis magic, magic that hath ravish'd me."⁷⁴ The scholar seeks to be overcome and, as Calvin writes, "not regarding any other delights," to "wholly addict" himself and his "studies to the obtaining of" his goal.⁷⁵ Even as Faustus wants to revel in "power," "honor," and "omnipotence," he is fundamentally a "studious artisan."⁷⁶ Flourishing in his studies he hopes to be, as Cornelius promises, more consulted than the Delphic oracle. That is to say, he desires to be a source of knowledge that is invisible, empty, and devoid of will, reflecting instead the voice of the divine. This *omphalos*, or navel, of the world delivers its messages from a divine power that Faustus, too, wants to channel, "forgetting himself, and addicting himself wholly," as Calvin writes, so as to "ouercome al impediments."⁷⁷ Of course, Faustus's attraction to necromancy does not arise solely from his ambitious spiritual goals: as Luke Wilson has argued, he chooses necromancy with an expectation of its returns. He speaks of "gold," "pearl," "pleasant fruits," and "princely delicates."⁷⁸ More

⁷⁰Indeed, Guenther argues that Faustus's attraction to necromancy arises from his refusal of the Christian dialectic prizing the soul above the body; he instead celebrates the body and seeks magic as a means of preserving himself in his understanding of material existence: damnation in hell, while walking and disputing, seems preferable to salvation in heaven, with its erasure of the body.

⁷¹Marlowe, 77 (*Faustus* 1.1.18).

⁷²Snow, 79.

⁷³Marlowe, 80 (*Faustus* 1.1.51, 53, 51).

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 83 (*Faustus* 1.1.111).

⁷⁵Calvin, 1584a, 364.

⁷⁶Marlowe, 80 (*Faustus* 1.1.55–57).

⁷⁷Calvin, 1584a, 457.

⁷⁸Marlowe, 82 (*Faustus* 1.1.83–86).

specifically, he seeks to command: necromancy offers servile spirits “to do whatever Faustus shall command” and to be “always obedient to my will.” “I’ll be a great emperor of the world,” he claims.⁷⁹

Yet scholars have tended to overlook how Faustus — perplexingly and contradictorily — seeks such power through the utter surrender of himself, releasing his own mind into a metaphysical, even divine, relationship. However much he might claim to pursue magic for material gain, his more sustained desire centers on metaphysical merger. He seeks this merger through study, searching out the field that promises ravishment, and then submitting himself to that field’s masters, Mephistophilis and Lucifer. Just as Calvin counsels ministers to “addict & giue themselues wholly to the Church, whereto they are appointed,”⁸⁰ so does Faustus give himself: he “surrenders up to [Lucifer] his soul.”⁸¹ As with Calvin, Marlowe stages the complex exercise of the human will; Faustus strives and seeks, he labors in his field, but he must also surrender himself to it. Even as he proves eager to see if devils will obey him, and even as he celebrates his own skill in conjuring (“who would not be proficient in this art? / How pliant is this Mephistophilis, / Full of obedience and humility, such is the force of magic and my spells!”), ultimately Faustus “dedicates,” “surrenders,” and “give[s]” himself.⁸² On finding that Mephistophilis serves not himself, but Lucifer, Faustus dedicates himself to Lucifer too; on finding his conjuration was per accidens rather than a sign of necromantic skill, Faustus responds not with disappointment, but by pledging himself further: “There is no chief but only Beelzebub, / To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.”⁸³

Faustus’s embrace of metaphysical merger appears in two ways: first, in his willingness to forgo the logic he has mastered at the opening of the play, and second, in his signing of the contract. In choosing necromancy and binding himself to its masters, he exhibits the single-minded, exclusive attachment to his calling typical of the lauded addict: he follows faith, however dubious it might be. Aristotle’s logic and Ramus’s methods celebrate reasoning and critical thinking, but Faustus, despite his proficiency in logic and rhetoric, ignores such skills. Instead, Faustus wants a “miracle”; he seeks to “be eterniz’d,” and to revel in “heavenly” books.⁸⁴ This is not the ambition of a logician or lawyer. Imagination, emotion, hope, and faith, not logic, fuel his desires, arguably mirroring the devotion of the Christian faithful whose addiction to God defies earthly reason: “mine owne fantasy, / . . . will receive no object, for my head / But

⁷⁹Ibid., 93, 96, 97 (*Faustus* 1.3.37, 97, 104).

⁸⁰Calvin, 1584a, 148.

⁸¹Marlowe, 96 (*Faustus* 1.3.90).

⁸²Ibid., 93, 96, 97 (*Faustus* 1.3.28–31, 90, 103).

⁸³Ibid., 94 (*Faustus* 1.3.58–59).

⁸⁴Ibid., 77 (*Faustus* 1.1.9, 15).

reflects on necromantic skill.”⁸⁵ A. N. Okerlund writes of these lines, “Faustus is telling us his mind is made up and not to be confused by critical analysis. . . . Distinguishing the valid from the invalid statement is the problem here — the problem to which Aristotle, Ramus, and their scholarly followers devoted their lives. But Faustus apparently cares not at all about the irreconcilable meanings of the Angels’ statements and hears only the words which excite his desires.” As Okerlund concludes, “Marlowe intends to call our attention to Faustus’s deliberate violation of formal logic.”⁸⁶ While such a failure of logic might seem foolhardy and indeed damnable, when viewed from the vantage point of addictive dedication, Faustus’s illogical willingness to embrace magic appears as a sign of his faith: he refuses to be swayed from his path, in a manner Perkins himself might praise, by the writings of men. “We must no more,” Calvin writes, “be addicted to our selues, but be wholly dedicated.”⁸⁷

If Faustus’s language of dedication, surrender, and ravishment — the language of addiction — expresses his scholarly ambition to lose himself in his studies, in surprising contrast (and throwing into high relief the scholar’s addictive devotion), Mephistophilis proves a cautious, reasoned, and even logical partner in magic. One finds reason and logic, for example, both in Mephistophilis’s answer to Faustus’s queries (he is, as many critics have noted, disarmingly straightforward in his answers), and in his effort to draw up the contract. Mephistophilis twice demands a “deed of gift” from Faustus.⁸⁸ The precision of Mephistophilis’s “deed of gift” is Marlowe’s addition to his source. In the *English Faust Book* the term is “covenant,” which has greater resonance with biblical than English or Continental law. Deploying a category of contract in the highly legal phrase “deed of gift,” and emphasizing Mephistophilis’s logic rather than obfuscation, Marlowe creates a figure more sympathetic than the trickster of medieval mystery plays. At the same time, Marlowe draws heightened attention to Faustus’s failure to deduce or even hear the patently evident error of his choice.

Yet, Marlowe reveals, Faustus’s failure is also a triumph, for it exposes further his desire to addict himself to his field of choice, precisely as Seneca and Calvin counsel. He embraces the contract as an opportunity to realize his addictive goals, constructing a document baffling in its terms, but satisfying in its potential. This contract is another sign of Faustus’s longing for integration over autonomy, addiction over willpower. If Foxe derides those who have “neuer entred into any serious feeling of Gods iudgement, nor euer felt the strength of

⁸⁵Ibid., 83 (*Faustus* 1.1.104–06).

⁸⁶Okerlund, 268.

⁸⁷Calvin, 1563, 408; Calvin, 1574, 412.

⁸⁸Marlowe, 106, 107 (*Faustus* 2.1.35, 60).

the law & of death,” Marlowe stages Faustus’s willing embrace of such deep feeling, encountering strength of the law eagerly, even bafflingly.⁸⁹ For Faustus acknowledges that he will be proficient, indeed “great,” only to the extent he gives himself up entirely, donating his soul to another “as his own.” It is when Lucifer claims and owns Faustus’s soul that the magician merges with the devil he follows: “bind thy soul that at some certain day / Great Lucifer may claim it as his own, / And then be thou as great as Lucifer.”⁹⁰ Far from shying away from such terms, Faustus designs them: he offers Mephistophilis his soul before the spirit has even requested the gift deed. In the play’s first act he tells Mephistophilis, “Go, bear these tidings to Lucifer . . . Say he [Faustus] surrenders up to him his soul.”⁹¹ Then, in drawing up the contract’s terms in act 2, Mephistophilis’s request of “a certain day” becomes, under Faustus’s design, “four and twenty years,” while the demand that he “bind [his] soul” becomes Faustus’s more elaborate offering of “body and soul,” and further, “John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods.”⁹² In not just signing the contract, but designing its terms, Faustus paradoxically wills away his will, resolving to surrender himself to the greater force of magic. Mephistophilis proves the beneficiary of Faustus’s longing for merger and dissolution: “Had I as many souls as there be stars, / I’d give them all for Mephistophilis.”⁹³

CONTRACTED FAUSTUS

Faustus’s contract is notable for its omissions as much as its guarantees. Indeed, the contract has generated significant critical discussion because its rewards for Faustus are so vague. Faustus appears, critics argue, to be unaware of how bad a bargain he constructs. In exchange for essentially two things — the ability to be a spirit, and the service of Mephistophilis, both for twenty-four years — Faustus gives his body and soul to Lucifer. While the terms of the contract seem unfavorable to Faustus, it is nevertheless worth considering how it might offer precisely what he seeks. In posing a version of this question, Guenther suggests that Faustus, in discounting the metaphysical realm, embraces the contract without recognizing its repercussions. But this essay answers differently, by saying that if Faustus indeed seeks the devoted union he trumpets, he finds the contract a means of articulating this desire, if not securing it. Faustus’s ostensible goal — to be “great emperor of the

⁸⁹Foxe, 2:20.

⁹⁰Marlowe, 106–07 (*Faustus* 2.1.50–52).

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 96 (*Faustus* 1.3.87–90).

⁹²*Ibid.*, 96, 110, 107, 110 (*Faustus* 1.3.91; 2.1.108, 50, 106, 110).

⁹³*Ibid.*, 96–97 (*Faustus* 1.3.104). While this essay emphasizes the scholarly addiction expressed in these lines, Faustus’s expression of dedication and surrender has also been interpreted in erotic terms. See Chedzoy.

world” — cedes to his deeper aim, stated in the contract itself.⁹⁴ Rather than securing his own “command” or empyreal power, he instead signs a contract ensuring that his own form will disappear, and be supplemented by the continual presence of another. Indeed, he repeatedly insists that the contract include body and soul, even as Mephistophilis seems unconcerned with Faustus’s physical remains. Mephistophilis tells Faustus, “thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer,” to which Faustus responds, “Ay, and the body too.”⁹⁵ If his body and soul will be Lucifer’s after death, before that time Faustus will be physically joined to Mephistophilis, who will come — as the contract states — to Faustus “at all times.”⁹⁶

Forging a contract securing constant companionship with his magical mentor, on signing Faustus immediately asks (after first inquiring about the location of hell) to be married. He deflects his desire for a mate by claiming, “I am wanton and lascivious,” but this earthly request arguably tips his hand in betraying longing not for empyreal power but for union, precisely what the contract with Mephistophilis offers.⁹⁷ Through marriage, as through magic, he seeks companionship on earth, to be overcome by relationship, even as he also seeks metaphysical union. The necromantic contract thus doubly satisfies Faustus, by offering him earthly company and spiritual merger: he enjoys Mephistophilis’s company for twenty-four years, and then joins Lucifer, who elevates Faustus’s soul in claiming it as his own.⁹⁸ For a character so ostensibly preoccupied with his own glory, Faustus proves surprisingly eager to lose himself in his field of study and devotion to the field’s masters. He seeks to be ravished, consumed, and overcome by the study of magic and the companionship of its practitioners. The contract’s terms thus illuminate the paradox of Faustus’s devotion: he is choosing to give up choice; he is securing his right to surrender himself. Rather than seeking legal protection and securing his own claims, Faustus uses the contract to voice his loyalty, his surrender, and his willingness to give himself entirely to magic. Through the contract, in other words, Faustus attempts to announce, and secure, his addiction.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Faustus takes the contract more seriously than anyone might reasonably expect. Legal scholar Richard Posner puzzles over Faustus’s “sanctity of contract,” exploring the numerous ways Faustus might have wiggled out of his obligation. First, the contract does not involve an immediate exchange, but instead relies on Mephistophilis serving Faustus for twenty-four years before Faustus delivers his soul. “Such a contract,” Posner argues, “establishes a long-term relationship; and since not every contingency that might arise over a long period of time can be foreseen, it is understood that the parties will act in

⁹⁴Marlowe, 97 (*Faustus* 1.3.104).

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 111 (*Faustus* 2.1.132–33).

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 110 (*Faustus* 2.1.103–04).

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 112 (*Faustus* 2.1.142).

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 80, 106, 107, 110 (*Faustus* 1.1.50–52; 2.1.32, 45, 55, 110).

good faith to resolve problems as they arise rather than stand on the letter of the contract.”⁹⁹ Even if Mephistophilis does exercise a “good faith” effort to fulfill every request, the contract remains riven with other weaknesses. As Posner writes, “The law refuses to enforce contracts that are against public policy, and a contract with the devil fits the bill.”¹⁰⁰ If challenging the contract at the last moment would seem an unfair gain for Faustus, even here he could have nullified the bargain by offering restitution to the devil in the form of his body, his estate, and his service for the remaining years of his life, as legal scholar Daniel Yeager argues in his analysis of the play.¹⁰¹ Faustus’s repudiation of the contract would be all the easier given the weakness of Mephistophilis’s position. The legal insistence of Mephistophilis that Faustus sign a contract in the first place might alert audiences — if not Faustus himself, who dismisses law as “too servile and illiberal” — to the illegitimacy of his argument.¹⁰² “Mephistophilis’s insistence on formalities,” Yeager writes, “reveals his doubt about the validity of the contract.”¹⁰³ Posner, too, concludes: “The devil could not argue either that he didn’t know that contracts with him were illegal or that the primary wrongdoer was not himself but Faustus. . . . So Faustus might have wiggled out of his contract after all.”¹⁰⁴

Faustus does not seek, of course, to wiggle out of the contract. The question then becomes why Faustus upholds what Posner deems the “sanctity of contract” at all. For Faustus believes the contract is, as Yeager writes, “inviolable,” even though the scholar has studied law and might recognize the legitimate challenges he could mount against Mephistophilis. He upholds the contract, this essay answers, because this unmistakably legal exchange demonstrates the eagerness with which Faustus seeks — and perceives himself — to be bound. The issue is not, as Posner puts it, the “irrevocability of Faustus’s contract,” but rather Faustus’s perception and desire that his choice should be irrevocable. Once committed, Faustus remains convinced of the legitimacy of this commitment, and strains to maintain his half of the bargain.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹Posner, 152.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Yeager, 613: “Despite the lateness of the hour, Faustus could have avoided the contract — which demanded full performance on the part of Mephistophilis before Faustus’s performance was due — by repudiating the contract.”

¹⁰²Marlowe, 78 (*Faustus* 1.1.36).

¹⁰³Yeager, 607.

¹⁰⁴Posner, 153.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 150–51, expands on this point: “And being a man of honor and in his own way a hero, he makes no effort to break his contract when the time comes for him to deliver what he has sold. He substitutes the sanctity of contract for the sanctity of God, and thus cannot imagine a God of mercy but only one of justice.” Yeager, 607, also notes that, unlike the insecure Mephistophilis, “Faustus, contrastingly, believes the contract is inviolable.”

If Faustus's addiction were secure, surely neither he nor Mephistophilis would need a document signed in blood. But Faustus and Mephistophilis turn to these legal measures, one realizes as the play continues, because Faustus's initial efforts to pursue addiction through willpower and resolve failed. At the start he repeatedly tells himself, "be resolute," reassuring Cornelius and Valdes of his commitment.¹⁰⁶ When questioned by Valdes, who tells Faustus he can be a magician only "If learnèd Faustus be resolute," Faustus responds, "Valdes, as resolute am I in this / As thou to live. Therefore object it not."¹⁰⁷ Resolution to study and life go hand in hand for Faustus. As he conjures for the first time he again repeats: "Fear not, Faustus, but be resolute."¹⁰⁸ But resolve is not enough. Willpower alone cannot sustain Faustus in his commitment to magic. The contract represents, therefore, his second-order attempt to bind himself, offering more of himself than Mephistophilis demands. He designs a deed that will keep him dedicated to magic and overcome his hesitations. Logic ravished Faustus, as he admits at the opening of the play, and yet the scholar rejects this field anyway. He was resolved on divinity, until he was not.¹⁰⁹ In embracing magic, in allowing himself to be ravished again, Faustus attempts to ensure his commitment through firmer means than he had exercised with his earlier devotions — hence, the contract's specificity, and its insurance of his merger with Lucifer and Mephistophilis, not twenty-four years in the future but from the very moment of signing. And he must ensure (or at least attempt to ensure) this continued obligation contractually because he knows what Seneca, Calvin, Foxe, and Perkins have illuminated before him: devotion is difficult.

If to some viewers Faustus's failure to challenge the contract signals his reprobation (he literally cannot see what the audience is able to recognize, that he's making a terrible bargain in selling his soul to the devil), this essay suggests how the play offers a more complex portrait of the hero than this answer allows. Faustus is not merely an emblem of Icarus, even if the Chorus might frame him this way. What makes Faustus's situation at all sympathetic is his drive to devote himself to his studies, and through the contract he attempts to demonstrate — indeed, bloodily performs — precisely this devotion. Despite challenges to logic and reason, despite isolation from friends, and despite distance from the heavens, Faustus binds himself to his field of study. The dilemma he faces — whether to commit himself to his path despite all of this evidence against it — is a compelling and inherently dramatic one not because it involves summoning the devil and being devoured by a hellmouth, but because it mirrors the travails

¹⁰⁶Marlowe, 91 (*Faustus* 1.3.14).

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 85 (*Faustus* 1.1.134, 135–36).

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 91 (*Faustus* 1.3.14).

¹⁰⁹Hamlin, 262, argues that this complex relationship between desire and doubt reflects a "series of cyclical trajectories wherein Faustus's habit of casting doubt is preempted by an experience of euphoric ravishment — ravishment that yields in turn to new casting of doubt."

of all aspiring addicts. Faustus wants to be bound, compelled, reshaped, and overcome by a metaphysical force. He seeks, as he repeatedly states, rapture. While Faustus's commitment to his contract might be, as Yeager calls it, "numbingly self-defeating," Marlowe's play illuminates, in this drama of self-defeat, the nature of attempted devotion.¹¹⁰ "Self-defeating" might, in another context, be precisely the desirable outcome of devotion. The dissolution of the self in the supernatural is what the Christian faithful pray for, and what the addict seeks. Indeed, even the bodily inscription warning Faustus away from the contract serves, arguably, to remind him of his desire for merger. When Faustus finds "Homo fuge" inscribed on his arm, he responds, "whither shall I fly?"¹¹¹ This phrase, of course, refers to the biblical invocation, "Fly, oh man," from 1 Timothy 6:11. But one might also read *fuge* in its musical sense, originating in the sixteenth century. A fugue, or fuga (out of *fugere*), is a form of composition weaving together two distinct threads, contrapuntally. In this case, *fuge* resonates with Faustus's broader desire to be subsumed or ravished by a greater power. Man, were he *fuge*, might turn into the music of the spheres. The word teasingly evokes an ideal, nonviolent form of merger: just as the music emerges out of intertwining two strands of sound, producing harmony and depth, so too might Faustus be taken up into a relationship greater than himself.

Yet, tragically, in attempting merger through a legal contract, Marlowe exposes Faustus's desired but ultimately failed addiction. Like the Roman slave contractually bound to a master, Faustus becomes an addict through the law. But the addiction celebrated from Seneca to Calvin is not legal, but vocational. It involves a calling. A contract upholds Faustus's rights, even if they seem paltry. A contract can be negotiated and annulled, as Posner and Yeager illuminate. One does not, by contrast, "wiggle out of" addiction. Thus Faustus's attempt to secure his addiction through contract already exposes his devotional failure before he even begins. True devotion requires no contract, no promptings, and no threats. In the same way a beloved might erroneously hope a marriage contract could secure a lover's fidelity, Faustus relies on the necromantic contract to fix his own insufficient desires.

WAVERING FAUSTUS

Faustus's signing of the contract, ironically, betrays his own failed addiction. The document that secures his damnation fails to, and could never, represent his devotion. Certainly, the play's remaining scenes offer the fulfillment of Mephistophilis's promise: viewers see the rewards of necromancy in Faustus's adventures. But as critics have long noted, the fruits of magic are rather slim. If Faustus hopes to command nations, he finds himself rather playing parlor tricks,

¹¹⁰Yeager, 617.

¹¹¹Marlowe, 108 (*Faustus* 2.1.77).

leaving the audience, if not Faustus himself, disappointed.¹¹² He mocks the pope and the horsecourser, brings grapes to a duchess, and conjures historical figures for the emperor and scholar friends. Why Marlowe, who stages Tamburlaine's march across Europe and Asia, would hesitate to stage more satisfying magical triumphs has rightly preoccupied critics and audiences. The most evident answer, provided by the Chorus and ostensibly in concert with Calvinist theology and Elizabethan authorities, finds Faustus an emblem for misguided ambition. The failure of magic supports readings of the play as a cautionary tale (why sell one's soul for mediocre magic) insofar as one finds the play's middle section to be an extended lesson on Faustus's bad choice.

This essay offers another answer, one that finds the drama of the play to lie not in its subject matter of magic, but, in properly Aristotelian fashion, in its action. For the drama of the play's middle acts lies in Faustus's wavering, as the scholar with heroic resolve, a man who signed a contract he refuses to challenge, nonetheless falters. Indeed, perhaps more surprisingly than critics have noted, having made such a dramatic deal with the devil and offering up his blood in signing, nonetheless Faustus must continually remind himself of his pledge. Faustus reassures himself, "Fear not, Faustus."¹¹³ This imperative presages a series of reminders that Faustus offers himself as he wavers: "No go not backward. No, Faustus, be resolute. / Why waverest thou?"¹¹⁴ This wavering, he claims, is because "something soundeth" in his ears, a voice that counsels, "Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"¹¹⁵ He keeps entertaining the possibility of repentance, or, rather, the possibility of escape from his chosen commitment. In the first glimpse of the scholar after signing the contract, he cries, "When I behold the heavens then I repent."¹¹⁶ Even he might lament "my heart's so harden'd I cannot repent," but he also actively embraces magic again on recalling the "ravishing sound" of the Ampion's harp making "music with my Mephistophilis."¹¹⁷ He cries, "I am resolved: Faustus shall ne'er repent. / Come Mephistophilis, let us dispute again."¹¹⁸ Wanting to dedicate himself entirely but pulling away, and wanting to repent but returning to magic, Faustus seems insecure in the very bargain he designed.

Faustus both picks the wrong field and can't quite commit himself to it. For a man who begins the play wanting to be obliterated through integration into

¹¹²On the disappointing nature of Faustus's magic, see Halpern; Orgel, 211–30. *Ibid.*, 224, writes, "For all its talk of the perils of boundless ambition, there is a continuous sense of disappointment in the play, a sense that Faustus isn't ambitious enough."

¹¹³Marlowe, 91 (*Faustus* 1.3.14).

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 104 (*Faustus* 2.1.6–7).

¹¹⁵*Ibid.* (*Faustus* 2.1.7, 8).

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 117 (*Faustus* 2.3.1).

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 118–19 (*Faustus* 2.3.18, 29–30).

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 119 (*Faustus* 2.3.32–33).

necromancy, he never achieves full surrender or release but instead wavers between professions and masters. He tells Charles V, “I am content to do whatever your Majesty shall command me,” and in doing so receives “a bounteous reward”; the Duke of Vanholt, too, tells him, “follow us and receive your reward.”¹¹⁹ Even as he is bound to Mephistophilis and Lucifer, Faustus relates to earthly authorities as a pandering courtier seeking favor. He obsequiously calls Charles V, “my gracious sovereign,” while deeming himself “far inferior to the report men have published, and nothing answerable to the honor of your imperial Majesty.”¹²⁰ Seeking favor and accepting rewards from earthly authorities, Faustus then relishes his power to humiliate his social equals or inferiors. The mocking knight and the horsecourser experience Faustus’s high jinks. These comic interludes strain against Faustus’s initial desire to be ravished, enveloped, and devoted: he seems preoccupied with his own status and reputation. Rather than dissolving his self, he seeks to protect and amplify it.

Fluctuating between authorities, and erratic in his devotion, Faustus then begins to reproach others for his choices. As Poole writes, “Faustus has the unattractive habit of blaming others for his actions, often positioning himself as a passive entity.”¹²¹ He blames his own fall on reading: “Oh would / I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book.”¹²² Or, alternately, he blames his fall on Mephistophilis, claiming he was tricked: “go accursed spirit to ugly hell: / ’Tis thou hast damn’d distressed Faustus’ soul.”¹²³ Finally, Faustus claims that his relationship to Lucifer and Mephistophilis is incomplete, since he has not experienced magical power, but only indulged his appetites. He, like the Chorus, condemns himself as a glutton, surfeiting on his desires: “The god thou serv’st is thine own appetite, / Wherein is fix’d the love of Beelzebub.”¹²⁴ He revels, he claims, in “a surfeit of deadly sin, that hath damned both body and soul.”¹²⁵ He doesn’t even have the satisfaction of full, spiritual devotion to necromancy — it is his appetite that governed him, he claims, nothing else.

Finally, Faustus calls out to God, in direct defiance of his contract: “Ah Christ, my Saviour, / Seek to save distressed Faustus’ soul!”¹²⁶ Having questioned faith, but yearning for God, Faustus here proves a more complex and sympathetic character than the static scholars who fail him. Here he is not merely wavering — he wavers

¹¹⁹Ibid., 143, 147, 155 (*Faustus* 4.1.12–16, 4.1.92–93, 4.3.33).

¹²⁰Ibid., 143 (*Faustus* 4.1.12–14).

¹²¹Poole, 2006, 104.

¹²²Marlowe, 165 (*Faustus* 5.2.19).

¹²³Ibid., 123 (*Faustus* 2.3.77–78).

¹²⁴Ibid., 104 (*Faustus* 2.1.11–12). As Calvin writes, “the more a mans vices are, so much the more fiercely doth he with loftie words extol free wil”: Calvin, 1584a, 207.

¹²⁵Marlowe, 164 (*Faustus* 5.2.10).

¹²⁶Ibid., 124 (*Faustus* 2.3.83–84).

toward the divine, and in doing so admits the challenge of true faith. His prick of conscience, like the potential intervention of God in the form of the Good Angel or Old Man, teases the audience with hope for Faustus's salvation. Indeed, for a Christian audience Faustus's wavering toward repentance, even if his repentance is unrealized, is admirable, even heroic. The audience's strong desire for Faustus's conversion is modeled both by characters internal to the play and by the Chorus. Scholars cry, "God forbid!" on learning of the contract, asking, "O what shall we do to save Faustus?" and lamenting that the doctor had not turned to them earlier: "Why did not Faustus tell us of this before, that divines might have prayed for thee?"¹²⁷ The Good Angel, the Old Man, and the scholars unite in attempting to sway Faustus back to salvation and devotion to God. They counsel Faustus, "call on God," even as the scholar understands it is too late.¹²⁸

Such wavering might demonstrate Faustus's residual faith. Indeed, his necromantic addiction will always, one might argue, be compromised by his awareness — from his studies of theology and his immersion in Christian Wittenburg — of God's divinity. Yet, at least to the extent Marlowe engages with Calvin's theology, such mixing and mingling of Faustus's devotions is as much troubling as hopeful. "No man shal euer go forward constantly in this office," Calvin writes, "saue he, in whose heart the loue of Christ shal so reigne, that forgetting himself, and addicting himself wholly vnto him, he may ouercome al impediments."¹²⁹ Calvin's emphasis on exclusivity — the believer is constant, overcome, and subjected, while his love of Christ is entire, whole, and unailing — precludes wavering. The faithful might be tempted, certainly: "the faythfull them selues are neuer so wholly addicted to obey God, but that they are ofte withdrawn with sinfull lustes of the flesh."¹³⁰ But Calvin clarifies that "ofte withdrawn" signifies not recantation, but instead mere temptation, as the faithful remain steady in their dedicated service to God. For Calvin, all humans struggle with addiction: "by reason of the grossenes of nature, we are always addicted vnto earthly things." Nevertheless, divine intervention might "correct that disease which is ingendered in us," turning earthly into godly addiction.¹³¹ Marlowe, by contrast, depicts not conversion from one addiction to another, but the incompleteness of attachment itself, whether to necromancy or to God.

¹²⁷Ibid., 166 (*Faustus* 5.2.35, 46, 40–41).

¹²⁸Ibid. (*Faustus* 5.2.26).

¹²⁹Calvin, 1584a, 457; Calvin, 1582, 597: "Nunquam ergo in hoc officio constanter perget, nisi in cuiuscorde sic regnabit amor Christi, ut sui oblitus, totumque se illi addicens, impedimenta Omnia superset."

¹³⁰Calvin, 1584a, 203–04.

¹³¹Ibid., 142; Calvin, 1582, 455: "quia pro ingenii nostri crassitie semper rebus terrenis addicti sumus, ideo prius corrigit ingenitum illum nobis morbum, quam ostendat quid agendum fit."

If Calvin's writings affirm the power of addiction to overcome the believer entirely, Marlowe instead stages, in his gnarled, questioning universe, a believer with an incomplete addiction. The play's central conflict thus concerns Faustus's attempt but ultimate inability to addict himself to supernatural forces. As he claims, "I do repent, and yet I do despair."¹³² For even as Marlowe depicts the potential heroism of striving toward Christian conversion, he equally challenges it, by making repentance on Faustus's part a form of spiritual and legal betrayal. For Faustus to reject the very path he surrenders to, by taking alternate advice and rejecting magic when its outcomes are insecure, would be to signal his infidelity to faith more generally, be it to the magic he embraces or to the God he does not. Tragically, then, even as Faustus's wavering might be read as a sign of his potential for salvation, it nevertheless betrays his failed devotion, not just to Mephistophilis and Lucifer, but to anything: God, necromancy, friendship, or study of any kind. Staging the gap between the desire for addiction and its realization, the play illuminates how a character allegedly predestined for hell, overcome by desire for magic, and contractually bound to necromantic masters, still cannot achieve addiction.

Yet in staging Faustus's failure, Marlowe depicts not the depressing or powerless spectacle of the damned, but instead the monumental difficulties of the addiction Calvin trumpets. Addiction, it turns out, is hard. If, as Rasmussen writes, "the central problem with most orthodox interpretations of *Doctor Faustus* is that they often verge on lack of sympathy, even open hostility," viewing Faustus as a failed addict instead illuminates his wavering, not as a sign of weakness, but as indicative of the challenge of his task.¹³³ Calvin sidesteps the effort necessary to achieve total surrender; one might reasonably ask if addiction to faith is really as simple as he makes it sound. For that matter, one might ask if addiction to sin is that easy. Even as Calvin notes the ways in which the elect might stray from their addiction to God, he also describes addiction as effortless; it is simply a question of which addiction one might follow. Calvin's theory, evident in his conversion story and his theory of election, seems to promise that addiction is everywhere — and, more potently, that God is everywhere, as seen in all one's addictive predispositions.¹³⁴ But, Marlowe reveals, this theory of God's dominant will falls short because of God's absence. Mephistophilis works throughout the play to secure the soul of a character who is all too eager to give it away; God, by contrast, may or may not speak through the conscience, the Good Angel, or the Old Man.

¹³²Marlowe, 160 (*Faustus* 5.1.63).

¹³³See Rasmussen's introduction in Bevington and Rasmussen, 21.

¹³⁴Poole, 2006, elucidates how audience members might nevertheless find comfort in this staging of election, even as they struggle to understand the nature of salvation and damnation during a period of intense theological shifts.

It is perhaps perverse, then, that despite his inadequacies as a devotee, and despite his wavering, Faustus nevertheless reaches the promised end. He achieves final integration into Lucifer's kingdom, and he does so not because of his own devotion, but because of Mephistophilis's extraordinary efforts. Again and again Lucifer and Mephistophilis counsel Faustus toward right belief, toward the kind of behavior expected of his "faithful." Toward the end of the play, as Faustus tries to repent, Marlowe stages a divine figure literally holding the tongue and hands of the devotee, prohibiting him from straying: Faustus cries, "the devil draws in my tears. . . . O, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold 'em, they hold 'em."¹³⁵ This staging of Faustus's damnation, even as it shocks viewers, also arguably appeals to them.¹³⁶ The fantasy of God accompanying the faithful through every hour of the day, staying their hands, holding their tongues, and distracting them with spectacles when they think of straying, exists in Marlowe's play only in reverse fantasy, in the form of Lucifer. If even Faustus fails as an addict, despite receiving both direct encouragement from Mephistophilis and tangible material benefits from magic, imagine the challenges facing the godly. Tormented by popish regimes, ridiculed for restrained living, besieged by existential melancholy, and plagued by mortal questions, the godly must endure worldly troubles without a divine Mephistophilis by their side.

CONCLUSION

Marlowe's play stages a supernatural universe in which even the unfaithful, weak, and wavering subject might meet his desired end. Understanding how Faustus's addiction falls short illuminates the treacherous illusion of free will in the play. An attempt to exercise free will in defiance of his contract — indeed, the need to bind himself in a contract in the first place — reveals Faustus's failure to lose himself in his devotional pursuit. The resulting opposition between free will (as it might allow him to turn from necromancy) and devotion (as it might demonstrate the fidelity of his commitments) is thus a catch-22. Even as the evocation of free will might seem to dramatize Faustus's potential to turn from sin, it also — to the degree that he successfully turns — demonstrates his propensity to infidelity and inconstancy, regardless of the devotional field. It is Faustus's problematic inconstancy that signals his fall, as much as his failed exercise of what one might or might not take to be free will. Indeed, one might argue that Faustus should express even more commitment to Mephistophilis than he does, for only through this full exercise of addiction might he reveal his predisposition for true faith.

¹³⁵Marlowe, 167 (*Faustus* 5.2.59–63).

¹³⁶Gill, xviii, writes that "the behaviour of Marlowe's Faustus seems to follow Perkins's Calvinist theology quite closely."

Rather than viewing the play as hinging on the tension between faith and free will — a tension that casts Faustus as either predetermined in his damnation or capable of saving himself — the study of addiction in Faustus illuminates instead the drama of his attempted devotion and his failed surrender. His desire to release his will to Mephistophilis indicates a predisposition to precisely the kind of radical faith required of the righteous believer; but his failure to achieve the form of commitment he trumpets indicates his fall. Viewed from this vantage point, the real question in the play is not whether Faustus has free will, but rather why Faustus has such a hard time committing. It is because, as argued above, devotion does not come easily. Even as the play illuminates the horrors of following the wrong path, it even more potently stages the challenge of, and fortitude necessary to surrender to, an addiction. Individual desires, combined with the external promptings of community, culture, and law, might still prove inadequate to the task. Faustus's wavering suggests his incapacity for addiction, evident in his all-too-human propensity for wandering. After so many centuries, what remains admirable about Faustus is precisely his repeated attempts to give himself away to his pursuits in the face of his own fear and hesitation. This sort of addiction is clearly dangerous; but it is also extraordinary and compelling.

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