

In the history of English literature, the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods are both referred to as The Age of Shakespeare. This epoch is known as the Golden Age of Literature. It runs from Elizabeths accession in 1558 to James Is death in 1625. It was a time of both reflection and action. It was a period notable for the unprecedented development of art, literature, and drama. John Milton calls England, during this age, as a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Lets see the main characteristics of this age. Political Peace and StabilityElizabeth brilliantly framed and followed a policy of moderation and balance both inside and outside the country. With Scotland, a workable compromise was reached. The rebellious northern barons were subdued. As a result, she may be able to bring peace to traditionally troubled border areas. capable administration. Social DevelopmentIt was a time of great social satisfaction. Thousands of people were employed as industrial towns grew rapidly. The expansion of trade and commerce enriched England. The wealthy were taxed in order to help the poor. This created a conducive environment for literary activities. Religious ToleranceIt was a time of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Upon her accession, she discovered a nation divided against itself. The north was predominantly Protestant. Scotland was a fervent supporter of the Reformation. Ireland adhered to its traditional religion. Elizabeth was the one who made the Anglican Church a reality. Anglicanism was a sort of middle ground between Catholicism and Protestantism. The Church was accepted by both Protestants and Catholics. The Queens policy of religious tolerance influenced all Englishmen, who were united in a magnificent national enthusiasm. The mind of man, now free from religious fears and persecutions, turned with a great creative impulse to other forms of activity. An atmosphere of all-pervading religious peace gave a great stimulus to literary activity. READ ALSO: Renaissance Meaning in EnglishSense and Feeling of Patriotism. Queen Elizabeth loved England ardently and she made her court one of the most brilliant courts in Europe. The splendour of her court dazzled the eyes of the people. Her moderate policies did much to increase her popularity and prestige. Worship of the Virgin Queen became the order of the day. She was Spensers Gloriana, Raleighs Cynthia, and Shakespeares fair vestal throned by the West. Even the foreigners saw in her a keen calculating intellect that baffled the ablest statesmen in Europe. Elizabeth inspired all her people with the unbounded patriotism which finds a voice in the Faery Queen. Under her administration, the English national life progressed faster not by slow historical and evolutionary process. English literature reached the very highest point of literary development during her period. Discovery, Exploration and Expansion This is the most remarkable epoch for the expansion of both mental and geographical horizons. It was an age of great thought and great action. It is an age that appeals to the eye, the imagination and the intellect. New knowledge was pouring in from all directions. The great voyagers like Hawkins, Frobisher, Raleigh and Drake brought home both material and intellectual treasures from the East and the West. The spirit of adventure and exploration fired the imagination of writers. dramatic literature. Drama progresses in an era of action and not of speculation. It has rightly been called the age of the discovery of the new world and of man. Influence of Foreign FashionsThe Elizabethans were captivated by Italy, the birthplace of the Renaissance. Everyone wanted to go to Italy and stay for a while. People admired not only Italian books and literature, but also Italian manners and morals. As a result of imitating Italian classics, English literature was greatly enriched. Contradictions. It was an age of light and darkness, of reason and of foolishness, of hope and of despair. The barbarity and backwardness, the ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages still persisted. Disorder, violence, bloodshed and tavern brawls still prevailed. Highway robberies, as mentioned in Henry IV, Part I, were very common. The barbarity of the age is seen in such brutal sports as bear-baiting, cock and bullfighting, to which numerous references are found in the plays of Shakespeare. Despite the advancement of science and learning people still believed in superstitions, ghosts, witches, fairies, charms and omens of all sorts. Despite great refinement and learning, it was a time of simple morals. People were unconcerned about high moral and just principles. Bribery and international delays in the administration of justice were common ills. Material advancement was the primary goal of men in positions of power, whether by fair or foul means. Almost no public man of this era had a perfectly clean hands. In spite of the ignorance and superstition, violence and brutality, easy morals and lax values, Elizabethan Age was an age in which men lived very much, thought intensely and wrote strongly. Difference between Jacobean Drama and Elizabethan bramas and the dramatic worksthat were created and performed during this era are known as Elizabethan drama. The Elizabethan era compares several renowned and well known dramatic works byrenowned dramatists. The major and significant playwrights of the period were (1564-1606) and Greene (1564-1606) and Greene (1564-1606). Lyly(1554-1606) and Greene (1564-1616), Peele (1558-1597), Lyly(1554-1606) and Greene (1560-1592). It is entirely unquestionable issue to regard Shakespeare as the greatest dramatist of not just the Elizabethan era but of all the timesthroughout. But before going to Shakespeare several other significant contemporary playwrights of the period. Beginning and the features: In the beginning of the Elizabeth age the dramawas in struggling into its maturity unlike the early period in which the dramawas scholarly and aristocratic in authority. The dramatists and their great skill of great writing. Thus the dramawas of the Elizabethan era hademphasis entirely not just upon the dramas that were appreciated by the publicbut also were socially acceptable through their language and content. As such the shift ofdrama from religious to a secular function in society playwrights and poetswere among the leading artists of the age. Towards the end of the seventeenthcentury the popularity and progress of drama kept on increasing throughout thetime. Thus the dramatic works of various renowned playwrights viz. WilliamShakespeare, Christopher Marlow, Robert Greene, John Lyly and Thomas Lodge etcgained very profound fame. Comedyof Manner: One of the prominent features of the Elizabeth feature of the Elizabeth and rama was Comedy of Manner. In this the social manners of thedramas were portrayed as the true representatives of the entire age. Theplaywrights in this age were concerned with the renowned dramatic works was Christopher MarlowsTurbulaine the Great (1857), Jew of Malta (1589), and Dr Fantus, ThomasKeates The Spanish Tragedy, proving a roaring success became exemplar of theElizabethan Revenge tradition. The incomparable works of Shakespeare includingHamlet, Macbeth, Othello etc, along with George Peeles The Chronicles of Edward I (1590), Marlows Edward II, The Massacre of Paris etc. JACOBEANERA had its beginning marked by the Elizabethan dramatists of the Eliza Marsh (1575-1634), Thomas Middleton (1570-162-), George Champman(1539-1634), Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625). Features: The Jacobean dramatists undertook to more realistic way of writing. Theyenormously enhanced the sensational level of writing within their dramatic works of the Jacobean age gained thedescription and sequences of murder, blood, loot and many such criminalsequences became a casual part of the Jacobean dramatic writings. The standard and the classicism ofdramas established in the Elizabethan era started getting a downfall as theprimary focus of the dramatists shifted towards producing evil and licentiousscheme for their own sake making the character and situation immortal to theextent that the stage became frivolous, bad and improper representation of thedramatic actions, thus making drama of cheap nature and quality. Divisions:Unlike the Elizabethan age, the Jacobean era had dramas divided into twoclasses; one were those dramatists of the Elizabethan era and theothers were the dramatists of the Elizabethan era. They were divided as:1.Thedramatists of the Elizabethan era and theothers were the dramatists of the School, comprising of Decker Heywood, Webster, Fletcher, Beaumont, Fletcher, 2.TheSatiric group consisting of Chapman, Johnson, Marston, Middleton and Tourneur. These groups of satiric play especially BenJohnson were fond of mocking the old school dramatists. He had lack of sympathyin portrayal of both life and character. Comedyof Humor: Unlike the Elizabethan age the Jacobean age having anentirely identical satirical group had also the comedy of humour. The comedy ofhumour mainly deals with the oddities of the characters i.e. the odd features and characteristics of the character. It represented and threw a whimsical and shadow over the life of the character. Also the aim of the playwrights is tohave in the character, a dominance of humor in their personality. Some prominent examples of Comedy of Humor are Ben Johnsons Every Man In HisHumor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1599). Dramatic Works: The great dramatic works fthe Jacobean era were Thomas Dekkers The Shoemakers Holiday, The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), The Alchemist, Every Man Out of His Humor (1598), tworenowned plays The White Devil and The Duchess of the Malfi. Among the otherplays the Philaster and the Maids Tragedy were amongst the prominent ones. Thus it can be fairly concluded that the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas hold a considerate differences and distinctions amongst the main of Elizabethan among the main of Elizabethan ErasThe Elizabethan and Jacobean eras had several similarities but are probably considered to be very different when you take the broad scope of the Elizabethan era. The Elizabethan era was generally a very prosperous age, but ended with a war and serious debt incurred for the Jacobean eras had several similarities but are probably considered to be very different when you take the broad scope of the Elizabethan era. EraThe Jacobean era ranges from 1603 to 1623. The name derives from the monarch, King James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name derives from the monarch, King James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name derives from the monarch, King James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, James I. Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name derives from the monarch, King James I. 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Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, Jacob is the name, Jacob is the Hebrew version of the name, Jacob is the hebrew version of the name, Jacob is the name, Jaco 1,400,000. The treasurer of this time, Robert Cecil made some changes and lowered this debt back down to 46,000 by 1610. However, the damage had already been done. By the time 1620 rolled around and the bubonic plague had hit England severely, there was a terrible economic crisis. England suffered a terrible depression from 1620 to 1626 One of the many bright spots that continued throughout the Jacobean period, including Macbeth. We also found that the King James Bible also derives from this time period which is still one of the most prominent works in terms of literature in history. The unfortunate part is that the artistic side of England had somewhat been overshadowed. Unlike the Elizabethan period many of the England was at its prime from an artistic perspective, throughout the Jacobean period many of the England had somewhat been overshadowed. greater artists later on down the road such as Robert Peake the Elder and William Larkin. Still, other artists received more notoriety. King James I, the Jacobean era, was a relatively dark time in Englands history and ended on a terrible situation that was likely doomed from the beginning. More Info On- Elizabethan Time Period, Social and Elizabethan Society, Explorers The rich intellectual life in England during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is reflected in literary works of the period. brought with it a consciousness of artistic beauty and a love of learning little known since the days of (c. 1343-1400), poetry bloomed in this favorable climatea poetry different in mood and subject from that of the earlier medieval poets. Prose fiction, too, took tentative steps toward the novel as the stories people had to tell began to expand beyond the boundaries of rhyme and meter, but it was drama that overshadowed all other literary forms from the beginning to the end of the Renaissance. The rebirth of arts and learning that came to England during the Renaissance brought with it the great drama of classical Greece and Rome. The guidance of and the models of , , , , , and others brought to the Renaissance Englishman a view of humankind, of the world in many respects different from the medieval view. Long before the introduction of classical drama into England, the citizens of cities and villages were acquainted with drama associated with the Church. The transition from native English mystery, morality, and folk plays to what is generally called regular English drama came about slowly from approximately the middle of the sixteenth century. The happy marriage of classical and native English drama came about slowly from approximately the middle of the sixteenth century. Renaissance. In the early sixteenth century, Senecas tragedies were translated into English and served as a model for regular English tragedy. The five-act structure; the observance of the unities of time, place, and action; the emphasis on character; and the use of the ghost were Senecan devices employed by English Renaissance writers of tragedy. For comedy, the works of the Roman dramatists Plautus and Terence, with their clear plot development, wit, use of proverbs, and natural dialogue, served as models. Elizabethan dramatists adopted the five-act structure almost completely, but they did not slavishly follow classical models in observing the dramatic unities. Native English settings and humor remained dominant in drama, but they were regularized and modified somewhat by the classical models. A Period of Transition from mystery, morality, folk plays, and interludes to regular English drama. Classical influence was strong during this period because those scholars who were writing and producing the plays were the same scholars who had introduced the literary works of classical Greece and Rome into England., for example, who wrote the first regular English comedy, Ralph Roister Doister (pr. c. 1552), was an Oxford scholar and headmaster at Eton who studied and translated Terence. Senecas tragedies had been translated into English by 1580 and served as an example for English tragedy. One can see in Jack Juggler (pr. c. 1553-1558), perhaps by Udall, an excellent example of how Plautus was used in an English setting. The English tragedy. One can see in Jack Juggler (pr. c. 1553-1558), perhaps by Udall, an excellent example of how Plautus was used in an English tragedy. One can see in Jack Juggler (pr. c. 1553-1558), perhaps by Udall, an excellent example of how Plautus was used in an English tragedy. patterned after the Roman miles gloriosus and parasite, respectively. Although the pattern is classical, the setting is English. The play depicts middle-class life in London, with Dame Christian Custance and her English servants replacing the Roman courtesan and her entourage. Another English comedy of this period is Gammer Gurtons Needle (pr. c. 1562), probably by the Cambridge scholar William Stevenson. Like Ralph Roister Doister, Gammer Gurtons Needle is divided into acts and scenes and has a well-conceived, complex plot in the classical manner, but although the pattern is classical, the substance of the play is native English. Even Diccon, the most Roman of the characters, reminiscent of the intriguing slave of Roman comedy, is transformed into a distinctively English character. Whereas the setting of Ralph Roister Doister is urban, Gammer Gurtons Needle is set in a village. The dialogue, full of dialect and earthy language, helps to make the play more realistically English than any other early regular English drama. Its author was clearly a scholar of Roman comedy, but he was writing about and for English people. One of the better Italian adaptations of Plautus and Terence, s I supposes and presented at Grays Inn by in 1566. Best known as a source for s Lucentio-Bianca plot in The Taming of the Shrew (pr. c. 1593-1594), Gascoignes translation is also important for having made available in English a comedy writers, eliminated the classical characters of the slave, courtesan, and pander and built the plot around a love story, as though the inspiration for the play were more from Giovanni Boccaccio or Chaucer than from Plautus or Terence. The influence of classical tragedy can also be seen in early sixteenth century England. Gorboduc (pr. 1561; also as The Tragedy. It has five acts, observes the unities, avoids comic situations, and employs a chorus. Violence, and indeed almost all the action, takes place offstage, as in classical models, but even here the theme is English, not Greek or Roman. The plays didactic purpose is to warn Queen Elizabeth of the dangers of leaving the kingdom without an heir to rule. Taking as its plot the story from the legendary British history of old King Gorboduc, who, like the legendary King Lear, divided the kingdom between his two offspring, the play would presumably offer the potential for exciting stage action, inexplicable dumb shows, and almost endless, dull speeches. Although the play may strike the modern reader as tedious, its historical importance cannot be overstated. Not only does Gorboduc set the form for later Renaissance tragedy, but also, and more important, the play is written in blank verse, a meter introduced into English some few years earlier by . The meter was used with good results by refined by into the mighty line, and immortalized by Shakespeare. Other adaptations of classical tragedy in English include Jocasta (pr. 1566) and The Misfortunes of Arthur (pr. 1588). Jocasta is a tragedy in English include Jocasta (pr. 1566) and The Misfortunes of Arthur (pr. 1588). Jocasta is a tragedy in English include Jocasta (pr. 1566) and The Misfortunes of Arthur (pr. 1588). Jocasta is a tragedy in English include Jocasta (pr. 1566) and The Misfortunes of Arthur (pr. 1588). Jocasta (pr. 1549, an adaptation of a Latin translation of Euripides Phoinissai, c. 410 B.C.E.; The Phoenician Women, 1781). Jocasta offered nothing new to English tragedy. The same can be said of The Misfortunes of Arthur, by Thomas Hughes, also written in blank verse and exhibiting a marked Senecan influence. Hughes based his plot on ancient British legends from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Sir Thomas Mallory. Another type of play introduced during the period, from the English chronicles. s King Johan (pr. c. 1539) showed future dramatists the way to move from morality plays to more modern ideological history plays. The play features such allegorical characters as Sedition, Dissimulation, Private Wealth, and Usurped Power, conspirators against the righteous monarch, Johan. The allegorical characters as Sedition, Dissimulation, Private Wealth, and Usurped Power, conspirators against the righteous monarch, Johan. The allegorical character Imperial Majesty (representing the Protestant monarch Henry VIII) finally sets things right. Richardus Tertius (pr. 1579), by Thomas Legge, although a Latin play, is noteworthy as a transitional play because it uses recent English history. The Famous Victories of Henry V (pr. c. 1588) also uses recent national history as its subject. It neglects classical models almost completely, patterning its form more on the medieval miracle play. It is the earliest classical models almost completely as its subject. example of a play based on a popular rather than a scholarly view of history. In introducing Sir John Oldcastle (the prototype of Shakespeares Sir John Falstaff) and many episodes involving Prince Hal in his madcap days, the anonymous playwright provided in rough form the material Shakespeare was later to use in creating his famous political plays involving Henry IV and Henry V.Other chronicle plays that may be called transitional in the sense that they showed the way for later, better representatives of the type are The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England (pr. c. 1591), King Leir and His Three Daughters (pr. c. 1594), The Lamentable Tragedy of Locrine (pb. 1595), and The First Part of the Tragical Raigne of Selimus (pr. 1594). The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, perhaps written by or, is a rather loosely constructed play written at the height of anti-Catholic sentiment. It served as the primary source for Shakespeares King John (pr. c. 1596-1597). King Leir and His Three Daughters is more nearly a dramatic presentation of the story taken from Raphael Holinsheds Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1577) than it is a Senecan tragedy. Shakespeares later treatment of the Lear legend has overshadowed the considerable value of its predecessor, but although the anonymous playwright provides neither the panorama nor many of the specific sensual elements of Shakespeares greater work, King Leir and His Three Daughters is a well-written and moving chronicle play. The Lamentable Tragedy of Locrine (by W. S., perhaps William Stevenson) combines both Senecan machinery and rather crude English humor in a history play. The First Part of the Tragical Raigne of Selimus echoes many lines from The Lamentable Tragedy of Locrine and uses many of the same sensational devices introduced by Seneca, but similarities end there. The First Part of the Tragical Raigne of Selimus takes its plot from Turkish, not British, history and features extravagant passions presumably calculated to appeal to unsophisticated theatergoers. The Rise of Elizabethan DramaDuring the latter part of the sixteenth century, the popularity of dramatic productions increased among all segments of the English population, from the rustics, who, as Hamlet tells the players, for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise, to the educated middle class to the nobility. Plays on almost every conceivable subject were written to appeal to some segment of the population, and a few were able to include something for everyone. What had begun in the Schools had now become so popular that both the writing and the acting of drama became a business enterprise. Tropes (passages or sequences for parsing the Mass) had expanded into medieval mystery and morality plays, and those, in turn, given the stimulus of classical thought and forms, had evolved into school drama. So successful had drama been in delighting audiences while teaching them Christian morality and Humanistic concepts that the next logical step in development was into the public realm. In religious drama, the choir as stage had given way to the nave, the porch, and the churchyard; construction of public theaters expressly designed for the production of plays. In 1576, James Burbage (father of the renowned Elizabethan actor Richard Burbage) built The Theatre just outside the city boundaries of London. Although some evidence, in the form of municipal records, exists to indicate that an earlier public theater had been built and used, Burbages theater is generally considered to be the first major effort to establish a place where professional actors could practice their trade. The location of the public theater in Shoreditch, a name that adequately describes the area, allowed the acting companies to escape the jurisdiction of the public theater in Shoreditch. out in 1596, The Theatre closed. The Curtain, built in the same general area, opened around 1577. From about 1592, when the Rose was refurbished there (it had been built in 1587), the Bankside, an area south of the Thames, just opposite the City but in the county of Surrey, became the theater district for London: The Swan was erected there (it had been built in 1587). around 1596, the Globe in 1599, and the Fortune in 1600. These public theaters were built primarily for the production of plays, but they were all nevertheless built on the plan of the innyard. The roofless auditorium offered only standing room for the mob, or the groundlings, and seats in the roofed galleries for those who could pay more. These theaters were three stories high and either round or octagonal. The front of the stage extended out into the pit. Above the stage, and behind behind belony. Under the first balcony and in line with the second balcony was an upper stage, and behind that was a curtained-off inner stage. Theaters built inside London had to claim that they were private playhouses catering to a special clientele, usually a wealthy and influential one. The first attempt to open a theater in London, in the Blackfriars district, was made in 1596 by the same man who had built the original Theatre, James Burbage, but after much time and expense, the city authorities refused Burbage permission to open the Blackfriars. The second attempt to open the Blackfriars, in 1600, was successful, but not without great difficulty. Private theaters in Stuart times, however, proliferated because of the comfortable seating, artificial lighting, and elaborate stage machinery. The actors in early religious plays had been amateurs, controlled first by the Church and later by the trade guilds, and even after troupes of professional actors began touring England presenting interludes in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama and in the houses and castles of great families, much drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, both in school drama was being performed by child actors, bo actors were serious rivals to the adult acting companies is illustrated by Hamlets referring to them as an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for t. In 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage burbage burbage built of the realm, but not until 1576, when Burbage the first public theater, did professional companies have a place especially established for them to present their plays. Given the generally medieval view of morality of the time, the acting companies were composed entirely of men and boys, with womens roles being taken by the boys. There were two prominent adult professional acting companies during the latter part of the sixteenth century: Lord Leicesters Men and the Admirals Men. The latter group was headed by the notable Elizabethan financier Philip Henslowe, whose diary is an invaluable aid to scholars as a window to the daily operations of early theater management. Henslowes son-in-law, the great actor Edward Alleyn, was co-owner. The company, which gained its name and reputation from its patron, the Lord High Admiral, owned two theaters, the Fortune and then as the Princes Men. The second company was considerably more famous, having as one of its members . Lord Leicesters Men, managed by Richard Burbage, took its name from the patron Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester. Its theaters were The Theatre, the Globe, and Blackfriars. At the death of Dudley, the company came under the patronage of Lord Strange, becoming Lord Stranges Men and later, when he became Lord Derby, Derbys Men. The company went on to have more patrons and therefore different names: Lord Hunsdons Men, the Lord Chamberlains Men, and then, in 1603, the Kings Men. University WitsElizabethan drama evolved quite naturally from the intellectual climate of the times and was accompanied by the growth of acting as a profession. The volved quite naturally from the intellectual climate of the times and was accompanied by the growth of acting as a profession. increasing popularity of drama led to acting companies, special theaters, and the need for new material to enact. The new playwrights were not the Church scholars of the middle sixteenth century. Rather, a new occupation developed, that of the professional playwright. Educated young men from Oxford and Cambridge, passionate young minds excited by the Humanistic spirit who had no inheritance or patrons to support their literary efforts, found in drama a way to mold language and ideas into a form that would support them. This group of educated young men, known as the University Wits, included , , , , , , and . Because these men not only were familiar with classical models but also were trendsetters in developing a distinctively English literature, they lent to the evolving drama both a form and dignity borrowed from the Aristotelian mold and an immediacy in language and idea sparked by an awareness of the political, social, moral, and economic problems of sixteenth century England. Others in the new profession of acting learned from the University Wits and, in some notable cases, improved on them. Often the acting companies, both adult and childrens companies, individually or in cooperation with others, would revise old plays to suit present needs or would fashion plots from old plays, poems, or tales into new dramas. These practical dramatists could often create works that combined the best of Humanistic ideas with the most practical dramatist could often create works that combined the best of Humanistic ideas with the most practical dramatic techniques. The predecessors of Shakespeare, therefore, built a tradition of the best of Humanistic ideas with the most practical dramatists could often create works that combined the best of Humanistic ideas with the most practical dramatist could often create works that combined the best of Humanistic ideas with the most practical dramatistic ideas with the most practical dramatist could often create works that combined the best of Humanistic ideas with the most practical dramatistic ideas w excellence that would have given the Elizabethan age a luster had Shakespeare himself never written a word. Lyly, although he wrote not for professional adult companies, nevertheless had considerable influence on later playwrights. He carried the extravagant language of his Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit (1578) over into his drama with an effect thoroughly new in English drama. Many modern audiences find Lylys style tedious and almost unreadable, marked as it is by heavy use of alliteration, antithesis, and elaborate similes and catalogs of fictitious authority to support insignificant arguments. Lylys work is nevertheless a landmark in the history of English literature, setting a standard that showed the age that the English language was capable of art and grace. Shakespeare mocked the excesses of the euphuistic style in such works as Loves Labours Lost (pr. c. 1594-1595), Henry IV, Part I (pr. c.1597-1598), and King Lear (pr. c. 1605-1606), but his plays reveal the devotion to style, the confidence in the resources of the language, that informed Lylys works. Excessive as Lylys rhetoric was, he illustrated the richness of English. Through his witty dialogue, Lyly emphasized the intellectual comedy of situation. Lylys best play is Endymion, the Man in the Moon (pr. 1588), an allegory praising Queen Elizabeth and the earl of Leicester. Elizabeth is portrayed as Cynthia, the chaste huntress, and Leicester is the faithful lover Endymion. Other plays by Lyly are Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander, the beautiful Campaspe, and her artist-lover Apelles. In Sapho and Phao (pr. 1584), a prose comedy based on the classical story of Alexander Apelles. In Sapho and Pha allegorical devices, while in Galathea (pr. c. 1585) and Loves Metamorphosis (pr. c. 1589), he employs pastoral elements. Mother Bombie (pr. c. 1593), written in blank verse, satirizes women. All are pretty plays but slender in plot and significant ideas. As pieces of highly ornamental lace, Lylys plays did not stand up well on the vigorous Elizabethan stage, but they served as models for the greatest drama the world has known. If Lylys plays are overly refined, those of are frank, often bombastic, full of blood and thunder. Although Kyds sensationalism often overpowers the more truly tragic elements of his plays, his realism in language and action nevertheless gave a vigor to drama theretofore unknown on such a large scale. Lyly may have showed them how to use raw power to grab the attention of the audience. Strongly influenced by Seneca, Kyd introduced revenge tragedy to English drama. Most scholars believe that Kyd wrote an early version of Hamlet, called the Ur-Hamlet (from the German Ur, origin or source). His reputation, however, rests on The Spanish Tragedy (pr. c. 1585-1589), the quintessential revenge tragedy. Here, Kyd introduces a ghost, insanity, and a play-within-the-playall elements employed by Shakespeare in Hamletand, unlike the authors of Gorboduc, he presents violent action on the stage. is perhaps as well known for his prose as for his drama; like most of the age, Greene expected to acquire fame as well as fortune, but both eluded him during his lifetime, and posterity has been only slightly kinder. Because he was not an actor himself, he merely wrote for others, a task that he did not entirely enjoy. In Greenes Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance (1592), he calls actors apes, peasants, painted monsters, and puppets that speak from our mouths. Shakespeare is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers. He advises his fellow University Witsprobably Marlowe, Nashe, and Peeleto stop writing for actors, for it is a pity men of such rate wits should be subject to the pleasure of such rate wits a pity men of such rate wits should be subject to the pleasure of such rate wits a pity men of such rate London and England (pr. c. 1588-1589), written in collaboration with Lodge, resembles earlier religious drama rather than the secular drama of its own time. Orlando furioso (pr. c. 1588), based on Ariostos work of the same title, is a play of lighter tone, but not completely successful. James IV (pr. c. 1591), not a history play but a serious comedy taken from a story by the Italian writer, is perhaps most important for introducing Oberon, king of the fairies, to the English stage. Greenes best play is Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (pr. c. 1589), a romantic comedy. The play draws on the legends that had grown around the thirteenth century philosopher and scientist Roger Bacon, whose thinking was so far in advance of his time that he was credited with magical powers. Greene shows that the magic of love is as inexplicable as the magic of Friar Bacon. F comedy. The character of Margaret sets the ideal of the Renaissance woman: Greenes Margaret is a bright, vivacious, virtuous, and charming woman who can hold her own in dealing with any man. Whether Greene intended to help show the way to apes and puppets, he did so anyway. As another of the University Wits, wrote poetry and drama in a vain attempt to earn a living by his literary skills. Although some scholars have suggested that Peele spent some time as an actor, little evidence exists to support this contention; indeed, Peeles plays show scant knowledge of how to combine plot and character with ideas in a manner attractive to an audience. Those plays usually attributed to Peele are The Arraignment of Paris (pr. c. 1584), The Battle of Alcazar (pr. c. 1589), David and Bethsabe (pr. c. 1593-1594). His contribution to the development of English drama is to be found in the verse employed in his plays: He softens without destroying the mighty line of Marlowes blank verse and makes it fit for romantic drama. The contribution of to drama is much less than to prose romance. Along with his poems and pamphlets, Lodge wrote the pleasant prose romance. Along with his poems and pamphlets, Lodge wrote the pleasant prose romance. Wits, Lodge extended his literary experiments into drama. He collaborated with Greene in A Looking Glass for London and England and wrote at least one play independently, The Wounds of Civill War (pr. c. 1586), dealing with the civil strife between the Romans Marius and Sulla. Although the play is interesting as an early treatment of Roman history on the English stage, it suffers from ponderous speeches and a confused plot. is best known for a series of pamphlets written during the famous Martin Marprelate controversy and for his anti-romantic prose narrative The Unfortunate Traveller: Or, The Life of Jack Wilton (1594), a precursor of the English novel. In The Isle of Dogs (pr. 1597) Nashe collaborated with on a comedy that so pointedly portrayed the abuses of the state that Jonson was sent to jail. Nashes only complete extant play is Summers Last Will and Testament (pr. 1592), a play of courtly complete extant play is Summers Last Will and Testament (pr. 1592). moments and some surprisingly good poetry. Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeares famous contemporary, is remembered not only for his poetry and drama but also for his colorful, often violent life and his mysterious death in a tavern brawl. In contrast to his fellow University Wits, he seemed less interested in establishing his reputation as a writer or in earning a living than in pushing life and ideas to the limits. In particular, the philosophical and political ideas of fascinated Marlowe, and in his plays, he takes those ideas to their logical conclusion. Marlowes skepticism concerning the reigning medieval conception of human beings place in the cosmos is implicit in his obsessive preoccupation with the nature of power. Some critics believe that Marlowes skepticism is ultimately resolved on the testing ground of the plays; in their view, Marlowe (who was accused of atheism by fellow playwright Thomas Kyd, with whom he had been living) clearly rejected the Christian worldview; according to their reading of the plays, Marlowe identifies with his proud, defiant, overreaching protagonists. Marlowes Tamburlaine the Great (Part I, pr. c. 1587; Part II, pr. c. 1587), based on the story of the Tartar king Timur Lenk, examines the nature of power as exhibited in the title character, Tamburlaine, who, as a young shepherd enamored of the riches and trappings of power, sets out to rule the world. This intoxication with power leads him to overcome all earthly adversaries, and he becomes an absolute monarch. The young Tamburlaine ignores the medieval concepts of divine intervention into worldly affairs and sets out to be his own god by becoming king; as his follower Theridamas says, A god is not so glorious as a king. When the rulers captive, the Turkish emperor Bajazeth, whom Tamburlaine wants to control absolutely, takes his own life, the man who would be god discovers that a power greater than his exists. Although he can take or spare life, he cannot, after all, control life and death. In the second part of the play, after defying the gods, Mahomet, and the Koran (Quran), the great Tamburlaine dies. In Doctor Faustus (pr. c. 1588, pb. 1604), Marlowe analyzes yet another search for power, perhaps the most universal of human desires. Like Marlowe analyzes yet another search for power, perhaps the most universal of human desires. Faustus, and a man, still unresolved of the ambiguities of life. Finding no absolute answers in traditional studies, Faustus decides to try his brains to gain a deity. He turns to magic, some scholars say to science, as humankinds way to know all things; as Faustus decides to try his brains to gain a deity. He turns to magic, some scholars say to science, as humankinds way to know all things; as Faustus decides to try his brains to gain a deity. does Macbeth later, that no activity of humankind is infinite. Although he learns a number of fascinating tricks, Faustus is still merely a human being. The Jew of Malta (pr. c. 1589) provides another Machiavellian character, at least as the Elizabethans generally understood . Barabas the Jew seeks power and wealth with no regard for values that migh be dictated by a morally ordered universe. Because Barabas is so outrageous in his ideas and actions, so much so that Machiavelli himself would doubtless have detested him, his characterization often descends to bathos. In Edward II (pr. c. 1592), however, the protagonist is a more convincing figure. Marlowes Edward, unlike the typical Marlovian protagonist, is a weak and vacillating man. As Edwards power decreases, the audiences sympathy for him increases, and as young Mortimers power increases, and as young Mortimers power decreases, the audiences sympathy for him decreases, and as young Mortimers power decreases, the audiences sympathy for him decreases, and as young Mortimers power decreases, and as young created a complex, well-crafted tragedy based on an application of Aristotelian principles to English history rather than on the Senecan model. Shakespeare was to use and build on Marlowes model in the plays of his plays that had the greatest impact. The mighty line that and all succeeding critics saw in the blank verse of Tamburlaine the Great set the standard poetic form for the majestic speeches characteristic of Renaissance drama. To speculate on what Marlowe might have achieved had he lived past his twenties is irresistible but ultimately futile. This much, however, is certain: No dramatist other than has shown more promise in his early works. William Shakespeare was learning the trade of playwright. By 1595, the marriage of classical ideas and forms with native English literature and culture was consummated and secure., from the village of Stratford-upon-Avon, learned his craft not from his own reading of classical literature, from his connection with the professional theater as an actor, and from his extraordinary perception of human nature. Shakespeare has been justly praised for his perceptions in dramatic works of unparalleled power and linguistic virtuosity. Still, Shakespeare was not a dramatist who descended fully developed from Mount Olympus the professional theater as it was taking shape in Elizabethan England. He was, without question, the greatest dramatic poet of his time, but he was also the heir of a tradition of great poetry. It is likely that Shakespeare saw himself primarily as a working dramatist who wrote drama because his company needed plays to act, for he made no great effort to protect his plays for posterity. Sixteen texts of his plays appeared in quarto form during his lifetime, but Shakespeare himself appears not to have been involved in their publication. The result is that such quartos are of uneven quality. performance of the plays), considered good quartos even though they have the kinds of errors one might expect to find in a copy when the author does not read and correct galley proofs. Other quartos. Many of Shakespeares plays remained unpublished until seven years after his death, when two of his fellow actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, collected his dramatic works (with the exception of Pericles, Prince of Tyre, pr. c. 1607-1608) in 1623 and published them in folio form. Of the thirty-six plays in this 1623 First Folio, eighteen had never been printed before. Even in the case of Shakespeares 154 sonnets, although the poet had promised his patron in Sonnet 18, So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee, the poet had promised his patron in Sonnet 18, So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee, the poet had promised his patron in Sonnet 18, So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee, the poet had promised his patron in Sonnet 18, So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee, the poet had promised his patron in Sonnet 18, So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,/ So long lives this, and this gives life to the publication. scholars have busied themselves with finding internal and external evidence to use in dating Shakespeares plays. Once a chronology was established), certain patterns of the development of Shakespeare is ever established (insofar as any scholarly question concerning Shakespeare is ever established). four periods for the purpose of highlighting certain elements of his artistic development. Shakespeare did not so categorization. The problems of the literary historian are compounded by the fact that Shakespeare did not limit himself to any single dramatic genre during any period of his career; he wrote comedies, histories, tragedies, and combinations throughout his literary life. With these caveats posted, one may reasonably discuss Shakespeares dramatic works in four periods of development. The first period covers about five years, from 1590 to 1594, when, in order to supply his company with material to perform, Shakespeare began to adapt the plots and devices of earlier dramatists. He borrowed from Plautus, Terence, Lodge, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, and others; his purpose seems to have been to provide his fellows with a well-structured script that dealt with a subject already approved by audiences. During this time, Shakespeare was learning his craft, experimenting with presenting plot exposition in dialogue, with problems of characterization, with language, and with all that his predecessors had taught him. Although this first period was a time of experimentation, with language, and with all that his predecessors had taught him. perception of human behavior and motivation. To this first period also belong the poems Venus and Adonis (1593), which the author called the first heir of my invention, and the more mature The Rape of Lucrece (1594). Some of the sonnets were at this time being circulated in manuscript form, but it is not certain which ones or when they were written. The plays of the first period represent all the popular typescomedy, history, and tragedyand they are imitative and flawed. Which play is Shakespeares first has been the subject of much conjecture, but evidence is inadequate to lead to any secure conclusion. Titus Andronicus (pr. 1594) was certainly one of Shakespeares first plays and clearly a melodrama. It is a bloody play, closer to Senecan tragedy than is Kyds The Spanish Tragedy. The motif of eating human flesh, for example, derives from act 4 of Senecas Thyestes (English translation, 1581). Because the play includes such horrors as rape, mutilation, murder, and cannibalism, some critics want to deny that Shakespeare wrote it, but in fact Titus Andronicus shows a great talent for effective presentation of plot so as to achieve suspense and an acceptable conclusion. Shakespeares purpose in this early attempt at tragedy was almost certainly to provide for his company a play that would capitalize on the publics taste for sensational material presented with some degree of realism on the stage, and the play accomplishes that limited purpose, but in delivering a popular play to his company, Shakespeare also improved on his source. The comedies in this first period are reflections of what Shakespeare also improved on his source. The comedies in the academic theater influenced by Plautus and Terence, the courtly drama of Lyly, and the popular comedy of Greene and Peele. The Comedy of Errors (pr. c. 1592-1594), which was an adaptation of Plautuss Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E.; The Twin Menaechmi (of the late third or early second century B.C.E structure more complicated than and superior to that of Plautus, and although dialogue irrelevant to the plot and emotive speeches unprepared for in characterization detract from the plays artistic unity and coherence, this early comedy presents in the marital conflict between Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana, his wife, a good analysis of the intricacies of human relationships. In Loves Labours Lost, the influence of Lyly is more clearly seen than in any other play of the period. The source of the comedy is not known, but the play at once uses and satirizes the romantic subjects and euphuistic style of Lyly. the artificiality of society. The Two Gentlemen of Verona (pr. c. 1594-1595) presents a love story that is less contrived than that of Loves Labours Lost, and the characters more individualized and more believable causes some problems because the plot itself is not realistic but romantic. The history plays of this early period were doubtless written to capitalize on the great spirit of nationalism that flourished after the English defeat of the powerful Spanish Armada in 1588. Only three authentic chronicle plays had been written before 1590, but soon history, especially English history, was to become an important subject for all types of literature. Shakespeares early efforts at historical drama presented the story much as he found it in his sources, with characterization being subordinate to plot, but under the influence of Marlowe and prompted by his own interest in individual psychology, Shakespeare soon learned to use the stories and characterization being subordinate to plot, but under the influence of Marlowe and prompted by his own interest in individual psychology. write plays analyzing politics, love, hate, revenge, and other elements of the human condition. The three parts of Henry VI (pr. c. 1590-1592) are uneven, lacking unity and coherence, but with the last play in the tetralogy, Richard III, Shakespeare had learned to escape the dramatic problems of episodic history by concentrating on a single character and a single theme, complex though they both might be. Here, the clash between the ideas of divine and Machiavellian power that so fascinated Marlowe is taken up and analyzed minutely and realistically; as in Tamburlaine the Great, the Machiavellian Richard runs afoul of the natural order and is defeated. In King John, Shakespeare continues his movement away from mere episodic history to concentration on themehere, the theme of patriotism. Some scholars see this play as a rewrite, commissioned by his acting company, of an earlier play perhaps by Marlowe or Peele, The Troublesome Raigne of John King of England, but Shakespeares treatment of the story is more than a mere rewrite. Here, he personalizes history, analyzing contemporary political concepts, an exercise he was to develop more fully in his history plays of the second period. In his second period, from about 1595 to 1600, Shakespeare was no longer an apprentice dramatist imitating the work of others to produce plays for his company; rather, he had become a journeyman, able to plan his own work and create artistic works based on his understanding of his material, his audience, and his perceptions of human behavior. The plays of his second tetralogy derive from Raphael Holinsheds Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland and from an earlier drama, The Famous Victories of Henry V (pr. c. 1588), but these sources serve merely as a vehicle for exploring the major question of political theory: whether power derives from divine right or from military power. To serve his purpose, Shakespeare felt free to change the historical age of Richard IIs queen from that of a mature woman, of Prince Hal from a boy of fifteen to a young warrior, of Hotspur from a man of about forty-five to one about the same age as Hal. The playwright moves armies about to suit his dramatic purposes and introduces pumps, gunpowder, and cannons into early fifteenth century England, where these devices were not yet in use. In Richard II, Shakespeare continues his inquiry into the nature of kingship, showing the political folly of one who depends wholly on divine power to protect his authority: Not all the water in the rough rude sea, Richard shouts, can wash the balm off from an anointed king, yet he discovers that vaporous angels are no match for Bolingbrokes army. The play ends with Richards descent from monarchical power and high-flown illusions (exquisitely mirrored in the plays language and imagery) as Bolingbroke, now Henry IV, takes his place and the cycle of rise and fall begins anew. The two parts of Henry IV, who depends on military strength to attain and keep the crown, and the political development of Prince Hal (the future Henry V), whose grasp of the Machiavellian principle of situational ethics eventually surpasses that of his father. Indeed, the two plays focus less on their title character than they do on Hal and his personal and political maturation. This development culminates in Henry V (pr. c. 1598-1599), which concerns the reign of Englands most successful king up to the time of Elizabeth. Having learned much about human nature and the requirements of kingship through the negative examples of the profligate rogue Falstaff and the hotheaded young nobleman Hotspur (in the plays about Henry IV), Hal uses Hotspur and Falstaff as Marlowes Tamburlaine used Bajazethas steps to the throneand then rids himself of them when they are of no more political use. Unlike Tamburlaine, however, Hal acts on the basis of a mature comprehension of his central role as monarch in the Elizabethan hierarchy of being point to the people of his nation and to Godmakes him in many ways Shakespeares ideal ruler. The second period of Shakespeares dramatic development contains more festive comedies than any other type of play. The Taming of the Shrew (pr. c. 1593-1594) derives from a comedy of about the same time as Shakespeares, with an almost identical title, The Taming of a Shrew. Shakespeare builds on his analysis of male-female relationships begun in The Comedy of Errors by contrasting the love affair of the romantic young lovers Lucentio and Bianca with that of the more mature Petruchio and Katherina. Here Shakespeare turns the farcical elements he found in his sources into a carefully drawn comedy in which Kate (as she is called in the play) learns what love is. A Midsummer Nights Dream (pr. c. 1595-1596), written for private presentation rather than for the public theater, continues the theme of love. The five plots taken from various sources are carefully woven into a unified masterpiece showing that the course of true love never did run smoothprimarily because, as Puck remarks, Lord, what fools these mortals be. In The Merchant of Venice (pr. c. 1598-1599), As You Like It talents, clear perception of human relationships, and humor are developed to the point of mastery. All these plays treat love as the noblest of human kinds ability to work through conflicts to the natural harmony that love brings to human beings. In The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare contrasts the honorable friendships between Antonio and Bassanio, Bassiano and Portia, and several other pairs of lovers with the unnatural hatred of the Jewish moneylender Shylocka figure suggested by the Christian characters in the play, a man who does not understand the natural model of mercy or love. The play is dominated by the clever Portia, who does understand the model and who has the intelligence and force of personality to establish it in the midst of conflict. Much Ado About Nothing continues the optimistic spirit of romantic comedy and again features a witty woman who helps to bring natural order to chaotic situations. The relationship between Benedick and the witty Beatrice is contrasted to that between Claudio and Hero. When the two major characters learn that they love each other, they combine to make right the evil engineered by the hateful Don John. Beatrice, aware of the benefits of love and justice, leads the successful efforts to reestablish harmony among members of society; all, one is given to understand, live happily ever after. In As You Like It, a wise young woman again leads the way through conflict to order. Shakespeare borrowed the plot from s prose romance Rosalynde: Or, Euphues Golden Legacy, but the play uses only Lodges names and settings, not his characterization. Once again, the villains, whose greed brings suffering and hardship, are pitted against a discerning young woman who orchestrates the return to order. Shakespeares Rosalind understands that the courtly love tradition is mere nonsense and that secure love comes not from glandular secretion but from trust won by understanding. In Twelfth Night, it is young Viola, shipwrecked on the shores of the fictive kingdom of Illyria, who teaches the lovesick Orsino and the morbid Olivia what it can do. There are no villains here, except for the puritanical Malvolio, who is more churl than villain, but there are clowns aplenty, as in the other comedies. Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aquecheek are buffoons in the tradition of Bottom, Launcelot Gobbo, Dogberry, and Touchstonethe plays true clownswhereas the wise fool of King Lear in his position as truthteller by means of parody. Although common themes and similar devices run through all of these comedies, each play has its own flavor and emphasis. They are all examples of high comedy, plays in which the situations, wit, humor, and developments are generated from the characters rather than the other way around. Taking traditional devices from others and adding his own understanding of human nature and of the theater, Shakespeare created romantic comedy of unsurpassed quality. Another play of this period, The Merry Wives of Windsor (pr. 1597), is different in many respects from the second-period history plays. Legend has it that Shakespeare wrote this comedy at the request of Queen Elizabeth, who wanted to see a dramatic presentation of Falstaff in love, but because Falstaff was created specifically to fulfill a thematic purpose in the last three plays of the second tetralogy, he is in most respects a different character. The result is a low comedy, producing much fun but little of the second tetralogy to the other comedies of the period. The only tragedy of the second period is different from both earlier and later tragedies. In his Romeo and Juliet (pr. c. 1595-1596), Shakespeare presents the story of two young people who discover the glory of honest, natural love. and from the hundreds of love poems of the period, including the source of Shakespeares play, the poem The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Iuliet (1562), by Arthur Brooke. Here, Shakespeare shuns the vagueness of sentimental courtly love to dramatize the discovery of true love that he was to use as the theme in his great romantic comedies of the second period, as well as in the sonnets and many of the tragedies and comedies of later periods. The love of Romeo and Juliet is contrasted throughout the play to other concepts of love and marriage: the youthful infatuation that Romeo had for the aloof Rosaline; the effeminate emotion that Mercutio scorns; the proper alliance between families that old Capulet seeks to arrange; the essence of decorum that Paris desires; and the sexual satisfaction that the earthy nurse believes love to be. When Friar Lawrence chides Romeo for loving Rosaline one day and Juliet the next, Romeo explains to him the difference: Juliet loves him back, honestly and without reservation. Their love is celebrated in

magnificent poetry; the sonnet, epithalamium, and aubade express the couples love in their relationship, and they are sometimes unthinking; their immaturity is displayed not in their love for each other but in their relationship, and they are sometimes unthinking; their immaturity is displayed not in their neutronship. indict their relationship; on the contrary, their love, because it is so natural and honest, is perhaps too pure to survive in a flawed world, and thus they must die. Nevertheless, the deaths of the star-crossd lovers result in a sense of pathos rather than the sense of fear and awe that the later tragedies evoke. The third period of Shakespeares development, from 1600 to about 1608, is commonly referred to as his great period, or his bitter period. The great tragedies and dark comedies written during this period analyze the most difficult problems concerning humankind, the cosmos, and human beings relationship with the cosmos; they show the greatness of people in constant conflict with their darker nature. The comedies of this period begin with Alls Well That Ends Well (pr. c. 1602-1603), a play that ends with Bertram promising to love and cherish his wife, Helena, but this comic ending has been reached by a tortuous path. this contemptuous message: When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, than call me husband. . . . Instead of appealing to the kind of love Benedick has for Beatrice or Orlando has for Rosalind, Helena must rely on trickery to fulfill the requirements of her husband. Taking the place of Bertrams new mistress, Diana, in her husbands bed, she gets the ring and gets a child. The order of marriage is preserved by the so-called bed trick rather than by the dignity of human love. There is no purifying Forest of Arden here, no musical Illyria. Neither is the world of Measure (pr. 1604) a happy place The unyielding justice sought by Shylock in The Merchant of Venice becomes here the driving force of the play. The rule of Vienna is left by Duke Vincentio to his deputy, Angelo, who seeks by puritanical law to force morality on immoral man. He orders Claudios sister, Isabella, appeals to the deputy to be merciful to her brother, Angelo agrees to do so only if Isabella will yield her body to him. Isabella, as extreme in her prudishness as Angelo is in his hypocrisy, refuses to give up her maidenhead to save the life of her brother, much to Claudios distress. The play is saved as a comedy only when the rampant immorality of the citizens of Vienna is controlled by Vincentio, who has been observing the situation disguised as a friar. The third comedy of the period, Troilus and Cressida (pr. c. 1601-1602), is perhaps the most bitter of all, so much so that scholars have for years been undecided whether to call it a comedy or a tragedy. In the 1623 folio, Heminge and Condell gave it the title The Tragedy of Troilus and Cressida, but in most surviving copies of that collection the play is placed without pagination between Henry VIII (pr. 1613), the last of the histories, and Coriolanus (pr. c. 1607-1608), the first in the section of tragedies. lovesick young fool in the Petrarchan tradition, and Cressida is little better than a prostitute. The story of the Trojan War offers material to present humankinds nobility, but Shakespeares treatment is anything but ennobling. Homers great story is set in the mire, amid the petty squabbling of the Greeks and the irrationality of the Trojans. Hector is the most likely candidate to represent noble man, but after delivering a clear and rational argument to his brothers Paris and Troilus on why they should seek the high moral ground by returning Helen to the Greeks and thus end the bloodshed, he abruptly tosses godlike reason aside and agrees to continue the war. The deformed and scurrilous Thersites best expresses the theme of the play in his several remarks on what motivates man: Lechery! still wars and lechery! Nothing else holds fashion. Shakespeares analysis of human beings darker nature finds its greatest expression in the tragedies of the period. Political power, a subject that he had analyzed from a historical point of view in the second tetralogy, is presented darkly in the tragedies of this period. Julius Caesar (pr. c. 1599-1600), based on Sir Thomas Norths translation of Plutarchs Bioi paralleloi (c. 105-115 C.E.; Parallel Lives, 1579), continues to use the chronicles as a source, as do many of Shakespeares later tragedies, but here the emphasis is on individual human tragedy rather than history or politics, as is the case with Richard II, Richard II, and the other history plays with tragic overtones. What A. C. Bradley calls the four principal tragedies of Shakespeare belong to this third period: Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (pr. c. 1600-1601), Othello, the Moor of Venice (pr. 1604), King Lear, and Macbeth (pr. 1606). In each of these plays, Shakespeare shows how the private virtues of great characters are, in the political and social contexts of the action, flaws leading to great suffering. Hamlet, like the biblical character Job, finds that his expectation of a morally ordered universe causes him to hesitate to act when faced with the horror of insensitivity and injustice surrounding him in Denmark. Only late in the play does he decide that theres a divinity that shapes our ends regardless of the chaos existing in society, at which time he acts as a minister of heaven to restore order, but such action in the midst of evil destroys this good man as well. The life and death of the great general Othello follows a similar pattern. Because he is a man who thinks men honest that but seem to be so, he is easy prey to the brilliant villain lago, who seems to be honest but is not so. The innocence of both Othello and Desdemona in an evil plot concocted by Iago causes their virtues to work against them. Desdemonas desire to help her husband and their friend Cassio contributes circumstantial evidence to aid in persuading Othello that she is indeed the whore that lago suggests that she is. Othellos idealistic desire to protect the order of the play, Othello learns of the duplicity that led him to murder the one he held most dear, he also gains insight into the aspects of his personality that made him vulnerable to such duplicity. He is, as he recognizes before taking his own life, one who loved not wisely, but too well.King Lear, too, is an essentially good man who learns that he lives in a world in which love and virtue can be aped by mere words used by Machiavellian characters to further their own selfish ends. Two of Lears three daughters, Goneril and Regan, love him only when he has power: When he gives up his power (by parceling out a third of his kingdom to each), they turn him out into the storm. He and, to a lesser extent, the earl of Gloucester learn that power in society comes not from virtue but from soldiers. Lear is, indeed, a man more sinning, but sin has no real meaning for those who do not recognize a moral order. Nevertheless, Shakespeare in this play offers a tribute to the power and supremacy of love in the person of Cordelia, Lears third daughter, who, at the plays beginning, had refused to substitute the letter of her love and respect for her father with the spirit, as expressed in her refusal to flatter her father with appropriate but empty words (as had her sisters) in order to gain her third share of his kingdom. Enraged by her unwillingness to bow to his authority and astounded by the truths she expresses instead, Lear disowns the only one of his offspring who truly loves him. At the plays end, a much battered, maddened, yet wiser Lear acknowledges his wrong, and father and daughter are reconciled in one of the most touching and humanly true scenes of Shakespeares entire canon. The consequences of flouting the moral order are further examined in Macbeth, but the pattern is somewhat different, for here good and evil coexist in the same characters. Macbeth fully understands the implications of disorder in the lives of men, as he demonstrates when he tells King Duncan that the service and loyalty I owe,/ In doing it pays itself and again when he tells Lady Macbeth, I dare do all that may become a man./ Who dares do more is none, but his and his ladys lust for power eclipses his understanding, and they murder Duncan to gain the throne. Like Marlowes Tamburlaine and Doctor Faustus, Macbeth are tragically aware of the consequences of their actions. Lady Macbeths conscience catches up with her, and Macbeth knows that in an ordered existence, he should have honor, love, obedience, troops of friends, whereas through his unnatural deed he has gained only curses and mouth honor in their stead. Macbeth, executes the inexorable fate due to those who deny the universal order. The fabric of these great tragedies is so rich and varied that no literary historian can do more than select a few generalities of many to indicate the importance of these works in Western culture. people consider at some time during their intellectual development, and they present these ideas in the finest dramatic poetry the world has to offer. Shakespeares view of humanity is not always pleasant, but it is accurate, and dark though the tones and settings of the plays may be, in every case the world has to offer. conclusion of the play. The other three tragedies belonging to this period have never been accepted by scholars as of the same intellectual and artistic quality as the four principal tragedies to warrant considering them alongside the others. Antony and Cleopatra (pr. c. 1606-1607) contains neither the horror of the proportions presented in earlier tragedies nor any hero of the stature of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, or Macbeth. Some scholars have a difficult time seeing Antony is here in his dotage and Cleopatra is revealed as merely a capricious woman. Nevertheless, they are noble characters in conflict with others who are less noble. Antony is no Hamlet, nor was he meant to be, but neither is he merely an attendant lord. The plays only villainand that is too strong a wordis Octavius Caesar, whose villainy consists in his wanting to be landlord of the world, a desire shared by much of the worlds population. Antony and Cleopatra have discovered that the nobleness of life lies not in building an empire but in love, and in their struggle to live in a world that does not understand such a nonmaterialistic goal, they die. In Coriolanus, a similar idea is presented. Coriolanus is an idealistic man of great talents, a nonpolitical man lured into the political world described by Machiavelli. Because he shuns the situational ethics required by anyone who operates in such an arena, he is destroyed. Similarly, Timon in Timon of Athens (pr. c. 1607-1608) is a generous man forced to flee society because of the greed and ingratitude of other people. Timon dies hating all humankind, but Alcibiades, who was also banished by the ungrateful leaders of Athens, returns to conquer Athens, returns, returns potential. The plays of the fourth period, from about 1608 to 1613, appear to be experimental works. Shakespeare had left London for Stratford sometime in 1611, but even before that time he seems to have left the harshness of reality for the more pleasant realm of romance. Indeed, four plays of his final period are romances. These late plays still contain evil, guilt, and suffering, but mythology and magic are ever present to set things right in a way that does not occur in reality. Some scholars have suggested that the late romances indicate that Shakespeare had found a new faith in the goodness of humankind, but in fact the darkness in humankind presented in these plays is not neutralized by rational action, as it is in the plays of the third period, but by magic or improbable chance. In Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Cymbeline (pr. c. 1610-1611), and The Tempest (pr. c. 1610-1611), and Tempest (pr. Antonio, the usurping duke of Milan, and Sebastian, his brother, who will murder their own kin to further their ambitions. No moral values guide their action, there is a counterpoint between the bestial Caliban and the airy spirit Ariel. The action is controlled by Prospero, the rightful duke of Milan, exiled by his usurping brother, Antonio. Prospero, who can call up spirits to do his bidding, is generally regarded as a figure for the late plays. In the last years of his life, Shakespeare wrote no plays by himself, but on two occasions he did lend his talents to plays by his friend . Shakespeares contribution to The Two Noble Kinsmen (pr. c. 1612-1613) appears to have been limited to a few scenes, which Fletcher reworked and placed into the play in appropriate places. In Henry VIII, Shakespeares part is largely a matter of conjecture, but the largest part has been attributed to Fletcher. Scholars believe, on the other hand, that the character of Queen Katherine, who is the best developed character in the play, is Shakespeares. The place of Shakespeares plays in the history of Elizabethan drama is, therefore, at the peak. He was clearly influenced by his predecessors, who gave him the tools to practice his craft, but he sharpened the tools and created from the material of life works of art that have never been surpassed. As Shakespeares famous contemporary Ben Jonson said of him, He was not of an age, but for all time. Ben Jonson Ben Jonson is second only to Shakespeare as a giant of the period. The two were in many ways very different kinds of dramatists. In his An Essay of Dramatic Poesy (1668), presented the mystery and complexity of human life, Jonson concentrated on human folly. His Every Man in His Humour (pr. 1598), with its well-constructed plot, stands as the first important comedy of humors on the English stage. In this genre, of which Jonson was the major exponent, human folly. personality traits (which, in medieval times, had been thought to result from an imbalance in the four bodily humors), concentrated in individual characters. A companion play, Every Man Out of His Humour (pr. 1599), has a more complex plot and suggests that humors are cured by their own excesses. Other early Jonson comedies are allegorical and satiric. The Case Is Altered (pr. 1597), based on a plot by Plautus, is a rather romantic comedy set in modern Italy, but the two other early comedies contain much more satire: Cynthias Revels: Or, The Fountain of Self-Love (pr. c. 1600-1601) is a complex allegory praising Queen Elizabeth and satirizing some of Jonsons contemporaries, while Poetaster: Or, His Arraignment (pr. 1601) has a Roman setting and contains scathing attacks on the dramatists adversaries. The comedies. Volpone: Or, The Fox (pr. 1605), perhaps the greatest satiric comedy in English, shows the effects of greed on individual characters and society in general. Epicne: Or, The Silent Woman (pr. 1609), thought by to be the most entertaining of Jonsons comedies, is not so biting in its satire of humanity generally as Volpone; the gulling of the old recluse Morose is all in a kind of fun in which no one gets hurt. Greed and other human foibles are again satirized in The Alchemist (pr. 1610), a play relying on the medieval belief in alchemy to show how the human desire to solve complex problems with quick, simple answers makes people susceptible to quackery. Bartholomew Fair (pr. 1614) uses a rather simple, though well-ordered, plot to present a realistic pageant of colorful London charactersa veritable circus of pickpockets, mountebanks, confidence men, religious hypocrites, ballad mongers, puppetmasters, and many others. The good fun ends with all characters being forgiven their transgressions. The late comedies return to the allegorical and satiric form of some of Jonsons earlier plays, with limited success. To this group belong The Devil Is an Ass (pr. 1616), The Staple of News (pr. 1629), The New Inn: Or, The Light Heart (pr. 1629), The Magnetic Lady: Or, Humours Reconciled (pr. 1632), and A Tale of a Tub (pr. 1633). The plots continue to be developed along the lines of classical comedy and are imaginatively drawn, but the characters remain mere emblems. Jonsons two tragedies, both on Roman themes, are different in several respects from those of Shakespeare. Jonson, perhaps to display his superior knowledge of classical history; he also took as his sources the original Latin works rather than English translations or dramatic adaptations. Sejanus His Fall (pr. 1603), which derives from Tacitus, stretches the unity of time; the play depicts the destruction of the powerful Sejanus by the Emperor Tiberius. The psychological analysis of the tyrants mind is well done both dramatically and intellectually, leading to the creation of Jonsons great comic character Volpone. Catiline His Conspiracy (pr. 1611) uses classical sources and dramatic devices, including a ghost and chorus, to show how humankinds bestial nature shapes political history. Characterization here, however, is weaker than in Sejanus His Fall. Jonson wrote two pastoral plays, one of which, The Sad Shepherd: Or, A Tale of Robin Hood (pb. 1640), employs exquisite poetry in a mixture of pastoral and realistic traditions. The play exists only as a fragment; Jonsons other pastoral, The May Lord, is now lost. Jonsons poetical ability as a dramatist can be seen in the pastoral fragment; Jonsons poetical ability as a dramatist can be seen in the pastoral fragment. provide entertainment at courtly functions and celebrations and different from the drama written for the public theater, for the companies of child actors, and for academic purposes. Jonson was the principal writer of masques during the reign of James I, and in these elaborate productions he replaced his satiric with his talent for writing carefully functions and celebrations and celebrate productions he replaced his satiric with his talent for writing carefully functions and celebrate productions he replaced his satiric with his talent for writing carefully functions and celebrate productions he replaced his satiric with his talent for writing carefully functions and celebrate productions he replaced his satiric with his talent for writing carefully functions. crafted poetry. Among the many masques he wrote for production at the court of James I are The Satyr (pr. 1608), The Masque of Blacknesse (pr. 1608), The Masque of Blacknesse (pr. 1609), Oberon (pr. 1601), The Golden Age Restored (pr. 1616), and Gypsies Metamorphosed (pr. 1621). These plays contain neither great character development nor profound ideas, for the purpose of masques was to provide not social commentary but courtly entertainment. What they do show is another side to this prolific and complex writer. Like many of his colleagues, Jonson collaborated with other dramatists in writing plays. He had gone to jail for his part in writing The Isle of Dogs (pr. 1597) with , a play now lost. He had better luck with Eastward Ho! (pr. 1605), written in collaboration with and . Scholars have been unable to determine with certainty which parts were written by which authors, for the play contains none of the biting satire of Jonson, the psychological analysis of Chapman, or the bitterness of Marston. The plot is realistic, presenting the virtues and pettiness in the lives of common tradesmen. The moral, if it can be taken at face value, is rather mundane, but the play is a pleasant comedy that presents middle-class London life in the style of or .Drama after JonsonHad Shakespeare and Jonson never written drama, the history of the theater during the Renaissance would appear as a continuum from the late Elizabethan period, or almost so. The tradition developed by the University Wits was continued by , , Thomas Middleton, , , , and . These men, individually or in collaboration, wrote plays superior to any written for two hundred years or more thereafter. Their relative obscurity is caused simply by their proximity to the greatest dramatists in our culture. Others, such as , , , , and , were good dramatists whose works lie even deeper in the shadows of Shakespeare and Jonson. George ChapmanGeorge , perhaps best known in the twentieth century as the translator of who impressed the English Romantic poet John Keats, was a leading literary figure in his day. He contributed both comedies and tragedies in response to the growing demand in London for new plays. His plots are distinctive and sometimes powerful, but seldom are their motives carefully analyzed. His comedies include The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (pr. 1596), An Humourous Days Mirth (pr. 1597), The Gentleman Usher (pr. c. 1602), All Fools (pr. 1604), Monsieur dOlive (pr. 1604), Monsieur dOlive (pr. 1604), The Widows Tears (pr. c. 1605), and May Day (pr. c. 1609). Three others were written in collaboration: Eastward Ho! with Jonson and Marston, and The Ball (pr. 1632) and Chabot, Admiral of France (pr. 1635) with James Shirley. The comedies develop interesting characters in usually improbable plots. The vulgarity of some of the subplots in May Day seems strange coming from the moral Chapman, but certainly the play offers a realistic treatment of its subject. Chapmans five tragedies offer an interesting study of the Renaissance view of Stoicism. Drawing primarily on French history rather than English, Chapman created strong heroes placed in stories of political intrigue. Hotspur in Henry IV, Part I, Othello, Kent in King Lear, and Coriolanus. Bussy is a tested soldier out of place in the world of courtly intrigue. In The Revenge of Bussy dAmbois (pr. c. 1610), Bussys brother Clermont, more of the detached stoic character than Bussy, philosophizes with himself on the subject of morality, revenges the murder of his brother, and dies by his own hand. The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron (pr. 1608) returns to the theme of Bussy dAmbois to show a strong character whose passions lead to his destruction. Chapmans last two tragedies, The Warse to the theme of Bussy dAmbois to show a strong character whose passions lead to his destruction. of Caesar and Pompey (pr. c. 1613) and Chabot, Admiral of France, both present heroes who react stoically to the problems that beset them. Chapmans purpose throughout seems to be to use drama to present psychological studies of characters in the manner of Shakespeare before him and Webster after, and although his dramatic structure is often faulted by scholars, he was one of the most popular of the Jacobean dramatists. Thomas DekkerAnother important dramatist of the late Renaissance is , a man whose love of life is reflected in his comedies. He took part in the war of the theaters that erupted between Jonson and Marston, writing the comedy Satiromastix: Or, The Untrussing of the Humourous Poet (pr. 1601) the humorous poet being Jonson. Dekkers attack was not vitriolic, but Jonson soon realized that he was far too easy a target and withdrew from the war. Dekker is best known for The Shoemakers Holiday: Or, The Gentle Craft (pr. 1600), a pleasant comedy using a plot and characters borrowed from Thomas Deloneys prose romance The Gentle Craft (1597). Other comedies by Dekker are The Whole History of Fortunatus (pr. 1599; commonly known as Old Fortunatus), the two parts of The Honest Whore (pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is in It (pr. c. 1610-1612; also as If It Be Not Good, pr. 1599; commonly known as Old Fortunatus), the two parts of The Honest Whore (pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is in It (pr. c. 1610-1612; also as If It Be Not Good, pr. 1599; commonly known as Old Fortunatus), the two parts of The Honest Whore (pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is in It (pr. c. 1610-1612; also as If It Be Not Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, pr. 1604 and c. 1605 respectively), The Whore of Babylon (pr. c. 1606-1607), If This Be Not a Good, p the Devil Is in It), Match Me in London (pr. c. 1611-1612), and The Wonder of a Kingdom (pr. c. 1623). In addition, Dekker collaborated with other writers. His comedies are remarkable for their realistic portrayal of contemporary life and customs in essentially romantic plots. He excelled at the creation of individual scenes, although connections between the scenes are not always adequately provided. Thomas MiddletonA dramatist known to have collaborated with Dekker is who probably had a hand in writing The Honest Whore with Dekker and Jonson. His most important comedies among the many he wrote are The Phoenix (pr. c. 1604), Michaelmas Term (pr. c. 1606), A Trick to Catch the Old One (pr. c. 1605-1606), The Old Law: Or, A New Way to Please You (pr. c. 1605), and A Game at Chess. His comedies present life as he found it, in all of its coarseness, but his fine poetry and mastery of language attracted the attention of audiences during Girl: Or, Moll Cutpurse (pr. c. 1610) and probably with Jonson and Fletcher on The Widow (pr. c. 1616). He wrote two tragedies in collaboration with William Rowley: A Fair Quarrel (pr. c. 1615-1617) and his best, The Changeling (pr. 1622), plays that contain good ideas well dramatized but that are marred by highly sensational, bloody scenes. John WebsterThe plays of are second only to those of Shakespeare in their analysis of the psychology of evil. Scholars have long admired the magnificence of Websters villains but condemned their motivations as obscure. Modern scholarship has argued that the characterizations in Websters two best plays, The White Devil (pr. c. 1609-1612) and The Duchess of Malfi (pr. 1614), are in fact complex, virtually clinical analyses of psychological disorders. The horrors visited on the virtuous Duchess of Malfi by her brother Ferdinand, for example, can be traced to the same source as his lycanthropy: his incestuous love for his sister and his inability to achieve his desires or even to admit them to himself. Webster wrote only two other plays but collaborated on several others. Appius and Virginia (pr. c. 1634; with Thomas Heywood) is a Roman tragedy that lacks the analysis of horror found in his other tragedies. The Devils Law-Case (pr. c. 1619-1622) is a romantic comedy that illustrates Websters grasp of comic satire. Both plays have been neglected by scholars because they do not contain the startling portrayal of horror long thought to be Websters forte; they be reexamined in the light of modern scholarship. Webster collaborated on two plays with Rowley, A Cure for a Cuckold (pr. c. 1624-1625) and The Thracian Wonder (pr. c. 1617); he also collaborated with Dekker, notably on Westward Ho! (pr. 1604). John Ford, like Webster, is known for his use of sensationalism. He explores fr love, as many of his colleagues did, but the problems that lead to the frustration are not the usual ones. Complex plots, as in The Broken Heart (pr. c. 1627-1631), lead the audience through a maze of sympathies and emphases. The play begins with a love triangle involving the unhappy heroine, Penthea; moves its focus to her brother, who is murdered by her lover; and ends by concentrating on Princess Calantha, who stoically receives the news of the death of her two friends and of her father the king long enough to set her affairs and those of the state in order before dying of a broken heart. In his best play, Tis Pity Shes a Whore (pr. c. 1629-1633), Ford uses the theme of incest, as Webster did in The Duchess of Malfi, but in Fords play incest is much more central to the plot and more explicitly treated. Indeed, so sympathetic is Fords treatment of the brother and sister, Giovanni and Annabella, whose incestuous love leads to their tragic deaths, that some critics have seen a conflict between the plays apparently moral conclusion (sin is punished) and its inner logic. Among Fords other contributions to drama are Perkin Warbeck (pr. c. 1632), The Fancies Chast and Noble (pr. c. 1633). All the plays show clear construction and often scenes of intense passion and emotion. Perkin Warbeck is generally considered to be the best history play written after those of Marlowe and Shakespeare. Ford also collaborated with Dekker and Rowley on The Witch of Edmonton (pr. 1624). Several plays known to be by Ford are no longer extant. Francis Beaumont and John FletcherThe names of (c. 1584-1616) and , while they both wrote plays individually and Fletcher collaborated with several other dramatists, are almost always mentioned together because of the great success of the plays that they wrote in collaboration. The one play sometimes assigned solely to Beaumont is The Woman Hater (pr. c. 1606), a kind of burlesque comedy; some modern scholars believe that Beaumont was also the sole author of the mock-heroic satiric comedy The Knight of the Burning Pestle (pr. 1607). About twenty plays are usually assigned to Fletcher alone, including the pastoral The Faithful Shepherdess (pr. c. 1608-1609), a play of excellent poetry and rich imagery. Fletcher collaborated on many other plays with such dramatists as Massinger, Rowley, Middleton, and perhaps even Shakespeare. The best works of Beaumont and Fletcher, however, are to be found among the plays jointly written by them rather than in their solo efforts. Philaster: Or, Love Lies A-Bleeding (pr. c. 1609), one of the finest plays of its day, is a tragicomedy that achieves genuine pathos. The play was acted often during the seventeenth century and returned to the stage well into the nineteenth century. The Maids Tragedy (pr. c. 1611) suffers from sensationalism and sentimentality, but its well-constructed plot and vivid characterization made it a popular play during its day. Both Beaumont and Fletcher were men of good family and good education giving them a familiarity with men and women of high social standing and a certain contempt for the common person. They were able to write interesting and successful plays that often achieve brilliant effects, but they seldom explored the basic questions of human psychology with the intensity of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, or Webster. Other JacobeansMarston, Heywood, Massinger, Tourneur, and Shirley are usually ranked somewhat lower than the Jacobean dramatists discussed above, although some noteworthy critics would disagree with this ranking in a given case. Marston began his literary career as a poet, turned playwright, and then gave it all up to become a priest. He entered the war of the theaters against Jonson with his Histriomastix: Or, The Player Whipt (pr. 1599) and was held up to ridicule as the character Crispinus in Jonsons Poetaster, but the battle ended quickly, and Marston collaborated with Jonson and Chapman in Eastward Ho! in 1605. He even dedicated to Jonson his most famous play, The Malcontent (pr. 1604), the story of a virtuoso cynic. The deposed Duke Altofronto, disguised as the jester Malevole, roams the court commenting on immorality and injustice. In The Malcontent, however, as in Marstons other plays, the characters motivations are often lost in the vigor of the action. is usually listed as a major Jacobean dramatist on the strength of volume alone, for he wrote more than two hundred plays wholly or in part, many of which are no longer extant. His plays are the domestic dramas, the ones in which specific elements of private life are dealt with interestingly and without undue sensationalism. Charles Lambs description of Heywood as a prose Shakespeare is certainly hyperbolic; Heywood was a professional writer turning out plays for actors on proven themes. His best play is A Woman Killed with Kindness (pr. 1603), a kind of domestic tragedy on the order of Shakespeares Othello, the Moor of Venice. In Heywoods play, the woman is guilty of adultery but repentant; her husband, controlling his rage and jealousy as Othello does not, banishes his wife to a manor seven mile off, there to live out her life. When she is near death, he goes to her side and forgives her. The English Traveler (pr. c. 1627) presents a similar theme of seduction, repentance, and death from shame. Most of Heywoods plays present the same kind of delicate, thoughtful reactions to sin and a kind of quiet morality. Neither the sin, if that is what it is, nor the morality, if such exists, is analyzed as in the plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and others., who spent his dramatic apprenticeship in collaboration with Fletcher and such other dramatists as Dekker and Rowley, wrote comedies, tragicomedies, and tragedies. His plot construction is skillful and his characterization competent, but his prejudice in favor of the nobility causes his characterization presentation competent, but his prejudice in favor of the nobility. of the political and financial kingmaker Sir Giles is not uncommon as an overreacher a rather usual character type in drama of the Renaissancebut Massingers overreacher does not aspire to be ruler, a position dangerous because of its high profile; rather, he seeks to place others in position of power and wealth so as to secure his own position without the dangers faced by his own greed, and he pays for his sins. The City Madam (pr. c. 1632), a play on a similar theme, is almost as lively and skillful, but its villain, Luke Frugal, does not quite measure up to Sir Giles in consistency and motive. Here again, the distrust that the noble audience of the private theater had of the middle class is at the heart of the plot. Two plays are usually credited to , a poet and dramatist about whose life little is known. The Revengers Tragedy (pr. 1606-1607), regarded by some critics as one of the masterpieces of Jacobean drama, shows the corrupting power of revenge. Vindice, the protagonist, like his predecessor Hamlet, begins the play as a moral man caught up in a plot of lust and murder; unlike Hamlet, however, Tourneurs revenger acts not as a minister of heaven but as a man who learns to plot and murder with glee. Vindice recognizes at the end of the play that he has been corrupted when he says, Tis time to die when were ourselves our foes. Tourneurs other play (if indeed he wrote either onethere is some question) is also a revenge tragedy. The Atheists Tragedy: Or, The Honest Mans Revenge (pr. c. 1607). As in the earlier play, the dramatist here uses the revenge theme to express Christian virtues. A ghost is employed, as in many earlier revenge bet to God. The play thus offers an interesting addition to the usual revenge theme, but the idea is marred by the rather unrealistic application of reward for a moral life. Because he trusts in the moral order to set things right rather than taking the law into his own hands, Charlemont is rewarded with the same kind of material gain that has caused the villainy in the play. Interesting in the play is the presentation of the new materialism that came to late sixteenth century England. One of the last dramatists of the period is , a professional playwright of whose works more than thirty plays are extantmore than any playwright of the period except Shakespeare and Fletcher. Shirleys plays are extantmore than any playwright of the period except Shakespeare and Fletcher. wide range of themes and plots. Of his six tragedies, The Cardinal (pr. 1641) is the best. It has all the trappings of revenge tragedy who followed him. There are echoes here of Websters The Duchess of Malfi, but Shirley is content to present the actionally displayed, as they had been presented by Kyd and the great writers of revenge tragedy sensationally displayed. without psychological probing. He wrote many more comedies than tragedies, the best being Hyde Park (pr. 1632) and The Lady of Pleasure (pr. 1635). The former is an early comedy of manners that looks forward to the drama of the Restoration. Shirley provides no hint that the pleasures of the aristocracy presented in this comedy would lead to the 1642 Civil War, only a few years away. The latter play presents a similar picture of an aristocracy for whom life is defined by their own pleasures and trivial concerns. The characters play at love in a sensual London, and the morality that is reaffirmed at the end of the play is little more than a witty refusal to sink completely into the mire. Shirley was at the height of his career when, on September 2, 1642, the ruling Puritan administration proclaimed that public stage-plays will cease and be foreborne, thus putting an end to the greatest period of English drama the world has known. It had its origins in the ideas and structures of Greek and Roman drama and in the realism of native English drama and life. It was able to grow to maturity because the intellectual and social climate of England was such that citizens were free politically and economically to pursue those ideas wherever they led. That persons of rare genius such as Shakespeare and Jonson happened along during the development of drama elevated the achievement to a level that has enthralled succeeding generations, but even without their contributions, the high reputation of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama would be secure. Rarely before or since has literature of any type held such a clear mirror up to nature, and never with such consistency. BibliographyBraunmuller, A. R., and Michael Hattaway, eds. The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama. Cambridge UP, 1995. Davies, Hugh Alistair, and M. H. Butler. "Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama." Britannica.com/art/English-literature/Elizabethan-and-early-Stuart-drama. Accessed 6 Nov. 2024. Dollimore, Jonathan. Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries. 1984. Reprint. Duke UP, 1994. Egendorf, Laura K., and Chris Smith. Elizabethan Drama. Gale Group, 2000. Kastan, David Scott, and Peter Stallybrass, eds. Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan Drama. Routledge, 1990. Leggatt, Alexander. Introduction to English Renaissance Comedy. Manchester UP, 1999. Neill, Michael. Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy. Oxford UP, 2000. Published: Apr 1, 2025written by Lauren Jones, MA Creative Writing Before Elizabeth I ascended to the British throne. theatre was broadly seen as sinful and crude. The Renaissance, accompanied by the Reformation and philosophical Humanism, elevates the artform from traditional church led mystery plays to classical drama. It could be argued that it was Queen Elizabeths patronage of the arts that popularized the form and gave us some of our most famous playwrights (Shakespeare, Marlowe, Kyd). Although continuing in popularity under her successor King James Is reign, the theatre responded to the restless political climate as well as advances in exploration, culture and scientific developments synonymous with the Renaissance. By the end of this era, theatre had transformed from the bawdy, humble beginnings to a more refined, literary pursuit recognizable today. How Were Domestic and Political Interests Conveyed? James IV of Scotland, by Jacob Jacobsz de Wet II. Source: The Royal Collections Trust Influenced by Roman comedies, Elizabethan playwrights often centered their plots around domestic matters. This meant a smaller cast of feature content of se characters, lower stakes and private matters. The characters traditionally would be ordinary, working folk dealing with recognizable dilemmas. However, Jacobean theatre widened its scope to encompass broader political and philosophical concerns. Frequently the cast of characters will be of the noble class, royalty and clergy; their personal motivations impacting on the courts they preside over. Plays such as Websters The Duchess of Malfi exemplify this type of drama. What Was the Difference Between English and European Settings? The Theatre of Dionysus at Athens by Edward Whymper, 1890. Source: The New York Public Library, New York In early Elizabethan theatre, the influence of English pastoral plays were still evident. Of these, Nicholas Udalls Ralph Roister Doister demonstrates the typical facets of English farce of the drama arrogantly believes that every woman he meets is in love with him. Played for comedy, the drama arrogantly believes that every woman he meets is in love with him. morality plays. In contrast, Jacobean plays took geographical inspiration from the Renaissance and were usually set in mainland Europe (particularly Italy) or based in antiquity (such as Greek or Roman settings). This trend can be seen in the canon of Shakespeares works which center around noble houses in Italy. Locations and VenuesA 1982 production of Everyman. Source: Shakespeares Staging, UC Berkeley The successful opening of The Theatre in 1576 paced the way for plays as a popular form of entertainment for all classes with entrance fees varying accordingly. The mixed audience is reflected in the content of the plays produced in this era which dealt with broad, humanistic themes that would appeal to the everyman. Later, more intimate indoor candlelit performance spaces popular in the Jacobean era, gave upper class theatre goers the opportunity for exclusivity. This is similarly reflected in the shift in content toward more sophisticated court politics. How Did Acting Styles Differ?Inside the Globe Theatre. Source: Shakespeares Globe Elizabethan audiences almost exclusively experienced plays in large, open-air venues such as The Rose or The Globe. These could have up to 2000 audience members at any time, and (unlike today) there was no expected standard of behavior from the audience so walking around, talking and heckling were commonplace. Therefore, the acting style could be termed formal or presentational with a focus on clear delivery, often directly to the audiences moved to smaller, more intimate interior venues such as The Blackfriars Theatre, the favored acting style naturally developed to suit the space therefore becoming more natural. How Did Comedy and Tragedy Manifest? Julius Caesar at the Globe Generally speaking, Elizabethan theatre was open to everyone therefore becoming more natural. How Did Comedy and Tragedy Manifest? to diverse tastes. Comedies could include broad slapstick alongside witty wordplay; Shakespeares early comedies being shining examples of this. While tragedies were popular, the genre often contained fairly straightforward plots and occasional comic relief such as can be found in Arden of Feversham first performed in 1592. Playwrights of the Jacobean era, honed tragedies into darker, more complex tales with the most famous of these termed Revenge Tragedies. The violence in these is more extreme and the consequences more dire than in earlier works. Lauren is a qualified teacher and writer with an academic background in theatre (Shakespeare), folklore, and creative writing. She is also a travel writer and guide. Together with her husband she curates the travel website www.twohumansandadog.com. Lauren writes, explores, and teaches full time, always looking for the next adventure. Elizabethan England was named after its king, James I. He was also King James VI of Scotland before Scotland and England were ruled by one monarch (king or queen). Elizabethan London was a place of contrast. Who were the major writters of the Jacobean period and how they contributed to the enrichment of English drama?William Shakespeares greatest tragedies were written between about 1607. Other Jacobean dramatic writers became preoccupied with the problem of evil: the plays of John Webster, John Marston, Thomas Middleton, and George Chapman induce all the terror of tragedy but little of its pity. What were the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras? The Elizabethan and Jacobean eras? The Elizabethan and Jacobean eras? The Elizabethan era coincides with the reign of Queen Elizabethan era coincides with the reign of Labethan era coincides with the reign coincides with the reign of King James (1603-1625). What was literature like in the Elizabethan era? The Elizabethan age of drama (especially for the plays of Shakespeare), and inspired a wide variety of splendid prose (from historical chronicles versions of the Holy Scriptures, pamphlets, and literary criticism to How did Jacobean poetry?Jacobean literature. Some of Shakespeares greatest tragedies were written during this period. Many poets questioned the stability of the social order and worried about forces of evil.What is meant by Elizabethan and Jacobean drama discuss its main features? Jacobean drama of the drama in English drama. But with the turn of the century, the drama in English also took a turn. It does not mean that there were no dramatists left. What are the main features of Elizabethan Age :Revival of Interest in Greek Literature? Characteristic Features of Elizabethan Age :Revival of Interest in Greek Literature? Novel.When was the Elizabethan era?November 17, 1558 March 24, 1603Elizabethan era / PeriodWhat is meant by Elizabethan literature?Elizabethan literature?Elizabethan literature?Elizabethan era?November 17, 1558 March 24, 1603Elizabethan era of English literature? Elizabethan Era: Home This era is often considered the Golden Age of England because it was a time of immense progress, stability, and national pride. During Elizabethan age was remarkable for its religious tolerance, strong national spirit, patriotism, social content, intellectual progress & unbounded enthusiasm. Incredible thoughts, feelings & vigorous actions were the pillar of this age. It flowers extraordinary development of drama. Why was the Elizabethan era important? The Elizabethan age is considered to be a time of English renaissance that inspired national pride through classical ideals, international expansion, and naval triumph. This English Renaissance saw the flowering of poetry, music and literature. Why is it called the Elizabethan era? The term, Elizabethan Era refers to the English history of Queen Elizabethan era? The term, Elizabethan era? E English history and its been widely romanticized in books, movies, plays, and TV series. What were the dominant literary themes in the Elizabethan era? Some of the most significant themes in the Elizabethan sonnet sequences include love, time, the value of writing, and the eternalization of beauty. Romantic love is one of the central themes; many sonnets of the Elizabethan era wrote about the frustrations of unreciprocated love. Why Elizabethan period is important? When was the Jacobean era / Period Why is Elizabethan age called the golden age of English literature? What is the Jacobean period? March 24, 1603 March 24, works written during the reign of James I of England (160325). The successor to Elizabethan literature was often dark in mood, guestioning of the period, What are the characteristics of the Jacobean era? The Jacobean literature was often dark in mood, guestioning the stability of the social order; some of William Shakespeare s greatest tragedies may date from the beginning of the period. What are the characteristics of the Jacobean era? The Jacobean era? era succeeds the Elizabethan era and precedes the Caroline era, and specifically denotes a style of architecture, visual arts, decorative arts, and literature? Elizabethan era in literature? Elizabethan era in literature? known for his plays volpone and the alchemist, his lyrics, his influence on jacobean and caroline poets, his theory of humours, his contentious personality. [6] What did Shakespeare wrote several of his best works during the Jacobean period, including Macbeth. We also found that the King James Bible also derives from this time period which is still one of the most prominent works in terms of literature in history. The unfortunate part is that the artistic side of England had somewhat been overshadowed. Jacobean drama is, quite simply defined, the drama that was written and performed during the reign of Elizabeths successor, James I. But, as with Elizabethan theatre, it is more than just the plays written during the reign of a particular monarch: like Elizabethan drama, Jacobean drama has its particular characteristics. The comic dramas of the Elizabethan theatre give way to harsh satire, led by Ben Jonson; the Elizabethan tragic dramas give way to an obsession with moral corruption and violent stories of revenge. In both forms, the dramas of the time show a cynical and pessimistic outlook on life. Some of the most prominent, Fletcher, Middleton, Rowley, Marston, Heyward, Ford and Dekker. A Jacobean theatre scene depicting A Midsummer Nights Dream James inherited a whole English theatre was thriving as well as any industry of the time, complete with about twenty London theatres and scores of playwrights feeding them with new material every week. By the time James came to the throne, the theatre had become a favourite leisure activit in London, but the appetites of the theatre-going public were changing. Audiences loved the humour and the many human situations the tragic and comic dramas that were unfolding before them on the stage. But as time went on the playwrights, reading the audiences changing appetite, felt the need to give them even more realistic representations of the society of which they were a part. Towards the end of Elizabeths reign the plays were becoming more edgy and human situations were focusing on the human beings capacity for selfishness, and exaggerating such Renaissance forces as human ambition and its effects. They were exploring the nature of evil, pushing to the extremes of human behaviour. Audiences flocked in to see those representations of the society in which they lived, dramatised in exciting, titillating stories, full of sex and violence. And so we have Duchess of Malfi, with their highly intelligent characters perpetrating on a play that is still regarded as a model of Jacobean drama, The Changeling, in which we see a murderer cutting off the finger of his victim because the rinc he wants to steal wont come off. That is mild, though, compared with Shakespeares King Lear, where Lears daughter, Regan, tearing the old Gloucesters eyes out, with his moving human dramas, his comedies, and his ever-ready memorable quotes, but always with the lurking threat of violence, threw himself into the spirit of the Jacobean theatre, applying his talent for characterisation and plot to the new tastes. Iago, for example, the villain of Othello, a psychopath who limits his own violent acts but manipulates those around him to commit extreme violence, culminating in Othello strangling Desdemona, is the arch Jacobean protagonist ambitious, intelligent, clever and manipulative. And, of course, Jago survives as one of the most notorious villains of both the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and of the king and queen the musical drama, and so the Jacobean theatre is full of masques dramas with music and elaborate sets. And here again, the finest example of a Jacobean masque is Shakespeares The Tempest. Welcome back to Performer Stuffs Know the Basics series, highlighting essential time periods and authors in theatre history. Chances are high that youve read Shakespeare at least once, but if youre going to pursue a theatre degree, youre going to encounter works by other authors who wrote around the same time period. Familiarize yourself with these works by the playwrights who worked alongside Shakespeare (and in his shadow). Well be skipping Shakespeare since weve already covered him, so click here for a lesson on the Bard. Youll find that a lot of these plays are included in our Know the Basics: the Renaissance article, too, so weve added a few more to round out your Elizabeth I and her successor James I.Authors like Thomas Kyd (1558 1594), George Chapman (1559 1634), Christopher Marlowe (1564 1593), William Shakespeare (1564 1616), Ben Jonson (1572 1637), Thomas Dekker (1572 1637), Thomas Dekker (1572 1637), Thomas Middleton (1579 1625), Thomas Middleton (1570 1625), Thomas Middleton (1570 1637), Thomas Dekker (1572 1637), Thomas Middleton (1570 (1584 1616), and John Ford (1586 1639) made major contributions to the English theatre scene in from the mid 1550s to the mid 1550s to the mid 1550s to the mid 1550s to the mid 1550s. The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd (written between 1582 and 1592) Kyds play helps us transition into the English Renaissance. English Renaissance theatre existed between 1562 to 1642 less than one hundred years but it paved the way for all Western theatre that would follow. Highly popular and influential during the early days of English Renaissance theatre, The Spanish Tragedy is a revenge play, the first of its kind, consisting of a series of violent murders onstage (fake and staged, of course). Its content and style influenced the plays of Ben Jonson Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare, most notably Shakespeares Hamlet. (The Spanish Tragedy employs the use of a ghost character who presents the central conflict of the play like the Ghost of Hamlets.) Marlowes play about the man who sells his soul to the devil was the most famous and one of the first plays to address a humans willful interaction with the demonic realm. Prior to Doctor Faustus, playwrights shied away from including such material because of their fear of the character Faust, Doctor Faustus, a well-respected scholar, becomes bored with traditional methods of acquiring knowledge intense study of medicines, law, and religion and years to gain more power and book-smarts. Over the next 24 years, he traipses around the world impressing dignitaries with magic, but when his time is up, he is carried off to Hell by a host of demonic forces, leaving his limbs behind. In Jonsons play, each main character is named after an animal: Volpone (the Fox), is a Venetian gentleman and lawyer; Mosca (the Fly), his servant; and Voltore (the Vulture), Corbaccio (the Raven), and Corvino (the Crow), the men who hope to inherit Volpones wealth upon his death. Volpone pretends to be on his deathbed after a long illness in order to fool Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino for fun. Mosca convinces each man that he has been chosen to inherit Volpones fortune, which causes Corbaccio to disinherit his own son, Bonario, in favor of Volpone. Corvino even offers up his own wife, Celia, so that he might win the favor of Volpone. Later, Volpone insists that he must fake his own death (just for kicks), and he lists Mosca as his sole heir, forgetting all about Corbaccio, Voltore, and Corvino. When everyone returns to court to dispute the decision, Mosca wont relinquish his newfound inheritance, and Volpone and his trio of duped friends are finally punished. This play is the first parody play in English and is a satire on chivalric romances. Its a parody of Thomas Dekkers The Shoemakers Holiday. The short version? Actors are about to perform a play called The London Merchant, and a Citizen and his Wife in the audience of the play interrupt and complain that the play might misrepresent the middle-class. They demand that the actors put on a play that the man and his wife will enjoy. They also demand that their apprentice, Rafe, be put into the production. The actors give Rafe a role a knight errant and a shield with a burning pestle on it and send him on adventures within their impromptu play. Loosely based on the events that occurred during the time, The Duchess of Malfi took events from the life of Duchess, Websters is the most famous. The plot centers around The Duchess whose brothers, Ferdinand and the Cardinal, are enraged at her bold act of taking the throne upon her husbands death. Ferdinand, having an incestuous attraction to his sister, seeks also to control her by limiting her ability to rule. When she marries Antonio and has three children by him, Ferdinand, incensed, enlists the Cardinals help and they murder their sister in cold bloodalong with her children and her handmaid. Based on events that took place outside of London earlier in 1621, the play depicts Elizabeth Sawyer who sells her soul to the Devil after she has been unfairly shunned by her neighbors. She hopes to get revenge on her neighbors for slighting her, and after making the contract, communicates with a dog called Tom who appears as the manifestation of the Devil. The Witch of Edmonton is a tragicomedy that presents Sawyer as a product of a harsh society rather than condemning her for choosing a path of darkness. Widely regarded as one of the English Renaissance, The Changeling contains two main plots: Within the territory of Alicante lives Vermandero and his daughter, Beatrice-Joanna. Three other characters round out this plot line: Alonzo, Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna orders to kill Alonzo (De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores, the man who Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does love; and De Flores also secretly loves Beatrice-Joanna does l Joanna). Beatrice bribes De Flores to kill Alonzo, and because De Flores thinks she is promising her virginity, he does. (Spoiler alert: shes not.) The second plot line takes place in an asylum, which is run by Alibius who is married to Isabella. Alibius is terrified that his wife will cheat on him, so he has her locked up in one of the asylum cells. Two men faking madness try to seduce Isabella, but are unsuccessful. These two plots collide when Vermandero invites Alibius, his friend, to Beatrice-Joanna is too ashamed to sleep with Alsemero on their wedding night, she has her handmaid, Diaphanta, sneak in the bedroom and do it instead. Ultimately, Diaphanta is shot and killed, Beatrice-Joanna is stabbed by De Flores, and De Flores, and De Flores stabs himself. Crazy, right? A comedy set in France during the reign of Charles VIII in France, the story revolves around a noblewoman named Bellisant whose love for extravagant parties, food, drink, and flirtation are risking her good name. Seeing Bellisants escapades and the troubles of other courtiers, King Charles decrees that a Parliament of Love will be held where every unhappy lover will be held where every unhappy lover will be allowed to plead their case. A series of snafus and blunders results in everyone thinking a prominent courtier, Montrose, has been sleeping with Bellisant. These things, however, are false (as is with all farces). Montrose is united with Beaupre, his wife whom he abandoned previously in the play. Happy endings abound. One would think incest a popular occurrence in Jacobean stories because Fords play, like Websters, also deals with incest. Giovanni, recently returned from university, develops an intense passion for his sister, Annabella, and upon learning of his desires, Annabella returns them (cue simultaneous eyeroll and gasp). Knowing that she cannot continue her relationship with her brother, Annabella marries her suitor, Soranzo. When Annabella finds out her pregnancy is a result of her relationship with her brother, she panicsand so does Giovanni. Giovanni visits her one evening, stabs her, and carves her heart out of her chest, presenting it on a dagger at dinner. Grim, right? Well, its one of the most controversial works in English literature, only recently (at the opening of the 20th century) gaining more acceptance as a profound work of drama. Fletchers play includes a device used by Aristophanes in Lysistrata a women refusing to have sex with her husband in order to influence his decisions and attitude. Based on Shakespeares Taming of the Shrew, The Tamer Tamed is a response (not exactly a sequel) that revolves around Petruchios second marriage (after his wife Katherine has died). His new wife, Maria, is an even bigger rebel, and she mocks, bothers, and belittles Petruchio for the ridiculous life he leads. In Petruchios attempt to get Maria to feel compassion toward him, he has men bear him onstage in a coffin. And in one of the most famous scenes in Elizabethan theatre, Maria, thinking him dead, bemoans not his loss, but how foolish his life was, proving him less of a man and more a mockery of men.

What is the difference between jacobean and elizabethan. What's the difference between elizabethan and jacobean. What is the difference between elizabethan and jacobean theatre. What is jacobean drama. Difference between elizabethan and jacobean era. What is the difference between the elizabethan era and the jacobean era. Jacobean or elizabethan.