Dr Faustus essay plans

1. Tragic hero
   - First addition - 'Tragical history of Dr Faustus' - presented as a tragedy.
   - Aristotle’s definition = 'neither good nor thoroughly bad' - question severity of F's punishment.
   - Prologue 'born of parents of base stock' - everyman figure.
   - Tragedy = describes downfall of a great man on account of his hamartia.
   - 'tragoida' = Greek for goats play - sacrifices - sense of a great man sacrificed to appease wrath of God.
   - Kastan 'is the tragic motor human error or capricious (unpredictable) fate?'
     ⇒ Tragic flaw that led F to his fate? - hubris
     ⇒ 'heavens conspired his overthrow' - universe governed by capricious deities?
   - Kastan 'is the catastrophe (tragic outcome) a just, if appalling, retribution?'
     ⇒ Fate might be deserved but even so - cruel justice.
   - Last soliloquy - God presented as almost tantalising (teasing him).
     ⇒ Audience encouraged to sympathise with F - methods evoke this.
   - Is F a great man?
     ⇒ Encouraged to think great but Marlowe spends time undermining.
     ⇒ Through imagination/speculation of ambitions - link to humanists.
     ⇒ Ambiguity - parents of base stock - everyman figure.
     ⇒ While his greatness is questioned we do nevertheless have a sense of his fall.
     ⇒ Great chain of being - 16thC audience not see F as great but meddling with divine order.
     ⇒ Pity - epilogue 'cut is the branch though have grown full straight' - F's potential.
   - F's fall into mediocrity - strong sense when contrasted to initial ambitions - 1st + last soliloquy.
     ⇒ Increasingly 'humane catastrophe' - slapstick comic scenes - morality plays - socially lower characters.
     ⇒ 'graced with doctor's name' - anagnorisis - recognition of some universal truth about humanity.
     ⇒ 'what art F but a man condemned to die' - contrast with ambitions - come to terms with truth of human condition.
     ⇒ Towards end- repentance on his mind - 'I do repent yet I do despair' - evokes sympathy.
     ⇒ Keep 'oath...made to Lucifer' - wanting to do right thing.
     ⇒ Last soliloquy - methods - enhance dramatic atmos monosyllabic words 'now hast thou' - mirroring striking of clock.
   - Hero of his own imaginations.
     ⇒ 'I will be Paris' - sees himself as a hero.
     ⇒ Determined/resolute but play undermines his sense of heroism.
     ⇒ 'Hell's just a fable' - can you be truly heroic if you don’t understand consequences of your actions?
   - Fuses morality + classical tragedy.
     ⇒ Creates tensions.
     ⇒ Kastan argues tragedy makes us question nature of the gods - just cruel? - at odds with Christian view.
     ⇒ By employing Christian theme but putting in a tragic universe - Marlowe obliges us to question God.
     ⇒ Compared to Icarus - 'waxen wings' - in prologue - metaphor for attempt to usurp role of god.
     ⇒ Critical tone of chorus in prologue- critisising F's arrogance - danger in Renaissance stress on individual - tension
     ⇒ Morality plays- educated in God's governance not encouraged to question.
     ⇒ Greater complexity - F = psychologically complex.
       • Christian narrative is inadequate - binary categorisation good/evil.
       • Places god on trial.