



# Nietzschean Conceptualization of the 'Renaissance Man' in Hamlet and Doctor Faustus

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received: 11 December 2015;

Received in revised form:  
09 February 2016;

Accepted: 13 February 2016;

### Keywords

Renaissance,  
Hamlet,  
Doctor Faustus,  
Nietzsche,  
Comparative Study,  
Renaissance Man.

## ABSTRACT

Sixteenth century Europe is widely recognized by the word Renaissance which made an enormous evolution in cultural, economic, artistic and literary aspects of that age. British literature in particular went under the influence of masterpieces of great men like William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe who injected a generous motif to the literary canon of that time. By establishing a peculiar research on the side of the heroes of the two plays i.e. Shakespeare's Hamlet and Marlowe's Faustus, we come to face with the emergence of novel characters who are in need of more precision. In this direction, Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical thoughts come in handy to researcher's attempt to apply a critical reading of the two plays in a comparative manner in order to shed light on the deep levels of the groundwork of these two plays. For doing so, six fundamental concepts taken out of Nietzsche's theories are being observed along the context of the works each of which though might meet in a number of overlaps, represent the complicated concept of Renaissance Man with a critical and metaphoric perspective. Finally, the outcome is captured as was the ultimate goal of the researcher: a moral implication perceived on the literary basis of the two plays. Without considering any biased tendency towards a specific author or critic, the extracted concepts of the works rely on Nietzsche's enlightenments by expressing life's various ups and downs and by manifesting the outcomes of such jeopardies happened to the heroes which directly target the literary reader on how to supply the eternal pace of life as the mere meaning of humanity.

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## 1. Prologue

### 1.1. Preamble

Sixteenth century marks the high watermark of English literary accomplishment. Just in a short period of time, the whole situation of people flourished. Rediscoveries of classical manuscripts led to a new and improved period of art works. At this period the medieval west was transformed into the modern western civilization, greatest pieces of art came out that the whole world has never witnessed before. This period later in 19th century was named the Renaissance, and as the famous historian Paul Johnson explained, "The Renaissance was primarily a human event, propelled forward by a number of individuals of outstanding talent, in some cases amounting to genius" (17). A collection of geniuses, to be called, made the Renaissance a true historical phenomenon. It was in the Renaissance age that biased religious thoughts started to decline and people felt a freer and less limited life. Moreover, education, technology and rhetorical knowledge was expanded and medical science and the living environment surpassed those of the Middle Ages.

Great men of literature flourished in this era; Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare and John Milton are among the most brilliant examples. Those whose enchanting rhetoric and literary wit were and will be never repeated in any other period of history. Neither has any other age in Western and specifically in English civilization observed such a revolutionary

glorification in art, culture, literature, science and lifestyle. Obviously there are thousands of researches and critiques on any work of art done in this period each of which astonishingly elaborates upon a specific feature of the works to be noted as masterpieces of the age. But what is highly remarkable and worth mentioning is that there is no limit in finding clues and magnificence in these works and the more one gets into a scholastic outlook and seeks for understanding, the deeper one feels about the grandeur of such works.

### 1.2. Research Enquiry

The foremost enquiry of this research is about the style of writing that the two dramatists -Shakespeare and Marlowe- engaged at founding the very essence and magnificence of the Renaissance era and more narrowly focusing on the particular concept of Renaissance Man at that age.

What point of signification do Shakespeare's and Marlowe's heroes carry with themselves that causes them to be astonishingly divergent in their perspectives not only in their own time but also as eternal symbols for all ages?

Nonce this question is in need of a constructor, an advisor, or more pointedly, a critic. One who could shed light on this particular headway and lead it with an authentic framework on which one could rely on for advancing through and this specific person is no one other than Friedrich Nietzsche who in this research does the utmost in finding the common features of the corpus study as Hamlet and Dr.

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Faustus to compare them on the basis of Renaissance Man.

### 1.3. The Concept of Renaissance Man

Between 14th and 15th century, there were numbers of Italians who appeared setting Italy as a symbol of style in architecture, sculpture, painting, literary taste and educational philosophy (Findlen 295). In this period, people whose expertise covered numbers of different areas of discipline were known as 'Renaissance Man'. The term, 'Renaissance Man', was then used for describing the person with vast expertise in different subjects. The Italian Renaissance, which started in the early 13th century and lasted until 16th century, opened a new era for great cultural change throughout Europe (Gouwens 3). Amongst many, there were two prominent names; Lorenzo de' Medici and Leonardo da Vinci, who, against their background related to political stability and development to new technology, followed the flowering of literature and philosophy in the society (O'Connor 28). During the Renaissance period in Italy that emerged in 14th century and reached its peak in the 15th and 16th century, the literature and philosophy encompassed the style of painting and sculpture and this Renaissance captured the traditional art to seek individuals' experiences and their self-consciousness (Martines and Baca 17). Similarly, the man Leonardo da Vinci was the one who was considered as 'Renaissance Man', his main contribution was the practical demonstration of all visual arts. In addition, the thing that makes him a Renaissance Man is the study of a wide range of other subjects such as anatomy, geology, botany, hydraulics and flight.

For both amateur and professional historians, a traditional starting point for discussion of the Renaissance has been individualism. They associate the period with the achievements of talented, "self-aware" men. Giorgio Vasari focused his famous account of the "revival" (*rinascita*) of Italian art on the series of great artists, culminating in the "genius" of Michelangelo. Jules Michelet defined the era as one of "the discovery of the world and man," which in turn led to man's "rediscovery of his own self." In *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Jacob Burckhardt placed "individualism" at the heart of his analysis and made it the essential quality of the Renaissance man, distinguishing him from his medieval counterpart, who lay "half-awake beneath a common veil," woven of "faith, illusion and childish prepossession." Burckhardt's individualism was uniquely Italian, developed in the context of local politics, which by their calculated and treacherous nature produced self-serving men, who succeeded according to their skill and ability. Birth and inherited status meant little; illegitimacy often fared best (Burckhardt 91-117).

Postmodern and new historicist literary critics meanwhile have questioned the very existence of the autonomous individual, viewing the self as a fiction fashioned by its context. Recent approaches have also emphasized the development of specifically Renaissance modes of behavior including politeness, sincerity, and crafted ambiguity. The era witnessed the emergence for the first time of an inner self and the awareness, if at times hazy, of the boundaries between it and the outer world. Not all scholars have accepted the notion of an autonomous self, no matter how ambiguously crafted. New historicist literary critics have depicted the Renaissance self as a wholly passive entity acted upon by external forces. They see it as a cultural artifact that reflects larger social, political, economic, and religious forces. Stephen Greenblatt has been most prominent in arguing this point, coining the still popular term "self-fashioning." "The simplest observation," he

wrote, "is that in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about self-fashioning of human identity as a manipulable artful process" (2).

For Greenblatt, the literature of the great writers of 16th-century England – Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare – produced fictional characters like Faustus and Hamlet who began self-consciously to reflect on and manipulate their own identities. In this respect they started to look and sound like modern men. The painting that Greenblatt used to introduce his theory of self-fashioning was none other than Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. Greenblatt concluded that in the Renaissance 'the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society'. Writing as an American, Greenblatt has subsequently explored both his admiration for the achievements of the Renaissance and his anxiety with its darker side, most specifically for him the colonization of the New World and the anti-Semitism found throughout the 16th century (19).

## 2. Nietzschean Concepts as for the Renaissance Man

### 2.1. Overview

This chapter puts into practice six basic theorized notions as stated by Nietzsche in his various works in relation to the intended main concept of Renaissance Man. Each notion is applied to both corpuses of this study i.e. Hamlet and Doctor Faustus comparatively and in case of demands, quotations of excerpts are appended in textual assets. Greater attention is paid to some parts which brought more grounds for discussion on their aspects. Also some quoted parts are repeated in different sections because different applications of critical readings could be applied to them.

### 2.2. Übermensch

Nietzsche published a plethora of books and essays throughout his life. Few of his writings, however, deal directly with an elusive, but vital concept to his philosophy: the Übermensch. As Arthur Danto puts it, "The Übermensch idea, for all its notoriety, hardly appears in Nietzsche except in Zarathustra" (197). Despite this elusiveness, the Übermensch plays a crucial role in Nietzsche's philosophy. The Übermensch isn't merely an esoteric and inapplicable aspect of his philosophy meant to sit on a bookshelf and rot away, but a vision of how we could, in the wake of nihilism and the loss of belief in God, come to live meaningful lives.

In the Renaissance, the unique talents and potential of the individual became significant. The concept of personal fame was much more highly developed than during Middle Ages. Actually Faustus is an individualistic tragic hero. His tragedy is his own creation. He does not think like traditional heroes or men. He crosses his limit while common people do not generally cross that. While a descriptive approach towards this concept is previously elaborated in chapter two, a number of supplemental ideas are provided in this section as well.

"A sound magician is a mighty god" (i, 62) says Faustus at the beginnings of the play referring to himself as the one who carries with himself all characteristics of a super-human as powerful as a god.

Marlowe, in his *Dr. Faustus*, draws an excellent character before us. This character can be regarded as a strong individual, an embodiment of Renaissance and a tragic hero. Indeed, each and every man possesses two forces going on in him. One is social that abides by the set up rules of his surroundings. Another is individual that thinks things in his mind particularly from his own demand, dream and thought. In *Dr. Faustus's* case, it is the second one- he has a firm

individuality, that's why he is called an individualistic hero, or as Nietzsche puts it, an Übermensch.

Hamlet, on the other hand, teaches Horatio that there are more things "in heaven and earth", of course referring to the ghost. But regarding modernity there is also the possibility to read this quote in a Nietzschean way. On earth we can find the world of things, of animals, and plants and of human beings. They are populated especially in Shakespeare's times with all kinds of transcendent entities: a god, angels of all sorts, a devil, good and evil spirits, and in popular cultures things like witches, fairies, and so on. And ghosts who, as we have seen earlier, had their specific place and function in this round dance of supernatural things. The figure Hamlet adds one more thing to this, which is kind of a hybrid, a poly-functional being, the "Übermensch". This happens long before this term is coined in the Nietzschean way, not to its full extent, but in a rather paradoxical way. Hamlet, through his father's demand, displays a certain will to power, and this plea gives him a certain kind of usefulness, a task to fulfill. It embodies defining elements of modernity which are individualism, the capability to form one's own fate, a sense of equitableness among humans (which has been violated by Claudius), and a certain objectivity, which Hamlet needs to act mad and for example have the vision and view to stage *The Mousetrap* to unmask Claudius. And yet he resists the ideas of disenchantment of the world as he clearly acknowledges the existence of the ghost and the ultimate stage in the Nietzschean concept of becoming a god-like creature oneself: He, how advanced he may seem, still is in the position of a human being with literally both feet on the ground and being servile to some higher, transcendent entities. Therefore, he is and is not the Übermensch: He may seem like one certainly to the people who are of his father's age, but in fact he shows more character traits of a modern man.

### 2.3. The Will to Power

Generally, Will to Power underpins Nietzsche's writings and themes - ontology, epistemology, the constitution of the human subject, the history and development of values and valuation. It is the keystone to his whole philosophy. Without it, the *raison d'être* of his philosophy cannot be fully understood.

The most important thing in the Renaissance is craving for infinite knowledge. This characteristic has been injected in Faustus properly. He has achieved knowledge of all branches. Yet he feels unfulfilled. Thus he wants to practice black art and with this he would be able to know all things:

*"I will have them read me strange philosophy."* (i, 86)

After selling his soul, he, at the very first, questions Mephistopheles to know the mystery of the universe, about the position of hell.

*"First, will I question with thee about hell,  
Tell me where is the place that men call hell?"* (v, 115-16)

Faustus's longing for material prosperity, for money and wealth, which is also a Renaissance element, has been expressed in the following lines where he desires to gain the lordship of Emden a great commercial city:

*"Of wealth!  
Why, the signiority of Emden shall be mine."* (v, 22-3)

He further wants to enjoy a splendid life full of worldly pleasures. He says,

*"I'll have them fly to India for gold,  
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,  
And search all the corners of the new found world.  
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates."* (i, 82-5)

Here we see another inherent thing characterized by Renaissance in Faustus i.e. love for adventure.

The Renaissance has made Faustus fascinated by supreme power.

*Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity."* (i, 63)

As an embodiment of Renaissance, Faustus, having attained knowledge, power and fame, wants more and more, unparalleled possession. He has achieved knowledge of all branches. Yet he wants to do whatever he pleases. So he would like to practice necromancy.

*Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please* (i, 79)

.....  
*I'll have them read me strange philosophy,  
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;* (i, 86-7)

Thus he will compel them to build a wall of brass around Germany and to make the river Rine divert its course to flow round the lovely city of Wittenberg; will be able to supply plenty of silk garments to the public school; will drive Prince of Parma from his country and become the supreme monarch of all the provinces; and will have wonderful and powerful weapons of war.

Moving towards Shakespeare's, Hamlet and Horatio have proceeded with a type of phenomenal reductionism, for they have translated sentences about physical objects into sentences about actual and possible sensations. However, after deducing that he is "an honest ghost," leading Hamlet to "take the ghost's word for a thousand pound" (III.ii.266-267), Hamlet's 'will to power' or 'pragmatic perspectivism' leads him celebrate: "Come, some music. Come, the recorders"(III.ii.271). Moreover, when the Ghost re-visits him in the closet scene, he remarks: "Do you not come your tardy son to chide" (III.iv.108), implying that he has concluded that the Ghost is indeed his father's spirit. But how does he now know that the Ghost is indeed his father's spirit? For Nietzsche, "the need, not to know, but to subsume, to schematize, for the purpose of intelligibility and calculation", accounts for his creative "interpretation" (Nietzsche 1968: 278)

More specifically, Hamlet has allowed his knowledge that the Ghost is honest, to be transferred to the belief that the Ghost is good, and therefore, is his father's spirit. In this respect, one must wonder if he has forgotten that "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"(II, ii, 243-244). Moreover, Hamlet's decision to take action against Claudius, although it gets mis-directed toward Polonius, is gravely ill-timed, considering Fortinbras is currently passing through Denmark with his army, en route to Poland.

### 2.4. Good vs. Evil

*"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"*

— Hamlet (II, ii, 245).

Good Angel:

*O Faustus, lay that damned book aside,  
And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,*

Evil Angel:

*Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,  
Wherein all nature's treasury is contained.*

— (Doctor Faustus, i)

*"You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way,  
the correct way, and the only way; it does not exist."*

— Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, Chapter 55

One of the most common themes in literature is the battle between good and evil. From children's books to classic historical literature this theme has been seen throughout

history. Most works of literature have characters on either side of the battle; however there are some that focus on a different battlefield. Such works include Dr. Faustus and Hamlet in which the battle is internal. In both plays we see the main characters struggle with which side of the battle they identify with. While both characters begin on the side of good, their storyline introduces them to people and circumstances which alter their path to evil. It can be said that the author's intent is to illustrate that evil has the power to influence anyone, and that good is not always victorious.

In Dr. Faustus we see a well-respected, highly educated man who is torn between the embodiments of good and evil, which are God and the Devil. Two spirits representing a side of the battle struggle for Dr. Faustus's soul. In the infinite search for knowledge, Dr. Faustus decides to side with evil and make an agreement with the devil. In return for his soul, Faustus received 24 years of power. Though good seems to divinely intervene on his behalf, Faustus does not see it. Even after this choice, the good spirit implores him to repent and renounce his pact with Lucifer. However, Faustus does not believe he can be forgiven and struggles with his decision without repenting for 24 years. In the end when he finally decides to repent for his sins and beg of God's mercy it is too late, and he is taken to hell for ever.

The first comparative point between Hamlet and Faustus is the importance of the wrong decisions made by the characters, and how one poor choice can lead down a path of evil. In Dr. Faustus we see a man who starts out as a respected, extremely intelligent and educated man, but his pursuit for knowledge leads him to a pivotal point in which he must make a decision which affects the rest of his life. After becoming involved with magic Faustus calls upon a devil called Mephistopheles who can grant Faustus power and knowledge. However, he is warned that such gifts come with a price, and the price would be his soul. Even Mephistopheles cautions Faustus about the effects of his decision, which can be seen in the following quote. "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it. Think'st thou that I saw the face of God and tasted the eternal joys of heaven, am not tormented with ten thousand hells in being deprived of everlasting bliss?" (I, v) Though Faustus is warned that the glory of heaven eternally is worth more than temporary knowledge or power, he chooses to relinquish his eternal soul to the devil in exchange for those things. On his descending journey Faustus makes many wrong decisions, each decision leading him farther down a road of immorality and evilness culminating in his death and decent into hell.

Hamlet begins as a boy saddened by the death of his father. After encountering the ghost of his father, who asks Hamlet to kill Claudius in order to exact revenge, Hamlet is faced with a decision which he questions through the play. The request from the spirit of his father, along with his uncertainty about the act begins to drive Hamlet insane. In the end, Hamlet takes the road of evil and seeks revenge, killing several people. This quote shows Hamlet debating whether to kill his self or others:

*"To die, to sleep;  
No more, and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil*

*Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life"* (III, i, 60-69).

Another comparative point is the evil influences both main characters encountered. Both were influenced by events, people and most importantly spiritual beings. In Dr. Faustus, he encounters two spirits, one good and one bad who try to convince Faustus to pick their side. In the following quote Faustus debates which spirit to choose.

*"How am I gluttred with conceit of this!  
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,  
Resolve me of all ambiguities,  
Perform what desperate enterprise I will"* (i, 78-81).

The evil spirit however is triumphant by alluring Faustus with knowledge, power and desire.

In Hamlet, a spirit claiming to be Hamlet's dead father asks him to commit murder in the name of revenge. This spirit while claiming to want justice, is leading Hamlet to perform an act of evil by killing Claudius. Hamlet seeks the spirit, and allows it to influence him as seen in the following quote. "If thou hast any sound, or use of voice, Speak to me" (I, i, 128-9). The spirit of Hamlet's father appears further times, once imploring, "So art thou to revenge" (I, i, 7). Due to the emotional pull of the spirit being Hamlet's own father, it was easy for him to listen and proceed down an evil path.

The final comparative point is the tragic demise of each character due to their evil choices. In Dr. Faustus, we see the main character making a deal with the devil, exchanging his eternal soul after 24 years on earth. From the moment Faustus made the deal he was aware of his damnation. His damnation was presented to him as no secret, "Ah Faustus, now hast thou but one bare hour to live, and then thou must be damned perpetually" (V, ii, 140-143). He knew the moment and manner in which he would die, but it was a fate he had chosen for himself. The tragic ending comes when Faustus finally realizes his sin, and asks for redemption yet is taken to hell anyway because it is too late for redemption. He cries "My God, My God! Look not so fierce on me! Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile! Ugly Hell, gape not! Come not Lucifer! Ill burn my books! --- O Mephostophilis!" (Faustus, V, iii, 194-197).

The tragedy for Hamlet comes after he has committed murder, possibly feeling guilty and believes his self worthy of death. As he prepares to fight Laertes, Hamlet says "Not a whit, we defy augury. There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it come-the readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves knows, what isn't to leave bedtimes? Let be" (V, ii, 220-225). After finally completing his goal, and killing Claudius, Hamlet dies as well.

This section therefore has illustrated how Marlowe and Shakespeare used the theme of the good versus evil, how it guides us in making moral decisions, and how those choices can lead to personal ruin. In Dr. Faustus, we begin to see his standpoint when he explains to us his interpretation certain biblical scriptures. He reads, "The reward of sin is death? That's hard: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. Why, then belike, we must sin, and so consequently die" (I, 38-43). Possibly Marlowe was saying that it doesn't matter whether you choose good or evil in any situation because everyone is destined to die. Faustus was presented with both good and evil spirits, yet chose evil. In Hamlet's case his decision to seek revenge was a justified cause, when the challenge came from the ghost of his slain father. However, even if seeking revenge seemed to be a

noble cause, Hamlet could not feel good about that act unless he gained more evidence. His pursuit in doing this led him to encounter the moral dilemmas which lead to his downfall. These two literary works both illustrate a less common theme regarding good versus evil, and that is simply that good does not always win.

## 2.5. Appearance vs. Reality

Nietzsche contends that philosophy has hitherto operated within a dualistic appearance/reality dichotomy where reality is deemed to be an *extra-empirical* realm of truth whilst the actual empirical world of our ordinary experience is deemed to be a realm of deception and untruth. It is thus Nietzsche's contention that philosophy has operated within a metaphysical realist paradigm (Clark 41). The term metaphysical realism is employed here to denote the view that reality has a determinate nature, which is cognitively inaccessible to our natural means of knowing about the world. Of particular interest to Nietzsche is its claim that reality is epistemically divorced from human cognitive subjects.

Nietzsche suggests that the recoupling of truth and justification takes place by incorporating partial or limited perspectives into the most comprehensive perspective on the nature of things. The most comprehensive perspective, for Nietzsche, is one that sufficiently explains the nature of the world and our participation in it. Thus he writes, "every elevation of man brings with it the overcoming of narrower interpretations". (1968:616). Nietzsche's perspectivism thus rejects the metaphysical realist quest for absolute standards of correctness. An intrinsic component of this rejection is the dissolution of the distinction between appearance and cognitively inaccessible reality. Rather, for Nietzsche, what we have are more or less comprehensive perspectives on things or what he calls lighter and darker shades of appearance. (1966:36). Within these shades there is room for correction and revision. However, the idea of an inaccessible reality and the related idea of massive error dissolves. Thus Nietzsche can write that:

*The antithesis of the apparent world and the true world is reduced to the antithesis "world" and "nothing".* (1968:567)

Based on Nietzsche's such conceptions of appearance and reality, Faustus and Hamlet could be read as below.

Faustus's false deception of reality begins by that which he desires: knowledge of the Black Arts. Faustus is a very educated man who carries the respect of his fellow peers; however, simply scholarly knowledge of life is not enough for Faust. What Faust wants is "a world of profit and delight, of power, of honor, of omnipotence {which} is promised to the studious artisan" (i, 54-55). Faustus has examined all the orthodox religions and chooses magic instead. The uncertainty of the existence of both heaven and hell justifies to Faustus his want to learn the black arts: "This word, 'damnation' terrifies not him, for he confounds hell in Elysium; his ghost be with old philosophers" (iii, 59-61). Throughout the story, Faustus is constantly asking his slave, Mephistopheles, whom he bought with his very soul from the devil, all the unsolved mysteries of the world. He gains knowledge of heaven, hell, space and time. All the knowledge in the world, however, does not change his fate. Rather than bringing Faustus to a life of freedom from ignorance and mediocrity, he is brought to despair and eternal death.

How Faustus appears to himself and how the rest of the world views him is another instance of obscured reality. Faustus sees himself as powerful, whereas the audience gets the impression that he is more of a court entertainer. Faustus

even has the audacity to compare himself to a god: "A sound magician is a mighty god: Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity" (i, 62-3). Since Lucifer has given Mephistopheles to Faustus, Faustus has the ability to exert control over someone-even this proves to be a false sense of control. Almost anything Faustus commands, Mephistopheles does, just so long as it stays within the perimeters of evil-doing. Even with his demon slave, Faustus cannot have everything he desires, for in reality, the only commands that are obeyed are those which lead Faustus closer to the devil. When Faustus asks for a bride, Mephistopheles fetches him a devil dressed like a woman.

Mephistopheles then explains that "marriage is a ceremonial toy" (v, 148), and that because Faustus is damned, he cannot obtain such a holy sacrament at the devil's hands. Faustus does many things with his power, including teasing the Pope while invisible. Nothing he does or nothing he can conjure is real power, however, for everything is just another seal upon his black soul. He cannot control his pride nor can he control his fate. Faustus may appear to be powerful in his own eyes, but in reality, he is a pathetic man, a slave to his own desire and pride.

Hamlet is a deeply and reflective man compelled by justice and filial duty to avenge his father's death, the King, who was murdered by the hands of his brother, Hamlet's uncle. A ghost of Hamlet's father appears to Hamlet and reveals to him that appearances can be deceiving: the King did not in fact die from a poisonous snake as everyone thought, but from the poison of a power hungry brother. The reality is the betrayal of Hamlet's uncle who becomes King after Hamlet's father is murdered, and even goes so far as to marry his brother's widowed wife, Hamlet's mother. Hamlet also contains two sorts of madness, one that is genuine and one that is feigned. Shakespeare develops the theme of appearance vs. reality extremely well and very thoroughly through the mind of Hamlet, who is constantly in a state of confusion, trying to figure out not only what is morally right, but also what is actually real.

Hamlet's desire for revenge due to his father's murder is most understandable, but still holds a false sense of justice. A father's murder by his brother and the subsequent and incestuous marriage of his widowed wife to the murderer is enough to distort Hamlet's mind and drive him to actions he would not normally perform. In fact, the moment Hamlet learns the reality of his father's fate; his whole world turns upside down. Rather than having thoughts of love and youth, he has thoughts of revenge and death: "Haste met o know it, that I, with wings as swift as meditation or the thoughts of love, may sweep to my revenge" (I, v, 31). Hamlet must avenge his father's death to restore his father's lost honor. Hamlet, however, is not the only character who desires revenge in this story-Laertes too vows revenge on Hamlet for the suicide of Laertes' sister, and the eventual murder of his father. Laertes' sister, Ophelia, goes mad and commits suicide when Hamlet rejects her after once pursuing her, and also from the terrible words Hamlet spits upon her. Laertes father is Hamlet's uncle, and the man Hamlet places his vendetta upon for the death of his own father. In a conversation with Hamlet, Laertes reveals his intentions of revenge: "I am satisfied in nature; whose motive in this case should stir me most for my revenge....I have a voice and a precedent of peace to keep my name ungodred" (V, ii, 235). Although both Hamlet and Laertes appear to get the revenge they desire, they

end up destroying their family, whose honor they sought to avenge.

## 2.6. Ressentiment and Vengeance

*Ressentiment* is the interiorization of weakened vengeance. Nietzsche suffers so much from it that he mistakes it for the original and primary form of vengeance (Fraser 148). Nietzsche introduces *Ressentiment* in *On The Genealogy of Morals*, when he is contrasting the (historically situated, though not actually historical) replacement of the dichotomy of 'good and bad' with that of 'good and evil.' (24) In the Homeric aristocracy and similar tribal oligarchies, Nietzsche says, there were simply the well-born and the base, and only what we would today call class distinctions, not moral ones between good and its obverse (47). The bureaucratization of organized religion in the Mediterranean world, Nietzsche says, had a leveling effect. With its ideas of sin and guilt internalizing the physical struggle for existence, the priestly class operated as a kind of disciplinary intellectual cadre. "He has to defend his herd, but against whom? Against the healthy people undoubtedly, but also against their envy of the healthy. He has to be the natural opponent and critic of all rough, stormy, unchecked, hard, violent, predatory health and power. The priest is the first form of the more refined animal which despises more easily than it hates. He will not be spared having to conduct wars with predatory animals, wars of cunning (of the 'spirit') rather than of force, as is obvious" (1956:III, 15). This substitution of despising for hatred, the replacement of straightforward antagonism with insidious envy, is the characteristic mode of what Nietzsche terms *ressentiment*.

*Ressentiment* itself, if it should appear in the noble man, consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not poison: on the other hand, it fails to appear at all on countless occasions on which it inevitably appears in the weak and impotent. (11,58) Nietzsche is suggesting that a person can feel wronged and save up or cultivate a hope of revenge. This is a feeling of *ressentiment* accompanying the impotence, rather than an active acting out.

*Let come what comes – only I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.* (Hamlet, IV, v, 135-36)

Hamlet, as a play, can give an insight into the forming of the self in terms of showing a strategy or way of finding out about the actual content of this self, and also importantly illustrate the process whereby cultural-knowledge is itself created in the play of *ressentiment* between people. It enables the teacher, pupil or spectator to themselves identify with or reject the cause of 'Hamlet' and thereby increase their awareness of revenge. By using a Nietzschean-inspired analysis in the revenge theme, one possesses an example of the 'unsociable-sociable'. That the 'Hamlet' play is itself fictional, doesn't disqualify its relevance to our daily lives. This is the case if we are able to feel at least some sympathy with Hamlet's plight and also our own dilemma as to whether to live- out revenge immediately or save it in the spirit of *ressentiment* for a later date.

*Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift  
As meditation<sup>14</sup> or the thoughts of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.* (Hamlet, I, v, 29-31)

As we shall see, Hamlet is rarely the instigator of his own *ressentiment*. For this, he is dependent on others such as the ghost of his father. In other words, Hamlet is steadily drawn into the play or game of *ressentiment*, at times almost without his knowing it. This suggests an option: that he could have refused this game, and in this sense defeated or overcome

*ressentiment*. Overcoming is an issue we will return to in the example of his mother Gertrude. She seems to have accomplished precisely this. Her actions and statements lead to the conclusion that *ressentiment* is not some instinct we are born with, it is rather something that can be activated in various situations, again depending on the participants themselves and their intentions. To be kept in mind is how this third party plays a part in creating the individual's distance from their own self. They are denied the opportunity to form themselves (*bildung*) without the interference of others, and the consequence of this is that their own private projects are woven tightly together with those of others.

On the side of Faustus, the character of Envy best identifies itself with a Renaissance-Nietzschean voice:

*"I am Envy, begotten of a chimney-sweeper and an oyster-wife.*

*I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burnt;*

*I am lean with seeing others eat - O that there would come a famine through all the world, that all might die, and I live alone;*

*then thou should'st see how fat I would be!*

*But must thou sit and I stand? Come down, with a vengeance!"* (Faustus V, 303-309)

Why should such a character exist in this play? It is preferably representative of Faustus. Almost any nominated character there is an identification of Faustus himself. His sense of envy wishes all the things for himself. Ironically presented *I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burnt'* (v, 304) reflect that he can read and want to be the only person who does so. The whole world must be dedicated to him and all the possible happenings must be under his command. Envy and *Ressentiment* here are in mutual collaboration. This Envy is raised out of a set of complexes. Faustus is having a sense of *Ressentiment* towards himself and this is assumed, in researcher's opinion, as a probabilistic irony.

*Yet in a minute had my spirit returned,*

*And I had breathed a manmade free from harm.*

*But wherefore do I dally my revenge?*

*Asteroth, Belimoth, Mephostophilis* (Faustus, ix, Appendix to B-text)

He envies himself. He is trying to take revenge against himself and he does so! Why should someone draw himself to the most complicated irritation with his own hands even when opposite forces try to prevent him? The inner conflict inside Faustus eradicates his self-esteem. On the one hand, he ironically thinks is capable of closing to eternity with his power of the Black Arts and provides a virtual hubris of himself. On the other hand, he is losing all of his identity and spirit of self. The conflict of man versus himself or theoretically speaking *Ressentiment* against oneself, vanishes the whole character of Faustus in the form of a desire.

## 2.7. Signification of Madness

*"There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness."*

— Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, *On Reading and Writing*

*"Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't."*

— Polonius, Hamlet (II, ii, 202)

Throughout literature madness, or insanity, is presented to the reader as a method to surprisingly control the plot of a story. Nietzsche in his book as Morgenröte translated to Daybreak or The Dawn, specifies a chapter to madness entitled "The Signification Of Madness In The History Of

Morality". There he willfully defends the signification of madness and insanity in the growth of morality through history. Calling this state of mind as 'genius', he refers to Plato's agreement with the benefit of madness in the developments of Greece civilization as well (21):

*Well in our own time we continually hear the statement reiterated that genius is tintured with madness instead of good sense. Men of earlier ages were far more inclined to believe that wherever traces of insanity showed themselves a certain proportion of genius and wisdom was likewise present—something "divine" as they whispered to one another. More than this they expressed their opinions on the point with sufficient emphasis. "All the greatest benefits of Greece have sprung from madness" said Plato setting on record the opinion of the entire ancient world.*

The gain caused by madness is clearly seen in the life of Doctor Faustus. Throughout the play, Marlowe demonstrates Faustus's madness in his quest for knowledge, his actions with the devil, and in his life after his commitment with the devil. Doctor Faustus thinks that happiness can be accomplished through knowledge. After Faustus thinks he has reached the pinnacle of "healthy" knowledge, he is proud of himself, but he is not content. He, in turn, looks to black magic to fill the void which all the other areas of study have left him. Still discontent, Faustus takes his insanity to the extreme when he makes a deal to give his soul to the devil in exchange for several gifts: a personal servant, the powers of a spirit-like invisibility, and twenty-four years of life with these gifts. The joy of this agreement is short-lived, however. At first the doctor loves his newfound attributes and plays tricks on many prominent people. One day, after playing several tricks on the Pope, the Pope puts a spell on the doctor and quickly ends his fun. From this point on, Faustus witnesses his life fading away, and after twenty-four years of tricks realizes that his ambitions are all going to disappear.

Doctor Faustus a middle-aged pedant at the peak of his academic career which has given him little satisfaction and brought disillusion, and, like Marlowe himself, a renegade student of theology and an apostate, agrees a contract with Lucifer and enters through the exercise of necromancy into a fantasy world in which he is able to carry out as a changed person actions he would have repudiated in his normal state, in order to achieve in fantasy the satisfactions he has been denied in reality. It is the power that attracts him.

*O what a world of profit and delight,  
Of power, of honour and omnipotence, is  
Promis'd to the studious artisan!* (i, 53-5)

The play is about the struggle between the two sides of Doctor Faustus, the controlled intellectual side giving way in what may be seen as a mid-life crisis to the indulgent sensual. When the latter is in the ascendant, he betrays his ideals of pursuing knowledge. His manner is jocose and exuberant, his antics ludicrous or mad buffoonery, and he is driven by ambition. He pursues riches and pleasures, as if acting out day-dreams, but the demands he makes are seen by Mephistopheles as 'frivolous'; what he achieves is trivial. He overreaches himself, his ambition for rich rewards and power driving him into wild, dangerous and ultimately tragic actions.

Shakespeare's look into madness through Hamlet brings the questions of fair life or death. Through the mystery of death, "the undiscover'd country" (III. i. 80), the rotten state of Denmark, Hamlet's 'play' of madness, fair Ophelia's madness through death and love, Laertes' revenge of his father, and the

King's corrupt manner. The significance of madness is the heart of the play.

When Hamlet is contemplating life or death in the famous "To be, or not to be" (III. i. 58) soliloquy, he brings a lot of attention of the significance of madness. When you are questioning your own mortality, usually it meant that there was not something worth living for - or to die and 'sleep'. With Hamlet's speech, it brought a whole level of depth to Shakespeare's character. Hamlet represents madness. Perhaps facing uncertainty and dream would be genius against misfortune but there's no immediate reason for Hamlet's choice to live.

Another theme of madness found through Hamlet's craves for honesty and his dislike for deception. It brings a lively twist to our understanding of how he goes about his play for the truth. Hamlet is stuck in a world of deception in political corruption (the murder of Hamlet's father and Gertrude's remarriage) which kills Hamlet. His madness later on represents the treachery that each character goes through due to their manipulation in the state of decline in Denmark.

*"And it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man"* (I. iii. 78 - 80).

Here, the advice given to Laertes from Polonius describes the situational irony of the state of Denmark indirectly as Laertes is about to go to university in France.

*"Why then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison"* (II. ii. 250 - 251).

Here Hamlet is talking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (where Claudius sent them to spy on his "antic disposition"). Hamlet describes Denmark as a prison - but says something relating to madness. Hamlet's thinking is his prison and because he's stuck with his mother (who married his uncle after his father died in such short time) and his murderous uncle. He sort of hoping for ignorance with bliss because if you think it to be bad, then it'll be bad, but if you think it to be good, it'll be good.

As with Hamlet, madness itself turns into all Hamlet plays and for Ophelia (after her father's death at Hamlet's hand) madness turns into her own death. Though, her madness represents true madness for its genuine. She lost her father and she feels lost Hamlet's love. After she sings about death and love, her madness becomes clear. With the death of Ophelia, Hamlet's heart is torn and with nothing more than the death of his father and his mere mortality.

When Hamlet is holding Yorick's skull he comes to terms with death - from a great to a common man, death is our fate. This is a turning point for Hamlet as it liberates him. In the last scene of the play, Hamlet's at peace with death. He apologizes to Laertes, who defends his honor but takes it with love, and yet duels. He took the situation blindly and it's almost the classic movie scene where we watch the 'hero' die, and yet we know what's going to happen, but it warms our hearts.

The significance of madness in Hamlet is presented as the defining heart of the play. Without madness, Shakespeare could not explore the certain character of that of Hamlet - how he thinks more rather than acting out of passion and honor. Hamlet is madness that puts everything together and represents the inner conscience of human from when he goes to distraught play writer to a sincere man of apology and peace. When you compare the Hamlet we've known throughout the play to the few moments he's left to live, you

know somewhere he accepted death and that Hamlet is a story to tell.

### 3. Epilogue

*"Not every end is a goal. The end of a melody is not its goal: but nonetheless, had the melody not reached its end it would not have reached its goal either. A parable."*

— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-too-human*, 204

At its outset, this research promised, via its critique of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical deployment of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, to comparatively comment upon the entire philosophical and critical landscape of the concept of Renaissance Man in two plays of Doctor Faustus and Hamlet. The groundwork for this has been established in the researcher's demonstration of Marlowe's and Shakespeare's essential role within Nietzsche's philosophy and its feedback towards reading of them.

One important factor is to be noted and stressed here in the concluding parts that wherever the word 'man' was used, it is not intentionally standing for male gender but rather literally means both male and female genders and widely all human.

As this study evaluated, six main features of a Nietzschean reading was applied to author's conception of Renaissance Man and this part summarizes the findings in a concluding manner focusing more on a comparative side to shorten the outcome of research and get close to its aim.

Hamlet and Faustus, with a Nietzschean perspective, are definitely outstanding symbols of an Übermensch. Hamlet proves to his surroundings, as a prince, that knows more than any other one even Horatio who was his close friend and colleague and thus is capable of being a king and rule the whole country. So does Faustus in his powerful talent and motif in the Black Arts to get greatly higher than any other existing human. Both fulfill this task by stating metaphysical aspects of life and elevating their highly ambitious wishes. Although it was a part of Nietzsche's framework of Will to Power, here it was divided as a separate part since the two made meticulous points of discrepancy. The Will to Power is appreciated as a self-oriented tendency. It is certainly accompanied with a sense of pride and chained with a tedious goal to achieve which is mostly regarded as notorious in others' as a third-person perspectives. The concept of Superman on the other hand represents itself in this study as a more positive one on the side of a optimistic behavior for helping others. It is to some extent its modern conception as distinguished in media as well. If it is questionable on the side of Faustus here, it should refer back to his inner ambition and be reminded that although he was tempted by and followed Bad Angel in the path, he was first and last himself; meaning that his ultimate goal was to open a grandeur outlook which in his own perspective was the ultimate human success and at the end finds out his faulty misunderstanding as an anagnorisis.

Out of ancient myth of the magician who sells his soul to the Devil for occult powers, Marlowe has fashioned a veritable fable of Renaissance man. The goal of any true Renaissance man is to improve himself. This goal may border on heresy, as it leads to a man trying to occupy the same position as God. Lucifer commits this same basic sin to cause his own fall. To Faustus, this idea of sin is of no concern at the beginning of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. Faustus's goal is to become god-like himself. In order to accomplish this, he learns of science and shows an interest in magic. He turns to the pleasures of magic and art and the power of scientific knowledge as substitutes for the Christian faith he has lost. Clearly, this total disregard for God makes Faustus an atheist.

However, it is only his renaissance quality, which seals his damnation, not his lack of faith. It is interesting to note how Faustus directly parallels Marlowe himself. The play is written as if Marlowe's vindication of Faustus will vindicate him in the end. This has a direct effect on style as well as the overall spin, which Marlowe takes on the archetype. Such as strong connection between Faustus and Marlowe makes it practical to speak of the damnation of both of these interesting characters almost simultaneously. Therefore, Marlowe and Faustus are both damned by their own self-improvement, not only by God, but also by themselves, and society.

Further, they both sought eternity, or in a Nietzschean term, eternal return. Faustus thought of being a demigod by his overwhelming knowledge. That way, he assumed, is able to make himself an eternal being to return to his own destiny and the final denouement turned over this eternal return. Hamlet reckoned with himself by the time he decided to take revenge and at the end when he found out that the sword is poisoned, saw her mother died, to end up everything and prepare for his ending.

The conflicts made by the opposite forces of Good & Evil, Appearance & Reality, Ressentiment & Vengeance, and Consciousness & Madness best represented themselves most precisely in Hamlet's and Faustus's monologues and their behavior with other characters of the plays. Admittedly, the conflict of man versus himself is the most outstanding characteristic of Renaissance man which effects all of their decisions and submits their destination. Nietzsche made clear each of these conflicts and provided their causes along with their solutions.

To close, Marlowe and Shakespeare portray Faustus and Hamlet as both the typical Renaissance men and as fairly developed tragic heroes. This is no contradiction in terms, and the rounded character that a Renaissance man has to be, makes Faustus and Hamlet all the more universal in what eventually germinates into a cautionary tale.

It is fair to say that Faustus and Hamlet represent the quintessential 'Renaissance man'. It is their thirst for knowledge that drives them into their pact and is overstated by their surroundings:

*Master Doctor Faustus, I have heard strange report of thy knowledge in the black art, how that none in my empire, nor in the whole world, can compare with thee for the rare effects of magic.* (Emperor, Faustus, iv, 1-4)

And

*O God, Horatio, what a wounded name, Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!* (Hamlet, V, ii, 330-31)

And their sense of Ressentiment tempted for Mephistopheles and Claudius; indeed it is the Evil Angel and Father's Vengeance that best summarize these two sets of dilemmatic lines:

*Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art, Wherein all nature's treasury is contained.* (Evil Angel, Faustus, i, 74-77)

And

*So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.* (Ghost, Hamlet, I, v, 8)

For giving more clarification, elaborating on the concept of Renaissance Man as the central theme of this study does not mean to defend all of its featured aspects on the side of human and act pro Hamlet or Faustus; rather it acted as a mirror to show both sides of the coin, either right or wrong, to present with the reader a logical framework and keep the gate open for



them to perceive the consequences of any incident which happened to the heroes of the plays as the symbols of such a concept. Not necessarily all characteristics regarded to Renaissance Man is positive. It is rather aimed at showing different outcomes of human will and lead to choose the correct ones avoiding any sort of downfall for humanity.

At the very end what this thesis gained by its various researches opened a literary path towards finding a distinguished life-style for any one at any age. Without having a biased outlook at any work or any critic, it sought its own fundamental goal which was to grasp something influential for the perfection of human life, at least for its own sake. It explored ways of gaining self-esteem through literature, specifically the Renaissance era. It sought how one could pack their motivation towards achieving their goal; explored the outcomes of indulgence and regretful selfishness in it. Perusing this study and understanding the Renaissance man helps one to literarily distinguish right from wrong in the course of *life-matters* and this was the final objective of this research.

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