

Early Theatre

2021 Prize for Best Interpretative Essay, Volumes 22-23

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“That’s hard”: Christopher Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus and the Trauma of Reprobation,
Early Theatre 23.2 (2020), 9–30
<https://doi.org/10.12745/et.23.2.3894>

Mark Scott’s winning essay is ambitious in scope, ingenious in argument, and rigorous in execution. Using theories about trauma and suffering, Scott persuasively argues that debates over whether Faustus’ soul can be saved are beside the point: he is a lonely, doomed reprobate, signaled by the confusion of his senses. The play made an enormous impact on audiences who were also undergoing the dislocation, loneliness, and pain of Reformation Calvinism, with its active, omnipresent Satan and uncaring, absent God. The essay is especially elegant in its discussion of the increasing isolation of Faustus in the gap between the A and B texts.