



## The Ideal of Renaissance period in English literature

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the main features of Renaissance period and the well known character of Christopher Marlowe who idealize the period. In the article, there is a whole description of periodic aim and its usage to describe the hero of the drama, Tamburlaine the Great.

### Keywords:

Renaissance, tragedy, ideal, Tamburlaine the Great, classical ideas, own style of art, symbol of strength

The Renaissance was a fervid period of European cultural, artistic, political and economic “rebirth” following the Middle Ages. This rebirth refers to a renewal of learning, especially in terms of new beliefs and ways of doing things differently from the Middle Ages. Characteristics of the Renaissance include a renewed interest in classical antiquity, a rise in humanist philosophy, a belief in self, human worth, and individual dignity and radical changes in ideas about religion, politics, and science.

Renaissance promoted the rediscovery of classical philosophy, literature and art. As well, during the 14th century, a cultural movement called humanism began to gain momentum in Italy. Among its many principles, humanism promoted the idea that puts the man in the center of the universe, and people should embrace human achievements in education, classical arts, literature and science. In 1450, the invention by Gutenberg allowed for improved communication throughout Europe and for ideas to spread more quickly.

As a result of creating printing press in communication, little-known texts from early humanist authors which promoted the renewal of traditional Greek and Roman culture and values, were printed and distributed to the masses.[7,p.165] Renaissance humanism was an ethical theory and practice that emphasized reason, scientific inquiry and human fulfillment in the natural world. Some of the greatest thinkers, authors, statesmen, scientists and artists in human history thrived during this era, while global exploration opened up new lands and cultures to European commerce. In this historical-cultural environment it was paid great attention to the knowledge, experience, emotions and feelings, adventures of a human as well as his scientific researches and they believed in different opportunities of a mankind. Though many Renaissance humanists remained religious, they believed God gave humans opportunities, and it was humanity's duty to do the best and most moral beings.[8] During this time, interest in classical antiquity and philosophy grew, with some Renaissance

thinkers using it as a way to revitalize their culture. They expanded and interpreted these classical ideas, creating their own style of art, philosophy and scientific inquiry. Some major developments of the Renaissance include developments in astronomy, humanist philosophy, the printing press, world exploration and changes in literature.

Renaissance literature was characterized by humanist themes and a return to classical ideals of tragedy and comedy. Christopher Marlowe is one of such great writers who supported the ideas and concepts of Renaissance period and described them in the characters of his dramatic works. He was among the most well-known playwrights called "University wits" and became the leader of them in a brief time. He began his initial creative activities as a translator of Greek masterpieces in his student years. After finishing master's degree in 1587, he devoted himself to the theatre and worked as an actor, at first, then as a playwright. He is noted especially for his establishment of dramatic blank verse. In a playwriting career that spanned little more than six years, Marlowe's achievements were diverse and splendid.

As an accomplished author, Marlowe had already revolutionized English literature. Several of his plays had enjoyed great success, setting the stage for the English Renaissance and opening the door for other poets and playwrights, most notably William Shakespeare. [1, p.36]

Marlowe's plays embodied the worldliness and creativity now associated with the Renaissance. His "Doctor Faustus" emphasized knowledge and learning over faith and belief. "Edward the Second" addressed the fate of ineffective rulers, while "The Jew of Malta" lampooned hypocritical clergymen. The success of these works lured other writers to the theater, including Shakespeare. In fact, Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" is believed to have been directly inspired by "The Jew of Malta." Additionally, "Edward the Second" is said to have influenced Shakespeare's cycle of history plays. In the end, Shakespeare may have been more prominent,

but the English Renaissance was deeply indebted to Marlowe.[5, p.192-193]

In all of the Marlowe's works it can be found the details and concepts of Renaissance and Humanism. Although he was in the family of shoemaker, due to his unrepeatable talent and hard work he managed to enter the most honorable British university, Cambridge. So, the characters created by him were the people who have strong willing to achieve their goals in spite of resistance by the society. Three characters: shepherd who would like to be the ruler of the world, Faust who wanted to know all the secrets of the ocean of knowledge and Barabas who would like to gain more wealth can be symbols of three superiority of life: strength, knowledge and money. they did not stop and did their best to achieve their goals. Although Tamburlaine, Faust and Barabas used different things to get what they want, they can be the men who can imaged the Ideal of the period.[3, p.51-53] Nevertheless, in the image of eastern proud, Tamburlaine, Idealism of Renaissance is described more clear rather than others. With the publishing of "Tamburlaine the Great", he received recognition, acclaim and playwriting became his major concern in the few years that lay ahead. Both parts of Tamburlaine were published anonymously in 1590, and the publisher omitted certain passages that he found incongruous with the play's serious concern with history. It appears that actually Marlowe intended to write only the first part, summing up the work with marriage of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate and his making "truce with all the world". But, the fame brought by the first part encouraged Marlowe to continue the story to the death of Tamburlaine.

In the drama, Marlowe described Tamburlaine as self-confident and strong enough to overcome any obstacles. However, main character of the tragedy really differentiates the historical Tamburlaine who we know. Although in the work Marlowe tried to follow artistic texture, strong determination, gifted talent, high potential and diligence of the

main character match with the historical and real one.

In the masterpiece Persian general Menaphon described the appearance of Tamburlaine to the king Cosroe as following:

*Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,  
Like his desire, lift upward and divine;  
So large of limbs, his joints so straightly knit,  
Such breath of shoulders as might mainly bear  
Old Atlas burden...  
His arms and fingers long and sinewy,  
Betokening valor and excess of strength -  
In every part proportioned like the man  
Should make the world subdued to  
Tamburlaine. [2, p.16]*

In the initial part of the tragedy, main character is imaged as physical and mental ideal man. In the most difficult situations or battles he was not defeated and did not panic. Every time he wins through well-thought-out eloquence and leadership skills. Despite these, CH.Marlowe does not idealize Tamburlaine's image. It is clear that at that time Amir Temur was considered in Europe as the bloody 14th-century conqueror of Central Asia and India and a man avid for power and luxury and the possession of beauty.[6, p.196] In the former part, Tamburlaine shows himself as "mightfull sword of God" and fights against unfairness, oppression by punishing and dethroning ignorant kings unworthy of the throne. Therefore, the final part concluded with following words of Tamburlaine the great: "Emperors and kings lie breathless at my feet".[3,p.61]

The I part is influenced by humanitarian ideas, and a strong sense of confidence in his capabilities while In part II Tamburlaine's conquests are further extended. Whenever he fights in a battle, he must win, even when his last illness is upon him.[6, p.76] But Zenocrate dies, and their three sons provide a manifestly imperfect means for ensuring the preservation of his wide dominions. He kills Calyphas, one of these sons, when he refuses to follow his father

into battle. When for a moment he has no immediate opponent on earth, he dreams of leading his army against the powers of heaven, though at other times he glories in seeing himself as "the scourge of God"; he burns the Qur'ān, for he will have no intermediary between God and himself, and there is a hint of doubt whether even God is to be granted recognition. Certainly Marlowe feels sympathy with his hero, giving him magnificent verse to speak, delighting in his dreams of power and of the possession of beauty, as seen in the following of Tamburlaine's lines:

*Nature, that fram'd us of four elements  
Warring within our breasts for regiment,  
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:  
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend  
The wondrous architecture of the world,  
And measure every wandering planet's course,  
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,  
And always moving as the restless spheres,  
Will us to wear ourselves and never rest,  
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,  
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,  
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown  
[2,p.187]*

But, especially in part II, there are other strains: the hero can be absurd in his continual striving for more demonstrations of his power; his cruelty, which is extreme, becomes sickening; his human weakness is increasingly underlined, most notably in the onset of his fatal illness immediately after his arrogant burning of the Qur'ān. In this early play Marlowe already shows the ability to view a tragic hero from more than one angle, achieving a simultaneous vision of grandeur and impotence.

To sum up, Christopher Marlowe tried to express the Renaissance ideas from the main character's perspective. So as to manage this, he create the ideal of Renaissance period in English literature who could achieve becoming

the ruler from the position of shepherd through hard work, intelligence and bravery.

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