

## THE FAUST LEGEND

What do men and women desire? For what will they barter their immortal souls? These two questions have haunted Western society, and these persistent queries find their fullest embodiment in the Faust legend. This memorable story, told and retold in novels, prose fiction, and drama, has also profoundly influenced music, art, and cinema. Sara Munson Deats explores its impact, tracing the development of the Faust topos from the seminal works of Marlowe and Goethe to the large number of dramatic and cinematic adaptations which have fascinated audiences and readers throughout the centuries. Her study traces the durability of this legend and its pervasive influence on the literature of the Western world, in which it has been adapted across time, languages, and nations to reflect the concerns of a given era or place. This is the first comparative analysis of the Faust legend in drama and film.

SARA MUNSON DEATS is a Distinguished University Professor Emerita at the University of South Florida. Former President of the Marlowe Society of America, she has published over fifty essays on early modern drama. Her twelve published books include three collections of essays on Christopher Marlowe, co-edited with Robert Logan; a collection of essays on Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*; and *Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (1997), for which she received the Roma Gill Award.

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*From Marlowe and Goethe To Contemporary  
Drama and Film*

SARA MUNSON DEATS

*University of South Florida*



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*I gratefully dedicate this book to my mother, Eula Bea  
Munson, who taught me to overreach*

*“Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what’s a heaven for?”*

*Robert Browning  
“Andrea del Sarto”*

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## *Acknowledgements*

This study is the result of my life-long fascination with the Faust legend. This interest, originally sparked in a graduate seminar offered by my mentor R. W. Dent of UCLA, developed into a dissertation comparing the *English Faustbook* to Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, and this fire continued to burn brightly throughout the years as I taught and wrote about Marlowe and participated actively in the Marlowe Society of America. In the early 1990s my colleague Flora Zbar invited me to give a plenary address comparing the treatment of the Faust legend in Marlowe and Goethe at an interdisciplinary conference at the University of South Florida. Discovering Goethe's *Faust* was a monumental event in my scholarly life; to paraphrase John Keats, I felt like a watcher of the skies when a new planet swims within her ken, and my interest in the Faust legend ignited anew. At that time, I conceived a plan someday to write a book analyzing the various treatments of the Faust legend in drama and film. Twenty-five years later I submitted my manuscript to Cambridge University Press.

Completing this study did not take a village, perhaps, but this book certainly benefited markedly from the support and assistance of many friends, colleagues, and institutions. First, I am grateful for all the aid I have received in locating not easily available information on the many plays, films, and productions discussed in this study. Special thanks must go to Nils Frischknecht and Martina Maria Sam for the insights they provided me personally on the premiere production of Goethe's complete *Faust* at the Goetheanum and also on subsequent productions of Goethe's complete play at the same venue. Also, my deepest appreciation goes to the library staff at the University of South Florida, which worked tirelessly to seek out information on the often obscure texts and criticism that I analyze in this volume.

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## *Abbreviations*

- DF Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus: The A- and B-Texts (1604, 1616)*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Manchester University Press, 1993. (All quotations of the play are from the A-text unless otherwise stated.)
- EFB John Henry Jones (ed.). *The English Faust Book: A Critical Edition Based on the Text of 1592*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- F-AH Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Faust: A Tragedy*, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin. 2nd edn. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001 (1st edn. 1976).
- FI-L Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Faust. Part One*, trans. David Luke. Oxford University Press, 2008 (1st edn. 1987).
- F2-L *Faust. Part Two*, trans. David Luke. Oxford University Press, 1998 (1st edn. 1984).
- F-P Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust, Part I & II*, ed. and trans. Charles E. Passage. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.
- GFB *German Faustbook*
- SFT Philip Mason Palmer and Robert Pattison More. *The Sources of the Faust Tradition: From Simon Magus to Lessing*. New York: Octagon, 1966.
- SOED *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, rev. and ed. C. T. Onions. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

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