

# Individuality, sin and repentance in John Donne's Holy Sonnets and Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus

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ODSJEK ZA ENGLSKI JEZIK I KNJIŽEVNOST

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and Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus**

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# **Individuality, sin and repentance in John Donne's Holy Sonnets and Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus**

BA Thesis

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Split, 2024

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## 1. Introduction

Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* and John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* were written during a time of great intellectual, cultural, and religious transition. Both authors capture the clash between the deeply ingrained medieval religious traditions and the Renaissance's growing emphasis on individuality and humanism. Far from a complete break from medieval thought, these works demonstrate a complex interaction with it. They explore how authors like Donne and Marlowe engaged with the philosophical and theological frameworks of the Middle Ages while simultaneously responding to the shifting intellectual climate of the Renaissance.

Though often labeled as Renaissance authors, Marlowe and Donne, despite writing several decades apart, both produced literature that defies simple periodization. To fully appreciate their works, it is necessary to recognize the enduring influence of medieval thought on their writing. This thesis contends that *Doctor Faustus* and the *Holy Sonnets*, while Renaissance works, display a continuity with their medieval predecessors in their treatment of theological and spiritual topics such as sin, salvation, and human agency. It attempts to analyze how Renaissance religious thought was built upon the foundations of medieval theology and Catholic doctrine.

The Renaissance is a period often described as an era of remarkable intellectual and cultural significance. (Monfasani 2020, *Decline section*) It is frequently characterized by a surge of interest in Classical scholarship and in ancient values.<sup>1</sup> This era began in the 14th century in Italy and extended into the 17th century. Ever since 1860, and the historian's Jacob Burckhardt's release of his most acclaimed work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, public discourse on the period has been shaped by his idea of the Renaissance being a transformative period in European history. Burckhardt (2000) argues that the Renaissance marked the birth of the individual in European civilization. He writes: "*In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness—that which was turned within as that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half-awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family,*

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<sup>1</sup> Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, August 9). Renaissance. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Renaissance>

*or corporation—only through some general category." (Burckhardt, 1990, Part II, "Individuality")*

The Swiss historian's stance on the Middle Ages being a time dominated by collective identity, the Church and feudalism further reinforces his opinion about the Renaissance bringing about a wave of secularization and a new golden age of culture and art. Burckhardt, with his Petrarchan attitude on the Middle Ages, fully rejects the period and its advances. The historian's work corresponds with the notion of the Dark Ages, as he dismisses the centuries following the Renaissance as being detrimental to the development of a modern and enlightened society.

However, this view oversimplifies the complex relationship between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Many scholars, such as E.F. Jacob (1931.) and W.K. Ferguson (1951.) have argued that the Renaissance was not a radical break but a period of transition, where medieval intellectual and religious traditions were not abandoned but adapted to new cultural and philosophical contexts. Rather than viewing the Renaissance as a complete break from the Middle Ages, this thesis sets out to prove the significant influence of medieval thought and theology on Renaissance literature. These influences proved remarkably prominent in the selected works of John Donne and Christopher Marlowe. To support this argument, three seminal medieval works have been chosen for comparison: Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*, and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. These texts, which have been widely acclaimed for their theological and literary contributions, represent the ethos of the Middle Ages and provide a lens through which to examine the works of Marlowe and Donne. The virtues of order, modesty, and devotion, so central to medieval Christian life, continued to influence literature during the Renaissance, despite the rise of secular humanism. By comparing the treatment of individuality, sin, and repentance in the works of Marlowe and Donne with that in those of Aquinas, Kempis, and Dante, I will attempt to analyze the medieval foundations responsible for Donne's and Marlowe's renaissance reinterpretations of medieval theological traditions.

## 2. Medieval religious tradition and the Dark Ages

In order to successfully expand upon the popular presumption about the Middle Ages being a period riddled with superstition and strict tradition, one must be familiar with the Petrarchan notion of the *Dark Ages*. This conception, originating from the 14th century writings of Francesco Petrarch, is based on the metaphorical juxtaposition of darkness and light; the preceding Roman age, according to Petrarch, being immersed in light brought upon by the birth of Christ and Constantine's vision of the cross in 312 CE. This event, followed by the conversion of Romans to Christianity, was seen as the proclamation of victory against the darkness of Paganism. The Germanic king Odoacer deposed the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire in 476., and thus Europe was propelled into the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages, or the Dark Ages as Petrarch described them as, were a thousand year long period crucial for the development of Europe and its culture. The millenia between the sacking of Rome and the writings of Petrarch is a time often dismissed and misinterpreted when historical periodization is regarded. Besides the words of Petrarch having tremendous influence on the perception the public has had on the period, the general outlook on the Middle Ages is one about it having been a time of great barbarian influence on the European identity and culture. (*Wood 1999:59*) These factors, alongside the scarceness of historical texts and sources, and the gross illiteracy of the medieval population, have played a monumental role in alienating the Medieval period from the Roman times which had been regarded as more abundant in order and intellect. The aforementioned lack of historical texts is a predicament that continues to shape public opinion about the medieval times even today, for the general consensus about the time has been shaped by few records preserved throughout history, mainly those of ecclesiastical nature, ranging from texts used for ceremonial purposes such as *The Lindisfarne Gospels* which showcase the great artistic skills of the period's monks, to numerous ecclesiastical papal letters bringing diplomatic resolutions, and theological works such as Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* written as a theological treatise which details the relationship between humanity and the divine. Although secular literature of the period does exist, it was produced in much lower quantities, hence the utilization of written word for religious purposes is a clear characteristic of the Middle Ages. With this in mind, it becomes apparent that authors such as Thomas Aquinas, Dante and Thomas à Kempis embodied the medieval world of Europe, and that their works greatly shaped the philosophical and theological thought of the period. In order to fully grasp the

development of a strict Catholic tradition so present during the Middle Ages, I shall briefly introduce some of these authors' influential works and attempt to analyze the means by which these have influenced the formation of a very distinct and theologically oriented general attitude so prevalent during the medieval times. To back this, a synopsis of each work will be given.

### **2.1. Thomas Aquinas – Summa Theologiae**

Written by Thomas Aquinas between 1265 and 1273, *Summa Theologiae* is the crown jewel of medieval theology, a true integrated system of Christian philosophical theology. The work, which acts as a treatise on the period's catholic thought, is divided into three parts which are concerned with God, Man, and Christ, respectively. Each of these three parts is broken down into questions divided into articles, the structure of these articles being as follows. First a question is raised and then objections to the position Aquinas wants to defend are listed, what follows is a summary of that position alongside an explanation of why the author is taking such a stance, and finally replies to the objections are listed (Davies 2014:14). Thomas Aquinas structured the entire compendium as is described above, with all of the three parts being a compilation of theological questions to which he gives detailed answers, citing earlier influences such as Saint Augustine of Hippo along the way. In an endeavour to detail the religious lives of the period's people and to explore the standard to which a true Catholic was to be held to, this paper will focus on the second part of Aquinas' Summa (*Secunda pars*). The author begins the second part with an examination of human happiness, detailing that true happiness can only be achieved through a union with god. Aquinas then turns to human actions and the factors that influence them; virtue, sin, faith, hope, charity, etc. These opinions that Aquinas has on the spiritual life of the individual are precisely why his Summa has been regarded as a theological handbook, or a guidebook of sorts. Although initially intended for Dominican priests and persons of lower ranks on the university of Paris where Aquinas had spent time studying under Albertus Magnus at the Faculty of Arts (Davies 2014:4), *Summa Theologiae* left a lasting impression on the members of the clergy and the laity alike. In the second part of the second part of his Summa (*Secunda Secundae*), Aquinas further examines cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins. The author sees sin as a grave offense against god and details the vices that lead to such offense by contrasting them with the mentioned virtues. Aquinas' employment of reason and philosophical principles is key in his attempt at systematically exploring the Catholic doctrine, he reconciles faith and reason and describes



both as complementary, rather than contradictory. If one is to fully understand the intricacies of the Christian civilization of the medieval times, examination of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa* is of great importance. Furthermore, this treatise is imperative when attempting to successfully showcase the beliefs and virtues a true Christian was to respect on his path to divine salvation in the Middle Ages. These factors make the *Summa* one of the most crucial works of medieval scholasticism. Similar to *Summa Theologiae* is Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi*. Hailing from the late Middle Ages, the book is a true manual of devotion, although it elaborates on numerous questions already tackled by Aquinas, its simplistic language and approach aided it in becoming the most widely read spiritual work, with the exception of the Bible (Patrick 1950:201).

## **2.2. Thomas à Kempis – De Imitatione Christi**

*De Imitatione Christi* is a Christian devotional work written by the Dutch Augustinian monk Thomas à Kempis. Being a devotional meant for spiritual growth and formation of Christian individuals, it enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages and was widely studied throughout history since its publication. *De Imitatione Christi* is divided into 4 parts, *Useful admonitions for a spiritual life*, *Admonitions concerning spiritual things*, *Of interior consolation*, and *Of the blessed sacrament*. The first book is made up of twenty-five chapters in which the author denounces the vanities of the material and the flesh, Kempis highlights the significance of humility and discipline and encourages his audience to live a humble life, detached from worldly things and lust. Through a practice of self-denial, the reader is to focus on meditation and prayer in the same manner that Jesus Christ did. The second book urges the reader to cultivate a close relationship with god, personal, or internal devotion is emphasized over rituals and similar external practices. In order to lead a life akin to Christ, the man-god, one must foster patience and humility by means of personal examination and utilization of sacraments as the only true path to achieving union with god. The third book celebrates the joy of union with god. It is structured as a conversation between Jesus and the flawed, human soul. According to Kempis, comfort is to be found in the deep connection with Jesus, hence this tome signifies the value of faith. The final book deals with the Eucharist. Besides highlighting how necessary 'the Sacrament of the altar' is in the life of a Christian, it attempts to aid the believers in preparing for the holy Communion and underlines the perplexing nature of the presence Christ has in the sacrament. While Aquinas' *Summa* was intended for members of the clergy, scholars and theologians, Kempis' work was meant for a broader

audience from its very inception. Its accessibility to the clergy and the laypeople alike was mostly due to its approach to practical spirituality. Kempis did not attempt to follow in the steps of Aquinas and write a scholastic work of theological analysis, he employed simple language and means of practicing Christian virtues, and did not stray further into the area of theological debate. By employing this method of approach to writing a spiritual handbook, the popularity and widespread of his *De Imitatione Christi* was guaranteed.

### **2.3. Dante Alighieri – The Divine Comedy (Inferno)**

The study of complexities concerning religion in the works of Thomas Aquinas and Thomas à Kempis is imperative in understanding the general attitude that one of the driving forces behind European feudalism, the Church, wanted its serfs to foster. Both the works of Aquinas and Kempis can be classified as religious handbooks. With the former being a true Aristotelian approach to creating a theological treatise distinct to the principles of European scholasticism, and the latter being a devotional work aimed at guiding the individual to leading a life similar to the one led by Jesus Christ. Both of these works have their share of differences but generally promote similar values that are to be achieved through faith. In order to fully encompass the spectrum of Christian medieval literature and come to a broader understanding of what the prevalent attitude on the themes of faith, sin and salvation were, it is of great necessity to turn to a work as universally acclaimed as Dante's Divine Comedy is. Considered to be one of the greatest works of literature ever written, the Divine Comedy is a long narrative poem written in Italian circa 1308<sup>2</sup>. The Divine Comedy consists of 3 large sections, Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. It follows the journey of the narrator as he descends through the corrupted darkness of hell, afterwards, with the help of the 'divine light' he ascends the mountain of Purgatory; finally, the poem reaches its climax with the beatific vision of god, emphasis is put on divine grace and eternal joy which is to be achieved when the soul is reunited with its creator. For the sake of juxtaposition of Dante's work to the works of Aquinas and Kempis, focus will be put on the first section of the poem, Inferno. Putting the first section, Inferno, at the centre of attention will be done to showcase the exact consequences an individual was to be put through if they were not to follow the spiritual instructions given by Kempis and Aquinas, and instead turned to a life of vice and sin. Inferno follows Dante Alighieri as he ventures through a forest in an attempt to climb a mountain

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<sup>2</sup> Ostberg, R. (2024, August 20). The Divine Comedy. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Divine-Comedy>

above him. As his way up the mountain is blocked by wild beasts, he retreats into the forest and stumbles upon the ghost of a renowned Roman poet Virgil who offers him help on his journey but warns Dante that, in order to reach Heaven, where his love Beatrice awaits him, they must pass through hell. At the gates of hell, a harrowing engraving: "*All hope abandon, ye who enter in!*" (Dante 2008:16) makes Dante aware of the horrors he is about to witness on his descent through hell. Virgil and Dante cross Acheron, and enter the first circle of hell, Limbo. The first circle is eternal home to those who never knew Christ and died without a chance at union with the Christian god. Although not enduring any punishment, they exist in a godless state for they did not experience baptism. After leaving Limbo, Dante and his guide venture to the second circle of hell which is reserved for those who've committed the sin of lust. There, the sinners are whipped around by strong gusts of wind for all eternity, just as they were swept by lust and desire during their earthly existence. The third circle of Inferno is home to the gluttonous who endure the punishment of wallowing in a vile bog created by the never-ending torrents of rain, ice and snow. The sickening mire symbolizes the overindulgence and excess that characterized their sinful lives. The futile pursuit of material gain is punished in the fourth circle, the greedy are divided into two groups: those who squandered their wealth and those who hoarded it. These two groups are destined to spend an eternity fighting by pushing heavy weights at one another. Similar is the punishment in the fifth circle, where sinners participate in an everlasting brawl against each other, these are the souls of those who spent their lives consumed by wrath. On the surface of the river Styx fight those who let their rage take over their earthly lives, while submerged in the filth of the swampy river lie the sullen ones, those whose wrath was one of a passive nature. According to Alighieri, Fiery tombs are the eternal destiny of those who denied the Christian God, their acts of heresy engulf them in a never-ending flame. The seventh circle houses those guilty of the sin of violence. This domain is divided into three rings, in the outer part those who made war or committed homicide boil in a bubbling river of blood. The souls of those who committed suicide are turned into trees. They are picked at by harpies, never to be reunited with their physical bodies, for they did not respect them on Earth. Blasphemers, sodomites, and usurers are punished in the inner ring of the seventh circle. Trapped on a plain of burning sand, and tortured by constantly falling flakes of flame, they are bound to be scorched for eternity. Seducers, thieves, sorcerers, and other fraudsters pay the price for their sins in the eighth circle which is divided into ten ditches with various punishments for each type of fraud. The last circle of hell is a frozen lake which houses those guilty of treachery against their families, countries, and guests. At the very centre of this lake stands Lucifer, engulfed in ice. There he

gnaws on the three greatest traitors: Brutus and Cassius, who betrayed Julius Caesar, and Judas Iscariot who failed Jesus Christ, the son of God.

Although explicit and rich in gory displays of punishment and suffering, *the Divine Comedy* has had great influence on both Dante's contemporaries and his literary successors alike. With his Comedy, Dante succeeded at crafting a work that successfully distilled the morality and addressed the ambiguities of over a thousand years of Christianity into a single epic poem. In spite the fact that Alighieri's work differs to Aquinas' Summa, the two authors are very similar at the core. Dante was a poet who was shaped by his philosophical and theological influences; thus it is no wonder that some key characteristics of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas can be observed in his Divine Comedy (Vereš 1982:327). With that said, one would be correct in proclaiming that, while Aquinas created his Summa as a thorough compendium of rules and insights a true Christian who obeys the scripture should respect on his pursuit of salvation, Dante Alighieri's Inferno was created as an epic reminder of the punishment those who disobey and commit offense against god will face once their earthly lives end. Although very religious, Dante was wary of corrupted and sinful priests and clergy of his time, he attacks those that he found guilty of offending God with their actions, condemning them to spend an eternity in the Inferno.

After providing a brief synopsis on each of these seminal works of medieval literature, this paper will aim to rely on characteristics and notions mentioned by the authors in the deeper analysis of the works of Christopher Marlow and John Donne. Following an introduction to *Doctor Faustus* and *Holy Sonnets*, those themes and concepts in the works considered to be relevant and in line with medieval religion, regarding its practice, core values, and attitude to sin and faith will be examined. This will be done by analysis of the approach and opinions on these topics that Aquinas, Kempis, and Alighieri shared in their works that have been synopsized above. The Middle Ages were a time of the rise of Christian civilization and institutions, this climate of prevalence of Christianity can also be studied in literature which is, as is mentioned earlier, majorly of religious nature; hence it is safe to say that the comparison of the Renaissance to the Middle Ages cannot be done without extensive study of one of the period's most ubiquitous phenomena, Catholicism. Despite religion being the most prevalent, the presence of medieval scholasticism will also be extensively studied. Due to the popularity and influence of *Summa Theologiae*, *De Imitatione Christi*, and *The Divine*

*Comedy*, one can safely assert that these works symbolize the literary manifestation of the most well-established moral values which typify the medieval peoples' stances on such topics.

### **3. Sin and repentance in Doctor Faustus and Holy Sonnets**

Faustus, the tragic hero, is an embodiment of the Renaissance spirit of individuality and ambition but is ultimately condemned by his sinful actions. Faustus, driven by overwhelming hubris, defies divine authority, choosing instead to chase after forbidden knowledge and power that far exceed human limits. This tragic flaw—his pride—aligns closely with the medieval understanding of sin as a wilful transgression against God. However, Faustus's pride is not merely a personal failing but can be seen as a reflection of the larger intellectual and societal changes occurring in Marlowe's time. The Renaissance was marked by a growing emphasis on human potential, individualism, and the pursuit of knowledge, all of which challenged the more conservative medieval worldview that prioritized submission to divine authority. Faustus's ambition to transcend human limitations, revealed in his opening soliloquy where he dismisses traditional fields of study and turns to necromancy—“Divinity, adieu! / These metaphysics of magicians / And necromantic books are heavenly!” (Marlowe 2020:8)—can be interpreted as symbolic of the tensions between Renaissance humanism and medieval scholasticism. Faustus' desire to become “a mighty god” (Marlowe 2020:8) not only reveals his personal pride but is also an expression of the broader reformations that emphasized human potential over divine limitation. Yet, Marlowe's play may also be interpreted as a critique of these Renaissance ideals. Aquinas (1911:1981) writes that the sin of pride is the root of all sin: “Pride denotes immoderate desire of one's own excellence, a man so exalts himself in his heart, that he despises and disdains the commands of God” (Summa Theologica, II-II, Q. 162, Art. 1). Faustus's rejection of God's authority and his pact with Mephistopheles are clear manifestations of this pride, but they also signify the anxieties of a society struggling with the consequences of departing from long-held traditions. The conservatism of the play suggests an argument in favour of adhering to the “old ways” of medieval Christian thought, positioning Faustus's downfall as a warning against the unchecked ambition and intellectual rebellion that was characteristic to Marlowe's period. In this sense, Faustus's tragic end serves as an allegory for the dangers of abandoning the collective values of the Middle Ages in favour of radical individualism.

Similarly, John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* illustrate the intense struggle with sin and the yearning for divine grace. The sonnets confront humanity's inherent sinfulness and the need for

repentance, showing a deep concern for the soul's salvation. However, this focus on repentance must also be understood in the context of the religious tensions of 17th-century England, where Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Puritanism competed for dominance. The Protestant Reformation, as described by Braddick (2008), rejected the notion that individual believers or the church could influence God's judgment regarding salvation. Calvin's doctrine of predestination shaped Protestant theology, emphasizing that salvation was solely determined by God's will. While this austere view diminished the importance of traditional rituals and practices, "*a residual role was reserved for edification—sensitizing the believer to the saving message—which allowed for the preservation of parts of the medieval tradition*" (Braddick, 2008, Chapter I). This emphasis on edification is evident in Donne's sonnets, which, while personal, also draw on earlier traditions of spiritual reflection and place great importance on bettering oneself through devotion. This "residual role" showcases the delicate balance between reform and the preservation of key elements of faith. Even as Protestantism distanced itself from the perceived excesses of medieval Catholicism, it still relied on certain practices (like edification) to promote spiritual awareness and guide believers towards salvation.

Earlier in his life, Donne embraced a more rebellious path. His love poetry often defied societal norms, and his secret marriage to Anne More violated both family expectations and social conventions<sup>3</sup>. However, his transformation from a defiant figure to a devout churchman suggests that his later works, including the *Holy Sonnets*, are shaped by a need to reconcile his past. In *Holy Sonnet I*, Donne tackles his fear of death and divine judgment: "Thou hast made me, and shall thy work decay? / Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste, / I run to death, and death meets me as fast, / And all my pleasures are like yesterday" (Donne, 2015:322). In seeking divine mercy, he exposes both his own personal guilt and the collective spiritual anxieties of his time.

The consequences of Faustus' sin are dire and irremediable. Throughout the play, Faustus experiences moments of doubt and guilt, but he consistently rejects opportunities to repent. His pact with Mephistopheles is the ultimate act that severs Faustus' connection with God, leading him toward his inexorable damnation. His recurrent rejection of repentance and his

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<sup>3</sup> Pinka, P. Garland (2024, August 23). *John Donne*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Donne>

despair are clear indications that his soul has been spiritually deadened by his sin. Donne, in *Holy Sonnet V*, addresses the concept of sin as an internal corruption, he equates his soul to a world that has been tainted by sin: “*I am a little world made cunningly / Of elements, and an angelic sprite; / But black sin hath betrayed to endless night / My world's both parts, and oh both parts must die*” (Donne 2015:324). The imagery of darkness and the duality of sin’s impact on both body and soul draw a parallel to the writings of Thomas à Kempis (1891:1952), where he warns against the dangers of sin that corrupt the soul’s purity: “*Of what use is it to discourse learnedly on the Trinity, if you lack humility, and so displease the Trinity? Truly, it is not learning that makes a man holy and just, but a virtuous life makes him dear to God*” (*De Imitatione Christi, Book I, Chapter 1*).

*Inferno* relies heavily on the portrayal of the consequences of unrepented sin. Faustus’ journey after making the deal with Mephistopheles mirrors the fates of Dante’s damned souls, particularly those who, like Faustus, allowed pride and ambition to lead them to their fates. Dante’s depiction of the damned reflects the medieval belief in *contrapasso*, or the fitting punishment for each sin. This imagery is displayed in *Canto III*, at the very beginning of Dante’s descent through the nine circles of hell: “*And I, who looked again, beheld a banner/ Which, whirling round, ran on so rapidly/That of all pause it seemed to me indignant; And after it there came so long a train/Of people, that I ne’er would have believed/That ever Death so many had undone*” (Dante 2008:18). Faustus’ ultimate damnation at the end of the play—where he is dragged to Hell by devils—mirrors the fate of those trapped in the *Inferno*. His failure to repent and his refusal to turn back to God doom him to eternal punishment. Donne’s *Holy Sonnet IX* echoes this tension between sin, divine justice, and the hope for mercy, where he questions God’s judgment: “*If poisonous minerals, and if that tree, / Whose fruit threw death on else immortal us, / If lecherous goats, if serpents envious / Cannot be damned, alas, why should I be?*” (Donne 2015:326).

In Marlowe’s play, the tension between the possibility of repentance and the despair that paralyzes Faustus is a key theme. Said tension is embodied in the recurring appearances of the Good Angel and the Evil Angel, who represent the contrasting forces of divine grace and demonic temptation. The Good Angel implores Faustus to repent: “*Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee*” (Marlowe 2020:28). However, the Evil Angel counters with despair: “*Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee*” (Marlowe 2020:28) Such internal conflict reflects the medieval concern with the soul’s battle between hope and despair. In *De Imitatione Christi*, Kempis (1891:1952) emphasizes the significance of having faith in God’s mercy and avoiding

the surrender of oneself to despair, which he views as a sin in itself: *"Of two evils, always choose the lesser; for nothing is more evil than to be weary of bearing evil and to despair of improvement"* (*De Imitatione Christi, Book III, Chapter 12*). The conflict between despair and hope is also a key element in *Holy Sonnets*, where the poet fluctuates between a deep fear of damnation and a hopeful plea for God's grace. In *Holy Sonnet XIV*, Donne's desperate invocation to God to *"Batter my heart, three-person'd God"* (Donne 2015:328) showcases a comparable internal battle. The poet acknowledges his sinfulness and the overpowering influence of evil, but unlike Faustus, Donne's plea is for God's forceful intervention to break the hold of sin and save his soul.

The significance of Marlowe's depiction of the seven deadly sins in his play is of great value. In an endeavour to seal the deal with Mephistopheles and write the deed in blood, Faustus stabs his arm. The blood congeals and, as the devil briefly leaves to bring fire to loosen the blood and finalize the pact, Faustus becomes unsure of himself and the plan to sell his soul. The seven deadly sins are then introduced by Mephistopheles, Beelzebub, and Lucifer to distract Faustus from thinking about God and the divine salvation from which he has cut himself off. In their article on the portrayal of the seven deadly sins in Marlowe's *Faustus*, Russell and Clare Goldfarb (1970) write: *"[...] despite his involvement with the sins Faustus remains completely detached from them. He fails to identify with a single one of the sins, and thus we have the irony of a man corrupted by the seven sins failing to recognize his corruptors"* (Goldfarb & Goldfarb 1970:358). According to Russell and Clare Goldfarb (1970), Faustus' involvement with the seven deadly sins can be traced throughout the entire play (1970:355). Guilty of pride, as shown in his ambition to surpass the limits of human knowledge, the scholar's cravings for power, knowledge, and wealth also reflect greed. The protagonist's anger toward God, who limited human knowledge, is a display of his wrath, which leads him to be envious of God's omnipotence. Faustus' overindulgence in earthly pleasures makes him guilty of gluttony, and the inability to seek forgiveness and repent for his evil deeds is a representation of his sloth. The seventh deadly sin, that of lechery, was discussed by Sir Walter Wilson Greg (1946): *"[...] 'Helen' then is a 'spirit and in this play a spirit means a devil.' In making her his paramour Faustus commits the sin of demoniality, that is, bodily intercourse with demons"* (Greg 1946:106). Faustus' lustful nature reaches its climax when he asks Mephistopheles to conjure the spirit of Helen of Troy. In an attempt to find some form of immortality or fulfilment through her, he asks the spirit to *"[...] make me immortal with a kiss."* (Marlowe 2020:57) Although the interaction between his protagonist



and Helen sees Marlowe writing one of the most iconic scenes in the entire play: "*Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships, and burnt the topless towers of Ilium?*" (Marlowe 2020:57), it is deeply tragic, as it represents Faustus' final surrender to earthly desires. It further alienates him from any hope of redemption. While critics like Nicholas Kiessling emphasize pride as Faustus's ultimate sin which condemned him to his damnation (Kiessling 1975:210). Greg's (1946) analysis of the interaction between Faustus and Helen of Troy rests on the notion that the scholar's fate was sealed after committing demoniality with a devilish spirit which took the shape of the Trojan princess (1946:107).

Although repentance remains within reach, Faustus's tragic vice is his surrender to despair. His belief that he is beyond redemption mirrors the despair that Kempis warns against. Even as the clock runs out on his life, Faustus dithers between repentance and the belief that his soul is irredeemably lost: "*O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down? / See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! / One drop of blood will save me: O my Christ!*" (Marlowe 2020:61). Yet, Faustus's despair ultimately overpowers his desire for salvation, and he fails to seek forgiveness before his time runs out. This tragic inability to be penitent aligns with the medieval conviction that despair is the final barrier to God's mercy. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante examines the notion of despair in the figures of the damned, who are condemned to Hell because they lost hope in God's forgiveness. In *Canto V*, Dante meets Francesca da Rimini, whose despair and self-justification prevent her from repenting: "*There is no greater sorrow/Than to be mindful of the happy time/In misery, and that thy Teacher knows.*" (Dante 2008:35). Faustus, like Francesca, is trapped in a cycle of regret and despair. In line with medieval theology, these characters demonstrate that despair, especially in its rejection of God's grace, is a sin leading to eternal suffering. Donne, in *Holy Sonnet X*, directly confronts this fear of death and damnation with a defiant proclamation against despair: "*Death, be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so*" (Donne 2015:326). Donne's challenging the power of death reflects a deeper faith in the resurrection and the possibility of redemption, it contrasts Faustus's tragic resignation to damnation. Donne warns death against being proud and thus committing the very sin Faustus is guilty of. This usage of irony is an example of the confidence the poet has in his impending union with God, he does not let doubt get a hold of him, and unlike Faustus, evades grief.

Central to Marlowe's play is the exploration of free will and individual responsibility. Faustus's decision to make a pact with Mephistopheles is a clear exercise of free will, yet he

constantly struggles with the idea of predestination, wondering if his damnation is inevitable. Aquinas (1911/1981), in his *Summa*, argues that human beings possess free will, which allows them to choose between good and evil. He states: “*Man has free will: otherwise, counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards, and punishments would be in vain*” (*Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 83, Art. 1). Faustus’s fate rests on his continuous misuse of free will. He repeatedly chooses sin over seeking forgiveness, even when presented with clear opportunities to turn back to God. His wrongful employment of free will is key to understanding the notion of sin being a wilful act that leads to either salvation or damnation, depending on the choices made by the individual. Kempis (1891:1952) emphasizes the importance of choosing the path of humility and integrity; he warns that the wrong choices can lead to spiritual ruin: “*All men desire peace, but few indeed desire those things that make for peace*” (*De Imitatione Christi*, Book I, Chapter 6). Faustus, however, chooses the path of worldly power and knowledge, rather than the path of spiritual peace. His failure to exercise his free will in a way that aligns with divine law leads to his downfall, hence the medieval view that individuals are responsible for their own salvation or damnation is further underlined: “*Why should I die, then, or basely despair? I am resolv’d; Faustus shall not repent*” (*Marlowe 2020:29*). The theme of free will is explored in Donne’s *Holy Sonnets* as well, particularly in *Holy Sonnet XIX*, where the poet writes about his past sins and the choices he has made: “*Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one: / Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot / A constant habit; that when I would not / I change in vowes, and in devotione*” (*Donne 2015:331*). Donne’s acknowledgment of his own inconstancy and the internal struggle to align his will with divine law mirrors Faustus’s tragic misuse of free will. However, Donne’s ultimate plea for God’s grace, as seen in *Holy Sonnet XIV*: “*Batter my heart, three-person’d God*” (*Donne 2015:328*), draws attention to a key difference between the two: while Faustus’s despair leads him to eternal damnation, Donne’s repentance and submission to divine will offer a path to salvation.

Despite numerous opportunities to repent, Faustus remains tragically defiant. In *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas (1911:1981) gives prominence to the notion that true repentance must involve sincere remorse for sin and a firm resolve to amend one’s life: “*The act of the penitent is to detest his sin, and to propose to avoid it for the future*” (*Summa Theologica*, III, Q. 84, Art. 2). Faustus’s last-minute regret, expressed in his desperate cry: “*O God, if thou wilt not have mercy on my soul, / Yet for Christ’s sake whose blood hath ransomed me, / Impose some end to my incessant pain*” (*Marlowe 2020:61*), lacks the genuine contrition and resolve that

Aquinas describes as necessary for forgiveness. His inability to truly repent seals his fate, and he is dragged to Hell by demons. *The Divine Comedy* provides a similar view of the consequences of unrepented sin. The souls in Hell are those who failed to repent during their lifetime, and their punishments are eternal. In *Canto XXXIV*, Dante encounters Lucifer, the ultimate symbol of unrepented pride and rebellion against God: “*He wept from his six eyes, and down three chins / Trickled the teardrops and the bloody drivel*” (Dante 2008:233). Lucifer’s eternal suffering stems from his refusal to repent, and his weeping is an unavailing expression of sorrow that can no longer lead to redemption. Similarly, Faustus’s final cry of despair and his realization of his impending damnation come too late to change his fate. Analogously, in his *Holy Sonnets*, Donne struggles with the thoughts of his sins being greater than those of others. He fears that his sins may be too immense to be redeemed: “*For, if above all these, my sinnes abound, / 'Tis late to aske abundance of thy grace*” (Donne 2015:325). Although Donne prays for salvation, he’s anxious about the extent of his sins. He fears that, due to the lateness of his repentance, he may not be able to receive divine grace. Despite both Faustus and Donne doubting their chances of salvation and thinking their sins as too grand, Donne’s attitude differs greatly, which is evident in *Holy Sonnet XI*. About this sonnet Patrick Grant writes: “*But Donne does not simply want, [...], to join Christ. Rather he would like to replace Christ on the cross and make reparation by suffering, in person, for his own sins.*” (Grant 1971:543)

Donne’s deep connection to medieval spirituality is evident through his use of affective piety, a devotional practice that immerses the believer in the vivid imagery of Christ’s crucifixion. This medieval approach to devotion places the individual directly at the scene of the Passion, as seen in Donne’s sonnets, where his intense engagement with Christ’s suffering is evidence to his alignment with earlier spiritual traditions: “*Spit in my face, yee Jewes, and pierce my side*”. (Donne 2015:327)

#### 4. The Clash Between Scholasticism and Protestantism

In John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the clash between medieval scholasticism and Protestantism unfolds amidst the broader intellectual and religious shifts of the Renaissance, where long-held theological frameworks encounter new humanist and reformist ideas. Scholasticism, deeply rooted in the medieval intellectual tradition, sought to reconcile faith and reason through rigorous theological discourse, exemplified by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*. However, Protestantism rejected many scholastic methods, particularly the emphasis on human effort in achieving salvation, instead it drew attention to personal faith and the sufficiency of divine grace. (Stieger & Tröhler 2023:3) In *Doctor Faustus* and the *Holy Sonnets*, the clash stems from the tension between the medieval scholastic legacy and the Protestant Reformation's radical view of the divine-human relationship.

In *Doctor Faustus*, the protagonist epitomizes the Renaissance spirit of inquiry and ambition, but his turn to necromancy, when he rejects traditional scholastic disciplines, is evidence of a deeper discontent with the constraints of medieval scholasticism. Faustus, having mastered the established fields of learning, seeks power and knowledge beyond the limits of traditional theology. By turning away from divinity, a cornerstone of medieval scholasticism, Faustus reveals his contempt for the intellectual confines of his era and his ambition to surpass the limitations set by the Church. However, his quest for knowledge leads to his downfall, as his pact with the devil condemns him to eternal damnation. In this sense, Marlowe critiques the Renaissance's glorification of human potential. The author's critique is based on the notion that without the moral and spiritual foundation provided by scholasticism, such ambition can lead to spiritual ruin. Faustus's desire to transcend human knowledge and surpass God is an embodiment of the Renaissance humanist ideal of *homo mensura*—man as the measure of all things, however, Marlowe critiques this humanist ideal by illustrating the dangers of unchecked ambition. Faustus's fall serves as a cautionary tale about the limits of human knowledge and the consequences of rejecting the moral and spiritual constraints set by scholastic authors.

Faustus's tragic downfall also serves as a vessel for Protestant critiques of scholasticism's emphasis on rituals, penance, and sacraments as means to salvation. Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist and Lutheran forms, emphasized salvation through faith alone—*sola fide*—rejecting human efforts to earn divine favour. (Stieger & Tröhler 2023:1) The tension between Faustus's inability to repent, in opposition to the scholastic belief in repentance, are evidence

of the broad religious divide between medieval Catholicism and the rise of Protestantism. This theological conflict was not confined to the Protestant-Catholic split but was reflected in the evolving nature of Anglicanism. Ralph McMichael describes Anglicanism as being "*on the brink of an identity crisis*" caught between Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox influences (McMichael 2014:11). Doctor Faustus, therefore, engages not only with the Reformation's challenge to scholastic thought but also with the broader uncertainties surrounding shifting religious identities during the Renaissance.

Despite his intellectual brilliance, Faustus cannot repent, even when urged by the Good Angel and others to seek God's mercy. His famous line, "*O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?*" (Marlowe 2020:61), reveals his internal struggle between the desire for salvation and the despair that his soul is already lost. This theme of despair arises in Protestant theology from the belief that those predestined for damnation cannot change their fate. In contrast, medieval scholasticism represented by Aquinas emphasized human free will and the ability to choose between good and evil.

Similarly, in John Donne's Holy Sonnets, there is an intense engagement with sin, repentance, and salvation, but through a more introspective, Protestant lens. Donne's sonnets showcase the Protestant focus on individual faith and a personal relationship with God. In this way they mark a departure from the communal and ritualistic practices of medieval Catholicism. In Holy Sonnet XIV, Donne famously implores divine intervention in intensely physical and emotional terms: "*Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you / As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend; / That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend / Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.*" (Donne 2015:328) In acknowledging his spiritual weakness and pleading for God's intervention, Donne conveys the Protestant belief that salvation depends solely on divine grace, not on human effort or ecclesiastical mediation. His plea for God to actively intervene in his spiritual renewal aligns with Protestant theology's emphasis on grace and faith over works. Martin Luther writes, "*Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times*" (Luther 1522). Unlike Faustus, who is paralyzed by despair and the overwhelming sense of damnation, Donne presents a more hopeful vision rooted in the conviction that God's mercy and power can renew even the most sinful soul. Embedded in Protestant conviction is the notion of salvation being an unearned gift of grace—distinct from the scholastic emphasis on the necessity of human cooperation with divine will. John Calvin stresses this dependence on divine grace, writing: "*We say that faith justifies, not because it*

*merits for us righteousness by its own worth, but because it is the instrument by which we freely obtain the righteousness of Christ” (Calvin 1998:312).*

Despite the Protestant undertones in Donne’s sonnets, his work preserves elements of medieval scholasticism, particularly in its intellectual diligence and engagement with theological questions. Like Aquinas, Donne’s poetry shows an acute concern for balancing faith and reason. His meditation on the nature of sin and contrition in Holy Sonnet V, where he contemplates the dual corruption of body and soul, is in line with the scholastic method’s logical structure: *“I am a little world made cunningly / Of elements, and an angelic sprite; / But black sin hath betrayed to endless night / My world’s both parts, and oh both parts must die” (Donne 2015:324).* This metaphysical reflection is evidence to the enduring influence of scholastic thought, even as Donne embraces Protestant individualism.

Such duality of thought in Donne’s work is a product of the broader societal shifts of the Renaissance, where medieval traditions were adapted to fit the new intellectual and religious climate. As E.F. Jacob notes, *“The Renaissance in its early stages is deeply connected with the clerical and scholastic past” (Jacob 1931:227).* According to E.F. Jacob, rather than being a complete break from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance was characterized by a layered blending of old and new ideas. Hence, Donne’s *Holy Sonnets* capture the nuances of this period.

Both Donne’s and Marlowe’s works deal with the role that human agency has on salvation. This area of discussion is key to scholastic and Protestant theology alike. Faustus, despite numerous opportunities to repent, repeatedly chooses to remain in sin. Despite being urged by his peers to repent in front of a God who forgives all, Faustus fails at showing true contrition. There existing a chance for redemption after all that the protagonist has done is very much in line with scholastic ideas about human agency determining one’s spiritual fate. However, his damnation is also crucial to understanding the Protestant anxieties about predestination, which play a significant role through Faustus who appears to believe his fate is sealed. Marlowe, with Faustus, succeeds at portraying the duality and the uncertainty of his age through his masterful interweaving of scholastic ideas of human action being key for salvation and protestant notions of predestination.

Donne’s Holy Sonnets, while less focused on predestination, also engage with free will and individual responsibility for salvation. In Holy Sonnet XIX, Donne laments the inconstancy of his will: *“Oh, to vex me, contraryes meet in one: / Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot / A*

*constant habit" (Donne 2015:331). This struggle to align his will with divine law mirrors Faustus's inability to repent, though Donne ultimately expresses hope in God's grace, consistent with the Protestant belief in salvation through faith, not actions.*

While Marlowe's Faustus represents the dangers of Renaissance ambition and the rejection of scholasticism, Donne's Holy Sonnets illustrate the personal nature of Protestant spirituality, where the individual's relationship with God is paramount. Yet both works remain deeply connected to the medieval past as they engage with theological questions that occupied thinkers like Aquinas and the Protestant reformers like Calvin and Luther. Both Marlowe and Donne created their works under the influence of complex interplay between scholasticism and Protestantism during the Renaissance. The two authors stood at the crossroads where old ideas were to be reimagined in face of new intellectual and religious developments. They confronted the anxious actualities of the reality brought upon by the dawn of a new era.

## 5. Conclusion

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Donne's *Holy Sonnets* are examples of the authors' layered approach to the intellectual, theological, and cultural transformations of the Renaissance, while staying deeply connected to the medieval world. These works are often considered representative of Renaissance ideals, yet Donne and Marlowe also engage with enduring medieval concerns, particularly regarding sin, repentance, and human agency. Through the authors' innovative ways of confronting these themes, Marlowe and Donne explore the tension between the old and the new. They successfully prove that Renaissance thought did not entirely break away from the moral and theological foundations of the past. This lasting influence of medieval thinkers like Thomas Aquinas, mystics such as Thomas à Kempis, and even Dante's *Divine Comedy* is what came to shape much of the literature belonging to the period that preceded them, as is demonstrated in *Doctor Faustus* and *Holy Sonnets*.

In *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe presents a character whose tragic arc embodies both the aspirations and dangers of Renaissance humanism. Faustus, driven by an insatiable desire for power and knowledge, is a complete personification of the Renaissance confidence in individual potential. However, his eventual downfall reveals the perils of ambition and the consequences of rejecting spiritual humility. Faustus's fate stems not only from his lust for knowledge but also from his refusal to repent. This refusal brings to attention the ongoing relevance of medieval doctrines on pride and salvation, particularly as articulated by Aquinas. Aquinas's concept of *superbia* (pride) as a cardinal sin finds its epitome in Faustus, whose tragic end aligns with the medieval moral teaching that pride inevitably leads to downfall. Additionally, the influence of Dante's vision of eternal damnation in *Inferno* appears in the play's treatment of Faustus's soul, trapped in its own self-made hell. This fate recalls Dante's depiction of sinners who reject divine mercy. It reinforces the medieval perspective that repentance is essential for salvation. Through *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe critiques the Renaissance's break from medieval tradition. The author reminds his audiences that unchecked individualism, without moral accountability grounded in traditional theological doctrines, leads to inevitable ruin.



Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, while exploring similar themes, take a more personal and introspective approach. The speaker's internal struggles with sin, guilt, and divine grace are a reflection on the theological concerns of his time, particularly those emerging from the Protestant Reformation and the doctrines of figures like Martin Luther and John Calvin. Yet, his opinions on repentance and salvation are not limited to Protestantism's emphasis on faith alone (*sola fide*); they also draw from the medieval tradition of penitence, as outlined in works like Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*. Like Kempis, Donne focuses on the inner life, emphasizing the constant need for humility and contrition. Moreover, Donne's view of grace and salvation as recurring struggles are reminiscent of the Catholic spiritual journey. Such similarities align his work closely with Dante's *Purgatorio*, where the soul undergoes purification. In this way, Donne bridges the gap between the medieval and Renaissance worlds. He offers a more intimate portrayal of spiritual struggle that resonates with both medieval and Renaissance sensibilities.

Ultimately, both Marlowe and Donne reveal that the Renaissance was not simply about breaking away from the medieval world but about reinterpreting its teachings to address contemporary concerns. Despite ongoing debates about periodization of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and the influence of Jacob Burckhardt's view of the Renaissance as a clear break from the medieval period, scholars remain interested in how these two eras are interconnected. Marlowe and Donne offer a way to track the development of theological thought as it moved from the medieval period into the Reformation. Their works allow us to see how key religious notions shifted and evolved across these historical periods. The English Renaissance, influenced heavily by the Reformation, introduced new theological ideas, such as the Protestant rejection of works-based salvation in favor of faith alone which contrasts greatly with the Thomistic synthesis of faith and reason. However, despite the radical shifts brought by figures like Luther and Calvin, medieval theological concepts—especially those surrounding sin and grace—continued to resurface in Renaissance literature. In *Doctor Faustus* and the *Holy Sonnets*, we encounter works deeply engaged with evolving attitudes toward sin, grace, and human potential. These works draw from both medieval and Renaissance thought. Refusing to discard the past, Marlowe and Donne reimagine crucial concepts of Catholic theology and offer timeless insights into faith, redemption, and the human experience.

## 6. Abstract

The onset of renaissance in Europe is responsible for the birth of a plethora of ideas, concepts and movements. One of those being the Renaissance humanism movement which dramatically helped shift the worldview of the continent's people. Although this intellectual movement was embodied by the worldview centered on the nature and importance of humanity, the stern principles of the monastic idea "ora et labora", hailing from the preceding Middle Ages were, despite efforts of humanists, all but forgotten. Nevertheless, mentioning the emergence of new humanistic ideas regarding the relationship between the Catholic Church and the individual remains of great importance. The medieval commoner found in twelfth century Europe varies greatly to the one observed just some couple hundred years later in any land that had been struck by the reforms brought upon by the Renaissance. The god-fearing individual deprived of any trace of individualism in the Middle Ages had now become an increasingly educated and curious entity. His free will, once completely stripped by the serfdom to his earthly and heavenly lords, had now swollen with interest for newfound notions of individualism and anthropocentrism. The new values brought upon by the Renaissance influenced a great number of works which radiate with the mentioned concepts, but also some that continued to be shaped by the era that preceded them. Two authors that wore the influence of medieval thinkers on their sleeves are John Donne with *Holy Sonnets* and Christopher Marlowe with *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*. There works are prime examples of how the strict and religious medieval tradition continued to exist during the Renaissance, although now greatly altered under the influence of the period's evolving philosophical thought.

## 7. Sažetak

Početak renesanse u Europi doveo je do rađanja mnogih ideja, koncepata i pokreta. Jedan od tih pokreta bio je renesansni Humanizam, koji je značajno pridonio promjeni svjetonazora stanovnika europskoga kontinenta. Iako je ovaj intelektualni pokret naglašavao pogled na svijet okrenut prirodi i važnosti čovjeka, stroga načela monaškog gesla "ora et labora" (moli i radi), koja potječu iz srednjeg vijeka, unatoč naporima humanista, nisu bila posve zaboravljena. Ipak, važno je istaknuti pojavu novih humanističkih ideja, osobito u pogledu odnosa između Katoličke crkve i pojedinca.

Srednjovjekovni čovjek iz dvanaestog stoljeća uvelike se razlikuje od onoga kojeg možemo susresti samo nekoliko stoljeća kasnije u dobu kojeg su zahvatile renesansne reforme.

Bogobojzna osoba, lišena bilo kakvih tragova individualizma u srednjem vijeku, sada je postajala sve obrazovanija i znatiželjnija. Njezina slobodna volja, nekada posve potisnuta kroz kmetstvo prema njenim zemaljskim i nebeskim gospodarima, sada je rasla, zajedno s interesom za novootkrivene pojmove individualizma i antropocentrizma. Nove vrijednosti koje je donijela renesansa inspirirale su mnoga djela prožeta tim konceptima, ali i neka koja su nastavila upijati utjecaj razdoblja koje im je prethodilo.

Dva autora u čijim je djelima evidentan utjecaj srednjovjekovnih mislilaca su John Donne sa svojim Svetim Sonetima i Christopher Marlowe s djelom "*Tragična povijest života i smrti doktora Fausta*". Njihova su djela izvrstan primjer kako je stroga i religiozna srednjovjekovna tradicija opstala tijekom renesanse, premda sada blago izmijenjena pod utjecajem filozofskih razmišljanja toga razdoblja.

## KEYWORDS

Donne, Marlowe, Renaissance, individuality, religion, repentance, humanism, Protestantism, sin

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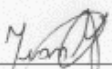
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