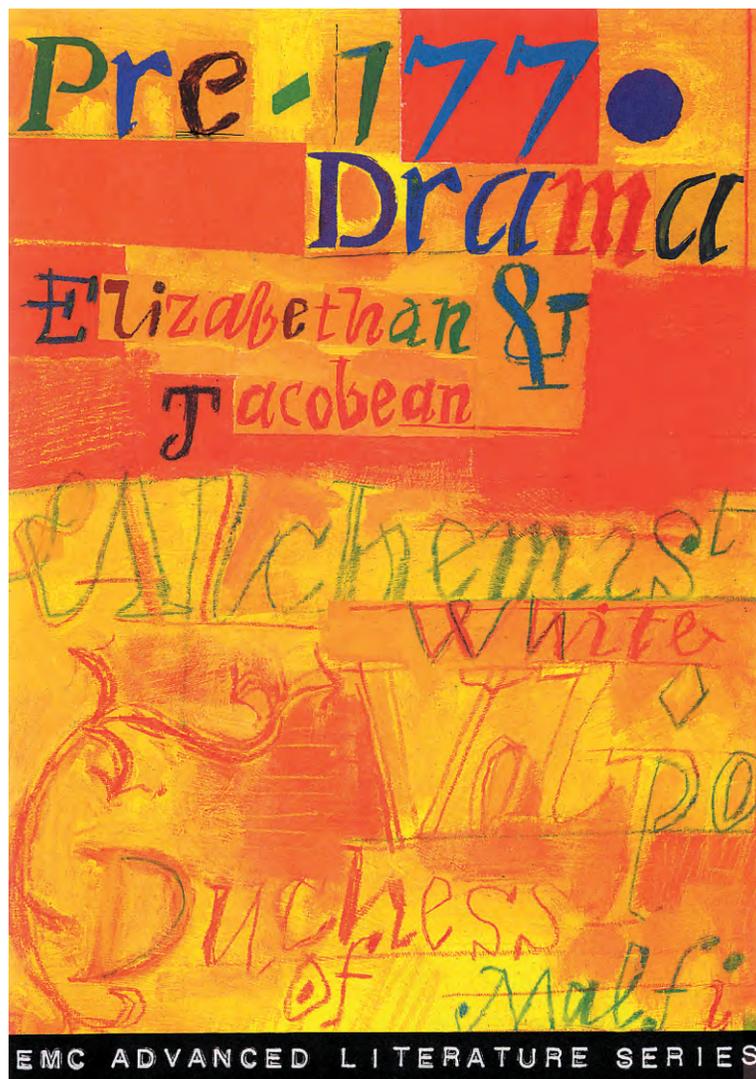


# Belief & Learning from Pre-1770 Drama



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## Belief and Learning

In this unit you will:

- learn about key aspects of early seventeenth century beliefs
- apply these to an extract from a text, *Dr Faustus*
- think about how these insights could be applied to other texts, including the play you are studying for AS or A2.

Your task is to analyse and interpret a key speech from *Dr Faustus* in the context of sixteenth and seventeenth century attitudes towards one of the following:

- religion
- new learning and discovery
- superstition and magic.

- In your group, work through the stages listed here.

Stage 1: read and annotate the speech, taking into account what you learn from the contextual material

Stage 2: devise an exam question

Stage 3: plan an answer for the question

Stage 4: present the context you have worked on, the question and the essay plan to the rest of the group.

### Stage 1 – reading and annotating

- Read the speeches from the opening and the end of *Dr Faustus* on pages 18 to 21.
- Annotate the speeches in the light of the contextual information your group has been given. Where appropriate, include brief quotations from the contextual material.

### Stage 2 – question setting

- In your group, devise an examination question. Your aim is to prompt candidates to examine the play in the context of the material you have been working on.

### Stage 3 – answering the question

- Write an essay plan for your question. You should have a sequence of five or six key ideas you would cover in the essay, with one or two short quotations or pieces of evidence from the text to support your arguments.

### Stage 4 – planning and delivering your presentation

- Talk about how you are going to do the presentation. For instance, you could start with a brief introduction/summary of the key 'beliefs' you have been introduced to, followed by a presentation of your essay question, mark scheme and essay plan.
- Take it in turns to deliver your presentation to the rest of the class.

# Pre-1770 Drama

## Dr Faustus

Dr Faustus, The tragical history of, a drama in blank verse and prose by Marlowe, published 1604 ... It is perhaps the first dramatisation of the medieval legend of a man who sold his soul to the Devil, and who became identified with a Dr Faustus, a necromancer of the 16th century ... under the poet's hand [Faustus becomes] a man thirsty for infinite power, ambitious to be 'great Emperor of the world'.

Faustus, weary of the sciences, turns to magic and calls up Mephistopheles, with whom he makes a compact to surrender his soul to the Devil in return for 24 years of life; during these years Mephistopheles shall attend on him and give him whatsoever he demands. Then follows a number of scenes in which the compact is executed, notable among them the calling up of Helen of Troy, where Faustus addresses Helen in the well-known line: 'Was this the face that launched a thousand ships ...' The anguish of mind of Faustus as the hour for the surrender of his soul draws near is poignantly depicted.

*Oxford Companion to English Literature*

### The opening of the play

*FAUSTUS discovered in his study*

Faustus. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin  
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess:  
Having commenc'd, be a divine in show,  
Yet level at the end of every art,  
And live and die in Aristotle's works.  
Sweet Analytics, 'tis thou hast ravish'd me!  
Bene disserere est finis logices.  
Is, to dispute well, logic's chiefest end?  
Affords this art no greater miracle?  
Then read no more; thou hast attain'd the end:  
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit:  
Bid Oncaymaeon farewell, Galen come:  
Seeing, Ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus:  
Be a physician, Faustus; heap up gold  
And be eternis'd for some wondrous cure:  
Summum bonum medicinae sanitas,  
The end of physic is our body's health.  
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attain'd that end?  
Is not thy common talk found aphorisms?  
Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,  
Whereby whole cities have escap'd the plague,  
And thousand desperate maladies been eas'd?  
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.  
Couldst thou make men to live eternally,

Or, being dead, raise them to life again,  
Then this profession were to be esteem'd.  
Physic, farewell! Where is Justinian?

*[Reads]*

Si una eademque res legatur duobus, alter rem,  
alter valorem rei, etc

A pretty case of paltry legacies!

*[Reads]*

Exhaereditare filium non potest pater, nisi, etc.

Such is the subject of the institute,  
And universal body of the church:

His study fits a mercenary drudge,  
Who aims at nothing but external trash;  
Too servile and illiberal for me.

When all is done, divinity is best:

Jerome's Bible, Faustus; view it well.

*[Reads]*

Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha! Stipendium etc,  
The reward of sin is death: that's hard.

*[Reads]*

Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas;

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. Why, then, belike we must sin, and so consequently die:

Ay, we must die an everlasting death.

What doctrine call you this, Che sera, sera,

What will be, shall be? Divinity, adieu!

These metaphysics of magicians,  
And necromantic books are heavenly;  
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters;  
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.

O, what a world of profit and delight,  
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,  
Is promis'd to the studious artisan!

All things that move between the quiet poles  
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings  
Are but obey'd in 'their several provinces,  
Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;  
But his dominion that exceeds in this,  
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;  
A sound magician is a mighty god:  
Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity ....

# Pre-1770 Drama

... *Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL*

Good Angel: O, Faustus, lay thy damnèd book aside,  
And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,  
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!  
Read, read the Scriptures: – that is blasphemy.

Evil Angel: Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art  
Wherein all Nature's treasury is contain'd:  
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,  
Lord and commander of these elements.

*[Exeunt Angels]*

*Act I, Scene I*

*The end of the play*

Faustus: Ah, Faustus.

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,  
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!  
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,  
That time may cease, and midnight never come;  
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make  
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but  
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,  
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!  
O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!  
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,  
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd  
O, I'll leap up to my God! – Who pulls me down? See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the  
firmament!

One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ! –

Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!

Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer! –

Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God

Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!

Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me,

And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!

No, no!

Then will I headlong run into the earth;

Earth, gape! O, no, it will not harbour me!

You stars that reign'd at my nativity,

Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,

Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,