

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

Key Points

1. Do not let your lack of sympathy for Faustus blunt critical engagement with the text
2. The narrative of Doctor Faustus allows Marlowe to express blasphemous concepts
3. The character of Faustus is based on the real-life man, Dr. Johann Georg Faust
4. Contemporary performances of Faustus tend to lack the risk involved in Marlowe's own time. Students need to be aware of how exciting and challenging the play can be.
5. Watch Silviu Purcărete's take on Doctor Faustus to get a sense of the type of danger that can be involved within an interpretation of the play.

Quotations

- "Faust. My heart's so hard'ned I cannot repent.
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears
"Faustus, thou art damn'd!"
Doctor Faustus, Scene VI, ll.20 – 23
- 'Now go not backward: no, Faustus, be resolute.
Why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears
"Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"
Doctor Faustus, Scene V, ll.8 – 10.

Suggested Passages for Analysis

- Scene V, Lines 1 – 15
- Scene VI, Lines 20 – 40

Further Reading

1. **Bartels, Emily C.** 'Authorizing Subversion: Strategies of Power in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*', *Renaissance Papers*, (1989): 65-74.
2. **Brooke, Nicholas.** "The Moral Tragedy of *Doctor Faustus*". *Cambridge Journal* 5 (1952): 662-87.
The most thoroughly Satanic reading of the play is in this lamentably hard-to-find essay by Nicholas Brooke, where the play is read as Faustus' inverted morality play, a quest to reach hell and resist all the temptations set out by heaven.
3. **Greenblatt, Stephen.** 'Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play.' In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. By Stephen Greenblatt, 193–221. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
4. **Halpern, Richard.** 'Marlowe's Theater of Night: Doctor Faustus and Capital', *ELH* 71 (2004): 455-495.
5. **Hamlin, William H.** "'Swolne with Cunning of a Selfe Conceit': Marlowe's Faustus and Self-Conception", *English Language Notes*, 34 (1996): 7-12.
6. **Hamlin, William M.** 'Casting Doubt in Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 41 (2001): 257-275.
7. **Hattaway, Michael.** 'The Theology of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*', *Renaissance Drama, N.S.* 3 (1970): 51-78.
8. **Minshull, Catherine.** 'The Dissident Subtext of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*', *English: The Journal of the English Association*, 39 (1990): 193-207.

Web Links

- **The Victorian Web** provides a rich array of resources, including a chronology and articles on Wilde's works: <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/wilde/index.html>
- **In Our Time** BBC Radio 4 programme on Oscar Wilde: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547m3>
- The OUP **Writers Inspire** project provides a range of resources for teachers and students on Oscar Wilde:
- <https://writersinspire.org/writers/oscar-wilde>
- A **British Library** article on 'perversion and degeneracy' in the Picture of Dorian Gray: <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/perversion-and-degeneracy-in-the-picture-of-dorian-gray>
- University of Missouri website on the trial of Oscar Wilde: <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/wilde/wilde.htm>