

# Knowledge, Hubris, and Ethics in *Dr. Faustus*: Lessons from Islamic Thought

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<p>Received: 18 Aug 2025;                      Received in revised form: 20 Sep 2025;                      Accepted: 24 Sep 2025;                      Available online: 28 Sep 2025</p> <p>©2025 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/</a>).</p> <p><b>Keywords— Doctor Faustus, Ethics of Knowledge, Islamic Thought, Tragedy</b></p>	<p><i>This study aims to read this dramatic text through an ethical framework of knowledge, drawing upon interpretations from the Islamic intellectual tradition and beyond. The play presents epistemic growth not as an unqualified virtue but as a double-edged weapon: Faustus's pursuit of ultimate perfection and absolute power ultimately leads him to ruin, for he overlooks that no end can be achieved without submission to divine will and acknowledgment of human limitations. By comparing this with the Islamic conception of knowledge as inherently tied to morality, responsibility, and piety, the analysis highlights both convergences and divergences in the transformation of knowledge – from mere contemplation to articulated discourse, and vice versa. The study also emphasizes the Sufi perspective, as seen in the works of al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī, which stresses the ethical and spiritual boundaries of knowledge. Moreover, the Qur’ānic narrative, particularly Sūrat al-Fajr, is examined as a textual entry point affirming the ethical limits of human knowledge. In this way, the research underscores how literary texts, when read alongside religious thought, can provide renewed intellectual insights and critical approaches to the interplay between knowledge and ethics.</i></p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

In Christopher Marlowe's immortal tragedy, "Dr. Faustus", the resplendent figures of Renaissance humanism blend with the spiritual anxieties of Europe across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet, Marlowe's play, in which the protagonist fausts in his effort to attain omniscience and cries despairingly at the solipsism of hell, is surprisingly silent about the thoughts of a different, older tradition, deeply alienated from the West: Islam.

The Renaissance conversion, which Faustus brings about in his effort to comprehend the universe entirely, rests upon a radical distance, a dualism of subject and substance—or, to use a Kantian term, a gulf between the epistemic and the phenomenal—that

is every bit a Western, and therefore Christian, construct. The unmoved mover of Averroes, which the Arab Philosopher-Faust Defoe encounters in the very opening of "Fear of Knowledge", is a philosophically—or simply a latently—Islamic figure.

Such unmoved movers, of the universe or of souls, are certainly nowhere to be found in either rival version of Western Christianity—namely, the neo-platonic version, which is gentler to Faustus, and the biblically fundamentalist, musically more maddening version, voiced by Marlowe's Christian monks. It would conceivably be the task of the Arab creature's Reason, in once more raising a philosophical bulwark against the baubles of divinity and technology, also to ally with Charity and Faith against the more lethal

assaults of the unquiet Western Trinity: deadly Knowledge, mad Loves, and Impious Hate.

Faustus, unfortunately, does not answer this novel question of "The Legend of the Treatment of Knowledge and Thought in Islam", whether metaphysically or merely inventively.

On the other hand, Islam itself has known various Phantoms of Faith—brilliant wings of the trance world unanchored in the phenomenological block world of the kosmos—which have scuttled through its various stations of earthly life, troubling a range of scholars and mystics with dreams of prelapsarian union amidst the pain and suffering of worldly exile.

Visionary journeys, intellectual adventures, and beautiful chains of poetic thoughts enlacing God through Faith have all been, from the early centuries after the Hijra, at the eye of the storm. A boundless sea of wildest speculative and mystical visions—many deeply divine and inspired—was thus stirred up, some shaded by the doctrines of Plotinus, Aristotle, the Neoplatonists, and the Greek commentators available in Arabic only to one who possessed Faustus' complete self-transformation in addition to a profoundly brilliant intellect—*jiwa mutarabba*, "a well-trained soul", entirely devoted to ceaseless prayer, profound meditation, sound moral character, and sincere penitence, such character being, according to al-Ghazali, irreplaceably more eligible than splendid intelligence, however brilliant.

### 1.1. Background and Significance

The quest for knowledge has been a central theme in the human experience. From the earliest days of civilization, humans have sought to understand the world around them, to experiment with and manipulate nature, and to explore the depths of their own minds. However, this thirst for knowledge has often been accompanied by cautionary tales, warnings about the consequences of hubris and unchecked ambition. These themes recur time and again in the world's great religious and philosophical traditions.

One such tale is Christopher Marlowe's play, *Doctor Faustus*, in which a brilliant scholar, seeking ever more power and understanding, turns to necromancy as a means of acquiring greater knowledge. Faustus gains access to wondrous powers through his pact with the devil, but ultimately is undone by his own overreaching ambition. This play

raises crucial philosophical and theological questions regarding the ethics of knowledge, the moral limits of the quest for understanding, and the inherent risks and responsibilities of the search for knowledge. These questions are rendered especially compelling by the ways in which Faustus and his knowledge-seeking path parallel that of modern science and technology.

A set of theological-philosophical views and values—distinguished here as the Islamic ethos of knowledge—is extracted from the founding texts and traditions of Islam and then applied to the case of Marlowe's Faustus. The specific conceptions of knowledge critiqued in Faustus are shown to parallel those in Islam that are considered to be distortion or misapprehension of the nature of knowledge and, therefore, the quest for knowledge. Also addressed is the point that the Faustian pact with the devil (traditional or modern) becomes conceivable not out of ignorance of its dangers and consequences but precisely as a result of insubordinate design of seeking greater (contrastive) knowledge and power. The questioning and pursuit of knowledge is a natural endowment and a God-given responsibility. However, knowledge bearing this ethical corpus is distinct from knowledge devoid of such concomitant moral and spiritual dimensions. Central to the Islamic ethos of knowledge is the conviction that knowledge belongs to God and that knowledge and religion are inextricably tied together.

### 1.2. Purpose and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this research is to provide an ethical perspective on analyses of "Doctor Faustus" and the implications of knowledge acquisition. The story of "Doctor Faustus" indicates the ethical parameters of knowledge that underpin true knowledge attainment. The significance of the analysis is enhanced from the values, concepts, and principles exhibited in Islam regarding the morality of human intellect.

As the stake of such knowledge is great, the moral aspects of knowledge acquisition are rendered within this argument. The framework by which Islamic principles have been integrated with moral parameters on knowledge undercurrent within the literary work of Marlowe will be assessed as political and theistic. In this context, religious affiliation manifests applied knowledge in accordance with the

desire of one's God. An opposing virtue consists in the use of such knowledge against divinity's will or God's necessity, thereby leading to evil results.

The social and political dimensions accentuate power acquisition, acquisition rivalry, and supernatural arrangements regarding political authority, matters of evil, resistance, deception, and corruption. It is essential to theistic knowledge that knowledge attainment is no longer in the hand of its acquisition. Within the real counterpart of knowledge, human creatures became solely tracked by it along interminable stations. Whether the knowledge to which Faustus and man at large have been betaking themselves is the true or its mere semblance remains an important obligation for reason.

Out of all these endeavors, this research sustains one focal question regarding the delinquent of both Faustus's and the whole man's pursuit of knowledge: to what extent the knowledge acquired by man's choice is achievable and how much of it is beyond man's will and control? Western epistemology has suggested a binary position regarding divine and human knowledge acting as a surplus of causated proportions that need to be counterrepresented. Such a view has been intended in the early perspective of theology and the Absolute drawn by St. Augustine and was held till the apex of West school of theocracy was blown with the Reformation.

Of Marlowe's counterparts, such separation results in Faustus's inquisitorial paradigms of necromantic and hermetic sciences. Within such a backdrop, Marlowe accommodates the crises of divine and human labor, chance, agency, and certainty, thereby placing two paradigmatic groups at one pole theism yielding demi-nature and World-soul's allegories of moral order and corporeality, harmony, sense, beauty, light, geometry, dualism, but at the other ranging prevailing knowledge and culture of medieval Christianity.

## II. THE LEGEND OF FAUST: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The story of Dr. Faustus can be viewed as an archetypal tale of humankind's quest for limitless knowledge. The day that Faustus sold his soul to the devil seems a moment of tragic irreversibility, codifying a move from ignorance to all-knowingness, from innocent to hyper-sophisticated being. In the

Reckoning, however, Faustus learns this knowledge is not his to bequeath to the world. Though the Devil's bargain was informed by Faustus's insatiable hunger for knowledge, the Covenant is grounded in the mythic tale of its futility. The Faustus we inherit cannot aspire to be the universal sage. Most importantly, however, at its core, Faustus cannot claim sovereignty over the sacred creative pursuit of knowledge and learning; it cannot hold god/al in disrepute with the covenant of the Devil. With its insatiable hunger, Faustus cannot steady the divine source and unending fount of Knowledge in its paltry human chrysalis.

This study recounts the archetypal Faustus tale, its underlying mythic structure, and elucidates Abrahamic perspectives that underpin Faustus' unthinkable, tragic knowledge that terrifies it. Drawing on the Naqshbandi legacy of tasawuf, an understanding of God/deity as Allah, experience of which is epistemologically and ontologically efficacious, but which spaces Faustus in an abyss is proposed. This "Eclipse of God" vision dispels the human shadow and creative wonder as ma'rifa or knowledge is born from an eternal, rhythmic Sound, which breathes words of knowing to the Immanent Holy Void. The human soul flickers in the Sun of this Living Knowledge but is trapped by the Devil's device in a dimension of objectively knowing forms which distort and deny knowledge's genesis in Death and Nothingness, silencing its Promethean Voice.

Hampered by the epistemological conditions of empirical adequacy and certainty, Faustus graduates into the realm of Aristotle's Aeternal Fallacy. In ever-warring pursuit of its shattered remembrance and prophetic beginnings, the thousand knowledge fields azure beyond the Universe dome are darkly construed as divine Beacons. In such spaces, bright moons attentive, celestial bodies hum the Divine Science, a prophetic intimacy yielding a thousand wondrous arts of knowing, craft and creation - a return unto God through knowledge, death and silence. Fearing mortal obliteration, Faustus steadfastly consults the Devil, sealing its tragic Pact. Heliacal phantoms and illusory founts avail infinite secondary visions, worlds enchant with ocular effects of heavenly wonders and cause, but Faustus broods.

The Faustus tragedy is borne of a Chiasmus, where the end is the Beginning, Heracleitic teeth are

led through time-stretching cycles Law and Jesu  
dolour, Matter, Empiricism, Colonies, Mechanism and  
Instruments of War, culminating verily in the fiendish  
fragility and ruin of mechanistic Knowledge, Nature  
and the Presence. Yet, the moons forgot their Glories,  
bound in steel crystals whence replicate their auroral  
forms in shattered Whispers. Knowledge abandoned  
its sidewalk, considered solely in ciphers, stones  
inherent to Mare, constructing layers of ethereal,  
vibrant Words in remembrance of vibrant, divine  
Names - firm realities of shadows collapsed in frozen  
images, their sepulchral prayers silenced in the  
latitudes of iron, glass and soil.

### 2.1. Historical Origins and Development

In its various forms, the Faust theme has fascinated and moved gifted poets, playwrights, and composers of music for over four hundred years. What is it, however, that has fired so many minds and hearts? Why did the Faust legend attract the greatest genius in all of European literature, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; the most gigantic dramatic imagination of the modern theatre, Christopher Marlowe; the great French moralist and lyric poet, Paul Valéry; and the two greatest composers of lyrical and musical drama since the Golden Age of Greece, Charles Gounod and Hector Berlioz? Why did so many writers of lesser stature, together with painters and sculptors, treat the subject, and still continue to elicit the interest of pseudo-scientists and pseudo-philosophers who slowly vacillate on the "moral" of the miracle? Why has the Faust legend been, and is, an obsession with many artists so recondite as to be esoteric? In short, what was it about Faust that lent itself, or was forced, to so many conflicting interpretations? Concerning Faust's major theme, the bondage and liberation of the mind, the knowable and the unknowable, consciousness is so deeply immersed in contradictions that no document, musical or literary, is coherent regarding Faust's character.

It is not in the least surprising that ideas of Faust have changed with the changing world. Initially, for the Middle Ages, the mind was satanically possessed by the very spirit of the Church. Thus, Faust's questing mind was absolutely negative. Since trailblazers were anonymous, it is impossible to state how and when Faust was first liberated from the bondage of the "Faustian Act." Only in the seventeenth century does Faust begin to be a collective-heroic

allegory as destiny played out mind's liberation so eulogized by a subsequent generation of poets. The remystifying trends of Baroque thinkers once again performed an alchemistic transformation by making Faust the Betzite and manipulating one of Faust's heroic descendants, Auerbach (Fausit), into being a Sorcerer-Devil. Only in the early nineteenth century was Faust reidentified and once again remystified, with Goethe's genius lending Petrarch to Faust.

With still more changing temporalities, Faust has adapted to modernity's mechanization by imparting writerly will to Faust. Faust's heroism has either been demonized by a secular materialistic society or has become Quixotic in postmodern discourse. With a privileged experience of mechanical modernity, Muslims' mystifications of Faust have articulated modern ambivalence toward Westernization.

### 2.2. Key Themes and Motifs

At the intersection of the myth of Faust and the debate over the limits of knowledge, the story of Faust has inspired a remarkable range of thoughts on the finer points of what it means to know, who may know, and which forms of knowledge are indispensable or ethically problematic. Faust's circumstances would seem exquisite in their particularity: a scholar who has attained the highest degrees from the universities of Erfurt, Leipzig, and Wittenberg, Faust has become disillusioned with the futility of her studies. Religion and theology have become intolerable to her. She is fed up with philosophy, logic, and natural sciences, and dismisses them as unreliable, arrogant, and vacuous. Above all, she is weary of medicine, which seeks to cure the corporeal at the expense of the soul, and thus misses the most vital organs of the human being. In her thirst for knowledge, Faust is still mindful of the barriers to it, which no amount of rationality can surpass: "Must then what we over all fear—/Beheld from a higher sphere—/A nothing be to the eyes divine?—/Bah! Would be like a lost child/Of Man all know, all Cosmos all paralysed!"

On such a psychological terrain, Faust strikes a pact with the devil, exchanging her soul for immeasurable knowledge and worldly success, though she is ironically punished for her hubris with eternal symptomatology: she is rendered all-knowing, but an uncomplaining statue of stone, as God dumps

upon her the sum of all knowledge and infinite wisdom. Faust becomes the central card in a game between heaven and hell, and her misadventures become cautionary tales. Acquiring the knowledge of good and evil, Faust becomes like god; failing to assume God-like omniscience, she falls like Lucifer into inextricable bondage ("Sacred Science"). Faust's protests at her subjugation ultimately gain her release from hell.

There are also significant variations to the Judith's curse: in Calderón's play, her ancestors rise up against her and the knowledge-seeking Fausto vanishes into thin air. In Schoenberg's delectable "Moses und Aron," the knowledge-seeking Aron is cursed by the heavens. In Milton's "Paradise Lost", Eve is blinded by knowledge. The Faust-Stoff inspires its narrators to apprehend how knowledge creates algebraic language barriers that blind the knower to the full nature of her knowing. Beyond Freudian Oedipus/Antigone quarrels at the founding of the institution of knowledge, Faust in her quest imagines and encounters the patriarchs themselves: god, knowledge, gynecology, devils, angels, nature, sorcery, death, redemption, terra damnata, a loving god.

### III. DR. FAUSTUS BY CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Considered one of the greatest Elizabethan dramas and influential works of literature, "Dr. Faustus" by Christopher Marlowe remains an unparalleled representation of the Renaissance spirit and a cautionary tale of knowledge and its dangerous pursuit. This essay aims to provide a critical analysis of the play, emphasizing the plot summary, character analysis, and themes and symbolism.

At the heart of the play is Faust's struggle with the acquisition of knowledge, his ambition to exceed the limits of knowledge, and the consequences posed by the illicit nature of knowledge and power. Inspired by the late Medieval legend of a learned man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for necromantic power, the protagonist is a renowned scholar disillusioned with the limits of classical and religious knowledge, who seeks forbidden knowledge through a pact with Mephistopheles. Drawing from the backdrop of the Renaissance, which is characterized as the dawning of modernity, an interest in the natural

sciences and the mechanistic view of the universe, and a growing independence of reason from theology, the play explores the possibilities and dangers of knowledge, faith and inquiry, and passion and duty. Illuminating insights from the Islamic perspective of knowledge should enrich the analysis of the play in its representation of knowledge.

"Dr. Faustus" tells the story of a disillusioned scholar by this name, who questions the limits of knowledge. With ambitions that outrun its scope, Faustus moves from one field of study to another until finally abandoning them for magic! Surmising that necromancy would provide the satisfaction of his "desire in a fierce" (II.i.31), Faustus makes a pact with the devil through his familiar spirit Mephistopheles and ultimately sells his soul to Lucifer in exchange for twenty-four years of necromantic power. The pact enables Faustus to conjure Mephistopheles, the agony of which highlights the horror of damnation and Faust's susceptibility to it, reiterating the biblical warning not to dabble with the forbidden. Nevertheless, Faustus pursues lustful knowledge and gratification by defying the limits imposed by God. In a parody of God's creative word, Faustus commands Mephistopheles to send him in the style of a Cardinal backdrop of the Renaissance, a puppet-show which resembles that of God's omnipotent providence. When Faustus's desire is granted, he henceforth occupies the novel position of the demiurge striving to know and control the cosmos.

Life after the pact does not turn out to be the desired fulfillment of Faustus's longing. The necromantic power is desolated. Enslaved by Mephistopheles, Faustus finds himself no longer capable of unworldly or mortal amusements and pursuits. Incurring unlimited powers, the more Faustus obtains where the cynical knowledge is mixed with euphoric insight into the unknowability of God, the faster he falls from the flesh to the spirit to non-being. Blinded by insatiable desire and lust, he is insidiously stripped away of God, faith, love, and knowledge to the point of grotesque helplessness. As described in II. ii-iii, Faustus, searching vainly for happiness and satisfaction, becomes the omniscient godlike spirit of time and space, the mocker deriding the Church and the creed, the wretched shadow, the routine conjuror, and finally the madman terrorized by the loss of his reason.

### 3.1. Plot Summary

Christopher Marlowe's "The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus" is a tragedy based on the Faust legend of a man who makes a pact with the devil for knowledge and the ability to work magic. It follows the story of Faustus, a highly educated scholar in Wittenberg, Germany, who grows dissatisfied with the limitations of traditional forms of learning. Spurning the arts and the sciences, Faustus seeks knowledge of the dark magical arts, raising the devil Mephistopheles through a diabolical incantation. He conjures him into the study, and they engage in a philosophical debate surrounding Hell and Faustus's quest for knowledge.

After much deliberation, Faustus strikes a pact with the devil: Faustus sells his soul for twenty-four years of power over the Earth and the service of Mephistopheles. He studies necromancy and magic and begins engaging in some impressive magical feats. Nevertheless, Faustus is tormented by doubts about the pact, often expressing shame and regrets over what he has done. He attempts to repent, pleading for mercy, and wants to reconcile with Heaven, while Mephistopheles warns that given Faustus's knowledge of God's power, he cannot be saved.

Faustus summons Helen of Troy, a mythological figure associated with beauty and desire, believing she represents the ultimate knowledge of beauty. The Good and Evil Angels' intervention proves futile as Faustus is drawn deeper into the abyss, becoming a mere puppet dancing to the Devil's tune. During the last hour of the twenty-four years, Faustus wrestles with his conscience, coming to believe death appears inevitable, and finds himself damned because of the pact. Fear sets in as he contemplates the horrific consequences and wants God's pardon, but it proves to be too late.

The play closes with Faustus shouting curses at eternal damnation: 'I'll leap 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... O soul, be changed into little water-drops, and fall into the ocean. Ne'er be found! ... Why erring, Faustus? Where is it now?' He is most likely dragged to Hell by demons.

### 3.2. Character Analysis

A study of the characters in "Dr. Faustus" reveals a dichotomy between its two principal figures,

Faustus and Mephistopheles. Faustus, a man once great and learned in many systems of thought, allows his fierce ambition for knowledge to overwhelm his conception of truth. His hubris compels him to see the limitlessness of knowledge only in terms of its potential for power; he rushes, therefore, to a dark pact in order to reorganize the world according to his own will.

Mephistopheles, by contrast, is a fallen angel who has been granted access to Faustus by Lucifer because of the man's incalculable hubris. What is great about him in terms of power is also most desperate; to avoid hell, he offers Faustus the very thing which will doom Faustus to it – knowledge used to advance the will above truth and goodness. He willingly, if bitterly, plays the role of tempter, seducer, and ultimately jailer. As a co-creator of this hellish relationship, his cries of futility and despair echo Faustus' own utterances even as they are hurled blindly against the man who has, paradoxically, the most insight into his condition.

Faustus is never depicted onstage in a state of exaltation; rather, he is shown in reflection after having sought forbidden knowledge and gained power over lesser spirits. This power, however, does not lead to satisfaction. More than any other character, Faustus bends the action of the play to his own will and the action is caught in this bend. Every attempt to articulate, either verbally or conceptually, his self and its desired end ends in painful contradiction; to possess what he desires, traces of its loss must be foreseen, and desire fails before what it so desperately craves. He thus suffers the irony of attaining what he himself has devalued. The grandeur and impossible contradictions of Faustus' vision of self and God's relationship to it mark him as the tragic figure of the play; moreover, through his vision, deeper problems relating to truth's certainty, God's goodness and concern for man, and the illimitability of knowledge fall under scrutiny.

### 3.3. Themes and Symbolism

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, a tragic dramatization of the Faust legend, is, amongst other things, an exploration of the ethics of knowledge. The idealist humanist Renaissance scholar Faustus chooses the desperate, doomed route of occult pursuits, inquiring into the dark knowledge of necromancy, demonology, and black magic.

Faustus's hubris leads him to invade God's province of knowledge through an uneasy pact with the archfiend Lucifer, executed in an extravagant comic signing ceremony in blood with a pair of new spectacles. Faustus's sin is that of radical, absolute knowledge, to transpose the nature of God and man. He comes to see knowledge itself as knowledge of man's role and power in God's creation. Eluding the Christian image of man as humble and pious, Faustus takes on the Semitic image of man as transcendent, creating and ransacking all knowledge for the services of beast and monster. Cosmology, astrology, aeronautics, telephony, sculpture, painting, poetry, and the charms of Helen of Troy are all rendered into tricks of grandeur and pride before Divine Justice, who sees through Faustus's wretchedness. Man of the Renaissance, Faustus transcends the medieval servitude of awareness with its blindnesses and theologies to self-consciousness, son of God, like Lucifer, attempting to usurp God's omniscience, eternity, and all-knowingness. Otherwise, the binding binaries, heaven and hell, life and death, body and soul, ravel with pathetic human energy gone ludicrous, a series of malapropisms made comic, tragic, ridiculous. The epicurean skepticism and materialism of the Renaissance and classics plead for the silencing of this dangerously jealous God in sins of heresy. Doctor Faustus as black comedy is a blossoming; amoralist, atheist horror; Faustus's fate is buried in God's voiceless Wisdom, mystery, and malevolence.

This humanist Doctor Faustus is condemned by God, representative of nothingness, beast, and repetition. Theological scaffolding held within domineering boundaries of fact awakes God's omniscience, eternal time-tide, memorial auroral time in foolishness and ludicrousness, like a great waxing and waning joke riding the cosmic coils of the vast exempt emptiness before grasping the humankind of discovery with the fool's gold of knowledge impossible and blindness inexorable. Doctor Faustus places irrational patriarchal knowledge before the viewer, seducing sympathy at the man's attempts to transcend human vanity and blindness. In other words, Marlowe's Doctor Faustus has dramatic coherence and thematic insight into the knowledge of God and transcendental dread as divine wrath and human wretchedness, outside of the scopic coalescing

of the tragedy gruesome, male or benign. The son of Repertoire Theater's Faust, in the words of Edgar, was "a recreation of the man" on the stage of the mock mirthfulness of the "pure animal".

Renaissance, reformation, incarnation awaken the eternal Dasein into the hand of barren white without God, knowledge, and interpretation. For within depthlessness, co-creatable and conflating as a meaningless index to right knowledge's motionless, fathomlessness, reason's vast, void, "all there is". Perceived as such, this God is surely artificial and ugly. Man is a vehicle of Mind, using it as "Its solely artificial" thought-object and sight turned unto itself as formless being beyond time, Nature, immobile. Hence, human sin is frightfully imminent and omnipotent; in derelict, dumb ignorance, this dark god is ever present, numbing knowledge, sight, and the whole nature.

#### IV. ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON KNOWLEDGE AND ETHICS

The juxtaposition of Dr. Faustus' quest for knowledge and insights from Islamic philosophy invites reflection on the ethics of knowledge. Faustus embodies the pursuit of knowledge without limits, while Islamic thinkers grapple with the ethics, limits, and purpose of different types of knowledge.

Faustus, a disillusioned scholar of theology, turns to necromancy, yearning for absolute knowledge and power. Dr. Faustus accepts the Faustian bargain with the devil, the demon Mephistopheles. Their ensuing interactions, oscillating between Faustus' thirst for knowledge and Mephistopheles' evasive answers, expose the futility of Faustus' quest. He vacillates between hope and despair, driven by fear of death and damnation, as he realizes the knowledge gained is unearthly and destructive. He recognizes the omnipotent God as the ultimate knower, pleading for repentance and grace, but Mephistopheles instills hopelessness. Thus, Faustus, a tragic figure, embodies the ethics of knowledge gone awry, while his tragic flaw, hubris, spurs contemplation of the ethics of knowledge.

In Islamic thought, scientists are revered as the "knowers of God." Knowledge is viewed as good. Knowledge lies at the intersection of the visible and non-visible realms, the human experience, and the Divine essence. Knowledge emerges from God's

being, subject to different interpretations by humans. Prophetic knowledge is considered by the Qur'an as the unfolding of primordial knowledge. Divine knowledge is beyond any epistemology; other types of knowledge lie in the penumbra of the Divine. Knowledge is revealed and "given," and is indissociable from ethics. Knowing God brings submission to His will. Knowledge is power, dominion, and stewardship; without faith, it becomes tyranny and wrongdoing. Knowledge is considered the horizon of a person's being. The epistemic horizon becomes narrow with either a lack of knowledge or blindly following others. The Qur'an challenges human hubris, asking "what do you know?" Humanity knows so little. By upholding a position of rational arrogance, Faustus becomes a paragon of tragic hubris, a false knower who ends in sin and suffering.

#### 4.1. Concepts of Knowledge in Islam

At the heart of Islamic beliefs is the Qur'an, the ultimate source of guidance for the individual and the community. Comprised of words of God in Arabic, eloquently delivered by the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an was revealed to him in a span of twenty-three years and continues to be preserved by many through diligent memorization. The Qur'an addresses various aspects of human life, including the past, present, and future, with direct relevance to diverse personal and social needs. Many consider the Qur'an as the treasure of the last revelation, complemented by an unbreakable chain of transmission from Muhammad to the current times. Such beliefs instill confidence that the Qur'an is free from mistranslations and later interpolations. Still, its meaning remains complex within Arab culture and richly deepened by the interpretations of greatest Muslim scholars over fourteen centuries. Considered to be the miracle of miracles, the Qur'an offers wisdom equal to the highest peaks of human intellect. In response to the supreme challenge of the Qur'an itself (i.e., to produce a word similar to it), many Muslims cite the opinions of non-Muslim scholars speculating why unlettered Muhammad had such a remarkable literary proficiency.

Though believers continue to explore the depths of the Qur'an, the simple yet powerful message of tawhid remains: only God is worthy of worship, and no other deity deserves the name of God. Those

who blaspheme this core verse and falsely stigmatize tawhid as terrorism, extremism, or radicalism are chastised by a broader examination of Islamic history and unblemished peace-loving endeavors of recent exemplars. Contemplating the tremendous success and survival of Islam offers a glimpse into unimaginable prophetic wisdom and transcendental nur, for Islam can be described best as a way of life through an all-encompassing approach. The Qur'anic perspective of concern for knowledge inspired life-long learning pursuits, development of sciences, construction of libraries, and enmity for ignorance.

To ensure that knowledge accumulated is ethical, pure, and beneficial, knowledge in Islam is geopolitically categorized into 'ilm: that is beneficial and that is not beneficial, also denoting knowledge that elevates (ilm al-nafi') and that which debases (ilm al-gharsi). Accordingly, a similar distinction is made regarding the heart: that which purifies (tazkiyat al-qalb) and that which corrupts (tawassat al-qalb). The consequences of both types of knowledge and heart for personal life, social life, temporal life, and afterlife are widely publicized via long-standing Qur'anic verses.

#### 4.2. Ethical Frameworks in Islamic Thought

Ethics, or moral philosophy, is the branch of philosophy concerned with questions about the moral significance of human choice and the criteria by which human choices can be judged and found right or good. The English term "ethics" is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means "character," "disposition," "trait," "moral nature," "custom," or "habit." Another Greek term, "morals," refers to "mores" or "habits," in the plural. Hence, ethics has often been understood as "the study of habits." The term is used broadly to denote values, morals, principles, rules, norms, or standards of personal or social behavior that regulate the conduct of human society.

Although utilitarian ethics has recently been on the rise, at least in middle and upper classes, it is said that the Hebrew ethical code in the Old Testament, which began with the Decalogue (The Ten Commandments) in Exodus 20:1-17, has seriously influenced Western ethical thought. This code was not anthropocentric but Theocentric. Ethics, therefore, was first conceived as the regulation of human affairs by the worship of one God, Yahweh, and by adherence to His commands, so that the vices of

idolatry, homicide, theft, and adultery were particularly punished. Such a historical background would show that Islam's ethical code as recorded in its Decalogue in the Qur'an would not have been quite alien to Western societies. The monotheistic ethical conception might be more or less similar due to their common propagation and development from a common source, West Semitic Yahwism.

The Arabic term "akhlaq," which refers to morality in a broad sense, is rationally and etymologically derived from khalaqa (to create), khalaq (creation), makhluq (creature), and khulq (nature). Moral existence being determined by reason and the personality of the agent was attested both in pre-Islamic Arabia and in the Qur'an. However, waywardness, extravagance, or al-jahiliyyah in a broad sense might be due to the absence of such a refined moral nature. Such a moral nature is deemed to generate a similar standard of moral judgment as such. Here is noted a universal anthropological standpoint of morality that suggests an absolute ethical code common to mankind irrespective of cultural differences.

## V. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: FAUSTIAN QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE VS ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

Christopher Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" tells the story of an individual's dissatisfaction with the conventional pursuits of knowledge. These aspects provide a critical examination of the ethical and moral dilemmas that arise from relentless pursuits of knowledge in the field of natural philosophy and the magical arts, with insightful perspectives by diverse Muslim scholars. The themes explored by Marlowe in "Dr. Faustus" and an Islamic perspective offer ethical reflections, which parallel the moral challenges faced by Mephistopheles in pondering the consequences of his actions and the hardships of being on either side of the equation of knowledge, thus culminating in the search for equilibrium and the notion of divine contentment.

The desire for knowledge pervades the religious, moral, and ethical aspects of existence. Marlowe's Dr. Faustus is representative of the Faustian quest for knowledge, conflating the epistemological quandaries of existence with the moral and ethical dilemma of knowledge and power.

Faustus, an inspired scholar yearning for arcane knowledge, emerges as a Romantic hero in quest of the cumulation of all knowledge known to mankind, thus violating the natural boundary of man's existence. This understanding of existence as a tensioned equilibrium is paralleled in the Quranic conception of existence as the manifestation of Divine attributes, either in the absence of ecstatic knowledge of God or the overabundance of such knowledge which incidentally claims the Immutable Divine Being or the cosmos itself.

The scholarly contemplations of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and al-Ghazali provide insight into these questions of being and knowledge, drawing upon the ancients and Plato's Parmenides, Timaeus, and the Republic. The similarity between Dr. Faustus and Iblis is the nature of their knowledge, which is contingent on the attitude and intention of the knower. Iblis, but unlike Dr. Faustus, serves as a heuristic function, providing an interesting avenue to contemplate the ethical and moral dilemmas arising from either extremes. Similar to either side of the Faustian narrative, one either ponders the consequence of their action in hope for salvation or solemnly accepts the punishment, thus abating of knowledge and projecting the moral challenges of being eternally damned for the ultimate truth.

### 5.1. Similarities and Differences

In examining paradigms of the Faustian quest, the current analysis shall proceed with a brief comparative analysis of Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (c. 1592, 1594) and the Islamic conception of knowledge through both similarities and profound differences.

The Dr. Faustus of English Renaissance literature is a tragic and moral play of the Faustian quest embodying the innate desires to attain knowledge, power, and transgression against God via the Memento Mori concept. The daemonic transgression is denoted in the scene where Faustus disdainfully rejects godly knowledge, 'Divinity adieu! These metaphysics of magicians and necromantic books are heavenly!' After the Memento Mori moment, Faustus discards his imperfection, and religion believes knowledge could perfect him. This belief becomes the tragic flaw resulting in consequent hubristic acts, profligacy, and quixotic strife to save his soul. Torn between the symbiotic desires, this

tragic Hamlet-like view even at the very last moment do not repent. Flawlessly impious, Faustus further assigns damning attributes to God, purity 'Thou art too horrible to look on,' ('Hell is a place... Where I reprieve from the fount of eternal love') in reactions to worldly curses.

Dr. Faustus' pact of selling his soul to Lucifer in return for godlike transgression via infinite knowledge echoes the temptation of Adam, the terrestrial triptych of knowledge, doubt, and temptation transcending the heavenly angelical hierarchy. In Islamic perspective, the conception of knowledge is Islamic quintessence denoting recognition and faith veneration with many mentions in the Quran. Islamic conception thus contemplates Haqiqat (Truth), Ain al-haqq al-mahfuuz (Archangel Record), noesis (intellectual assimilation), revelation between God and Prophet Muhammad as the primary source of knowledge, and Alim-i-lahai (Divine Knowledge). Herein, knowledge is perpetually resolute, God-ordained angelical mahaqeeqdaar (truth) by preconditioned guidelines, different from Faustus' hubristic flawed epistemic deduction uttering 'But what of knowledge – what is knowledge – knowledge?'. Faustus consummates worldly tumults wrought by alien alternative discursive assumptions of worldly notions and attributes to epistemic uncertainty, agnostic questioning the inability to comprehend regarding God's omniscient hypotheses.

In Islamic munificent narrative imaginative patterns, transmigrating choice deeds between the figure of choice and terror is firmly exodus. The oneness of existence Mother of Book quintessence being eulogized to unveil the pedigradial chain as the cone of existence foundation and the quintessence being molded or maj-dud (known corpus) onwards contingent designs, unfolded into sonorous rhythmic lyrical compositions through the concept of tajalli (derivation to mankind of Godly Knowledge), Godly aesthetics eulogizations of Asma al-husna, angels with their divine attributes, the rushdi transmissions of hawd of closeness light in seraphic vistas ontic comprehension of closeness to God, i.e. representation. Further depicting inspired foreshadowing circadian horrifying secrets unveiling the hubristic fleeting imprecations loss of Memento Mori scorns maj-dud of finitude human constraints.

Herein, the haunting language dilemma, quotidian ambiguity designates the ambiguous metaphoric everlasting agonize struggle of constant atrocious portrayal of angelic hope and soul-sick taunts between the earthly strides disappearing of celestial eikons as prisms slipped between heaven and hell, Muslim and non-Muslim, sanity and insanity, ascension and apathy.

## 5.2. Ethical Implications

On the surface, both Faustus' character and the mū'taqidān philosopher share a similar attentiveness to the instant potentialities and proximate poverties of knowledge and its ways. But there is a crucial difference with respect to close study of knowledge which is self-knowing. Faustus offers the closer study of experience when he offers it in payment for the second sight in its futures of unwisdom and unfoolishness in Dr. Faustus. On the contrary, the philosopher mū'taqidān teaches the learning and studied devotion of the faculty of intelligence, to address that knowledge which is knowledge of one's self. In this, he looks beyond the humanities in the Aristotelian sense, and the partialities of the knowledge those look upon. In this, the apostle of the ghayb or unuqt comports with the philosopher mū'taqidān. The reports of the knights are very much written on such close study of knowledge.

There is also a parallel in the character of Knowledge and the unorthodox voicing of it. Faustus' character voices a reason extensive in humanities, but on the shores along which the closeness to knowledge is offered there are voices outside of this reason. On the side of the mū'taqidānian philosopher, the unorthodoxy is seen in the notion of the realities of knowledge, that knowledge is the knower. On the apart side, the Faustus character cannot abide there. Hence in act four, he must play upon these notions of realities and never utter them plainly and nakedly. Only in quasi-rhetoric to the mirror upon which the learning and knowing devices may gaze, and know its other than these. And knowing is a mere stretching of a point of focus of the knowing places of knower and known mankind? These rancid fables bend the art out of joint but teach keenly.

## VI. CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES

Case studies and examples illustrate the ethical implications of knowledge acquisition and use. They highlight the consequences of pursuing knowledge without moral compasses, the potential for knowledge to be used for good or ill, and the importance of self-knowledge and humility in the pursuit of knowledge. Well-known figures from history, literature, and popular culture provide potent illustrations of Faustian bargains, the price of knowledge, and the ethical dimensions of knowledge in diverse contexts.

### 6.1. Historical Figures and Texts

At the outset, the book examines the story of the prophet Solomon and the jinn Iblis from a moral perspective. Solomon initially possesses the mysterious power to communicate with animals, a gift bestowed by God. However, a jinn known as the "Ruwer" (Sahro) cannot outsmart Solomon. As retribution, the jinn deceives Solomon into losing his power and reluctance for believing in God. Solomon is humiliated, made to forget the "Divine Names" and control his kingdom through sorcery. He ultimately remembers God and learns the secrets of his kingdom's language. Eventually, Solomon defeats the jinn. Despite their first confrontation being moral, it eventually becomes immoral. The epic chronicles the tension between God's soldiers and His foes – angels against jinn. Solomon is blamed for resorting to sorcery and forced to pay for his knowledge by losing his state and wavering faith. This narrative highlights the price of knowledge, predominantly victor's underestimation of loss of the desire to forgive.

Similarly, the Greco-Roman myth of Prometheus shares a parallel argument. While providing mankind with knowledge, Prometheus' attempt to outsmart Zeus leads to his torment; the titan is punished through the act of "parakoe," his hearsay knowledge of the Divine's pronouncements. Through the myth, mankind learns self-knowledge. Payback is in the form of suffering and the knowledge that mortals remain far from omniscience. Unlike the scriptural response to knowledge, Western myth also implies the resentment of imperfection. Mankind ought to know and figure out hope as the only solace amid distress.

### 6.2. Contemporary Relevance

Through the case studies, "the becoming of man" through knowledge that binds or liberates – makes familiar and inspires the sympathy of knowing the relation to mortality – are germs of a tragedy and comedy (or comedy-of-manners) genres. The modern Faust's tragedy includes the quest of longing for progress through knowing nature and/or humanity's divine self but risking gaining knowledge of blasphemy degree.

Contemporary relevance is considered through proactive cases of Faustian bargains. The ethical implications, dilemmas, and unintended consequences of offering a Faustian bargain in return for knowledge are explored through quick three scenarios. They involve dealing with physical harm, academic dishonesty, a pact with the devil for knowledge, using knowledge for unethical or illegal means, and a defense of negative knowledge of impotence or its absence in a Faustian bargain deal.

### 6.1. Historical Figures and Texts

Medieval Islam produced several figures who are of interest to the study of Faustus: Ibn al-Haytham (965-1039), al-Ghazali (1058-1111), the great philosopher, scientist, and mystical theologian of medieval Islam, and Ibn al-Rushd or Averroes (1126-1198), the towering commentator on Aristotle, philosopher, and historian of ideas whose works become the basis for the rebirth of philosophy in the Latin West in the thirteenth century. With the aid of Latin translations of these texts, Faustus could have avoided the fate that befell him in the Christian version of the tale. In the Arabic retelling of the Faustus story, published in the thirteenth century and rejected by Christian censors, a Faustus-like figure refuses to abandon philosophy for magic and is rewarded with a long life, literary fame, and occasional miracles such as intercession with rulers on behalf of his people. Faustus's great ambition, the thirst for knowledge of nature, is here identified with combining philosophy and poetry.

A more complex engagement with Islamic texts and philosophical questions surrounding the ethics of knowledge is found in Milton's early prose works, "Of Reformation" and "Of Education." A lively debate in the West began in the twelfth century with translations of parts of Sufism, astrology, and philosophy. Aristotle was finally translated in the thirteenth century. Spinoza wrote his "Tractatus

Theologico-Politicus" in response to the early seventeenth-century heresy trials in Paris and Amsterdam, and fierce Christian attacks on taqiyya (dissimulation) in Islamic thought. The fifteenth-century "Guillaumen" is quite spectacular. Discussed here are ways to study detective stories in particular historical settings, like Faustus, within a wide spectrum of genres. Following the Florentine historian Vespasiano da Bisticci, consider comparing Faustus with false saints in hagiography, charlatans in impious lives, tricksters in folklore, magic-stagings in art, and the Transformed Christian as performer-of-salvation in moralities.

## 6.2. Contemporary Relevance

An increasing number of modern-day Fausts can be found across the world. Many academics, governing bodies, innovators, and governments have the power to make Faustian bargains with the help of science and technology. Likewise, many of the same are dancing on the point of infinite knowledge for infinite power and infinite gain without responsibility or accountability. Grand schemes and projects based on materialism, the scientific method, and secularism are designed and implemented. On the stock markets outside the New York Exchange, vast sums of fictitious capital are used as betting chips to wager fortunes for windfall speculative gains. These processes take place with a disregard for the impact they have on humanity, the Earth, and the environment at large. Illusionary marketing reports on profit margins, bottom lines, housing bubbles, and jobless recoveries are bandied about by experts and economists peddling "truths" derived from models and projections that treat rational agents and transactional behaviour as the filtering and controlling factors suiting their purposes. There is little introspection on the consequences, if any, of this march of progress.

With the rise of capitalism, the social function and responsibility of knowledge was usurped by the imperatives of narrow interest. Recognition and the embrace of the shortcomings of the classical Greco-Arab-Islamic understanding of knowledges and knowledge systems hold immediate relevance in terms of coping with the epistemological, ethical, social, environmental, political, and economic consequences of works of humans; namely, the codes of conduct stipulating scientific method and acts of

inquiry, the social responsibility of knowledge, and the ethics and politics of geography. The archetypal Faust that Firdausi painted in the first cultural confrontation of the Islamic civilization with the model of the Greco-Arab-Islamic knowledge system through the actions of Avicenna inspired the design and prologue of the tragic tale told by Marlowe and Goethe, and also, implicitly, the transmutations of the archetype into socio-political Fausts that learned governors and ruling establishments ought not to replicate if they are wary of the Fate greeted by their predecessors.

The ethical implications or moral worth of these processes that pivot on rationality, reason, knowledge, and wisdom were left unexplored. Left untouched, however, is the ethos or spirit of knowledge and the conceptual panorama that governed the design, structure, functioning, and models of these systems. So too, there is no exploration of the implications of the traditional knowledge systems or impulses to the contemporary Fausts and users of the scientific method in coping with the triumph of delinquent unreason.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHICS AND EDUCATION

The narrative of Dr. Faustus, a tragic play by Christopher Marlowe, raises critical philosophical and ethical concerns regarding the acquisition and pursuit of knowledge. The protagonist's hubris, ambition, and subsequent Faustian bargain with Mephistopheles invite scrutiny into the morality of knowledge and wisdom. While knowledge acquisition is celebrated in most cultures, it is paradoxically perceived as a curse in others. A thorough contemplation of Faustus' tragedy urges deeper contemplation of this moral paradox. Ethical breaches stemming from the Western scholarly tradition and the mode of knowledge pursuit, together with the underlying epistemological and ontological notions, require attention.

Faustus is an archetype of modernity, whose tragic dimension is realized through the elements of the Renaissance that shaped European thought but were excessively disproportionate, irrational, and tyrannical. Faustus discontented with an attainable degree/quality of knowledge and "doing nothing." Mirroring Victor Frankenstein's overreaching ambition and mismatch motivation in relation to

knowledge, Faustus opts for an absolute power in knowledge for recognition, dominion, and "in glory," ultimately mutating into a necromancer lunatic reminiscent of Dr. Jekyll's tragic addiction to research-prompted performance in "narcotism." The parallel with Voracious B. Frog, consumed with insatiate appetite for knowledge by which he was transformed into mindless prey of evil "Phyllis," resonates with Faustus' character transformation into unholy pretense for knowledge by vile spirits: Fulgus.

The epistemological monopoly of the Latin tradition is reminiscent of Faustus' misguided approach to knowledge. The play represents a curious scholarly curiosity, odd juxtaposition of esoteric knowledge and banal trivialities, sorcery and silliness. Revolting and monstrous apparition of evil spirits as highly knowledgeable beings calls for consideration of malicious mutation in prudent scholarly tradition as the victims of Faustian bargain transcend the threshold of sanity. Indistinguishable and undifferentiated objects of curiosity and fantasy reminiscent of epistemic tradition in Umma inscribed in the Qur'an, mustering sacred knowledge in some magical threshold of eternity, and Dionysiac symposiums, the pursuit of knowledge takes bizarre terrible idiocy in the wake of monstrous aberrations devouring reason and heart of the Victorian age.

More than a thematic moral concern, Faustus is an allegorical insight into the cultural, epistemological, and ontological underpinnings of Ethical Dilemmas in the Personal Pursuit of Knowledge. A search for the source of evil spirits haunting Faustus pinpointing knowledge deranged is the inquiry into moral predicaments of knowledge and questioning the ethical tradition of the Latin intellectual legacy in consideration. In principio erat Verbum, and the Word was God, focuses on the cohesive notion of "Word." *Ḥiqmah*, وإذا قيل لهم اتبعوا ما وَاذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، and Al-Baqarah: 38, 38 and 65 are broadly inquiring the ethical dimension of knowledge pursuit highlighting epistemic incapacity of epicurean and hedonistic wisdom.

### 7.1. Ethical Dilemmas in Pursuit of Knowledge

Like countless other intellectuals and cultural figures throughout history, the scholarly protagonist of Christopher Marlowe's cautionary tale, "Dr. Faustus", indulges in the most grandiose ambitions before coming face to face with the consequences of

his hubris. Dr. Faustus craves and pursues the highest knowledge in broader and more powerful forms than human experience can provide, carelessly ignoring both established and revelatory encouragements to restrain his grasping desires. He engages in a Faustian bargain, trading his soul to a devil serving a tyrant god, only to discover that the vast powers he yearns for are trappings of servility and self-consumption amidst a tormenting despair. Despite centuries of leadership by Muslims after the advent of Islam, Faustus and others like him are never found to attempt the foundations, avenues, or means for a dream of knowledge and access to the kind of power he pursues. Islamic still-vibrant interactions between revelation and reason may allow for non-straightforward reinterpretations of either the myth or the story of Faustus, his knowledge and power, wish and despair, sin and redemption. These attempts at the reweaving of myth and history may further reveal a central ethical dilemma of knowledge acquisition deliberative on implications still being vacuously and carelessly ignored.

Dr. Faustus spends years in intensive study and scholarly pursuits, conquering all knowledge of human disciplines. Yet when Faustus grows frustrated with the limitations of this highest form of knowledge, he attempts further mastery of the supernatural with its more powerful, broader and absolute forms of knowledge. This step leads Faustus into an ultimate abyss of despair from the consummation of sin past which there is no turning back, as in Etienne Gilson's depiction of the tragedy. Faustus summoning and entering a deal with the devil is a consummate illustration of the abuse of free will. Sacrificing Faustus' eternal soul yields the price of worldly sovereign powers and boundless knowledge in bodies of ethical, ontological, and epistemological senses. Thereafter follows years of busy scholarly pursuit in such wish fulfillment with the utmost conscientious consideration, attempts and efforts, during which a number of guilt-rousing ethical dilemmas arise. In the drama and in the epistemology of the wondrous pact, knowledge takes on the character of unrelieved personal spiritual burden.

### 7.2. Educational Strategies for Ethical Knowledge Acquisition

The narrative of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, from his glorious ascent to his tragic downfall, serves as a reality check for anyone enamored by the

overpromise of knowledge, power, and wealth. Structurally following the theme of hubris in classical tragedy, Dr. Faustus draws on the myth of Faust from German folklore, adapting it to the Elizabethan context and tension between Christianity and nascent science. During the Renaissance, humanists rather than medieval scholastics were scholars, and classical antiquity was regarded as a gold standard for knowledge and life. In pursuit of the highest form of knowledge, Faust adopts a humanist's broad approach, consolidating his study of traditionally liberal arts with the then-modern arts and sciences, only to feel unsatisfied at the limits of humanistic knowledge.

Prompting dissatisfaction with being human is, ironically, a temptation—an ethical dilemma in evading the limits of being human. Trained in medieval Christianity, Faustus is aware of the ramifications of making a pact with the devil and the condition of damnation. In a hyperbolic manner, he takes it all, only to be rewarded with an Ethics 101 experience, "Unpack the consequences of your knowledge and power." Faustus profits from such knowledge, exploiting demons' service through superior learning and commanding them to interpret knowledge for his own benefit. His subsequent exploitation of power becomes a moral hazard of 'playing God,' summoning Helen of Troy and instigating religious rivalry via prophetic knowledge against the Pope and Charles V. Darin retrospectively condemns Faustus and Freud as hubristic misdeeds that dismiss ethical responsibilities embedded in the nature and use of knowledge. Education ought to instill an ethical dilemma amid the quest for the prohibited "what, if" knowledge; as taught by Iblis, the price of "what, if" knowledge is "but the naught," the neck of Eve and the fall of Adam.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The study explored the ethical implications of the quest for knowledge, using Christopher Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" as a central focus and drawing insights from Islamic perspectives on knowledge. Faustus's pursuit of forbidden knowledge through a pact with Mephistopheles raised profound questions about the consequences of overreaching ambition and the responsibility that accompanies knowledge. The analysis examined Faustus's internal

conflict, his alienation from humanity, and ultimately his tragic downfall as a cautionary tale about the moral limits of knowledge.

In parallel, the Islamic conception of knowledge, rooted in the Qur'an and Sunna, provided an alternative ethical framework. The Arabic term "Ilm," encompassing knowledge of both the material and spiritual aspects, was distinguished from the purely analytical approach of Greek philosophical tradition. The ethical perspective of knowledge in Islam emphasized sincerity, recognition of the Creator, and a God-given covenant of knowledge. This ethical framework was deeply tied to the post-scriptural modern period of knowledge, where commoditized knowledge and neoliberal economic forces were critiqued.

In conclusion, the discussions on "Dr. Faustus" and the Islamic conception of knowledge illuminated the ethical limits and responsibilities of knowledge. The cautionary tale of "Dr. Faustus" served as a prayer for humanity, imploring a return to its symbolic source. The complexity and multiplicity of the world of knowledge, along with the wealth of hidden meanings and symbolisms, called for an ethics of wisdom and interpretation, rather than a simplistic ethics of prohibition. This deeper conception of the ethical, while avoiding both utopias and dystopias, invitations and threats, allowed humanity to engage critically and responsibly with knowledge. The ethical limit of knowledge in Islam avoided both fanaticism and transhumanism, acknowledging the possibilities as well as the impossibilities and boundaries of knowledge. Future research should explore a deeper comparative analysis of knowledge and ethics, incorporating the Christian and Western traditions, alongside the rich Palestinian and Islamic philosophical tradition.

### 8.1. Summary of Key Findings

Focusing on the struggles of ambition and desire for knowledge, Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus presents a riveting encounter between one man and the overwhelming forces of science, art, imperial pride, skepticism, and religion, which would prove so perplexing and ultimately regrettable for the age in which it was written. Written in the crucible of the Reformation, Renaissance secularism, and the Scientific Revolution undertaken on the shoulders of giants—Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and more—

Faustus personifies that precarious position of learnedness in the West. An avid scholar of the natural sciences and subjected to the wish for even greater knowledge felt by all educated men, Faustus takes up necromancy – even as nativist devils who oppose his elevation are drawn to him and the world of hell alongside the promise of newfound power. He both gains and is eventually repulsed by this power in equal measure.

One ascends to the god-likeness of a Promethean scientist, flaring the ire of heaven while gloating over pathetic pauper-plebs amazed by anything of wondrous beauty or cleverness, after which this totally pregnant longing is unceremoniously discharged like fireworks in a thunderstorm. Ultimately trod fat-oily down by the heft of the unimpeachably material mortal coil, Faustus' despair mingles with the flames of hell. Following accusations of the Catholic Church with the diversion of knowledge and throne power of Jesus the offer to avert this joke fails, a tragic truism. In the smoky embers of 'scholar' and 'piper' with humor both ironic and bitter is the reminder of generations of desperate humility, innocence, ignorance, even stupidity. Contented with the illumination of medieval religion while adamant fossil remnants of snuffed-out gods remain, the wells of pagan martyred hope dead. It is into this milieu that the contemporary yawp of Helvetius toward liberty and the 'science of desire' must be given preliminary and prologue context.

More than a threat to churches, this equation of right and obligation with might unveils the fatal synergy of ignorance with tyranny, crass 'scientific' doctrines of 'Druids' and 'savages' instantly quickened to life by learned men at Oxford and Paris, who eagerly 'proved' to perverted minds that subservience to their power was the 'natural' state of all inferior 'races.' This ironically sordid chapter of the desire for knowledge bespeaks pitiful rapidity with which 'scholar' scorns feast or reverence due, rushing past a much more sterile deification and desire of the singular to eternal 'glory' or 'fame' to be seared in the hearts and minds of the eternal infinite darkness that is the 'universe.'

In innocence such thirst innocently seeks aesthetic joys now thought antiquated, wishing to nourish the fervors out of which the philosophy of

Plato bloomed; to draw a gulf betwixt spirit and letter, come what may, and deny nothing, however evil or desolate, either heartless infinity or dead void, ah!

## 8.2. Recommendations for Future Research

The exploration of the ethical concerns surrounding the quest for knowledge and insight into the consequences of excessive ambition and desire for power, as presented through the perspectives of both Marlowe's Dr. Faustus and Islamic scholars, offers a unique viewpoint on familiar material. There is tremendous scholarly potential to broaden the scope of exploration to enrich the understanding of this topic even further.

The comparison of the myths surrounding Dr. Faustus within Protestant and Islamic cultures represents an excellent opportunity to integrate a cultural aspect into the exploration of Marlowe's play while providing an interesting viewpoint. Considering the similar quest for knowledge pertinent to man and his relationship with God, the difference in the mythic outcome paints a revealing portrait of the respective cultures. The Protestant desire for legitimacy in the quest for scientific inquiry and concern about its consequences is apparent, while a more even-handed approach is seen in the Islamic retelling of the tragedy.

In addition to comparing variants of the Dr. Faustus myth, it might also be interesting to focus on the overarching concern over knowledge found in both Muslim and Judeo-Christian traditions. The tale of the Fall from Paradise, as told in the Book of Genesis and a significant core of Islamic teachings and literature, centers on man's quest for knowledge and the dire consequences. It is this base concern about knowledge that not only makes Marlowe's play compatible with Islamic literature but also highlights its universal nature.

Both after receiving knowledge, man's powers are mitigated by ignorance, and visions of God ultimately illuminate the incompleteness of man's knowledge. The negative portrayal of knowledge within both traditions is apparent and current. A thoughtful exploration of this topic, layering other relevant concerns, such as the clash between reason and faith, feminist views of knowledge, and even the perspective of the modern scientific pursuit of knowledge, would produce a

rewarding exposition on an important subject pitting religion against science and technology.

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