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İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

ANGLO-AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMME

ASPIRATION FOR KNOWLEDGE IN THE RENAISSANCE: *HAMLET* AND *THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS* MA THESIS

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MA PROGRAMME

ETHICAL STATEMENT

I prepared my project following the thesis writing rules of the Institute of Social Sciences at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, and I hereby declare that;

- I have obtained the data, information, and documents provided within the thesis according to academic and ethical rules,
- I have submitted all information, documents, evaluations, and results under the requirements of scientific ethics and moral rules,
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- I have not made any changes to the data used,
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HUSSEIN SUAD FADHEL FADHEL

PREFACE

Writing this Master's thesis has proven to be more complex than I initially believed and remarkably more rewarding than I ever imagined. The unwavering support of my family and the institute's professors has been indispensable on this journey. I am eternally grateful to my father and my mother, who have been pillars of strength and encouragement throughout; to my father, who has sustained me in ways I never knew I needed, and for always being proud of my success, I owe a special debt of gratitude. My ever-loving wife has been my greatest friend and supporter, and for her unwavering encouragement, I am deeply thankful. My brothers and sister have played a significant role in my journey, and I am immensely grateful to have them in my life. Their support has been invaluable.

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I consider myself fortunate and blessed to have such a strong support network.

ISTANBUL, 2024 HUSSEIN SUAD FADHEL FADHEL

ÖZET

RÖNESANSTA BİLGİ ARZUSU: *HAMLET* VE *DOKTOR FAUSTUS'UN TRAJİK TARİHİ*

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Klasik antik çağın yeniden canlandırılmasıyla tanınan Rönesans, dil, edebiyat ve düşüncede derin bir canlanmaya tanık oldu; zeka ve yaratıcılıkta sayısız ilerlemeyi teşvik etti. Bu çalışma, Rönesans döneminin çok yönlü ilerleyişini ele almakta ve dönemin çeşitli entelektüel arayışlarını yeni bir tarihselci yaklaşımla titizlikle incelemektedir. Öğrenmenin, öğretme metodolojilerinin ve felsefi temellerin evrimini araştıran bu tez, Rönesans filozofları ve hümanistlerinin zamanın kültürel ve entelektüel ahlakını şekillendirmede oynadığı önemli rolü aydınlatıyor. Birincil kaynakların ve Shakespeare'in Hamlet'i ve Marlowe'un Doktor Faustus'un Trajik Tarihi gibi ufuk açıcı edebi eserlerin titiz bir analizi yoluyla bu çalışma, insan doğasının karmaşıklıkları, bilgi edinimi ve güç arayışına dair incelikli içgörüler sunuyor. Bu araştırma, dönemin temalarını, karakterlerini ve teknolojik yeniliklerini inceleyerek Rönesans düşüncesi ve kültürünün modern entelektüel söylemi ve eğitim uygulamalarını nasıl etkilemeye devam ettiğine dair kapsamlı bir anlayış sunarak Rönesans ideallerinin ve ilerlemelerinin kalıcı öneminin altını çiziyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aspirasyon, Bilgi, Hümanizm, Rönesans, Yeni tarihselci yaklaşım.

ABSTRACT

ASPIRATION FOR KNOWLEDGE IN THE RENAISSANCE: *HAMLET* AND *THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

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The Renaissance, renowned for its revival of classical antiquity, witnessed a profound resurgence in language, literature, and thought, fostering numerous advancements in intellect and creativity. This study looks into the multifaceted progressions of the Renaissance era, meticulously examining the period's diverse intellectual pursuits through a new historicist approach. By exploring the evolution of learning, teaching methodologies, and philosophical underpinnings, this thesis elucidates the pivotal role played by Renaissance philosophers and humanists in shaping the cultural and intellectual ethos of the time. Through meticulous analysis of primary sources and seminal literary works like Shakespeare's Hamlet and Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, the study offers nuanced insights into the complexities of human nature, knowledge acquisition, and the pursuit of power. By examining the themes, characters, and technological innovations of the era, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how Renaissance thought and culture continue to influence modern intellectual discourse and educational practices, underscoring the enduring relevance of Renaissance ideals and advancements.

Keywords: Aspiration, Humanism, Knowledge, New Historicism, Renaissance.

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INTRODUCTION

The Renaissance, known as the rebirth of classical knowledge and antiquity, marked an intense philosophical and intellectual period. Its impact continues to resonate in modern science studies, as the era cultivated a rich educational environment in universities and schools, fostering diverse viewpoints and philosophies that celebrated human ingenuity and innovation. Alongside embracing new cultural elements and pedagogical approaches, the Renaissance also revived the classical language of Latin and literature.

During this period, philosophers leveraged classical learning and methodologies to advance their studies. They revered past forms of science, art, and architecture as invaluable sources of discourse, contributing significantly to the Renaissance's intellectual progress across various domains. Moreover, the Renaissance introduced pioneering teaching and learning methods that catalyzed advancements in major scientific fields, initially in Italy and later extending throughout Europe.

Numerous philosophers and authors of the Renaissance era made substantial contributions to knowledge dissemination, manuscript preservation, and the creation of significant artworks, literary works, and theatrical productions. Their efforts in archiving manuscripts, developing teaching methodologies, fostering philosophical discourse, and rediscovering classical antiquities from ancient Rome and Greece profoundly influenced the trajectory of modern science and studies. Through their contributions and intellectual pursuits, Renaissance scholars played a pivotal role in advancing various disciplines and fostering scientific innovation that continues to shape modern science.

Through the exploration of Renaissance activities and philosophies, the study presents various forms of development and intellectual endeavors archived during the period, serving as foundational sources for this thesis. While documenting numerous intellectual developments and schools of thought from this era, the study aims to deepen our understanding and address research questions concerning the struggles for knowledge personified in characters like Hamlet and Doctor Faustus. Consequently, this study encompasses a wide range of revolutionary intellectual

events and innovations from the Renaissance period, credited to numerous philosophers and intellectuals who made significant discoveries. The approach undertaken in this thesis involves examining the cultural and traditional lives of Renaissance people, shedding light on how these aspects contributed to advancements such as the development of machines like the printing press. Moreover, it explores the cultural perspectives and viewpoints that greatly influenced the progress of various scientific and linguistic fields.

Hamlet and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* are the primary sources and main texts of this thesis. Both of their main characters, existing within the Renaissance period, embody humanistic ideals and share similar views and thoughts. The study will look into their motivations for seeking insight and power to assert control over their respective worlds, while also exploring the conflicts and contradictions they encounter and attempt to resolve throughout their respective plays.

In *Hamlet*, the titular character, prince of Elsinore and a quintessential Shakespearean intellectual hero, grapples with the central contradiction of his world: the murder of his father, King Hamlet. Through investigation, Hamlet seeks truth and justice, employing strategies such as manipulation of his foes' emotions and donning the guise of a mad prince to conceal his intentions.

Similarly, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* follows the journey of a Renaissance humanist and tragic hero Faustus, the character borrowed by Marlowe from a popular German XV-century legend. The ill-fated protagonist is believed to be based on either Johann Georg Faust (c. 1480–1540), a fictionalized Renaissance scholar and scientist dissatisfied with his life, who made a pact with the Devil, or Johann Fust (c. 1400–1466), the business partner of Johann Gutenberg, the pioneer of the printing press, as suggested by Eric Jensen (1982, p. 153). Nevertheless, Faustus is consistently portrayed as a magician and alchemist, likely from Knittlingen, Württemberg, who obtained a degree in divinity from Heidelberg University in 1509. In Marlowe's rendition, Faustus's relentless pursuit of power and knowledge leads to his ultimate damnation, echoing the tragic fate of the legendary figure upon whom his character is based.

The main argument of the thesis posits that despite differing approaches to the pursuit of knowledge by the protagonists in Marlowe's and Shakespeare's works, they share a common objective: attaining supreme power within their respective fictional worlds, albeit through different means. Hamlet utilizes earthly knowledge to aspire to kingship and governance over his people, seeking truths and facts through investigation and learning. Conversely, Doctor Faustus seeks control over both natural and supernatural realms, aiming to declare himself as an omnipotent being through his pursuit of supernatural and natural insights.

While Doctor Faustus pursues both earthly and supernatural knowledge to dominate both realms, Hamlet digs into earthly knowledge to uncover truths and discern lies within his world. His quest for justice and truth leads him to investigate his father's murder independently, demonstrated by his creation of "The Mousetrap." (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 94) to manipulate Claudius's emotions into admitting his crimes. He eschews reliance on external forces, refusing to become subservient to spirits and apparitions. Instead, being a man of reason, he believes in tracking and finding truths and facts through investigating and experimenting as a scholar of Wittenberg. Therefore, while setting his "Mousetrap" in motion, Hamlet proclaims:

> […] I'll have these players
>
> Play something like the murder of my father
>
> Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;
>
> I'll tent him to the quick. If he do blench,
>
> I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
>
> May be a devil, and the devil hath power
>
> T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps,
>
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
>
> As he is very potent with such spirits,

Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds

More relative than this. The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King. (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 75-76)

In Hamlet's pursuit to ascertain the veracity of the ghost's claims regarding his father's demise, he plans to stage a play mirroring the events described by the spectral figure resembling King Hamlet. This performance is intended to scrutinize Claudius's reactions, given his status as the prime suspect. Hamlet's skepticism toward the supernatural stems from his Protestant upbringing, which views ghosts and apparitions as potentially deceitful. He seeks validation of the ghost's credibility through Claudius's responses, thereby determining whether the entity is trustworthy or merely a malevolent force exploiting his vulnerability following his father's tragic death.

Hamlet, a scholar of Wittenberg, subscribes to the belief in acquiring insight through experimentation and practice. Consequently, he refrains from blindly adhering to external sources without thorough investigation to discern their reliability, opting instead to rely on earthly knowledge rather than unnatural ones.

Conversely, Doctor Faustus, also a scholar of the Renaissance era, displays a contrasting approach. He fails to scrutinize the claims of the Dark Arts of Magic regarding wealth and power but rather embraces them unquestioningly. Motivated by unstable curiosity and an insatiable desire for fame and recognition, Faustus becomes ensnared in servitude to demonic forces; enticed by the allure of promised worldly treasures, fame, and status, he neglects to consider the consequences of mastering the dark arts. Instead, he surrenders to curiosity and enters into a pact with devils, readily exchanging his soul for their support and knowledge "Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires. Oh, what a world of profit and delight, Of power, of honour, of omnipotence Is promised to the studious artisan!" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 3). Faustus eagerly desires the contents of these lines, which describe the magic books and documents promising incredible elements. He believes that these artifacts guarantee him not only worldly treasure, fame, and status but also the power to command both natural and supernatural realms. However, Faustus's obsession with these promises

blinds him to their potential consequences. He neglects to investigate or analyze the implications of the Dark Arts' claims, instead succumbing to curiosity and striking a pact with demons for their knowledge and support. By forsaking earthly knowledge, Faustus seeks power and status through external sources, ultimately leading to his damnation in hell.

In this regard, the study raises several questions to support its argumentation regarding the progression of Marlowe's and Shakespeare's protagonists in their quest for power and influence. The thesis poses several pertinent inquiries: what, how, and why do contextual forces drive Hamlet to seek possible evidence of his father's murder from worldly sources? What, how, and why do contextual forces entice Faustus—just like Icarus from an ancient Greek myth—to "mount" his "waxen wings" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 1) and transcend worldly circumstances only to fell to his death and loss of his immortal soul in the end? How do Hamlet and Faustus utilize their determination to acquire knowledge to solidify their status within their respective societies? To address these questions, the study has to look into the advancement of the Renaissance, wherein Hamlet and Doctor Faustus serve as reflections of the period's attitudes and aspirations towards learning.

The Renaissance, propelled forward by a fervent pursuit of truth and inventive creativity, saw individuals like Hamlet and Doctor Faustus embarking on quests driven by their respective motivations, to fully comprehend which, it's essential to grasp the prevailing intellectual currents of the period, which shaped their thoughts and actions.

Any era seeking advancement must embrace diverse viewpoints and philosophies to facilitate transformation. The Renaissance epitomizes such a period, marked by a fervent revival of classical antiquity and ample opportunities for its leaders, future rulers, and professional society. Individuals like Petrarca embarked on ventures to rediscover ancient arts and documents, furthering progress while preserving invaluable heritage. Alongside the creation of new literary works, such as Shakespearean sonnets, significant discoveries of manuscripts and classical arts were made by figures like Petrarca and other Italian philosophers. Renaissance philosophers played a vital role in advancing knowledge through manuscript

publication and printing, delving into the philosophical and intellectual documents of ancient Western societies, including Rome and Greece. Noteworthy among these intellectuals was Leonardo da Vinci, renowned for both his artistic prowess and philosophical insights into human self-awareness and individuality.

Just like any other research study employing literary theories, this research also utilizes a literary theory to delve into the meaning of literary works and manuscripts that contributed to Renaissance learning. Understanding the term "advancement" in the Renaissance necessitates examining the period's background history. This exploration can be approached through two methods: old historicism and new historicism. This thesis employs new historicist methods to investigate how knowledge was practiced and disseminated throughout European countries during the Renaissance. However, it might be crucial to underscore some major differences between these two approaches. While old historicism views historical events as fixed—objectively recorded—and declares "that history, as written, is an accurate view of what really occurred" (Bressler, 1994, p. 128), new historicism challenges this view by asserting that history is "subjective" (Bressler, 1994, p. 128) and influenced by the perspectives and philosophies of those recording it. Therefore, to fully grasp history, attention to detail is paramount, as small nuances can alter the broader narrative. Thus, this research employs the methods of new historicism to comprehend the strategies employed by Renaissance individuals in documenting and capitalizing on advancements in various fields such as science and classical studies. It seeks to uncover and interpret the diverse methods developed by people of the period to progress in their learning and scholarship.

The selection of Marlowe's and Shakespeare's plays, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* and *Hamlet*, holds significant value for this study. Both authors were philosophers and humanists of the period, imbuing their works with humanist values and views that shaped their philosophies, themes, and the protagonists' educational and philosophical backgrounds. Their contributions to Renaissance literature through writing and performing significant plays have earned them recognition as famous poets from the Renaissance period to modern history. The protagonists in Marlowe's and Shakespeare's works reflect the morals and education of the period. Humanism played a pivotal role in advancing various fields during the Renaissance, with

Shakespeare and Marlowe being prominent figures in the Renaissance Humanist movement, espousing profound humanist views and philosophies. Their plays incorporate 'humanly' values and themes such as love, romance, individuality, self-awareness, and other aspects of human tragedy and self-control.

Thus, this thesis aims to explore the motivations and quests of characters like Hamlet and Doctor Faustus within the context of the Renaissance period, seeking to understand how these characters embody the aspirations and attitudes towards learning and knowledge dissemination prevalent during that time. Through an examination of the Renaissance era's intellectual currents, the work emphasizes its impact on modern science studies and educational environments, highlighting the revival of classical knowledge and its influence on diverse viewpoints and philosophies. Focusing on Marlowe's *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as primary sources, the thesis aims to explore how these works reflect humanist values and philosophies, contributing to Renaissance literature and reflecting the morals and education of the period. By employing a literary theory approach, the thesis examines the meaning of literary works and manuscripts from the Renaissance period, utilizing new historicist methods to investigate how knowledge was practiced and disseminated during that time, challenging traditional historical views and emphasizing the subjective nature of history. Additionally, through a comparative analysis of the characters of Hamlet and Doctor Faustus, the thesis highlights similarities and differences in their quests for power and influence, aiming to deepen understanding and address research questions regarding knowledge acquisition and the struggles for knowledge portrayed in the characters' endeavors. Overall, through the utilization of new historical methodologies, the thesis offers a novel detailed insight into the motivations guiding characters such as Hamlet and Doctor Faustus as they navigate their quests for knowledge and power during the Renaissance period.

To achieve these goals, this thesis is structured into three chapters, each comprising brief but significant insights and information regarding the detailed discussions within their respective sections. Each chapter is accompanied by an abstract, introduction, and conclusion. The first chapter, titled "THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING," is further divided into two sections. Initially,

the chapter provides an overview of the Renaissance era before delving into a detailed explanation of the literary theory utilized in the research study. It elucidates the differences between old and new historicism views and underscores the importance of employing new historicist methods in this thesis.

The first section of Chapter One, titled “Humanism and The Advancement of Learning,” discusses the remarkable contributions of the Renaissance humanist movement to the period’s progress in learning and scholarship. It highlights quotes and philosophies from renowned humanist leaders of the era, such as Francesco Petrarca and Leonardo da Vinci, whose ideas continue to resonate in modern history. The section elucidates humanists’ perspectives and philosophies by underscoring their publications and activities, shedding light on various humanist schools and their influence on learning and teaching methods, which served as models for subsequent generations. Furthermore, it examines the evolving meaning of the term “humanly” throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, along with humanists’ diverse views on education and the value of acquiring knowledge through books and manuscripts. By addressing the contribution of humanists and their movement to the advancement of learning and education, this section offers valuable insights into the period’s intellectual development.

The second section of Chapter One, “Manuscripts Versus the Printing Press: the Spread of Knowledge,” is divided into two parts. This segment explores the methodologies employed by Renaissance scholars to document, preserve, and disseminate their knowledge and insights. Printing and copying classical documents emerged as pivotal activities for philosophers and movements of the period, driven by the belief in making knowledge accessible to individuals. The section introduces two prominent methods for archiving and disseminating insights: vellum parchment manuscripts and printing. Vellum parchment manuscripts, originating from the Middle Ages but prevalent during the Renaissance, offered superior quality compared to paper and were favored by numerous philosophers and authors. The subsequent part of the section examines the revolutionary printing method introduced during the Renaissance: printing through movable types, pioneered by Gutenberg. This development revolutionized book copying and dissemination throughout European countries. Each section of Chapter One provides crucial insights into the

advancement of education and knowledge during the period, setting the stage for further discussion in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

The second chapter, “HAMLET’S INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY: A STUDY OF RENAISSANCE HUMANISM AND LEARNING” and the third chapter, “Doctor Faustus’ Thirst for Knowledge,” mirror literary works that reflect the Renaissance’s progress in views and philosophies of insight and knowledge, as well as responses to the forms of advancement and activity presented by the movements and philosophers of the period. The second chapter comprises two sections: the first section, “Hamlet and Religious Divides,” delves into the religious conflict within the play. Hamlet, embodying the Renaissance hero and adhering to its views and philosophies, grapples with the duality of Christianity. Despite studying Protestantism at Wittenberg University, the reality he faces aligns with Catholic views and beliefs. In his quest to understand and navigate the diverse insights and resolve conflicts between these two worldly perspectives, he hesitates to act until he explores the new reality portrayed by Shakespeare.

The second section of Chapter Two, “Exploring Humanist Themes in Hamlet: Knowledge, Individualism and Romance,” explores Hamlet’s Renaissance humanist aspects. It portrays the Shakespearean hero as a humanist scholar whose perspectives and philosophies are crucial for the Renaissance’s advancement of learning. The section provides an introduction to the Renaissance period’s philosophies and views addressed in the play, along with a brief comparison between Marlowe’s hero, Doctor Faustus, and Shakespeare’s protagonist, both pursuing knowledge and insight to confront their internal and external conflicts. The first part of this section delves into the play’s humanist values. Throughout Hamlet, the protagonist esteems humanity and values individual achievements, asserting that men are among the noblest creatures on earth (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 65). Additionally, the section offers numerous references to Renaissance works that extol human attributes such as love, romance, individuality, and self-control, providing detailed explanations of these human features within Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

The final chapter of this research study, “ASPIRATION FOR KNOWLEDGE IN *THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS*,”

comprises two sections preceeded by an introduction that addresses the definition of necromancy by various philosophers and authors. The chapter briefly introduces the views and thoughts of Faustus, Marlowe's hero, a Renaissance philosopher, and a doctor of divinity who veered off course in his pursuit of fame and power. It presents numerous terms and definitions describing necromancy as an advancement in accessing forbidden knowledge, as well as a curse leading its practitioner to hell. The first section of the chapter provides a summary of the play's themes, such as power and knowledge, along with a part focusing on themes of fame, power, and knowledge. It outlines Faustus' quest for elements and status to fulfill his desire for fame, highlighting the importance of knowledge and learning in acquiring power and status, and explaining the hero's exploration of various faculties that contributed to his fame, as well as the reasons behind his abandonment of these studies.

The second section of Chapter Three, "Doctor Faustus and the Renaissance Accounts of Learning," examines Faustus's humanist features as an individual, learner, and philosopher across various major studies and faculties. It elucidates the motives behind his quest for insight and the curiosity that drove him to master the four primary faculties of Renaissance studies: law, divinity, physics, and analytics. The section discusses humanist views on the accessibility of knowledge as an individual's right, contrasting the Renaissance's scientific opportunities for studying and mastering diverse faculties with the limitations of the Middle Ages. It further elucidates the humanist perspectives embedded in the play to illustrate key features of humanist studies and philosophies. Additionally, the section underscores the centrality of books as repositories of knowledge, reflecting Marlowe's belief in books and documents as primary sources of learning, with their availability being of immense value to the author. Moreover, Marlowe's strong focus on the formal educational system had a notable impact on his writings, as discussed in detail in the chapter while exploring the humanistic principles linked to education within academic institutions such as schools and universities.

Finally, in addition to evidence concerning the methods and developments for advancing learning during the Renaissance period, the three chapters of this thesis offer a substantial study that could enhance existing sources and research studies in the field with a fresh, modern form and style. The study provides numerous analyses

and key features for existing theses, studies, and journals to utilize, facilitating further exploration of advancements in learning and the dissemination of knowledge during this period.

1. THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING

The Renaissance, a period marked by the rebirth of classical antiquities, was defined by its pursuit of insight, humanistic features, and the revival of classical Roman and Greek antiquities. This era witnessed significant advancements in learning, education, and the dissemination of views and philosophies, shaping modern forms of studies and literature and providing enlightenment to modern science.

In his book *Millennium: Towards Tomorrow's Society*, Francis Kinsman emphasizes the importance of learning as a tool for higher status and accomplishments. He quotes Leonardo Da Vinci, a key Renaissance figure, who declares, "To develop a complete mind—study the science of art; study the art of science" and further concludes, "learn how to 'see'; realize that everything connects to everything else" (Kinsman, 1989, p. 223). As a Renaissance humanist, Da Vinci views learning as essential for a complete mind, advocating for the study and connection of the phenomenal essence of science to understand one's role in advancing society. Humanists consider learning the source of all advancement and have established an infrastructure to study, learn, practice, and educate people in major fields of science.

The Renaissance was a phenomenal period for its diverse faculties and perspectives on science and the arts. It consisted of numerous philosophical and cultural attributes that defined its beauty. The period's emphasis on insight and the human experience led to a significant transformation in intellectual pursuits, offering endless opportunities for intellectual improvement and enlightenment in modern science.

As was mentioned in Introduction, this thesis employs a New Historicist literary analysis approach to define and analyze the significance of advancing knowledge and insight during the Renaissance era. New historicism, a recent approach to literary analysis, aims to uncover the meaning of a text or document by considering various factors such as the text itself, the reader's response, the author's background, and the historical context in which the text was produced.

In his renowned book, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Literary*

Theory (1994), Bressler provides a concise definition of new historicism, stating that it is a method that "declares that all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past" (Bressler, 1994, p. 128). Unlike old historicists who view history as fixed and objective, new historicists challenge this perspective, asserting that every author's background, views, and biases influence their portrayal of historical events. They emphasize the importance of examining historical events in detail, acknowledging the significance of every piece of information.

Furthermore, new historicists argue that to understand the pursuit of knowledge and insight by figures like Marlowe and Shakespeare, it is essential to grasp the historical context in which they lived. This understanding provides a broader perspective and explains why they sought to acquire insight and employed specific methods of understanding and practice.

New Historicism, as a method of literary interpretation, is also defined as "a method of cultural analysis which studies the ways in which a cultural artefact (especially a literary text) intermingles with and participates in its historical context, especially with reference to the power relations operating within the society of its time" (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2011). It emerged as a means of analyzing the economic and cultural impacts of literary texts within their historical period.

Peter Barry defines New Historicism as "a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period" (1995, p. 171). He declares that New Historicism studies and gives attribute to both literary and non-literary texts while analyzing and studying as to find a suitable meaning, which declares that literary and non-literary texts question, as well as inform each other endlessly. His definition declares new historicism as a method that does not give privilege to neither literary nor non-literary texts (1995, p. 172–173). Numerous critics, including the American critic Louis Montrose, agree with Barry's definition, emphasizing the importance of giving equal attention to both literary and non-literary texts. Montrose defines new historicism as a shared interest in "the textuality of history, the historicity of texts" (1989, p. 20). He delineates the historical events in accordance to "the historicity of texts", and explains that tradition

and culture of a period is reflected in literary and non-literary texts equally.

Nevertheless, in his *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, Stephan Greenblatt outlines the essential elements of new historicism. Firstly, he declares that literature is history-oriented: it is the product of a period's social and cultural status and circumstances. He declares that "methodological self-consciousness is one of the distinguishing marks of the new historicism in cultural studies as opposed to a historicism based upon faith in the transparency of signs and interpretive procedures" (Greenblatt, 1990a, 158). Andrew Bennet and Nicholas Royle explain this statement by Greenblatt declaring that "new historicists argue that the production of literary texts is a cultural practice different only in its specific mode or formulation from other practices—from furniture-making to teaching to warfare to printing" (Bennet & Royle, 2004. p. 115). Literature is a reflection to the form of social tradition and cultural forces of a period. Secondly, Greenblatt claims that literature contains another vision of history. Literature is a reflection of historical social and economic background, therefore, it gives another vision of history. Thirdly, literary texts are products of the social and political ideologies of the period in which they are written. Thus, literature cannot surpass history. Fourthly, literature is interpreted in accordance with its historical context because it reflects the political and social ideologies of the period. History shapes literature, rather than the other way around (Greenblatt, 1982, p. 3–6).

Returning to the Renaissance's advancement in learning, the period consisted of numerous discoveries and developments from Italy to the rest of the European countries. The discovery of old manuscripts and documents by the father of humanists and the poet of Italy, Petrarca, greatly impacted the Renaissance course of improvement, learning, and education. As part of the humanist movement, Petrarca emphasized the importance of enhancing learning as the highest form of education to attain unlimited pleasure, a concept that the thesis will explore further.

The period embraced numerous philosophies and viewpoints that shaped its schools of thought and beliefs. Its advancement relied on various factors, including movements aimed at improving individuals' perspectives and thoughts, as well as developments and experiments such as various printing methods that spread

knowledge throughout Europe.

One significant philosophy adopted during this period was humanism, a movement championed by many Renaissance authors and thinkers. Although humanism has been defined in various ways, during the Renaissance, it held significant meanings and definitions. While modern interpretations emphasize human values such as kindness and peace advocacy, Renaissance humanism focused on the importance of studies, learning, and individual achievements.

Through its emphasis on human potential, the movement portrayed mankind as capable of remarkable deeds. This sentiment is echoed by Shakespeare through his humanist hero Hamlet, who famously declares, "What a piece of work is a man" (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 65). In this line, Hamlet expresses the uniqueness and intelligence of humanity, highlighting the potential for success and remarkable achievements through education and the exploration of various scientific disciplines.

In addition to the aforementioned points, Renaissance humanists pursued various goals, one of which was to disseminate their knowledge throughout European countries to promote and spread their philosophies. They were primarily recognized as tutors and educators in schools and universities during this era. Their lectures on classical language and literature proved invaluable for future generations, providing future rulers with comprehensive knowledge of disciplines and manners.

Furthermore, the methods employed by humanists conveyed significant aspects of civilized information and morality to the younger generation. They ensured that their studies and teachings would be passed down to future generations, aiding in their advancement and the refinement of their practices and knowledge.

The impact and contribution of humanists to the advancement of learning were substantial. In addition to teaching in universities and publishing numerous academic books, their methods and teachings served as role models for religious groups and philosophers alike, including followers of the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant thinkers.

Historical accounts, such as *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, highlight the prominence of numerous schools during the Renaissance period that followed the humanists' educational philosophies. Schools like those of

Guarino da Verona in Ferrara and Vittorino da Feltre in Mantua embraced humanist methods, teaching classical forms of language and literature alongside the new philosophies and viewpoints of the Renaissance (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, p. 114).

The Renaissance, in addition to adopting humanist philosophies and views to advance science's various forms and faculties, witnessed numerous revolutionary advancements. These advancements included machines and methods that facilitated the spread and dissemination of knowledge across Europe.

Philosophers of the period, including humanists, placed great emphasis on spreading knowledge and believed in its accessibility to all individuals. They engaged in activities such as tutoring, teaching in schools and universities, and publishing books and cultural arts. To archive their works, humanists and other philosophers utilized handwritten notes in vellum parchment manuscripts, a method popular since the late Middle Ages.

This practice continued into the Renaissance, with authors and philosophers like Shakespeare and Leonardo da Vinci using it for note-taking and printing artistic visuals. Alongside the documentation and writing through manuscripts, the period introduced one of its most significant revolutionary machines: the printing press. Gutenberg's printing press revolutionized printing, allowing for the production of high-quality books and documents at low cost due to the use of paper.

Although not every element contributing to the advancement of learning during the period can be conclusively identified, the thesis highlights some of the remarkable aspects and events that played crucial roles in advancing learning and spreading insight throughout the era.

1.1. Humanism and the Advancement of Learning

Humanists held the major intellectual school of thought during the Renaissance period, as they had one of the leading cultural and philosophical minds. According to historians, Renaissance humanists' schooling thoughts began in the late period of the fourteenth century in Italy, where many figures and philosophers, such as Francesco Petrarca, began their venture to access knowledge and learn through

classical manuscripts and documents which they found in multiple European countries.

Although the word “humanity” was often received as a liberal term during the Middle Ages, and the educating system often associated the word with the themes of liberty by multiple Roman writers and thinkers, such as Cicero, *Pro Archia*, and Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, the term was redefined by the scholars and philosophers of the Renaissance to stand for the meaning of obtaining well-refined school of thoughts and studies which included grammar, poetry, history, and philosophical morals. Numerous philosophers and writers, such as Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Petrarca, as well as many others, contributed to the reviving of the term to include the meanings of studies, such as philosophy and history, which were understood much better than the terms used to define the word “humanity” during the Middle Ages (Kristeller, 1965, p. 9).

The humanist movement is often regarded as a collection of ideas and philosophies that evolve differently in each period, reflecting varying thoughts and concepts. While some ideas may remain consistent across periods, others may differ significantly. Modern humanists focus primarily on moral and ethical aspects, whereas historians often define Renaissance humanism as a broader concern with the study and emulation of classical antiquity.

Historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggest that Renaissance humanism involved imitating the ancient learnings, philosophies, and thoughts of Greece and Rome. This movement encompassed teaching and learning across various forms of discourse, including art and science. However, modern interpretations of humanist thought, which deal primarily with human aspects of morality and value with no aspects of culture and tradition, differ in many respects from those of the Renaissance period, which historians often view as “that broad concern with the study and imitation of classical antiquity” (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, p. 113).

In addition to fostering diverse forms of study and educational perspectives, Renaissance humanism embraced various themes and philosophies that celebrated the intellectual capacities of individuals. Through their roles as tutors, educators, and

creators of theoretical and artistic works, philosophers of the movement significantly influenced the educational landscape of the Renaissance, initially in Italy and later across European cities and universities.

Jacob Burckhardt's seminal work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1910), underscores Italy's pivotal role in cultural leadership during the Renaissance. Kristeller further emphasizes that Italy served as the epicenter of Renaissance humanism and intellectual advancements, with many prominent humanists and characteristic views originating in Italy before spreading to other European countries (Kristeller, 1965, p. 3).

Evidence of Burckhardt's view can be found in the vast amount of Italian visual arts produced by Renaissance philosophers and high-elite humanists, such as Francesco Petrarca. Lastly, because of the activities and the publishings of the Renaissance humanists, which revived the term 'humanity,' Europe flourished with numerous phenomenal documents, manuscripts, and plays that portrayed historic and heroic figures, such as Shakespeare's heroic plays, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, as well as his historical plays, *Henry V* and *Richard II*, which portrayed significant features of human values and critical humanists schooling of thoughts and features.

The advancement of Renaissance humanists was influenced by various factors and themes. Publishing the thoughts and views of philosophers like Petrarca played a significant role in shaping the cultural and traditional perspectives of Renaissance Italy. Their exploration of classical antiquities through manuscripts and educational documents contributed to this development. In one of his essential lines, Petrarca declares an important humanist ideal stating the phenomenal importance of learning:

> Gold, silver, jewels, purple garments, houses built of marble, groomed estates, pious paintings, caparisoned steeds and other things of this kind offer a mutable and superficial pleasure; books give delight to the very marrow of one's bones. They speak to us, consult with us and join with us in a living and intense intimacy. (Bakewell, 2011, Para. 1)

Petrarca points out to the significant importance of learning and educating as they

hold the true essence and meaning of advancing in this universe. He depicts the importance of learning, a humanist's key feature and principle, as it gives him discourse and education. He further insists, saying, "books give delight to the very marrow of one's bones" (Bakewell, 2011, Para. 1), indicating that earthly materials and superficial objects such as gold and silver do not deliver pleasure and satisfaction to individuals' minds and status. However, educational books and manuscripts are the primary materials responsible for satisfying an intellectual individual's mind. Renaissance humanists attribute great importance to the educational system and individuals' learning, as they believe that obtaining knowledge and learning is the source that would grant individuals pleasure. Petrarca further insists that these types of discourse, learning, and obtaining insight are some of the major factors that "consult" the individual's mind and soul into making phenomenal decisions that would lead to their success and obtaining magnificent achievements.

Finally, alongside schools and philosophical ideologies, humanists' roles as educators and mentors in schools and universities significantly contributed to the development of education and perspectives during the era. Playwrights such as Shakespeare and Marlowe wielded considerable influence in shaping Renaissance society's human values through their tragic and comedic works, which depicted essential aspects of human nature. Poets also played a crucial role by exploring themes of romance, love, power, status, and individuality, thereby making significant strides in advancing humanist perspectives.

1.2. Manuscripts Versus the Printing Press: the Spread of Knowledge

The Renaissance signified a resurgence of ancient antiquity, the revival of knowledge, and the inception of new fields of study and practice. Renowned for its advancements in learning and innovation, this period saw the emergence of numerous advancements that facilitated the widespread dissemination of knowledge, such as the modern printing press. Alongside experimentation, the Renaissance encompassed a plethora of philosophies, thoughts, and insights that required preservation and restoration for future generations to study. Many of these Renaissance philosophies and ideas continue to be integral components of modern

science and university curricula. Consequently, authors and philosophers of the time sought methods to archive their works and viewpoints. In addition to archiving their philosophies, individuals of the era also endeavored to disseminate their works and thoughts, a principle embraced by humanists.

Additionally, Renaissance humanists believed in the accessibility of knowledge for every individual as an open source to be viewed and practiced in order to learn and get insight. Their primary motive for publishing and archiving works was to ensure the lasting of the documents that would be distributed as sources of knowledge for future generations. Therefore, historians indicate that Renaissance philosophers had numerous paths to archive their works. As well as following the old ways of using manuscripts to publish their works and philosophies, the Renaissance scholars invented a new machine or a device that works by printing to publish and archive their works, called the Printing Press. The process involves placing paper between movable types and a stand. A handler then utilizes pressing techniques to stamp the types onto the paper. The types contain either images or text, and they are coated with ink to imprint onto the paper.

Although the Renaissance publishers depended mainly on printing to publish their works, numerous philosophies and works did not need publishing through it, and some of them were “published only long after their composition,” for manuscripts, as argued by Schmitt and Skinner, “proved to be an effective vehicle for the expression and dissemination of ideas throughout the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance” (Schmitt & Skinner. 1988, p. 11). Philosophers and authors used both manuscripts and the Printing Press in order to archive and publish their views, works, and thoughts in order to keep them for future generations. Numerous modern studies and philosophies benefit from examining the evolution of modern societies and faculties through the lens of these manuscripts. Documents containing such insights have been preserved and disseminated, contributing to the progression of education and public discourse.

Schmitt and Skinner elucidate the significance of the “manuscript culture,” asserting its role as both an archive and a repository of intellectual pursuits during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. These manuscripts served as educational

resources, offering insights into the thoughts and philosophies of readers from these eras. Within the diverse forms of manuscripts, one finds detailed descriptions of ideas and devices that propelled the advancement of learning during this epoch. The dissemination of knowledge, books, and insights, crucial to the progression of education and public discourse, commenced with the circulation of printed books and manuscripts. The genesis of manuscript production traces back to the later Middle Ages. Sources indicate that its evolution can be segmented into two periods within the Latin West. Throughout these periods, the production and refinement of manuscript forms were chiefly influenced by "the special needs of a changing reading public." The demand for manuscripts by philosophers and readers alike played a pivotal role in determining the quality and scope of manuscript production (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, P. 12).

During the first period, vellum parchment manuscripts were predominantly used as religious documents, featuring illuminated pages and serving as vital tools for monks and clerics in imparting teachings and vows to their students. Crafted from animal skins such as calf, goat, and sheep, these manuscripts held significant religious importance. Despite the emergence of printing workshops, many religious writers and authors staunchly adhered to the traditional practice of hand-copying manuscripts. They believed that this method ensured the preservation of the text's originality and integrity, thus making it more reliable compared to printed copies.

Monk scholar Abbot Johannes Trithemius of Sponheim emphasized the importance of continuing handwritten manuscript production for various reasons, as stated in Schmitt & Skinner (1988): "some spiritual in nature but others related to guaranteeing the availability of a variety of texts and to avoiding errors" (Schmitt & Skinner,1988, P. 12). Trithemius argued that printed books often contained errors due to the mass production process, which resulted in widespread demand and subsequent errors in many copies. He highlighted that the quality of the final product suffered due to the challenges of producing numerous error-free copies to meet the high demand, stating, "Mass production, of course, did damage the quality of the final product" (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, p. 13).

The demand for manuscripts and printed documents exceeded the capacity of

printing staff, making it difficult to produce error-free copies. Thus, despite advancements in printing technology, scholars insisted on maintaining the traditional method of handwritten manuscripts to mitigate errors and ensure the preservation of textual accuracy.

The second period of manuscript production emerged in the thirteenth century, shifting the focus from religious to secular interests. Manuscripts became increasingly sought after by students and organizations, leading to a production driven by "[s]ecular interests and university needs," as noted by Schmitt and Skinner (1988). This shift in demand was accompanied by the emergence of various public readers and local communities, highlighting a growing need for diversity in "written works outside the relatively narrow confines of monasteries and of government offices" (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, p. 15). The rise of these readers and communities, lacking the time or inclination to produce their own manuscripts, led to a high demand for copies of existing texts. Consequently, workshops for writing and editing outside of monastic settings became essential to fulfill this demand. This expansion in readership and the dissemination of knowledge played a crucial role in advancing learning during the Renaissance, a period known for its emphasis on individualism and intellectual exploration.

The growth in readership not only facilitated learning but also contributed to the cultivation of humanist values, particularly individualism. The appreciation for insights and knowledge among the public and local communities reflected the humanist ideals of valuing personal intellect and autonomy. This widespread engagement in learning and practice marked a significant advancement in education and intellectual development during the period.

The emergence of the widespread distribution of manuscripts has resulted in dependence on other forms of book production materials. Editors and workshops began depending on paper as a copying device; its low price and availability resulted in the mass production of various forms of books during the Renaissance era. According to Schmitt and Skinner, "Paper allowed large quantities of books to be produced relatively cheaply; this both responded to and furthered increased literacy and education." Because of the high demand and the vast amount of orders that

workshops received for written and edited manuscripts, the emergence of other tools and materials for manuscripts were required to be introduced to fill in and satisfy the high demand for the products. During this era, manuscripts transitioned to printing and publishing on paper for several reasons. Firstly, paper allowed for the production of a large number of copies, meeting the demands of public readers more effectively than materials like animal skins. Secondly, the affordability and widespread availability of paper made it a convenient choice for authors and publishers, facilitating the adaptation to this new medium, which "allowed large quantities of books to be produced relatively cheaply" (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, p. 16–17). Because of the availability of paper and its cheap price, the method of copying made it possible to advance learning through increased sources of insight and education. The vast availability of sources made it easy to access by individuals who could not afford manuscripts of animal skins as they were not as cheap or available as those paper materials.

Vellum parchment, on the other hand, evolved into prized collections for affluent individuals and served organizational needs, particularly in the realm of governmental documents and records. They were "usually limited to the production of specific varieties of books" because of their high quality and durability to sustain their image and material over time compared to paper produced using rags (Schmitt & Skinner, 1988, p. 15). Therefore, the process of collecting manuscripts of vellum parchment was specific to those of authority and wealth for governmental documentation. Many renowned figures, including philosophers, authors, and poets, created numerous well-known manuscripts during this period; some, like Shakespeare and Francesco Petrarca, are celebrated for their poetry, while others, such as Giovanni Boccaccio and Leonardo Da Vinci, are renowned for their exceptional illustrations.

Dante Alighieri, the renowned Italian poet famous for his epic work *The Divine Comedy*, authored a considerable number of manuscripts. While many of his writings have been lost to time, those that remain hold significant importance in the realm of literature and the progress of knowledge. Particularly notable are Dante's manuscripts of *The Divine Comedy*, which serve as instructional material on the conditions of the Middle Ages. Within his poems, Dante intricately detailed various

pathways and institutions, shedding light on the schemes and truths of the Church that were often concealed from the public during his era.

Leonardo da Vinci, a prominent figure of the Renaissance and a humanist, was renowned as an Italian polymath, excelling in various fields including painting, architecture, sculpture, and engineering. His extensive insights and knowledge were encapsulated in his notebooks, notably *The Codex Leicester*, which were meticulously filled with sketches and observations on high-quality vellum parchment. This form of manuscript production exemplifies his exceptional contributions to Renaissance learning. Throughout his life, da Vinci produced numerous scientific and artistic manuscripts that have endured through generations, providing invaluable insights and inspiration to future artists and scholars. His meticulous observations of the human body, documented in his artistic manuscripts, are particularly notable for their contributions to the understanding of anatomy during the Renaissance. Among his many artistic achievements, da Vinci's masterpiece, the Mona Lisa, stands out as a timeless icon of artistry and continues to captivate audiences, retaining its value and significance over the centuries.

Francesco Petrarca, an Italian poet and a highly famous Renaissance humanist figure who laid the foundation for Renaissance discoveries and humanist ideas and thoughts, was known for collecting classical manuscripts and texts across Europe. He was knowledgeable and known for many poems, which he wrote using manuscripts of vellum parchments during his lifetime, such as *The Triumph*s, a series of poems written in the Italian–Tuscan language. Throughout his life, Petrarca achieved many accomplishments. In his search for classical forms of insight, he found Cicero's letters in the Cathedral Library of Verona, which are manuscripts that contain the sixteen books of Cicero's letters "*ad Atticum,* the three books *ad Quintum*, the two *ad Brutum*, and the apocryphal letter to Octavianus" (Cosenza, 1910, p. 5). The manuscripts that Petrarca discovered and collected helped and advanced the learning of the Renaissance generation and subsequent ones.

The advancement in manuscript production heralded a highly anticipated era, with numerous public figures engaging in learning and observation. This production played a pivotal role in the development of libraries, which began by amassing vast

quantities of papers and documents to archive and record the remarkable events of the period. Humanism attributed great importance to the progress of manuscripts, encompassing both paper and vellum parchments, as they facilitated the dissemination of knowledge and illustrations among Renaissance people. The introduction of rag paper manuscripts revolutionized the production of books and documents due to their affordability and abundance, making them primary materials for publishing philosophies, books, and documents. The widespread distribution of paper manuscripts to the public, including universities and organizational needs, led to the advancement of workshops dedicated to their production, thereby enhancing the accuracy and availability of learning and teaching throughout the period. However, despite paper's prevalence, many scholars and religious monks remained staunch traditionalists, refusing to abandon hand-written vellum parchment due to its perceived superiority in quality and durability. This ongoing debate underscored the complexities surrounding material choice in manuscript production.

Printing was a crucial method for the Renaissance advancement in various fields that of literature and business, including many others. In economic aspects, "The printing press fostered knowledge and skills that were valuable in commerce." Dittmar insists that the advancement of printing made the accounting system much more accurate. The information and status, as well as the monthly statements, became more accurate and informative. He further explains that "print media played a key role in the development of numeracy, the emergence of business education, and the adoption of innovations in bookkeeping and accounting" (Dittmar, 2011, p. 1134). Business management and education became more informative and accessible for the vast majority of interested parties. The introduction of new publishing methods facilitated faster learning and education for learners and practitioners, particularly in fields such as business and accounting management. This was enabled by the availability of sources and books dedicated to these subjects. In addition, the new producing methods were not perceived as advanced technologies alone but rather as competing methods for local workshops and printing industries. The low cost of printing and the vast availability of paper allowed printing industries to publish and print books and documents at low prices, as even locals could afford to buy and sell the manuscripts to make profits or archive them.

Therefore, the development of printing was considered an essential part of the Renaissance period. Many philosophers and authors appreciated such innovations for their high abilities and the privileges they provide to learners and educators. Sir Frances Bacon declares in his book *Novum Organum* that the three essential inventions and developments of the world—printing, gunpowder, and the compass—are the main reasons for advancing and improving humankind in the major fields of science. He declares:

> We should note the force, effect, and consequences of inventions which are nowhere more conspicuous than in those three which were unknown to the ancients, namely, printing, gunpowder, and the compass. For these three have changed the appearance and state of the whole world. (Eisenstein, 1968, p. 1–56)

In these lines, Bacon declares that humankind evolved and improved significantly by utilizing printing, gunpowder, and the compass. Gunpowder and the compass facilitated oceanic exploration, allowing people of the period to traverse seas and lands and to develop weapons such as fire arrows and bombs for warfare. Conversely, printing enabled the acquisition of knowledge and insights through books and manuscripts, as well as the dissemination of ideas and scholarship across Europe. Therefore, Bacon considers the invention of printing to be of great importance to Renaissance humanists, as it bestowed significant privileges upon both authors and readers.

One of the many advancements of the period was Gutenberg's development of the printing press. This part of the thesis intends to show the impact of printing on the advancement of the Renaissance production and dissemination of knowledge and documents. The introduction of the printing press was one of the greatest development of the era. The public and the humanist scholars highly appreciated it. Publishing and archiving the works and arts of multiple faculties and keeping records of every form were phenomenal aspects of Renaissance humanists. As they believed in the accessibility of insight, education, and learning for all parties, the invention and development of such machines helped to improve the process of distributing

manuscripts and documents of all forms throughout the era.

Nevertheless, the advancement of such machines proved immensely valuable as they helped increase the number of books published and made available to the public at affordable prices. Numerous sources indicate a significant increase in the availability of books and manuscripts at lower prices compared to the late Middle Ages, as noted by Zanden (2009) and Clark (2004). Although numerous scholars and philosophers did not intend to use such techniques for multiple reasons (their quality did not match their image and thoughts, the durability of such copies did not live up to their expectations, and they often were produced with mistakes and errors), the technique helped shape the widespread of knowledge, which the Renaissance appreciated, as it served numerous humanist thoughts of advancing education and learning (Dittmar, 2011, p. 1133–1172).

In addition to the aforementioned points, the abundance of paper played a crucial role in shaping the advancement of printing during the Renaissance. Printing became indispensable for scholars and the education system of the era, significantly enhancing the availability of books and manuscripts in educational institutions, including universities and local schools. Furthermore, printing facilitated the documentation and preservation of the thoughts and educational philosophies of Renaissance scholars, who utilized this technology to record and disseminate their works and illustrations. The availability of printing techniques also contributed to the widespread dissemination of books and publications by Renaissance authors, including copies featuring images and illustrations. Many of these works were published long after their initial composition, such as Dante Alighieri's art forms within *The Divine Comedy*. Although much of Dante's original records have been lost to history, numerous editions were republished posthumously.

One of the phenomenal aspects of printing is the reduced time for a copy to be distributed and published. The advancement of Renaissance teachings depended highly on the process of distributing books and documents across Europe's educational centers. Before the invention and advancement of printing, copying and documenting books and manuscripts was challenging to produce for many reasons, such as the high cost of printing and the lack of raw materials for printing. To fulfill

the market's needs, many editors and copyists had to work together to finish as little as two books per person within a year. The required person-hours and accuracy in copying and writing were challenging for a copyist, where books and manuscripts were highly in demand. However, after the establishment of bookshops and the advancement of printing, many books were ready to be viewed and published much quicker than they used to be (Eisenstein, 1968, p. 1–56).

Thus, the Renaissance stands as a pivotal period characterized by a profound resurgence of classical knowledge, driven by humanist ideals of learning, education, and the dissemination of knowledge. Figures like Leonardo da Vinci and Petrarch epitomized the Renaissance spirit, advocating for the integration of arts and sciences while emphasizing the importance of education in shaping individuals and society. Innovations such as the printing press revolutionized the accessibility and spread of knowledge, democratizing education and fostering advancements across various disciplines. This era laid the foundation for the flourishing of literature and intellectual inquiry, setting the stage for seminal works like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. These literary masterpieces, deeply influenced by Renaissance humanism and the pursuit of knowledge, continue to resonate with audiences, reflecting the enduring legacy of this transformative period in history. Through the lens of New Historicism, we can further explore how these texts reflect the societal power dynamics and biases of their time, offering insights into the human condition and the enduring quest for enlightenment and understanding.

2. HAMLET'S INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY: A STUDY OF RENAISSANCE HUMANISM AND LEARNING

Although the play *Hamlet* is about murder and revenge, it consists of many humanist and Renaissance elements, themes, and aspects, such as art, performance, politics, and human nature, making it one of the significant plays of the period. The play uses many humanist views on art and performance, as Hamlet uses these two elements to deceive his enemies and foes. He appears as a great actor by using mockery and nonsensical lines to indicate madness in order to confuse those who investigate him, as well as make his enemies look like clowns while trying to find his motives and status. Additionally, like his master Shakespeare, Hamlet is a great director; he uses his intelligence and insight to direct a play in order to deceive his uncle. He directs the play to confirm the doubts he has harbored since receiving intelligence from his father's spirit earlier in the play. Furthermore, he orchestrates the play to mirror the events of his father's murder, aiming to elicit Claudius's inner emotions and thoughts, thus indirectly coaxing an admission of his crime.

In addition to his roles as a great actor and director, Hamlet emerges as the central hero of the play, embodying the position of a prince of Denmark and a scholar with profound insight and knowledge. Preceding the events of Shakespeare's play, he pursued scholarly endeavors at the University of Wittenberg, immersing himself in various philosophies encompassing science, art, performance, and religion. Hamlet's astute understanding serves as his compass, navigating through the conflicts and paradoxes of his world as he embarks on his quest for vengeance and endeavors to secure a more deserving ruler for his kingdom, firmly convinced of his uncle's unworthiness for the throne.

Moreover, Hamlet is not merely a scholar but also a notable figure in the Renaissance humanist movement. His perspectives and ideals align closely with humanist principles, enriching the play with profound contemplations on human nature, the existential struggle between life and death, and an array of Renaissance themes including love, romance, and individualism. However, the play delves even deeper, introducing one of the era's central conflicts and dilemmas: the clash between Protestantism and Catholicism, two prevailing religious ideologies of the

time. Throughout the play, Hamlet grapples with these multifaceted themes and the intricate dynamics of his society, particularly the tensions arising from the opposing religious views, as he navigates the complexities of worldly affairs and moral quandaries.

The contradictions between the views are among the primary reasons for the hesitation and judgment depicted in the play. Although Hamlet receives news regarding the identity of King Hamlet's killer, he does not immediately act on or trust this information. This hesitance stems from the fact that the information is delivered by beings whom his studies refuse to recognize as credible sources. Consequently, he does not fully embrace either of the opposing religious views or schools of thought. Instead, he embarks on a personal investigation to reconcile this conflict, seeking to extract ultimate truths and facts using his keen intelligence. Hamlet undertakes this endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of his world and to fulfill his aspiration of becoming a more enlightened and just ruler for his people, ruling based on facts and truths. This contrasts sharply with the character of Doctor Faustus, who exhibits a starkly different approach, giving full obedience to the supernatural beings of his world. This obedience serves as a catalyst for his unstable mindset and insatiable desire for control and fame, both in his world and in the realm of the supernatural.

As mentioned, humanists prioritize individuals' self-awareness, self-control, and status, qualities that Hamlet attributes to his friend Horatio, describing him as self-aware, a great scholar, possessing self-control, and holding high status. In this chapter, we will examine the various aspects that render *Hamlet* a humanist play, including Renaissance perspectives on education depicted within the narrative, as well as the underlying reasons for Hamlet's quest to uncover truth. Furthermore, we will explore his struggle to transcend the religious conflicts prevalent in his society. The play resonates with numerous questions and conflicts characteristic of the Renaissance period. For instance, despite Hamlet's lifelong dedication to a particular philosophy, he encounters numerous conflicts during the events of the play that do not align with his philosophical studies.

Thus, *Hamlet* encompasses a rich tapestry of humanist and Renaissance

elements, exploring themes of art, performance, politics, and human nature while, at the same time, resonating with questions and conflicts characteristic of the Renaissance period, exploring themes of self-awareness, self-control, and status. Hamlet's quest for knowledge serves as a lens through which to examine Renaissance perspectives on education and learning, as he navigates the complexities of his world and seeks to transcend religious conflicts prevalent in his society, the topics that will become the focal point of this chapter.

2.1. *Hamlet* and Religious Divides

Hamlet, Wittenberg's scholar and Shakespeare's intellectual hero, finds himself caught between two religious views and debates. While he studied Protestant views and insights alongside his friend Horatio in Wittenberg, their expectations were challenged upon their return to Elsinore. Despite Wittenberg being a bastion of Protestantism, Hamlet and Horatio encounter a much more complex situation in Elsinore. Here, the views and philosophies of Catholicism are more relevant to the conflict at hand, diverging from their initial expectations. Hamlet tells his friend, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy" (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 44). He utters these words to ensure that all witnesses of the supernatural event remain silent about what they have seen. Hamlet goes on to explain that despite their studies of Protestantism's views and thoughts, the philosophies they learned at Wittenberg cannot fully comprehend the miraculous occurrences they are experiencing. As danger looms over Elsinore, the stability of their beliefs begins to crumble, and the once certain insights start to fade in the face of the inexplicable. Upon marking the ghost, Horatio indicates, "Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder." (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 11). As a scholar of Wittenberg, Horatio struggles to comprehend the figure before him. Consequently, he confronts the ghost with a fearful heart and a doubting mind. His predominantly Protestant knowledge leads him to perceive the apparition not as King Hamlet's soul, but rather as an evil spirit dispatched by demons to sow discord in Elsinore.

In order to understand the reaction of the two characters better, we need do have a slightly deeper look into the complex and multifaceted debate surrounding the

existence and significance of purgatory and ghosts in Protestant and Catholic denominations. Catholicism embraced the notion of purgatory and recognized the possibility of souls returning from the afterlife to interact with the living. Saints and Church fathers like Augustine (354–430) and Aquinas (1225–1274) provided theological justification for such occurrences, attributing them to divine providence and the will of God. Aquinas, in particular, believed that souls could appear to the living for instruction and intimidation, further legitimizing the existence of apparitions within Catholic doctrine (Aquinas, 2018, pp. 396–408). However, speaking with souls in purgatory, while occasionally permitted for saints, is not a common occurrence for ordinary individuals. The Bible explicitly prohibits communicating with the deceased:

> There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, [o]r a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. (Deut. 18:10–13)

Engaging in such communication signifies a lack of trust in God, as it involves bypassing Him and turning to lesser spirits or mediums for comfort, guidance, or information, thus violating the first of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3).

Although it never appears in the canonical text of the Bible, the idea of Purgatory, the place between hell and heaven, where souls go to be purified of the sins which individuals commit in the world of the living, is introduced in the *Second Maccabees*, one of the deuterocanonical books which are considered as parts of the Bible by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and the Assyrian Church of the East. The book declares:

> And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that

> died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin. (2 Maccabees 12:45)

It declares that those who died piously are delivered to Divinity's heaven for their good deeds and prosperous lives. Furthermore, those who died with sin should be purified with prayers and purification, thus cleaning their souls from the sins they committed in the living world.

Another definition could be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which describes purgatory as:

> All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (The Catechism of the Catholic Church 12:III:1030)

These lines describe the individuals who die with little to no known sins that are not cardinal, meaning they do not harm or very much damage their reputation. These individuals go under the purification of their few known sins; they are promised heaven and prosperity even though they cannot access it yet. Therefore, in order to enter Divinity's eternal heaven, they need to purify their souls of every last drop of sins. Additionally, the purification of their souls is necessary to grant access to Divinity's joy of eternal heaven. In addition to what is mentioned before, the Catechism of the Catholic Church claims that the name of purgatory is allowed for those of the "elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" (The Catechism of the Catholic Church 12:III:1031). The individuals who are considered damned for making cardinal sins shall not access the purgatory of soul purification because their souls have committed dangerously unimaginable sins. Therefore, their souls will be damned eternally. Although this definition of purgatory does not match that of the *Second Maccabees,* it does give a better view of purgatory and the idea of soul purification.

Thus, returning back to Shakespeare's play, why, in the face of the ghostly

apparition, Hamlet's reaction diverged from that of Horatio. While Horatio's Protestant upbringing instilled skepticism and fear, Hamlet's pursuit of truth and justice propelled him to explore the supernatural phenomenon with an open mind. Drawing from his knowledge and insight, Hamlet sought to uncover the hidden truths behind his father's murder, refusing to dismiss the ghost outright as his friend did.

Thus, as they stood face to face with the inexplicable, Hamlet and Horatio embodied the contrasting perspectives of Protestantism and Catholicism. While Horatio's Protestant convictions bred skepticism and apprehension, Hamlet's quest for truth led him to confront the supernatural with curiosity and determination, transcending the confines of religious doctrine to seek understanding in the unknown.

Conversely, Protestantism, rooted in the teachings of reformers like Luther (1483–1546) and Calvin (1509–1564) and emphasizing the supremacy of the Bible and faith, vehemently denied the existence of ghosts and purgatory. In his *The Table Talk*, Martin Luther indicates that "Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome held nothing at all of purgatory" (Hazlitt, 1872, p. 226). Ambrose was a beloved Bishop of Milan and Augustine's mentor in his conversion. Jerome was a Catholic priest who translated the Bible into Latin. Luther insists that these highly intellectual Christian theology figures did not mention anything of purgatory in their writing. Therefore, purgatory holds no meaning for Protestantism. Additionally, he claims that Gregory, a Latin father and a Doctor of the Church known as the Father of Christian Worship, was deceived during the nighttime by a figure who spoke words of purgatory. Whereas Divinity and the Bible declare that no matter should be asked and searched for from the spirits out of the living world but only from prophets such as Moses and Jesus Christ.

Protestantism views the authority of the Bible as the ultimate commander, and no other words, whether written or spoken, should be taken into account as long as the Bible exists. Therefore, Luther, in his *The Table Talk*, insists that "we must not admit Gregory's opinion on this point" (Hazlitt, 1872, p. 226) and that the promised day by fire will prove his words. Martin Luther concludes that every individual has two options: to have faith leading to heaven or to lose faith and be damned in hell.

He adds, as long as purgatory is not mentioned in the Bible, “neither must we any way allow it” as it darkens and weakens our faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, Luther does not acknowledge purgatory as a place where deaths supposedly go under purification. Neither does he acknowledge spirits as souls run from purgatory (Hazlitt, 1872, p. 226).

In her study *A Protestant Purgatory? Visions of an Intermediate State in Eighteenth-century Scotland,* Martha McGill insists that John Calvin, who was responsible for the development of the Christian theology system known as Calvinism, indicates that the thought of an existing world called purgatory is of great sin because it is a “deadly fiction of Satan” (McGill, 2018, p. 154). Therefore, she insists that the so-called purgatory is an invented world; “the Church of England’s Thirty-Nine Articles dismissed it as a ‘fond thing vainly invented.’” The claim that a place called purgatory, located between the two worlds of the living and the death, hell, and heaven, is a demonic vision and purely invented. She further insists that “Protestant eschatology is usually viewed in twofold terms: souls proceed directly to either heaven or hell.” These lines indicate that in Protestant views purgatory as a non-existent dimension, a world whose very existence is not supported by the Bible. McGill’s thought of purgatory matches that of Martin Luther’s; in his *The Table Talk,* he views everything that has no specific mention in the Bible as vain and little to true insight (McGill, 2018, p. 155). Thus, the rejection of purgatory “severed the connection between the living and the dead,” leaving “no room for apparitions to exist as intermediaries” (Oldridge, 2016, 107–127).

Thus, in the midst of his struggles, Hamlet finds himself grappling with the disparity between Protestant and Catholic beliefs, a conflict mirrored in the dichotomy of views on apparitions and purgatory. Despite his Protestant education in Wittenberg, Hamlet is ensnared in a reality of Catholic views colored by shifting philosophies.

Horatio, steeped in Protestantism, interprets the apparition as an ill omen for Elsinore. In contrast, Hamlet perceives it as a potential source of vital information concerning his father’s untimely demise. Throughout the play, Hamlet steadfastly refuses to accept the notion of his father’s natural death, citing King Hamlet’s

virtuous character and the incongruity of his supposed passing and describing his life as “So excellent a king,” (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 21).

Hamlet’s reverence for his father’s memory fuels his skepticism, as he struggles to reconcile the image of a revered monarch with the circumstances of his death. He adamantly rejects the idea of Claudius, his uncle, assuming the throne and marrying his mother, Gertrude, citing Claudius’s perceived inadequacy compared to his father’s strength and charisma.

Hamlet’s encounter with the ghost, purportedly his deceased father returned from the afterlife, takes on profound significance as a potential avenue to salvation. Upon receiving news of King Hamlet’s death, Hamlet is immediately plagued by doubt, unable to reconcile the reported circumstances with his idealized image of his father. This skepticism compels him to embark on a clandestine quest for truth, viewing the ghost as a vital source of information and insight into the mysteries surrounding his father’s demise. However, Hamlet’s reluctance to swiftly act on the revelations bestowed upon him by the ghost results in a tumultuous internal struggle. His indecision and hesitance to take decisive action destabilize his position within his own world, leaving him in a state of perpetual uncertainty and unrest.

Contrarily, Horatio vehemently denies the existence of the ghost, attributing its appearance to malevolent forces. Urging Hamlet to refrain from engaging with the apparition, Horatio warns, “Be ruled. You shall not go.” (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 36), expressing concern that Hamlet’s encounter with the specter could lead to disastrous consequences. He then dismisses the ghost’s resemblance to King Hamlet as a trick of the imagination, refusing to accept its identity as genuine: “He waxes desperate with imagination.” (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 36).

Horatio’s skepticism aligns with Protestant beliefs, viewing apparitions as manifestations of evil spirits seeking to disrupt the natural order. He perceives the ghost as a harbinger of misfortune, fearing that Hamlet’s insistence on investigating its claims will only invite calamity and jeopardize his status as the prince of Denmark. In line with Protestant teachings, Horatio interprets the ghost’s presence as a sinister omen, evoking a sense of dread rooted in his theological convictions.

Conversely, Hamlet views the ghost as a potential source of redemption from the

torment of unanswered questions surrounding his father's demise. Despite the prevailing doubts and uncertainties, he sees the apparition as a beacon of truth amidst the shadows of deceit and betrayal. Upon encountering the ghost bearing a striking resemblance to his father, Hamlet engages in a dialogue, questioning the specter's identity and purpose. The ghost confirms that he is indeed King Hamlet, returned from the afterlife to convey a message to his son. He reveals the true nature of his death, stating that he was murdered by his own brother, Claudius. In the midst of this revelation, the ghost alludes to the existence of purgatory, describing it as follows:

> I am thy father's spirit,
>
> Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
>
> And for the day confined to fast in fires,
>
> Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
>
> Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
>
> To tell the secrets of my prison house, (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 37-38)

The ghost provides a decidedly Catholic interpretation of purgatory, portraying it as a realm of torment and suffering where souls undergo purification for sins committed in life. He describes it as a necessary stage for achieving purity before ascending to divine heaven. Moreover, he laments his own confinement within this realm, detailing how he is granted temporary freedom to roam on certain nights, only to return to his agonizing imprisonment until granted further respite.

As we elucidated, Hamlet encourages Horatio to not confine themselves solely to the teachings of their academic pursuits in Wittenberg, but to instead embrace the fluidity of the reality they inhabit. He implores Horatio to expand his horizons and adapt to the complexities of their current circumstances, recognizing that their previous knowledge may not fully grasp the nuances of their experiences. Although initially skeptical of Hamlet's assertions, Horatio ultimately comes to believe him following the events surrounding the staging of the Mouse Trap play, where Hamlet orchestrates a clever deception targeting King Claudius.

Hamlet's investigation into the disparities between Catholicism and Protestantism serves a singular purpose: to transcend the contradictions inherent in these divergent Christian perspectives and uncover the truths of their world. He seeks to cultivate discernment and wisdom, enabling him to render judgments independent of supernatural influences such as the ghost resembling his father. A key motivation behind Hamlet's pursuit of truth is his obligation as a prince destined for kingship; he aspires to emulate the greatness of his father in order to fulfill his role as a leader. Thus, driven by a desire for justice and a determination to reclaim his rightful throne, Hamlet navigates the complexities of conflicting ideologies to assert his authority and ensure retribution for his father's murder.

2.2. Exploring Humanist Themes in *Hamlet*: Knowledge, Individualism, and Romance

Shakespeare's hero is the embodiment of the Renaissance teachings. T. S. Eliot indicates that the play *Hamlet* is "the Mona Lisa of literature" (Eliot, 1920, p. 47). It is considered among the greatest plays of Shakespeare and world literature. Because of the emotions the hero deals with while searching and investigating a case that is so difficult, the author aids his hero with a ghost to light his path into unveiling the truths. Nevertheless, the significant quality of the play makes it within the list of some of the greatest plays of all time, where the audience would not confirm whether the hero is a mad prince whose main object is to disrupt the nature of Elsinore or if he is genuinely just a prince seeking justice for his family.

Hamlet embodies many Renaissance attributes and philosophies as he navigates the path to avenge his father's mysterious death. Comparable to Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, Hamlet shares a belief in the pursuit of knowledge to gain insight and intelligence. However, while Faustus seeks both natural and supernatural knowledge for power and privilege, Hamlet seeks earthly wisdom to unravel the enigma surrounding his father's demise and the recent unsettling events in Elsinore, such as the appearance of the ghost. Despite his education in Protestantism at Wittenberg, the complexities of reality in Elsinore align more closely with Catholic views and doctrines, confounding even scholarly figures like Horatio. Consequently,

Hamlet embarks on a quest to reconcile the conflicting ideologies he encounters and to uncover the truth behind his father's murder, the nature of the ghostly apparition, and his mother's hasty remarriage to Claudius. Additionally, he grapples with discerning whom among his family and friends he can trust in his pursuit of justice and vengeance.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, the university studies and philosophical underpinnings that shape the character's persona, such as Horatio, hold immense significance. Despite being a scholar of Wittenberg, Horatio's grasp of the situation proves elusive. While he has delved into the realms of theology and humanities, his scholarly knowledge instills a sense of trepidation, hinting at the imminent calamity looming over Elsinore. Furthermore, akin to a Renaissance scholar, Hamlet exhibits a similar approach to learning and adaptation as seen in Doctor Faustus. Despite being distinct works, they converge on various viewpoints regarding the acquisition of knowledge and insight, as well as themes of power and status. Both Hamlet and Doctor Faustus embody the Renaissance ideal of knowledge as the ultimate source of control and manipulation. Further elaboration on these concepts will be expounded upon in the subsequent discussion.

The Renaissance period is best characterized by the humanist movement, which epitomizes its views on knowledge and insight. Embracing the ideals and philosophies of humanism, the era owes a great debt to this movement for the flourishing of various fields. Thanks to Renaissance humanists, disciplines such as literature, art, economics, politics, and philosophy experienced remarkable advancements as they adopted the principles of the movement.

Renaissance humanism emerged as a response to the intellectual and cultural needs of the era, with scholars and learners seeking to acquire knowledge and emulate the writing styles and creative processes of classical authors. Humanists emphasized the importance of individual achievement and practice, believing in the potential for success inherent in every individual. Central to the movement was the belief that all avenues of knowledge should be accessible to people, encouraging experimentation and practical learning as essential means of education and personal growth (Currie, 1960, p. 12).

According to Susanna Barsella in her journal article *Boccaccio, Petrarca, and Peter Damian: Two Models of the Humanist Intellectual,* Boccaccio and Sir Francesco Petrarca, two of the most significant humanist figures of the period, "shared the notion that classical antiquity represented an almost inexhaustible source of wisdom" (Barsella, 2006, p. 16). They insisted that individuals should crave to imitate the significant parts of classical practices because of the insight they hold. Additionally, individuals should search and view "early Christian writers" and not only learn and practice classical antiquities that hold a specific religious attribute. They must be diverse in searching for poets, historians, and philosophers. Humanists as Boccaccio and Petrarca, also insisted that early Christian writers and "ancient pagan" were necessary for the moral creativity "of Christian society" (Barsella, 2006, p. 16). Petrarch asserts in some of his renowned quotes that books serve as invaluable sources of wisdom and knowledge. He suggests that while many philosophers have been guided to wisdom through their reading, others have been driven to madness by the same pursuit. As a Renaissance humanist, the writings of Petrarca had a great influence on craving for knowledge. His insistence on the value of books as sources of wisdom aligns with the broader humanist emphasis on gaining insight through classical studies and antiquities (Barsella, 2006, p. 17).

According to John Addington Symonds, an English poet and literary critic known for his works on the Renaissance period, humanists are the "vital element in the Revival of Learning" (Arnheim, 1971, p. 5). He views men as rational, volitional, and sentient beings who deserve every right on this earth to be taught as much insight and knowledge as possible that would help them improve and enjoy prosperity (Arnheim, 1971, p. 9). Moreover, according to him, humanists insist that human beings should be able to aspire and practice whatever source of knowledge is necessary for their improvement. They further attributed learning and wisdom to the various types of classical antiquity and ancient teachings of the Ancient Greece and Rome.

Furthermore, humanism encompassed a significant movement that advocated for various themes including romance, knowledge, self-awareness, individual success, status, power, and numerous other elements. Thus, romance played a great part in the Renaissance author's plays and stories. Numerous plays of the

Renaissance reflect the romantic idea of love, courtesy, and courage. Some well-known plays by Shakespeare are significant sources of romanticism, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and *Hamlet. The Tempest* embodies themes of romance, love, and sacrifice and depicts characters developing affection, love, and hatred, as well as sacrificing for each other, reflecting the complexities of human emotions. The play showcases romantic encounters, such as Ferdinand and Miranda's budding relationship, symbolizing the Renaissance fascination with love and affection. Additionally, Prospero's act of forgiveness and redemption towards Caliban and Ariel highlights the theme of sacrifice intertwined with romance. Furthermore, the magical performance orchestrated by Ariel underscores the humanists' passion for romance, art, and performance, as depicted through the divine figures blessing the union of Miranda and Ferdinand. Overall, Shakespeare's portrayal of romance in "The Tempest" aligns with the Renaissance ideals of humanism and celebrates the power of love and forgiveness.

Upon seeing Ferdinand for the first time, Miranda sees it as a romantic encounter. Filled with passion and admiration, she claims "I might call him A thing divine; for nothing natural I ever saw so noble." (Shakespeare, 1920, p. 77). She expresses her affection and courtesy as she describes Ferdinand, a show of romance and bravery for which Shakespeare's plays are known. She even sees him as a prince of noble origin and insists on him being a divine production for his look and figure. According to Shakespeare, love, romance, and affection are significant themes to which humanists pay attention and with which they are well acquainted. These themes help improve individuals' inner thoughts and further advance their passion for family, other individuals, romance, and affection towards human beings.

In addition to what is mentioned above, the magical show and performance by Ariel and his servants, spirits, is a significant part of the play. It indicates the humanists' passion for romance, art, and performance themes, which they were famous for doing and practicing. As Prospero plans to bless the marriage of his girl Miranda to Ferdinand, he orders Ariel to gather his servant spirits to perform a magical and mysterious show of romance and blessings for the new couple. The performance begins when Ariel summons Iris, the Greek goddess of the rainbow. Then, one by one, Ceres, the Roman harvest goddess, is called upon by Iris to bless the couple's

union. Juno, the Roman wife of the Greek Father-god Zeus and the queen of the gods, joins their celebration to bless and congratulate their marriage. She claims:

> How does my bounteous sister? Go with me
>
> To bless this twain, that they may prosperous be
>
> And honour'd in their issue. [They sing:
>
> *Juno.* Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
>
> Long continuance, and increasing,
>
> Hourly joys be still upon you!
>
> Juno sings her blessings on you. (Shakespeare, 1920, p. 132)

Upon blessing the couple's divine union, Iris calls other divinity figures to come and show their blessings together while singing a magical song and performing a country dance. The performance and the appearance of mysterious figures are considered exceptional motives where the theme of romance and art is shown perfectly. Humanists pay a great deal to romantic themes alongside arts and performance, and Shakespeare shows the importance of these themes in his play by portraying them through his characters' magical play.

Finally, individualism is a prominent theme of Renaissance humanism, emphasizing the significance of individual achievement and talent. Humanists believe in the potential for success inherent in every person, provided that practice and insight are cultivated. Furthermore, the movement values the diverse talents of individuals and encourages the flourishing of these abilities, ultimately contributing to their success and personal development. In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night,* Duke Orsino's admiration for Cesario, actually Viola in disguise, exemplifies themes of individualism and humanism. Orsino's praise for Cesario's feminine attributes and musical talent reflects the humanist belief in the potential for individual achievement and the appreciation of unique abilities (Shakespeare, 1601, p. 11). By comparing Cesario to the goddess Diana and highlighting his exceptional qualities, Orsino

demonstrates the humanist emphasis on recognizing and honoring individual talents. This play underscores the Renaissance ideals of celebrating human individualism and nurturing talents for personal growth and success.In *Hamlet*, although the play does not define the Renaissance humanist movement, many lines and speeches indicate humanist virtues, ideas, and values that the movement stands for. The play is filled with numerous humanist expressions, some of which are addressed by the hero alone, and other features are shown through the character's speeches and expressions. Therefore, numerous humanists' values will be defined and explained in this part of chapter two, such as individualism, men's definition according to Hamlet, and the themes of love and romance, which humanists adopt through numerous plays and documents, as mentioned before.

As a Renaissance figure, Hamlet embodies the ideals of humanism, which champion individual curiosity as the pathway to achievement. While he challenges this notion in his soliloquies, his profound contemplations on human nature remain integral to understanding the humanist perspective. Thus, he claims:

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 65)

In the lines above, Hamlet initially extols humanity, lauding their nobility of thought and action, their dedication to learning, and the abundance of educational resources in their lands, likening their understanding to divinity. As a humanist protagonist, Hamlet perceives mankind as endowed with remarkable potential on Earth. However, he abruptly undermines this optimistic portrayal by characterizing humanity as nothing more than a "quintessence of dust" (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 65), expressing indifference towards both men and women. This statement may serve as a deliberate provocation aimed at Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. After encountering two acquaintances from Wittenberg University, Hamlet initially welcomes the opportunity to reconnect with them. However, as their conversation progresses, Hamlet grows suspicious that they have been sent by the king and queen to

investigate him or perhaps even spy on him. Consequently, he begins to playfully mislead and ridicule them, evading their inquiries about his well-being. Hamlet deduces that they were dispatched by the royal couple ostensibly to uplift his spirits and probe the cause of his melancholy, though he suspects ulterior motives. By testing the veracity of his suspicions through probing dialogue, Hamlet ultimately confirms his intuition, believing he has exposed their true purpose. Despite aligning with humanist values initially, Hamlet's disillusionment with humanity challenges these ideals. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's portrayal of Hamlet's complex view of humanity offers a profound interpretation, portraying mankind as capable of greatness yet ultimately flawed.

In one of the most renowned soliloquies in Shakespearean literature, Hamlet articulates the profound struggle inherent in human existence. This soliloquy, often hailed as one of the greatest lines in English literature, delves into the contemplation of suicide as a potentially more appealing alternative to enduring the trials of life. Hamlet grapples with the conflict between the burdensome nature of existence, which he metaphorically describes as "a sea of troubles" (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 127), and the tempting respite promised by death. Hamlet broods:

> To be, or not to be, that is the question:
>
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
>
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
>
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
>
> And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep—
>
> No more: and by a sleep to say we end (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 79)

These lines encapsulate Hamlet's internal turmoil as he confronts the climax of the play. He articulates his mental state by delineating the options before him: either to succumb to his fate and embrace death as the resolution to his conflicts, or to persevere in his narrative until its conclusion. He poses a moral quandary to himself, questioning whether it is nobler for "the mind to suffer" (Shakespeare, 2000, p.79)

passively, to endure the trials and tribulations of life or to take his own life and find eternal rest, a respite from the anguish tormenting his mind. Hamlet analogizes death to sleep, suggesting that those who endure suffering during their waking hours may find solace and relief in the oblivion of sleep, akin to a temporary escape from the agony of existence. Alternatively, he contemplates continuing the journey of suffering in the hope of reaching a more favorable resolution or a cessation of misfortune.

In addition to exploring themes of life and death, the lines above also underscore the importance of individualism, self-awareness, and the inherent value of human existence. These virtues align closely with humanist ideals, which emphasize the significance of understanding one's own state of mind and the capacity to pursue personal goals. Self-awareness, in particular, holds great importance for humanists, as it enables individuals to navigate their lives in a manner that fosters personal growth while avoiding harm. By understanding their own strengths and limitations, individuals can enhance their productivity and contribute meaningfully to their own lives—a characteristic highly prized by humanists.

In addition to self-awareness, humanists place great emphasis on self-control, which is integral to personal development and self-determination. The ability to regulate one's emotions and impulses plays a pivotal role in an individual's growth and achievement. Hamlet himself acknowledges the value of self-control when he expresses admiration for those who possess passion but also exercise restraint. This recognition underscores the importance of balancing passion with discipline, a principle that resonates deeply with humanist values. To his friend Horacio, he declares:

> […] Give me that man
>
> That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
>
> In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
>
> As I do thee. […] (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 87).

In these lines, Hamlet expresses deep admiration for his friend, Horatio, whom he

regards as one of his closest companions. Hamlet not only praises Horatio's self-awareness, passion for learning, and exemplary manners but also lauds his remarkable self-control and objectivity. Despite Horatio's philosophical skepticism toward many events unfolding in the play, notably the appearance of the ghost, he remains steadfastly loyal to Hamlet and maintains his integrity. Horatio stands unwaveringly by Hamlet's side, offering steadfast support and assistance in his quest for vengeance.

Through the lines above, Hamlet suggests that individuals who possess both self-awareness and self-control are among the most remarkable in existence. By exercising restraint over their passions, they demonstrate the capacity for great achievements. Such individuals are adept at managing subjectivity and producing meaningful work. Self-control emerges as a key tenet of humanism, facilitating personal growth and development. While passion serves as a driving force for learning and practice, unchecked passion can lead to the adoption of false ideals, hindering progress and success. Therefore, humanists place considerable emphasis on cultivating self-control and self-awareness, allowing individuals to navigate their paths effectively and reevaluate their actions when necessary.

The romance and love themes are another aspect of Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*. Hamlet's love for Ophelia is attributed to a significant part of his personality; his romance for Ophelia is described through the numerous letters he sent over the years before returning to Elsinore. In one of his letters, read to us by Polonius, Hamlet writes:

> 'Doubt thou the stars are fire;
>
> Doubt that the sun sdoth move;
>
> Doubt truth to be a liar;
>
> But never doubt I love. (Shakespeare, 2000, p. 56-57).

In this scene, Polonius suggests that Hamlet's erratic behavior stems from his unreciprocated affection for Ophelia. Holding the letters Hamlet wrote to Ophelia, Polonius contends that Hamlet's love for her has driven him to madness. The letters

are filled with declarations of love and romantic sentiments, with Hamlet professing that Ophelia could doubt the very existence of stars on the darkest night, the movement of the sun, or the truthfulness of any statement, but she should never doubt his love for her. He insists that his love for Ophelia is genuine and unwavering, despite his apparent madness.

These lines underscore the profound significance of love and romance within the play, a recurring theme in many of Shakespeare's works. As a humanist, Shakespeare explores the passionate aspect of human nature through the lens of romance and love. Humanists place considerable value on love and romance, recognizing them as natural and powerful forces that profoundly influence human growth and development. Love and romance are seen as catalysts for individual improvement and success, motivating individuals to strive for self-improvement. Thus, within the context of humanist philosophy, love and romance are regarded as essential features for their capacity to enhance human flourishing.

Thus, in examining *Hamlet* as a profound embodiment of humanist ideals, it's crucial to recognize how the play resonates with the core principles of humanism, even though it doesn't explicitly define the Renaissance humanist movement. Throughout the play, Shakespeare delves into themes that are central to humanist philosophy, such as romanticism, self-awareness, and individualism. These themes are interwoven into the fabric of the play, reflecting the Renaissance era's emphasis on humanist principles.

As shown above, the Renaissance period, renowned for its celebration of human potential and achievements, serves as a backdrop for *Hamlet*, allowing the play to incorporate essential features of the humanist movement. Shakespeare pays homage to these critical aspects by showcasing the virtues and complexities inherent in human nature through the protagonist's speeches and interactions. Accordingly, Hamlet's conception of love and humanity offers a compelling lens through which to view his character as a humanist hero. His introspective musings on love, as exemplified in his letter to Ophelia, reveal a depth of understanding and empathy that align closely with humanist views and values. Similarly, Hamlet's struggles with self-awareness and his quest for individual identity resonate with the humanist belief

in the importance of personal growth and self-realization.

Ultimately, *Hamlet* stands as a testament to the enduring influence of humanism on literature and culture. Through its exploration of timeless themes and its portrayal of complex characters grappling with existential questions, the play continues to captivate audiences and provoke thought on the human condition. In this way, the Danish play remains a shining example of how literature can illuminate and celebrate the core tenets of humanist philosophy.

3. ASPIRATION FOR KNOWLEDGE IN *THE TRAGICIAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* is set to show how a mere mortal seeks to learn arts that possess forbidden meanings and objects. Exceeding the limits of human understanding in science and teachings, magic is often regarded as the forbidden domain by the majority of religions. However, for Faustus, it represents an unparalleled opportunity to attain power, insight, and abilities beyond the grasp of any mortal in history. He describes the black arts as "Oh, what a world of profit and delight, Of power, of honour, and omnipotence" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4), acknowledging the potential benefits, insights, and elevated status that come with practicing the Dark arts. Faustus envisions the treasures and status he could acquire through mastery of the Dark arts.

However, by summoning devils from hell, Faustus portrays himself as a humanist who thinks and acts freely, disregarding concerns of condemnation and penalties imposed by religious authorities. This defiance is particularly notable in the context of the Middle Ages, where the influence of the Church over governance and social life hindered open discussion of magic. As Thorndike (1915) observes, "We must limit ourselves to a few authors who define magic" and "omit the many who illustrate the thing without designating it by that name" (Thorndike, 1915, p. 108). Through Thorndike's research, we gain insight into the perspectives on magic expressed by various scientists and authors during the Middle Ages.

Doctor Faustus' quest for natural and supernatural insight is embodied through his search for power and fame in his world. His main reason for power comes as a result of his instable curiosity and desire for fame and control over the natural and supernatural, which would further raise his status in his world, therefore, Faustus tries to understand his world further to control it through the Dark arts of Magic while abandoning the teachings of divinity and Jesus Christ, which would ultimately destabilize his status throughout the play within his world and lead to his damnation in hell.

According to Thorndike, John of Salisbury, a bishop in Chartres in 1176, addresses a

conservative view on magic through his *Polycraticus* (1159), which mostly involves Latin style and questions of classical and Christian writers. His description of magic matches the theology scholar's view of it not as a natural power, which could occur in the natural world as the work of divinity. However, "as a generic term covering various superstitions and occult sciences" (Thorndike, 1915, p. 109). His statement regards magic as superstitious lies and obscure acts that cannot be regarded as facts. He advances into claiming that:

> The magicians, so-called on account of the magnitude of their evil deeds, are those who by divine permission agitate the elements, strip objects of their forms, often predict the future, disturb men's minds, dispatch dreams, and slay by mere force of incantation. (Thorndike, 1915, p. 109).

The quotation above characterizes magicians as individuals who disrupt the natural order for personal gain. They manipulate the elements of nature, misuse objects, make false predictions about the future, deceive and manipulate people's minds through illusions, and even harm others by chanting spells and gestures. In his book, John describes some of the evil deeds a magician would do by chanting his spells.

In addition to what is mentioned above, in his second book of *Polycraticu*, the bishop treats magicians with the same attribute, adding more charges and condemning their acts by describing them as criminals. These magicians, as John claims, would go down in their evil deeds to expose supernatural elements to children, such as dispatching their bodies and exposing them to vampires. He pursues, "What shall I say of the necromancers .... except that those deserve death who try to obtain knowledge from death?" (Thorndike, 1915, p. 110) The characterization of necromancers provided by John aligns with Thorndike's earlier conservative viewpoint. John argues that individuals who seek knowledge through communicating with the dead and aiding malevolent forces through harmful actions deserve the severest punishment, namely death, which is clearly derived from the Biblical forbiddal: "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them" (KJV, Lev. 20:27). Additionally, the bishop contends that

superstitions lacking rational basis are not worthy of debate due to the unreliable nature of those who espouse and adhere to them.

John pursues condemning the acts of necromancers, “what they suffer in spirit they most erroneously and wretchedly believe to happen in the flesh” (Thorndike, 1915, p. 110). Whatever magicians suffer in the spirit world should happen to them in the world of the living as well because they deserve such a penalty for their evil deeds. Thorndike elucidates that John’s perspective stems from a Christian standpoint, condemning acts influenced by demons and attributing the instability of necromancers to their involvement in such practices, as stated in the Bible:

> There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, [o]r a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD (KJV, Deut. 18:10–12).

According to Thorndike, “Scripture forbids them and God does not see fit to grant men such divining or transforming powers which he reserves for himself in signs and miracles” (Thorndike, 1915, p. 110). He advances into stating that because these acts of necromancers and their chanting are done with the help of demons and evil books, they are as described by John, criminals before God. As John was schooled in Western Europe and later taught there himself, much of his claims and views on necromancy are those of conservative Christianity: he sees the Dark Arts as the doings of evil individuals since they are aided by demons and individuals whose divinity and prayers are rejected from heaven.

Furthermore, Hugo of Saint Victor, a clerical writer akin to many other medieval authors, provides a description of magic in his *Didascalicon* that closely aligns with John’s definition. Hugo asserts that “Magic is not included in philosophy but is a distinct subject,” emphasizing its separation from legitimate philosophical inquiry. He further characterizes magic as “false in its professions, mistress of all iniquity and malice, deceiving concerning the truth and truly doing harm,”

underscoring its deceptive and harmful nature. Hugo concludes by stating that magic "seduces souls from divine religion, promotes the worship of demons, engenders corruption of morals, and impels its followers" into darkness (Thorndike, 1915, p. 111).

Hugo argues that unlike philosophy, which studies reality and existence, magic deceives people into forming lies and unnatural objects out of the magician's mind. He asserts that magic deceives truths and harms individuals by giving false illusions. It also attracts individual minds by deceiving them with attractive objects, such as women and treasures, and promotes the worshiping of demons and doing evil deeds rather than following divinity and heavenly religions. Additionally, he claims that those who promote necromancy and forbidden arts are corrupted in soul and flesh. Therefore, giving such individuals space would eventually lead to the general corruption of men and society, resulting in a society of criminals.

As John, Hugo describes magicians as criminals who are worthless individuals who deserve the death penalty for their forbidden arts because of following demons. Hugo's attitude to the dark arts and his thoughts and philosophies on magic are Christian views. Such statements and views were natural amongst authors of the Middle Ages as Christianity was the leading religion, and the views would lead to acts and beliefs of Christianity (Thorndike 1915, p. 107–111).

Additionally, Thorndike elaborates on the perspectives of various authors and Christian writers regarding magicians and their practice of the Dark arts. According to him, many authors depict magic as an inherently evil pursuit, distinct from the realms of philosophy or theology. These acts are said to be aided by demons and malevolent powers, leading those who engage in them to be viewed as criminals and abusers of children. Moreover, medieval authors and society at large often portrayed magicians as individuals of evil intent with unstable mental states. In this era, Christianity wielded significant influence over the moral and social fabric, dictating what actions were permissible for humans to undertake. Consequently, the Dark arts of magic and necromancy were strictly forbidden, reflecting the dominance of the Church over the lives of people during the Middle Ages, while necromancers were often labeled as demonic figures deserving of sickness and death, seen as servants of

malevolent forces (Thorndike, 1915, p. 108–112).

During the Renaissance, there was a shift in belief regarding necromancy and the Dark arts, with some viewing them as expressions of human rights that could be pursued independently of divine authority or Church doctrine. Christopher Marlowe's protagonist, Faustus, epitomizes this humanistic perspective by rejecting traditional beliefs, delving into necromancy, and aligning himself with demonic forces. Faustus aspires to establish himself as the most knowledgeable and powerful figure in Europe through a pact with devils, which he believes will elevate him to an admirable status and grant him unnatural abilities. As the research progresses, the thesis will look deeper into the implications of Faustus's actions and beliefs within the context of Renaissance humanism.

As a Renaissance Hero, Faustus rebels against the medieval notion that individuals are predetermined by divinity and should adhere solely to the limits imposed by divine authority. As previously demonstrated, in medieval thought, the pursuit of forbidden knowledge and acts was viewed as a grave transgression—an affront to God and his divine commands. This sin of pride was universally recognized as a cardinal sin across numerous religious traditions. This prideful pursuit was believed to encourage demons to revolt against divinity and tempt humans into performing criminal acts. According to medieval beliefs, both the fate of individuals and the order of the universe were predetermined by divinity. Thus, deviating from this divine order was seen as irrational and sinful. Additionally, medieval authors cautioned against attempting miracles or acts reserved for divinity alone, warning of severe consequences for those who dared to practice them. Ultimately, such transgressions were believed to warrant the death penalty according to medieval norms.

Through the books and spells of magic that Mephostophilis brings, Faustus tries to escape the cycle and the limits upon knowledge asserted by divinity, ultimately destabilizing his status as an honorable doctor of the Renaissance. He desires unnatural knowledge that would allow him to distinguish himself from ordinary people, as well as, strives to place himself as a great being in the universe through his venture to obtain unnatural insight and power, as he claims, "A sound

magician is a demi-god:" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4) by indicating he could become a half-divinity human through learning necromancy.

Unlike Shakespeare's hero Hamlet, Faustus is consumed by a relentless pursuit of unnatural knowledge and power. Having exhausted conventional avenues of learning such as physics, law, logic, and divinity studies, Faustus finds them inadequate to satisfy his insatiable curiosity. Consequently, he turns to the demonic forces of hell, submitting himself fully to their commands. In contrast, Hamlet, while also seeking power and control to avenge his father's murder, resists succumbing to unnatural forces. Despite his desire for vengeance, he refuses to let these forces dominate his mind and soul, rejecting the ghost's instructions and relying instead on earthly knowledge to uncover the truth.

Despite their differing approaches, both Shakespeare's and Marlowe's protagonists ultimately destabilize their status in pursuit of their goals. From the outset, both seek to solidify their positions—Hamlet as a powerful king and Faustus as a renowned doctor—by acquiring knowledge and unraveling the truths of their worlds. Their ultimate aim is to wield power and authority over their respective domains. However, both find themselves forsaken by those around them. Faustus loses his standing within the academic community and descends into moral and spiritual ruin, trading his soul for fleeting desires. Meanwhile, Hamlet's quest leads to his downfall, as he loses his status as prince of Denmark to death and madness. No longer recognized as the powerful heir to the throne, he becomes known instead as a grief-stricken prince consumed by madness over his father's death.

Faustus begins his venture by addressing the phenomenal goal of his life, striving to learn the arts that would put his name amongst the elite beings in the universe, as well as grant him supernatural control over his world. Additionally, learning gives Doctor Faustus influence and meaning in life; his true essence is to achieve what others could not, improve in scientific aspects, and provide whatever his heart desires, as he indicates by saying, "Be a physician, Faustus; heap up gold, And be eternized for some wondrous cure" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 3). In his pursuit of marvelous cures and accumulation of wealth, Faustus emerges as a figure poised to achieve great objectives and secure his place as an exceptional individual. However,

his insatiable curiosity blinds him to the dangers inherent in his actions, ultimately leading him to suffer the torments of hell and undermining his standing in society. This chapter of the thesis seeks to explore a seminal text from the Renaissance era that deals with the thirst for knowledge and the exploration of human potential. Faustus' endeavors to master magic, defy the constraints of the Middle Ages, and embody the ideals of the Renaissance Hero through the invocation of spells and incantations will be examined. The thesis will illuminate the profound influence of such texts on the intellectual and cultural milieu of the Renaissance, particularly in the promotion of education and intellectual advancement. Moreover, it will analyze Faustus' unstable curiosity as a driving force behind his descent into the dark arts, marked by the summoning of death and the utterance of forbidden incantations. This exploration underscores the perilous nature of the pursuit of knowledge and the tragic downfall that awaits those who dare to tread the path of enlightenment without heed to its consequences.

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus intricately weaves together various Renaissance figures and themes centered around the pursuit of insight. Characters like Faustus's servant Wagner exemplify a dedication to acquiring forbidden knowledge, while others, like the old man, serve as reminders of divine influence and moral accountability, often drawing upon biblical references to highlight Faustus's sins. Throughout the play, there are compelling contradictions within the characters' personalities, particularly evident in Faustus and Mephostophilis, as they yearn for teachings and powers that conflict with their inherent natures or societal expectations. This dynamic exploration of conflicting desires and motivations adds depth to the narrative, highlighting the complex interplay between ambition, morality, and the quest for enlightenment.

Despite Faustus's devout studies in divinity and various scientific fields, he is consumed by a yearning to plunge into the dark arts, a pursuit that threatens to compromise his soul and undermine his esteemed status as a Renaissance doctor renowned for his cures during the plague. In voicing his aspirations, Faustus expresses his desire to contribute to Renaissance society and gain recognition for his endeavors, as evidenced by his assertion, "And divers desperate maladies been cured?" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 3). However, his unchecked curiosity leads him astray, as

he fails to recognize the inherent danger in practicing magic. Faustus becomes ensnared by his own ego and irrational thoughts, oblivious to the fact that necromancy and spells, fueled by demonic forces, promise only malevolence rather than fulfillment. As Mephostophilis grimly warns, “Within the bowels of these elements, Where we are tortured and remain for ever” (Marlowe, 1950, p. 23), Faustus is confronted with the chilling reality of the torment awaiting him in hell, a consequence of his ill-fated pact with the devil. Mephostophilis keeps stating:

> In one self-place; but where we are is hell,
>
> And where hell is, there must we ever be:
>
> And, to be short, when all the world dissolves,
>
> And every creature shall be purified,
>
> All places shall be hell that are not heaven. (Marlowe, 1950, p. 23)

Once more, in elucidating the concept of hell for Faustus, Mephostophilis serves as a stern warning of the dire consequences awaiting him for delving into forbidden arts. He characterizes hell not as a tangible location confined to a specific part of the earth, but rather as an abstract notion or symbol stemming from corruption and nefarious actions. Mephostophilis suggests that hell manifests wherever wicked deeds occur, emphasizing that its appearance need not mirror traditional depictions but rather reflect the presence of malevolent acts. Essentially, he conveys that wherever divine principles are absent, hell can be found. These philosophical insights are intended to dissuade Faustus from pursuing the study of dark arts. As a humanist hero, Faustus champions the advancement of knowledge through scientific faculties, recognizing the challenges inherent in such pursuits. However, driven by his insatiable curiosity, he ventures forward heedlessly, disregarding the perilous path he treads. Renaissance philosophers valued the acquisition of knowledge and learning as crucial avenues to wisdom. Thus, Faustus, in his quest for fame and enlightenment, must confront the dangers posed by his engagement with Mephostophilis’ books.

Although Mephostophilis is a demon and a servant of Lucifer, he describes hell as a horrific place that should not exist. He indicates that individuals should

never try to do arts which would place them in hell or perform deeds that would result in them being placed with demons. His description of hell does not match his image as a devil and as someone who should work hard to better convince his victims by encouraging evil deeds, and the reason behind that is Faustus' unstable curiosity; Mephostophilis knows that even if he speaks badly of hell and Lucifer, he is certain Faustus would not reject the contract with him because of his condition and curiosity. The words of Mephostophilis and the actions of Faustus show the contradiction within the play, where actors do not reflect on their image. Because of Faustus' irrational curiosity, he does not see or feel the danger in his actions, even though Mephostophilis indicates every bad ending he will go through for practicing the Dark Arts.

Lastly, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* is a play that promotes the Renaissance view of advancing in the scientific fields and practices. It stands out as an extraordinary exploration of the ideas of humanists, which sees all knowledge and insight as a right for individuals to practice and gain access without giving an eye to the dangerous outcome. Faustus is a humanist; he does not care for the dangerous positions he puts himself in, and because of his irrational curiosity, he further advances in his studies until his downfall to hell.

3.1. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*: the Themes in Knowledge

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus involves multiple themes about insight and learning, indicating Faustus' desire for knowledge and other characters' devotion to learning. Numerous themes were explained briefly with evidence earlier in the introduction. Therefore, this section of the thesis will discuss the themes of knowledge, power, and striving for fame and status, as well as explain Faustus' motives for learning, as they are the reason for Faustus' strive and for mounting his waxen wings and going beyond his limitations. This section will discuss multiple themes that explore the craving for insight in *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* while indicating the humanist attribute in Faustus' character. Also, it will provide evidence from the primary text alongside secondary texts with a detailed explanation of each quote and evidence.

In addition to exploring the fundamental components and basic principles of existence, which encompass both physical and metaphysical aspects, the play deals with various themes that underscore the pursuit of knowledge and learning. These themes include the quest for insight, knowledge, and power, the theme of making pacts or bargains with supernatural beings, and the motif of learning and education. The acquisition of magical insights is portrayed as conferring status and authority; for instance, Faustus endeavors to distinguish himself as a singular individual by mastering multiple scientific disciplines, driven by his insatiable curiosity to be recognized as an exceptional mortal, as previously mentioned. Conversely, Wagner engages in learning and practicing magic as a means to deceive and ridicule his adversaries, using it as a tool for amusement and manipulation. Despite being Faustus's servant, Wagner also demonstrates insight and knowledge, gained through clandestine observations of his master's studies within the privacy of his chamber, a phenomenon that will be further explored later in the study.

Faustus believes that mastering the dark arts would elevate him to a position of exceptional distinction among the highest beings. However, he is deceived throughout the play by Mephostophilis, who persuades Faustus to surrender his soul to hell for even individuals of lower status, such as Wagner, are capable of practicing necromancy. In a scene from the play, Wagner demonstrates his prowess as a magician to underscore his capacity for learning and practicing magic, highlighting that such abilities are not exclusive to brilliant minds like Faustus'. When the Clown rejects Wagner's offer and money to serve as a jester, Wagner summons two devils, Baliol and Belcher, to intimidate the Clown into acceptance. He declares, "Well, I will cause two devils presently to fetch thee away.—Baliol and Belcher!" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 17). This demonstration serves to prove to both the Clown and the audience that Wagner, like his master, is capable of studying necromancy and performing feats of magic, including summoning devils at will. This illustrates that the acquisition of dark arts is not an insurmountable feat, even for individuals of lower status such as Wagner. Despite being a mere servant, Wagner's adeptness in magic suggests that Faustus's pursuit of necromancy may not be as significant or worthwhile as he believes.

The theme of bargaining or the contract with supernatural beings to learn and

gain higher status is another aspect of the play that Marlowe introduces and matches to the Renaissance philosophies of advancing to learn. In order to show the Renaissance's attribute towards magic and necromancy as a form of science, which is a human right to practice and master, Faustus advances in his studies without fearing the bitter outcome, knowing that the improvement that awaits him is worthy of his time and flesh. The Renaissance is best defined by the humanists' movement, which, as mentioned before, believed all different forms of study were human beings' rights and that different types of knowledge were worth exploring and practicing, including the forbidden arts of magic (Currie, 1960, p. 12–26).

Furthermore, the theme of education and knowledge is prominently featured within the play, as the setting primarily revolves around the university environment where Faustus teaches his scholars and pursues his own studies. Marlowe delves into the significance of systematic education as a crucial component of acquiring insight, firmly asserting that formal education plays a vital role in personal development. Books and the educational system hold great importance for Marlowe, whose own intellectual pursuits and aspirations for learning and writing were deeply influenced by his academic background. He emphasizes the importance of obtaining knowledge through books and within the university environment. Marlowe reflects these beliefs through the characters of Faustus and Wagner, who both acquire magical knowledge through the books distributed by Mephostophilis. Additionally, Marlowe's intentions are clear: he advocates for individuals to strive for elevated social positions through education and the acquisition of knowledge. In the play, Faustus attains his esteemed position as a doctor through his relentless pursuit of various forms of knowledge, including magic, through reading and practice. Thus, Marlowe suggests that achieving exceptional positions and becoming educated scholars necessitates learning and practicing from a diverse array of insightful texts.

Faustus's quest for knowledge extends beyond traditional fields of study, as he seeks access to the supernatural through the dark arts of magic. Unlike Hamlet, who pursues knowledge and power to restore his father's honor and govern with truth and reason using earthly wisdom, Faustus desires earthly and supernatural dominion over the natural and unnatural realms. Guided by his insatiable curiosity, Faustus immerses himself in various disciplines, including law, medicine, logic, and

divinity, viewing learning as the ultimate source of power, prestige, and renown. However, he soon realizes that these conventional faculties cannot satisfy his craving for fame and authority. Consequently, Faustus expands his horizons to explore even the most infamous fields of study, including the forbidden realm of the dark arts.

In *The Essays of Frances Bacon* (1908), Sir Bacon, a key humanist figure, claims “Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability” (Bacon, 1908, p. 155). He expands his narration further declaring that “for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in the discourse; and for ability, is in judgment, and disposition of business” (Bacon, 1908, p. 155). He divides the process of learning into four parts, asserting that a learner finds the most satisfaction in solitary study and gaining insight privately. Bacon expands on this notion by suggesting that creativity stems from acquiring insight and developing judgment through daily experiences, while status is derived from knowledge. He argues that individuals who possess expertise can engage in debate, carry out tasks proficiently, and discern the best course of action based on their insights. However, Bacon contends that the most effective strategizing and management of affairs are conducted by those who are educated and knowledgeable. He emphasizes that individuals who are learned and thoughtful hold esteemed positions and are instrumental in shaping a nation’s pride during significant events. Bacon’s insights reflect key humanist principles embraced by Renaissance thinkers, including Faustus, who pursues education not only for personal advancement but also to enhance his ability to navigate life’s complexities and elevate his societal status. For Faustus, education represents the ultimate means of progression and self-improvement (Bacon, 1908, p. 154–155).

Faustus yearns for the status that comes with learning. His unstable curiosity and misjudge of the situation, which he asserts himself in by bargaining with demons, makes him blind as he claims that necromancy is a marvelous source to obtain the insight to be perceived, acclaimed, and to present himself as an exceptional mortal amongst the Renaissance individuals. According to him “All things that move between the quiet poles Shall be at my command: emperors and kings Are but obeyed in their several provinces” (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4). He asserts that with the aid of necromancy books, he will attain the ability to exert control over every object he encounters, with kings and princes becoming subservient to his

command. Marlowe portrays his protagonist as possessing a mind unfettered by rationality, allowing Faustus to reassess and reconsider his actions. Moreover, Faustus's insatiable curiosity compels him to further expand his ambitions, proclaiming his intention to assert dominion over kings and their entire kingdoms through the presumed power he will acquire from mastering the art of conjuration. To Faustus, insight and knowledge represent invaluable pathways to status and renown. Through his declarations, he articulates his desire to satiate his thirst for insight and leverage the knowledge gleaned from necromancy to elevate himself as both a Renaissance figure and a humanist. By wielding such power, Faustus envisages garnering admiration and esteem within his society—a perspective aligned with Renaissance ideals that emphasize ascending to the highest echelons through learning and mastery of various disciplines.

Since the beginning of the play, it has become common sense that Faustus yearns to get as much insight as possible. Sitting in his library at the University of Wittenberg, Faustus embarks on his quest for insight, delving into the depths of literature that he intends to master "Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin. To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess; Having commenced, be a divine in show, Yet level at the end of every art," (Marlowe, 1950, p. 2). Faustus prepares himself and delves into his insights and books to scrutinize the discourse he intends to explore and expound upon. Having delved into the depths of divinity, he acknowledges that these studies do not suffice for further exploration, recognizing that each field of study and discourse has its limits or boundaries.

As noted in Thorndike's *The Monist*, every major field encompasses both permissible and forbidden practices, with certain methods being off-limits for examination or exploration. Thorndike posits that due to the constraints imposed by forbidden practices, profound insights may remain elusive, even amidst the diversity of study, particularly evident in philosophies grappling with unanswerable questions (Thorndike, 1915, p. 108). Faustus perceives these restrictions and boundaries at the conclusion of each study, realizing that they fail to provide the insights and acclaim he eagerly seeks. He declares, "Yet level at the end of every art" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 2), acknowledging the presence of limitations and forbidden insights within each discipline. Driven by his insatiable curiosity, Faustus presses forward in his pursuit,

hoping to satisfy his thirst for knowledge and advancement. To grasp the extent of the barriers he confronts, Faustus proceeds to delineate the limitations inherent in each study. In scrutinizing and analyzing his rationale, it becomes imperative to comprehend the constraints imposed by the cultural traditions of the period, particularly the Middle Ages' perspectives on such matters. Understanding these constraints provides valuable insight into the prevailing attitudes towards knowledge and exploration during this era.

Knowledge and insight serve as paramount avenues for acquiring status and ascending the ranks within society, a sentiment championed and celebrated by humanists who appreciate individual accomplishments. With a fervent desire for acclaim and learning, Faustus meticulously examines the scientific fields that promise to bestow upon him the insight he craves. However, he finds himself disillusioned with each discipline he explores, rejecting them one by one as he discerns their inherent limitations. In a moment of reflection, Faustus laments, "And live and die in Aristotle's works. Sweet Analytics, 'tis thou hast ravish'd me!" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 2), expressing his frustration at the perceived confines of scholarly pursuits. Viewing himself as an astute scholar, Faustus is confident in his logical reasoning and analytical abilities. Yet, he disdains fields that prioritize argumentation and dispute as their highest forms of insight. Having plumbed the depths of logic, he ultimately dismisses it for its narrow focus on "disputing well" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 2), finding it devoid of the extraordinary revelations and marvels he seeks.

He presses onward in his quest for a form of insight and discourse that merits his time and insatiable thirst for knowledge. Identifying physics as a potential avenue for attaining fame and acquiring worldly success, Faustus sees it as a field ripe with opportunities to discover remarkable cures for earthly ailments. In his assessment, he deems becoming a physician as a noble pursuit worthy of his attention and title, given his proficiency as a philosopher in various major fields that could aid him in developing significant treatments for worldly diseases. The potential advancements he could achieve in this realm are envisioned as truly extraordinary, with his name reverberating through the annals of history, earning him admiration from historians and humanists alike for generations to come. Faustus anticipates that alongside his

insight and knowledge, his prestige and status will soar throughout Europe should he succeed as a physician. Thus, the role of a physician holds profound significance for Faustus as both a philosopher and a humanist striving for advancement in insight, power, and renown.

However, even as Faustus contemplates the allure of the medical profession, he remains cognizant of its limitations. While acknowledging the importance of maintaining bodily health as the ultimate aim of medicine, Faustus recognizes the inherent constraints faced by physicians. He asserts, “The end of physic is our body’s health” (Marlowe, 1950, p. 3), suggesting that physicians’ fame and recognition are diminished when confronted with widespread epidemics and infections, such as during the devastating plague. Despite his own reputation for remarkable cures, Faustus acknowledges the sobering reality that even a learned scholar such as himself could not discover a definitive remedy for the afflictions that ravaged Europe.

Additionally, he affirms that even after making special cures for the plague that hit Europe and saving thousands of lives, he is still a mortal. His name and title would not survive after a few decades. Therefore, curing is not enough for him if he does not accomplish the fame and recognition that his heart yearns for; this is why he claims that “Couldst thou make men to live eternally, Or, being dead, raise them to life again” (Marlowe, 1950, p. 3). Faustus asserts that if he were able to concoct an elixir capable of curing death itself and granting eternal life, or if he could resurrect the deceased with their flesh intact, then physics would have been deemed worthy of investigation and study by him. In such a scenario, he would have been revered for eternity, much like the great achievements celebrated by Renaissance philosophers and humanists.

After exhausting the four traditional faculties—theology, philosophy, medicine, law,— Faustus turns his gaze toward forbidden arts, driven by his insatiable thirst for fame and forbidden insights. He disregards the sanctity of the process, fixated solely on the prospect of becoming an exceptional doctor and a remarkable mortal through mastery of the dark arts of necromancy. In this pursuit, Faustus willingly embraces sin and risks damning his soul for eternity. This notion is echoed in Biblical

references, such as the warnings against seeking power through demonic assistance:

> And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (KJV, Isaiah 8:19–20)

> Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, [i]dolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, [e]nvyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (KJV, Galatians 5:19–21)

Thus, as Thorndike suggests, those who seek power through demonic means are condemned as criminals, destined to perpetrate evil deeds and suffer eternal damnation (Thorndike, 1915, p. 108). Hell becomes their eternal abode. Faustus's downfall begins with his initial sin of desiring knowledge as a means to attain fame. While humanists advocate for self-awareness and self-control in the pursuit of knowledge and philosophy, Faustus, despite possessing these qualities in his studies of analytics and law, succumbs to his unstable curiosity and ambition, ultimately leading to his tragic demise, for we should not forget that seeking fame and status was considered a fundamental human right during the Renaissance period. As noted by Stephan Currie in his *The Renaissance* (1960), humanists advocated for the dissemination of knowledge across various fields to individuals, challenging the notion that certain realms of knowledge should be solely attributed to Divinity. Currie highlights this perspective, emphasizing the humanists' belief that all individuals should have access to diverse fields of knowledge (Currie, 1960, p. 12). In this context, Faustus's pursuit of forbidden arts and rebellion against medieval attitudes towards necromancy scholars aligns with the ideals of Renaissance

individualism. His confidence and desire to advance through the acquisition of dark teachings mark him as a genuine Renaissance figure, challenging societal norms and asserting his right to pursue knowledge and status.

The pursuit of knowledge and power was a compelling driving force during the Renaissance era, as it promised to bestow upon individuals status and fame. Accessible knowledge held the key to gaining influence and recognition within the fabric of Renaissance society, a notion exemplified in Faustus's ambition. For Faustus, plunging into the Dark arts offered the tantalizing promise of magnificent status and material rewards, including wealth in the form of gold, profound insight, and enduring fame. These coveted attributes served as Faustus's primary objectives as he sought to fulfill his roles as both a philosopher and a Renaissance humanist. Embracing the belief that all fields of insight were fundamental human rights, Faustus pursued his quest for knowledge and influence with fervor, driven by the conviction that such pursuits were not only permissible but also essential to realizing his full potential in a society that valued intellectual prowess and innovation.

Faustus proceeds to explore the realm of Divinity, drawn to these studies due to his upbringing in a Christian low-class family. However, upon deeper reflection, he questions the purpose of worship if humanity is condemned to hell from the outset, merely for the inherent sinfulness of existence. He articulates, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us. Why, then belike, we must sin, and so consequently die" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4). Faustus contends that as long as sin is punished by death, and all forbidden insights and secrets are shrouded in sin, pursuing knowledge inevitably entails embracing sinfulness. This sentiment echoes the ethos of the Renaissance humanist movement, which championed the idea that all fields of science and knowledge were inherent rights of individuals, extending beyond the realm of divinity alone. Having exhausted conventional Renaissance fields of study, Faustus determines that delving into the forbidden arts is the path to attaining power and status. He goes so far as to describe the necromancy books as "heavenly" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4), emphasizing his belief that they hold the key to unlocking insight and knowledge that will elevate him to greater heights of influence and prestige. This aspect will be further examined in subsequent analysis.

In Bacon's essay "*Of Studies*," he asserts that a scholar who dedicates their entire life solely to studying falls into the trap of "sloth," while true scholarship involves creativity and the application of knowledge (Bacon, 1908, p. 154). Scholars, according to Bacon, derive enjoyment from using their knowledge to innovate and create. However, in the case of Faustus, while he endeavors to advance in his studies, he fails to fulfill Bacon's ideal of using knowledge for creative and beneficial purposes. Instead, Faustus deviates from his earlier promise and utilizes his newfound powers for trivial and self-serving ends. As he declares in the play, "Of power, of honour, and omnipotence" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4), Faustus becomes enamored with the notion of wielding unlimited power through the dark arts. However, his unstable curiosity leads him astray, and he squanders his potential by engaging in frivolous acts, such as playing tricks on people and causing horns to sprout from a knight's head. This divergence from the pursuit of genuine creativity and beneficial scholarship highlights Faustus's tragic downfall and his failure to uphold the noble ideals of scholarly endeavor.

Additionally, Bacon emphasizes that true learners are inclined towards nature and are refined through experience. He compares natural abilities to plants that require pruning and cultivation through study and experimentation (Bacon, 1908, p. 154). Learners, according to Bacon, derive satisfaction from practicing and experimenting throughout their lives, with the aim of benefiting society rather than deceiving it. He underscores the importance of experience in shaping individuals' abilities, asserting that practice leads to improvement. Furthermore, Bacon condemns those who deceive others, suggesting that such individuals disregard the pursuit of genuine knowledge and instead seek to manipulate and deceive for personal gain. While society reveres learning and wise individuals, those who deceive others are ultimately undermining the principles of science and knowledge. Faustus, in his pursuit of power and status through the Dark arts, finds joy in deceiving others and perpetuating illusions of grandeur. This aligns with Thorndike's assertion that magicians are akin to criminals due to their propensity for lies and deception. Thus, Faustus's descent into damnation is underscored by his abandonment of genuine scholarship in favor of deceitful practices.

Thus, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* has exceptional lessons,

themes, and characters that devote themselves to striving for insight, where every character promotes his view on the different forms of insight that could benefit the people of the era. Faustus, Valdes, and Cornelius promote the dark arts of hell that could grant them fame, power, and control. On the contrary, other characters such as Mephostophilis (ironically), the old man, and the other scholars promote the knowledge of Jesus Christ as a method to stay away from sins and end up as a pure soul in heaven.

3.2. Doctor Faustus and the Renaissance Accounts of Learning

The acquisition of insight and knowledge across various scientific disciplines is undeniably challenging, with many scholars struggling to achieve mastery in even a small portion of their chosen fields (McCullen, 1956, p. 6). While it is not impossible for individuals to attain proficiency in multiple faculties, the limited lifespan of humans presents a significant obstacle to fully realizing this potential. Nevertheless, the pursuit of learning across diverse scientific domains holds profound significance, and only an exceptional few manage to master a significant number of fields within their lifetime. In this context, Marlowe's portrayal of Doctor Faustus' insight and knowledge parallels that of esteemed scholars such as Socrates and numerous intelligent writers and authors of the Renaissance, if not exceeding them. Faustus's mastery of various disciplines including law, divinity, analytics, and medicine positions him as one of the rare minds of the Renaissance period. John Bakeless solidifies this perspective by affirming that Faustus "has mastered all the traditional 'four faculties' of the early universities, any one of which was a lifework for anybody except the hero of a Marlowe play" (McCullen, 1956, p. 6). Bakeless concludes by asserting that "Faustus has thus exhausted all legitimate learning" offered by formal education, prompting him to turn to the forbidden arts driven by his unstable curiosity (McCullen, 1956, p. 6–7).

Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that Faustus's thirst for knowledge extends beyond the confines of typical academic pursuits within the university. Even after completing his studies in the four major faculties, Faustus's curiosity remains insatiable, driving him to seek out new insights and disciplines to explore and master.

This relentless pursuit of learning persists even after he attains his doctorate in divinity, as evidenced by his eventual turn to the forbidden practice of necromancy. Faustus's quest for knowledge transcends the bounds of conventional scholarship, demonstrating a profound and unyielding curiosity that compels him to push the boundaries of human understanding. He also takes his curiosity to further levels by asking for Helen of Greece to be his paramour instead of asking for women of his period:

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
>
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
>
> Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
>
> Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!
>
> Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
>
> Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
>
> And all is dross that is not Helena.
>
> […]
>
> And none but thou shalt be my paramour! (Marlowe, 1950, p. 84–85)

Upon realizing the dire consequences of his pact with Mephostophilis, Faustus utters these lines as his impending death draws near. Despite the tragic repercussions of his insatiable curiosity on his soul, Faustus finds a perverse pleasure in fulfilling his desires through the power granted to him by the diabolical bargain. Consequently, Mephostophilis summons Helen of Greece once more to divert Faustus's attention from the impending doom that awaits him as a result of his sins. While Faustus's relentless curiosity enables him to master all four major faculties of the Renaissance, his reckless exploitation of this curiosity leads him into sin, undermines his societal standing, and ultimately plunges him into fleeting moments of pleasure amidst his impending demise.

The Renaissance marked a period of rebellion and defiance against the constraints imposed on scientific inquiry by the ruling authorities, who adhered to the doctrines and mandates of the Church. These constraints were a legacy of the tumultuous state of affairs in Europe during the decline of the Roman Empire, characterized by political, economic, and intellectual crises resulting from invasions and upheavals. The term “Renaissance” encompasses a broad historical epoch characterized by a revival of intellectual pursuits following a prolonged period of stagnation, commonly referred to as an “intellectual depression” in European history (Mommsen, 1942, p. 226–242). During this era, trade, politics, and intellectual endeavors were stifled, owing to various factors such as the division of the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western halves, with Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, Turkey) serving as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, and Rome retaining its status as the center of the Western Roman Empire. Additionally, conflicts and invasions by tribes such as the Visigoths further exacerbated the challenges faced by Western Rome.

As a consequence of the circumstances outlined above, the Romans experienced a significant decline in their adherence to Rome’s traditional and classical forms of knowledge, influenced by various factors including the division of the empire, invasions, and economic upheavals that disrupted intellectual infrastructures. Moreover, the governing systems established by northern European tribes lacked familiarity with the sophisticated demographic structures of the Roman Empire, contributing to the deterioration of Western Rome. Stephan Currie notes in his book *The Renaissance* (1960) that these tribes “were very different from the Romans,” and that “[t]hese Germanic peoples were rough and simple and had little interest in following Roman ways, especially were arts and learning were concerned” (Currie, 1960, p. 13). Despite the challenges of the Middle Ages, characterized by limited access to education and learning, historians acknowledge that many Western Europeans, authors, and individuals managed to create enduring legacies, exemplified by iconic structures such as the Catholic cathedrals of France and Italy, as well as literary masterpieces like Dante Alighieri’s *The Divine Comedy*. This period, which began in the fifth century and endured until the resurgence of learning, is often regarded as Europe’s golden age.

Compared to the Middle Ages, the Renaissance ushered in a period of prosperity characterized by flourishing trade, economic growth, and political stability. Additionally, the Renaissance embraced a philosophy that advocated for the inclusion of all scientific fields as worthy subjects of study for every individual, celebrating their accomplishments and advancements. Marlowe's Faustus exemplifies this philosophy by embodying the Renaissance ideal of the exceptional individual who actively engages in learning across multiple disciplines. According to Currie, humanists espoused a philosophy that rejected the notion of restricting practices such as creation, innovation, and experimentation solely to figures of divinity (Currie, 1960, p. 14). Instead, they advocated for these activities to be recognized as rights for individuals and philosophers to engage in and learn from. As a Renaissance figure, Faustus embraces this belief in the accessibility of diverse forms of knowledge for his personal enrichment and benefit.

As a humanist, Faustus disregards the restrictions imposed by the Catholic Church, which dictates that certain forms of insight should only be accessible to divine authorities. According to Currie, various religious perspectives assert that forbidden acts and practices are reserved exclusively for divine entities, warning against humanity's pursuit of such knowledge as it may lead to immoral behavior (Currie, 1960, p. 14). By challenging these beliefs, Faustus demonstrates a humanist stance toward forbidden forms of arts. Consequently, he begins to practice necromancy and summons death to display his power and prowess, exemplified by his conjuring of Helen of Greece onto the stage.

Through his conjuring and experimentation with the dead, Faustus illustrates the distinction between the Dark Ages and the Renaissance period, where insights and practices of this nature were exclusively associated with damned and devilish figures. In contrast, Renaissance individuals, exemplified by figures like Francesco Petrarca, demonstrated a fearless approach to seeking insight through experimentation and exploration. Petrarch, for instance, delved into the study of classical antiquities, reflecting the Renaissance spirit of intellectual curiosity and inquiry. This period also witnessed Renaissance humanists challenging the authority of the Church by probing questions concerning fate and embracing secular beliefs.

Throughout the play, Faustus's actions serve as a microcosm of the broader transition from the Dark Ages to the Renaissance period. Just as Renaissance individuals like Petrarch fearlessly sought insight through exploration and experimentation, Faustus embarked on a quest for knowledge and power. However, Faustus's journey takes a tragic turn as his insatiable curiosity and thirst for control lead him astray. Instead of attaining the esteemed status he desires as a renowned doctor and necromancer, Faustus's relentless pursuit of power results in his downfall. His descent into foolishness, marked by trivial tricks and petty acts, ultimately leads to the forfeiture of his soul and his esteemed status within society.

The Renaissance epitomized a period of boundless innovation and creativity, where knowledge held the key to power and worldly acclaim. It embodied humanity's relentless pursuit of insight and understanding. Marlowe's depiction of Doctor Faustus as a conduit for systematic learning and insight underscores the belief that such attributes are essential for achieving success and renown. By situating Faustus within a university setting, Marlowe suggests that formal education, including reading and learning within academic environments and institutions, serves as a primary avenue for acquiring a vast reservoir of worldly knowledge. Marlowe emphasizes the pivotal role of books and documents in imparting diverse insights to those eager to expand their intellectual horizons. In Marlowe's view, the thirst for knowledge and understanding is intrinsically linked to the pursuit of formal education, as it offers access to the intellectual perspectives and accumulated wisdom of esteemed individuals through the ages.

Marlowe himself achieved various academic milestones through formal and systematic studies. From a young age, he was awarded a scholarship to the prestigious King's School, where he received exceptional education and insights that were among the finest available during his era. Later, at the age of sixteen and a half, Marlowe earned another scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he delved into the study of foreign languages, particularly Latin. His adeptness in education and the profound insights he acquired through his rigorous learning regimen are evident in his remarkable poetic skills. In addition to his academic accomplishments, Marlowe achieved significant success by completing two scholarships and establishing himself as a prominent poet. Furthermore, he obtained

his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1584, thereby earning the title of ‘Dominus’ Marlowe, or Master Marlowe. Subsequently, he obtained his Master of Arts degree, a highly coveted achievement during Elizabethan times.

Additionally, because of his skills and insights in writing poetry since his time at King’s School, poet and critic Algernon Charles Swinburne described him as the father of English tragedy and the creator of English blank verse, while Alfred Lord Tennyson defines him as the Morning Star of English drama. He claims “If Shakespeare is the dazzling sun of this mighty period, Marlowe is certainly the morning star” (Heathcote, 1993, Para. 8). Finally, the systematic studies that Marlowe undertook and contributed to during his era served as the foundation upon which he expanded his knowledge, ultimately becoming the renowned poet he is recognized as in modern times (Honan, 2005, p. 19–40). Therefore, for Marlowe, the including of books, documents, contracts, university studies, and academic environments in his play, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, is vital to express his view that the education system is built to help individuals and society learn, as well as to improve by gaining insight and practicing through the existing knowledge.

Portraying Faustus as a voracious learner from books, Marlowe emphatically asserts the importance of education and knowledge derived from written sources throughout the play. Faustus’s study room serves as a focal point, situated within the university environment where he conducts his studies. The presence of books on conjuring and various subjects underscores the significance of education, insight, and the role of formal learning. Moreover, Marlowe emphasizes that every foray into the dark arts of magic entails the recitation of spells from necromancy books provided by Mephostophilis.

While holding the books of the Dark arts, Faustus places appreciation and gratitude for them because of the insight they carry “These metaphysics of magicians, And necromantic books are heavenly; Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters; Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.” (Marlowe, 1950, p. 4). Faustus’s declaration comes after he has exhausted his pursuit of knowledge in the four legitimate fields he previously attended. Holding the Dark art books, he acknowledges their significance by describing them as “heavenly.” As a scholar,

Faustus holds all books and documents in high esteem due to the profound insight they carry. Furthermore, as Marlowe's protagonist, books hold immense value for learners like Faustus as they serve as the means through which society progresses and improves.

In addition to the points mentioned above, Marlowe emphasizes the importance of formal education and scholarly pursuits in enabling individuals to acquire practical skills and achieve social and economic success. Education serves as a means for individuals to ascend to higher social classes based on their knowledge and accomplishments. Doctor Faustus, as Marlowe's protagonist, exemplifies this notion as he emerges from an educated background. His insight and education set him apart from common folk like Robin and Dick. Similarly, Wagner, Faustus's servant, receives education from his master, enabling him to envision himself as a capable sorcerer. Observing Faustus during his studies, Wagner learns to read, argue, and cast spells from the books of Dark Arts. When confronted by two scholars who belittle him with the term "sirrah" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 9), Wagner retaliates by highlighting their ignorance: "Why, dost not thou know, then?" (Marlowe, 1950, p. 9) This response mocks their reliance on degrees and status, implying that insight gained from Faustus's teachings is equally valuable. Wagner also underscores that, despite lacking a formal degree, he can engage in intellectual discourse, having absorbed knowledge from his master's books within the academic setting. Marlowe thus underscores the significance of books and formal education as pivotal avenues for acquiring worldly knowledge, achieving status and recognition, and enhancing one's insight. This theme is vividly portrayed through the characters of Doctor Faustus and his servant Wagner in Marlowe's play, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*.

The theme of insight and learning permeates numerous scenes throughout the play, offering a deeper comprehension of Marlowe's substantial contribution to the portrayal of systematic education, as in the prologue, where the Chorus introduces Doctor Faustus by describing his biography and experience throughout his life.:

> And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
>
> Now is he born of parents base of stock,

In Germany, within a town called Rhodes:

At riper years, to Wittenberg he went,

Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.

So much he profits in divinity,

That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,

Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute

In the heavenly matters of theology. (Marlowe, 1950, p. 1)

The audience, or reader, is introduced to Faustus's humble origins within a devout family, a backdrop that significantly shapes his academic journey, particularly his foray into the study of dark arts. The Chorus further reveals that Faustus relocates to Germany to pursue his studies, influenced by his religious upbringing, which initially steers him towards theology. Excelling in all four major faculties— theology, analytics, physics, and law— Faustus ascends the social and economic ladder, transcending his modest beginnings to attain the esteemed title of doctor in Divinity studies. Marlowe underscores the pivotal role of academic pursuits and formal education in elevating individuals above the ordinary masses through these narrative lines.

As previously mentioned, Marlowe asserts that formal and systematic education is instrumental in facilitating upward mobility, allowing individuals like Faustus to ascend the social hierarchy and attain positions of prestige and influence within the state or societal structure. Faustus's trajectory, marked by his academic success and eventual attainment of the title of doctor, serves as a testament to the transformative power of education in Marlowe's perspective. By portraying Faustus's journey, Marlowe seeks to convey the message that significant knowledge can be acquired irrespective of one's social background through diligent learning within the academic system.

Furthermore, Marlowe emphasizes the paramount importance of books as the

quintessential means of acquiring knowledge and the cornerstone of education. When Valdes entrusts Faustus with the books of the Dark arts, he declares:

> Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience:
>
> Shall make all nations to canonize us.
>
> As Indian Moors obey their Spanish lords,
>
> So shall the spirits of every element
>
> Be always serviceable to us three;
>
> Like lions shall they guard us when we please;
>
> Like Almain rutters with their horsemen's staves,
>
> Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;
>
> Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
>
> Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
>
> Than have the white breasts of the queen of love:
>
> From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
>
> And from America the golden fleece
>
> That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury;
>
> If learned Faustus will be resolute. (Marlowe, 1950, p. 7)

Marlowe portrays education as fundamentally rooted in the act of reading and learning from books, presenting it as the primary means of acquiring knowledge. In Faustus's quest to master the Dark arts of magic, Valdes provides him with a collection of books containing spells and incantations necessary for practicing this forbidden craft. Through these texts, Faustus gains access to the mystical realm of magic and its potential applications.

Valdes elaborates on the potential achievements Faustus, himself, and Cornelius could realize through the mastery of the Dark arts. He paints a picture of limitless power and control, suggesting that they could become omnipotent rulers capable of commanding the forces of nature, subjugating wild beasts, and indulging in worldly pleasures such as the company of beautiful women and the acquisition of vast riches, including the treasures of King Philip.

However, beneath Valdes's grandiose promises lies a subtle irony. Despite his assertions of the immense power and wealth that await Faustus, Valdes and Cornelius themselves seem to lack any tangible evidence of such achievements. This incongruity suggests that while they may be proficient in the dark arts of magic, they have failed to realize the lofty aspirations they dangle before Faustus. Thus, Marlowe highlights the discrepancy between the allure of magical power and its actual manifestation, underscoring the perils of Faustus's pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

Despite his intelligence and inquisitive nature, Faustus succumbs to deception due to his pride and insatiable curiosity. Instead of demanding proof or evidence of Valdes and Cornelius's claims regarding the power and benefits of magic, Faustus is swayed by their promises. In doing so, he forsakes the legitimate studies that have earned him recognition and success as a doctor and philosopher in various fields. These studies had not only equipped him with the knowledge to cure illnesses during the plague but also granted him mastery in analytics. However, Faustus abandons these pursuits in favor of delving into a field that promises eternal damnation and torment.

Faustus's journey underscores the importance of education and knowledge, particularly within the context of Renaissance learning. Several factors contribute to Faustus's status as a man of God. Firstly, his upbringing in a devoutly religious household instills in him a deep reverence for theology, which becomes a focal point of his academic pursuits. Excelling in his studies, Faustus achieves the esteemed title of doctor of divinity, demonstrating his exceptional command over theological matters. His proficiency in divinity surpasses that of many scholars, indicating the depth of his knowledge in this field.

However, despite his intellectual prowess, Faustus's downfall can be

attributed to several critical flaws. His ego and ambition for fame lead him astray, driving him to seek power beyond the confines of legitimate scholarship. Additionally, his insatiable curiosity, coupled with a lack of foresight regarding the consequences of his actions, accelerates his descent into darkness. Ultimately, Faustus's tragic fate serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the dangers of allowing pride and unchecked curiosity to overshadow wisdom and rationality.

Through Christopher Marlowe's portrayal of Faustus, we witness the embodiment of the Renaissance spirit of intellectual curiosity and defiance against societal constraints. Faustus's insatiable thirst for knowledge, coupled with his mastery of diverse disciplines, underscores the Renaissance ideal of the exceptional individual who actively engages in learning across multiple fields. Marlowe's depiction of Faustus's tragic downfall serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the perils of unchecked ambition and curiosity in the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. Moreover, the play looks into the transformative power of education and the importance of formal learning in societal advancement. By situating Faustus within the university setting and emphasizing the significance of books and scholarly pursuits, Marlowe underscores the pivotal role of education in personal enrichment and societal progress. Overall, *The Tragical Hostory of Doctor Faustus* provides valuable insights into the Renaissance mindset, celebrating the human daring quest for knowledge while cautioning against its potential pitfalls.

CONCLUSION

The Renaissance, hailed as a period of classical antiquity revival, witnessed a profound resurgence in old forms of language, literature, and thought, fostering numerous advancements in both intellect and creativity. This thesis investigates the multifaceted progressions of the Renaissance era, where various forms of innovation, perspectives, and artistic endeavors flourished, enduring through centuries into the modern age. Through meticulous exploration in the introduction and the ensuing chapters, the thesis meticulously examines how Renaissance individuals devoted considerable attention to advancing across the spectrum of intellectual pursuits. Employing a new historicist approach, each chapter studiously dissects the evolution of learning during this period, offering insights into its diverse facets. This method was deemed most suitable for the thesis due to its capacity to provoke critical questions and provide nuanced answers, thus enriching the understanding of Renaissance advancements.

In the introduction, we delineate the primary methodologies employed in the study and provide a succinct overview of the thesis' overarching approach in addressing its inquiries. Commencing with Italy and subsequently traversing through other European nations, the study elucidates the pivotal role Renaissance philosophers played in advancing their epoch through various endeavors, including the prolific publication of humanist literature and the advancement of groundbreaking machinery that facilitated the dissemination of knowledge across Europe. Additionally, it examines the significant contributions of renowned figures such as Bacon and Petrarch. Notably, the Renaissance era was characterized by its embrace of the humanist movement, and the study underscores the crucial role this movement played in fostering intellectual progress and pedagogy. Furthermore, the study explains the rationale behind selecting the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare, highlighting their temporal proximity, shared philosophical outlooks, and overarching aim of uncovering truths about their respective worlds to wield control and outmaneuver adversaries.

In the first chapter of the study, the Renaissance period is portrayed as a pivotal era marked by significant advancements in multiple fields, including science,

economics, and politics. The Renaissance is defined as a time of unprecedented growth and progress, characterized by a flourishing of intellectual activity and cultural innovation. This characterization is supported by the utilization of the new historicist approach, which allows for a deeper exploration of how the thinkers and philosophers of the Renaissance contributed to the development of learning and teaching methodologies. By examining primary sources with meticulous research and analysis, the chapter sheds light on the diverse intellectual landscape of the period and underscores its profound impact on educational development.

Central to the discussion is the Renaissance humanist movement, which is depicted as playing a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and cultural ethos of the era. The humanists are portrayed as champions of individuality and human values, as well as advocates for the revival of classical antiquities. Their emphasis on the importance of human experience and the exploration of the human condition contributed to a reinvigoration of intellectual inquiry and artistic expression. Moreover, the humanists' efforts to rediscover and study ancient texts and ideas from Greece and Rome helped to fuel a revival of classical learning and literature, which in turn influenced various aspects of Renaissance culture and society.

Through a detailed examination of primary sources, the first chapter highlights the significant contributions of Renaissance thinkers and humanists to educational development. Their ideas and innovations not only transformed the way knowledge was acquired and disseminated but also laid the groundwork for modern educational practices. By emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, creativity, and the exploration of diverse perspectives, the Renaissance thinkers helped to foster a culture of intellectual curiosity and inquiry that continues to shape educational institutions and methodologies to this day. Thus, the first chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the Renaissance period, showcasing its enduring intellectual and cultural significance.

In addition to highlighting the intellectual and cultural significance of the Renaissance period, the chapter further elaborates on the Renaissance humanists' multifaceted mission. It underscores their efforts to rediscover classical antiquities, a mission led by influential figures such as Francesco Petrarca. These humanists

dedicated themselves to uncovering and studying ancient manuscripts, which not only enriched intellectual discourse but also inspired architectural innovation. By delving into the works of ancient philosophers, historians, and poets, Renaissance humanists expanded the scope of knowledge and encouraged a revival of classical learning.

Moreover, the chapter emphasizes the transformative impact of Renaissance humanists on teaching methods. Through the establishment of schools and universities, they promoted innovative pedagogical practices that went beyond traditional religious frameworks. Instead of solely focusing on religious doctrine, these institutions emphasized critical thinking, empirical observation, and the exploration of diverse intellectual traditions. This departure from the dogmatic approach of medieval education laid the groundwork for modern educational principles, influencing subsequent generations and leaving a lasting legacy in the development of pedagogy.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the technological advancements of the Renaissance period, particularly the introduction of Gutenberg's Printing Press. This revolutionary development democratized access to knowledge by enabling the mass production of books and lowering their prices. As a result, learning materials became more widely available across Europe, facilitating the dissemination of ideas and contributing to the intellectual flourishing of the era. The Printing Press played a pivotal role in fueling the Renaissance's intellectual revolution, empowering individuals to engage with a broader range of texts and ideas.

Overall, the first chapter underscores the Renaissance humanists' dual commitment to intellectual inquiry and educational reform, as well as the technological innovations that facilitated the dissemination of knowledge during this transformative period in history. Building on this foundation, the subsequent chapters look deeper into the advancement of learning and teaching during the Renaissance, drawing insights from two renowned plays of the era: Shakespeare's Hamlet and Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. Through the analysis of these seminal works, the study further explores the intellectual currents and educational philosophies prevalent during the Renaissance, offering a nuanced understanding of

how literature reflected and shaped the cultural and intellectual landscape of the time.

Chapter Two discusses William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a quintessential work of the Renaissance era that encapsulates the human values of love, individuality, self-awareness, and self-control. Through the character of Hamlet, the play explores the complexities of human existence and the pursuit of truth amidst religious and philosophical conflicts. Hamlet's journey unfolds as he grapples with the contradictions between Protestantism and Catholicism, seeking to uncover the truth behind his father's murder. Shakespeare intricately weaves religious concepts and philosophical inquiries into the narrative, presenting Hamlet's quest for vengeance as a profound exploration of Renaissance learning and insight.

As the play progresses, Hamlet finds himself immersed in a profound religious conflict, questioning the teachings of Protestantism he studied at Wittenberg in light of the Catholicism prevalent in Denmark. The encounter with his father's ghost further deepens Hamlet's existential crisis, prompting him to reevaluate his understanding of the world and his place within it. Through meticulous observation and intellectual inquiry, Hamlet endeavors to reconcile his newfound reality with his desire for revenge against his uncle, who has usurped the throne and married his mother. This conflict serves as a focal point for exploring the complexities of Renaissance religious thought and philosophical inquiry.

Moreover, the chapter highlights the humanist aspects of Hamlet's character, emphasizing his embodiment of Renaissance humanist values such as individuality, love, self-awareness, and self-control. Hamlet's strategic deception of his enemies reflects the humanist ideals of intellectual acumen and adaptability, underscoring the Renaissance humanists' contributions to the period's intellectual and cultural advancement. Through Hamlet's journey, Shakespeare provides insight into the humanist ethos of the Renaissance, demonstrating how these values shaped the period's approach to knowledge, inquiry, and self-expression. In essence, the exploration of Hamlet serves as a lens through which to understand the profound impact of Renaissance humanism on both literature and intellectual thought during this transformative period in history.

The final, third, chapter of the thesis looks into Christopher Marlowe's *The*

Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, a seminal work that embodies Renaissance humanist views and philosophies. Faustus, the protagonist, symbolizes the human desire for power, fame, and status through the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. In rejecting the teachings of the Middle Ages, Faustus mirrors the Renaissance humanists' embrace of individualism and defiance against traditional constraints on learning and practice. His experimentation with magic not only impacts Renaissance teaching and learning methods but also reflects the Renaissance humanists' relentless pursuit of scientific inquiry and philosophical exploration.

Unlike Shakespeare's Hamlet, who seeks power through earthly knowledge, Faustus pursues natural and supernatural forces to assert control over the world. The chapter delineates Faustus' quest for ultimate power and fame through his pact with demons, showcasing his disregard for religious threats and his belief in the primacy of individual learning and practice. Faustus' actions epitomize the humanist ideals of intellectual freedom and the pursuit of knowledge for personal advancement, regardless of the consequences.

However, Faustus' insatiable curiosity and ignorance lead to his tragic downfall, as he fails to grasp the consequences of his actions. Marlowe employs Faustus as a vehicle to convey his philosophies on the importance of books and learning, depicting them as sources of proper knowledge and tools for self-improvement. Through Faustus' interactions with books of necromancy and his futile attempts to stabilize his status, Marlowe underscores the humanist belief in the power of individual intellect and the dangers of unchecked curiosity. Ultimately, Faustus' demise serves as a cautionary tale about the pitfalls of hubris and the pursuit of knowledge without moral consideration, highlighting the complex interplay between humanist ideals and the quest for power and fame during the Renaissance period.

As a culmination of the research conducted, several significant conclusions have emerged that merit attention. First of all, in contrasting the characters of Hamlet and Faustus, a stark disparity emerges in their approaches to uncovering truths and exerting control over their worlds. Hamlet, driven by a profound commitment to reason and scholarship as a product of his education at Wittenberg, seeks to interrogate the complexities of existence through his own faculties rather than relying

on external influences. His pursuit of truth is anchored in earthly knowledge, as he grapples with the conflicting religious paradigms that govern his reality, aiming ultimately to fulfill his promise of kingship to his people. Hamlet's insistence on personally investigating the veracity of the ghost's message underscores his commitment to discerning truth independently, safeguarding himself from potential deception.

Conversely, Faustus adopts a markedly different approach, embracing external sources—particularly occult knowledge and infernal forces—as the means to unravel the mysteries of his world and assert dominance over his adversaries. Viewing magic and necromancy as potent tools for attaining his desires for fame and fortune, Faustus willingly enters into a pact with the devil without fully considering the ramifications of his actions. His quest for control is characterized by a reliance on supernatural forces rather than the application of reasoned inquiry, reflecting a stark departure from Hamlet's rationalist ethos.

Therefore, while Hamlet embodies the Renaissance ideals of individual agency and empirical inquiry, Faustus represents a deviation from these principles, succumbing to the allure of esoteric power and forfeiting autonomy in favor of external manipulation, all of which leads us to the second conclusion. The thesis's central inquiries, articulated in the introduction, are seamlessly aligned with their corresponding elucidations found within the body of the work. Firstly, the investigation into the contextual forces prompting Hamlet's quest for evidence regarding his father's murder underscores his skepticism towards the credibility of external entities. The thesis adeptly delineates Hamlet's reluctance to rely on ghosts and apparitions, driven by his apprehension that they may harbor malevolent intentions aimed at disrupting the fabric of his reality. Secondly, the exploration of Faustus's temptation to transcend earthly constraints highlights his insatiable hunger for fame and power. The thesis cogently illustrates how Faustus's relentless pursuit of worldly acclaim leads him to forge compacts with infernal forces, viewing such alliances as a means to assert control over his adversaries and attain coveted knowledge and wealth. Lastly, the examination of how Hamlet and Faustus utilize their determination to gain knowledge to solidify their societal standing reveals intriguing parallels and contrasts. Hamlet's steadfast reliance on earthly wisdom and

his quest for justice serve to elevate his stature as a just and capable leader in the eyes of his people, whereas Faustus's descent into the dark arts and his collaboration with demonic entities reflect a bid for omnipotence, seeking to dominate both natural and supernatural realms. Thus, the thesis effectively intertwines these three pivotal questions with their respective nuanced answers, illuminating the complex interplay between contextual forces and individual agency in shaping the trajectories of these iconic literary figures.

Furthermore, despite their endeavors to consolidate their positions within their respective worlds, both Hamlet and Faustus ultimately destabilize their statuses, leading to their tragic demise. Hamlet's fatal flaw lies in his indecision and hesitance to take decisive action, particularly in avenging his father's murder by revealing the true identity of the culprit. This reluctance ultimately contributes to his downfall, culminating in his tragic demise. Conversely, Faustus's downfall is precipitated by his reckless pursuit of power and knowledge, manifested in his reckless pursuit of magic and his heedless compacts with demonic entities. His ignorance of the perilous consequences of his actions and his insatiable curiosity lead to his undoing, resulting in his tragic end. Thus, despite their efforts to stabilize their statuses, both characters are ultimately undone by their fatal flaws and the consequences of their actions.

Therefore, the two plays serve as profound reflections of the intellectual currents and humanist ideals prevalent during the Renaissance, offering nuanced insights into the complexities of human nature, knowledge acquisition, and the pursuit of power. They both stand as quintessential examples of Renaissance literature, each offering profound insights into the complexities of human nature, knowledge acquisition, and the pursuit of power. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare explores the depths of human existence through the character of Hamlet, who grapples with religious and philosophical conflicts while seeking truth and vengeance for his father's murder. The play serves as a poignant reflection of Renaissance humanist ethos, emphasizing individual agency, intellectual inquiry, and the pursuit of truth amidst the contradictions between Protestantism and Catholicism. On the other hand, Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* offers a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked ambition and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. Faustus, rejecting the teachings of the Middle Ages, symbolizes the human desire for fame

and power through occult practices which lead to the main character's tragic downfall, serving as a stark reminder of the consequences of hubris and moral transgression. Thus, while Shakespeare's masterpiece reflects the humanist ideals of intellectual exploration and individual agency, Marlowe's serves as a cautionary counterpoint, highlighting the dangers of intellectual curiosity divorced from ethical considerations.

Through the analysis of these seminal works, the thesis explores the intellectual currents and educational philosophies prevalent during the Renaissance. It elucidates how literature reflected and shaped the cultural and intellectual landscape of the time, offering profound insights into the complexities of humanist ideals and their impact on intellectual progress. By examining the themes, characters, and philosophical underpinnings of *Hamlet* and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, the thesis provides a nuanced understanding of how these literary masterpieces continue to resonate with modern audiences, underscoring the enduring relevance of Renaissance thought and culture.

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