

**THE IDEA OF INTERNALIZATION IN HAMLET:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE IN LITERATURE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Based on a previous sociological theory of knowledge reconstructed from Max Weber's writings, the main purpose of this paper is to analyze how knowledge is possible in literature and how the process of creation of ideas works through some sociological concepts. We define knowledge as an attempt of stating something true about reality, requiring two different elements: a *semantic context* and a *positive interpretation*. Following different Shakespearean scholars, the concepts were applied to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in order to demonstrate the constitution of the idea of internalization, expressed by the main character Prince Hamlet. In order to grasp the idea, the *semantic context* was divided in three different and interconnected levels. The English and Elizabethan theater's background, the context of the play and its influences and, finally, the proper constitution of the idea of internalization, viewed as a product of a *positive interpretation* made by Shakespeare himself because of his own dramaturgic development. We concluded that the *referent* of the "internalization's" hardcore was the emotional, existential, or psychological state of the loss of the meaning of the world, caused by a religious. crises, i.e., the catholic worldview declined and the Protestantism worldview upraise.

**KEYWORDS:** Elizabethan Theater, Sociology of Knowledge, Sociology of Literature, Shakespeare