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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of
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DEDICATIONS

Every challenging work needs self-efforts as well as guidance of the elders especially those who were close to my heart. I would like to thank my husband, my family members and all my friends for their support and patience.

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ABSTRACT

The present work gives more emphasis on the Elizabethan literature through the study of the various characteristics of poetry and drama. The objective of the researcher is to provide the readers, notably the students, with new useful information on English literature during its golden age.

The work is divided into four chapters; the first chapter deals with the evolution of literature and female role in enhancing literary views during ancient times of the Greeks and the Romans. The second chapter discusses the birth of the Elizabethan literature and the general characteristics of poetry during the Renaissance era. The third chapter studies a form of poetry called the Sonnet which was one of the greatest literary innovations that made a great influence on people during this time. The last chapter is about Elizabethan drama (tragedy, comedy), theatre and their impact during the Elizabethan age.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The earlier half of Elizabeth's reign, also, though not lacking in literary effort, produced no work of permanent importance. After the religious convulsions of half a century time was required for the development of the internal quiet and confidence from which a great literature could spring. At length, however, the hour grew ripe and there came the greatest outburst of creative energy in the whole history of English literature. Under Elizabeth's wise guidance, the prosperity and enthusiasm of the nation had risen to the highest pitch, and London in particular was overflowing with vigorous life.

The great literary period is taken by common consent to begin with the publication of Spenser's 'Shepherd's Calendar' in 1579, and to end in some sense at the death of Elizabeth in 1603, though in the drama, at least, it really continues many years longer. Several general characteristics of Elizabethan literature and writers should be indicated at the outset.

The period has the great variety of almost unlimited creative force; it includes works of many kinds in both verse and prose, and ranges in spirit from the loftiest Platonic idealism or the most delightful romance to the level of very repulsive realism. It was mainly dominated, however, by the spirit of romance. It was full also of the spirit of dramatic action, as befitted an age whose restless enterprise was eagerly extending itself to every quarter of the globe.

In style it often exhibits romantic luxuriance, which sometimes takes the form of elaborate affectations of which the favorite 'conceit' is only the most apparent. It was in part a period of experimentation, when the proper material and limits of literary forms were being determined, oftentimes by means of false starts and grandiose failures. In particular, many efforts were made to give prolonged poetical treatment to many subjects essentially prosaic, for example to systems of theological or scientific thought, or to the geography of all England.

As far as the present study is concerned, there are many motives behind the choice of Elizabethan Age. In fact, this period witnessed the birth of one of the greatest dramatists in the English literature "William Shakespeare" and the evolution of his precious works. In

Addition to this, this era was a turning point in Britain' history during which a new style of writing and new thinking on the different socio-cultural aspects emerged. However, there are still some ambiguous sides that need further exploration. Among the various questions that could be raised is; which status did literature have during the Elizabethan age?, a possible answer to such a question could include the fact that the writers played a vital role in the evolution of the Elizabethan society through introducing romance, realism and people' behavior analysis. The whole work is based on historical facts and events, and their impact on society.

The work is divided into four chapters; the first chapter deals with the evolution of literature and female role in enhancing literary views during ancient times of the Greeks and the Romans. The second chapter discusses the birth of the Elizabethan literature and the general characteristics of poetry during the Renaissance era. The third chapter studies a form of poetry called the Sonnet which was one of the greatest literary innovations that made a great influence on people during this time. The last chapter is about Elizabethan drama (tragedy, comedy), theatre and their impact during the Elizabethan age.

Chapter 1

Literature in Ancient

Times

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1. Introduction

The effects of Ancient Greek and Roman writers are important because the General idea of the Renaissance is the rebirth of the Classical era – the rebirth of its art, its literature, its philosophy centred on ethics, its interest in the human. Only four authors were chosen to represent this great time – Euripides, Virgil, Ovid and Seneca – because they created female characters that outlived their times and were reborn in the Early Modern period in the plays of Italian and English writers.

2. Ancient Greece

The Ancient Greek drama from the fifth century BCE is the original drama – this fact is assumed mainly because “there is no evidence for the existence of, e.g., Chinese, Indian, or Japanese drama as early as the fifth century BC.; and Egyptian ritual did not develop into drama proper” (Miller 126). N.P. Miller in his “The Origins of Greek

A Summary of the Evidence and a Comparison with Early English Drama” claims that the Ancient Greek drama has many origins and that it can be compared to the English Renaissance drama in its development: “However much an artist is influenced (as he must be) by the conventions and inheritance of his own age, we should remember that the inheritance will include conscious intelligence and individual genius, as well as primitive ritual and superstition” (Miller 126). The origins are, among others, religious rituals and processions and vulgar native farces, “perhaps including mythological burlesque” (Miller 128). Tragedy as a genre was “a part of a religious festival; its chorus was of much greater antiquity than its actors, and, to begin with, had the finer and more important part” (Miller 135) and the “subject-matter tended generally to be drawn from the heroic legends for the simple reason that there almost alone, for the moment, could the poet find inspiration for his dramatic thinking” (Miller 136). The comedy then evolved from satyr-plays under the influence of the quickly developing genre of tragedy. Then the “material, the context, and the genius came together” and in “486 BC the first comedy was produced at the Great Dionysia” (Miller 136), a dramatic festival which was previously focused only on tragedy, and the great period of Ancient Greek drama could begin.

Ancient Greece is a period that brought to the literary history many important writers and theorists, but not all of them were sufficiently challenging for the cause of development of female characters. However, among those playwrights whose plays survived at least through the Middle Ages, there was one important author, who was even by his contemporaries

described as a sort of social critic – Euripides. He belongs together with Aeschylus and Sophocles among the greatest dramatists of the 5th century BCE.

2.1. Women and their Social Position

To understand Euripides' criticisms on behalf of the social situation of Athenian women of his era – and thus to understand also his creation of female characters and their influence on future plays – it is important to outline the women's situation and hint several problems that occur in Euripides' plays. In the heroic societies of the world of Homer women had greater freedom – they were subordinated to men, but they were in charge of their own work and were oftentimes consulted in important matters. But in the 5th century BCE the situation became different. The type of government switched from monarchy to democracy and so did the power switch from women to men. In former monarchy the ruling body was a family and women were important members.

In the fifth century the seclusion of women resulted in the popularity of hetairas – female companions (Katz 73). These women were courtesans – they were educated and men in their presence looked not only for sexual pleasure but also for “intellectual stimulation which they had sought at home in vain” (Katz 73). This social paradox is similar, or rather the same, as in the Early Modern Europe – women are not allowed to be educated – and one of the reasons is their incapability of learning and lesser intelligence – yet there exist courtesans, who are not only educated women, but are also sought after by men, who are unsatisfied by the simplicity of their wives. It is only their marginal position in the society – being prostitutes – that makes the patriarchal societies of both eras acquiesce their education and accomplishments.

There was a particular difference in the gender role of a 5th century Greek woman from that of a woman from the Early Modern times – a woman could achieve kleos (fame or glory) only when she “is least talked about among men, either with blame or praise” (Women 51). Because of this rule there is not much known about the Women on the Edge pg. 50. The authors deal with this topic in a part of the Introduction called “Athenian Women and the Ideology of Gender”. Life of Greek women who lived according to their gender role – if they were not seen or even talked about, it is like they never existed. Euripides' female characters often transgress this rule and become if not famous, than at least infamous (Medea). So far it seems that in the position of women in the patriarchal society only a little was changed by the Early Modern era (apart from the above mentioned rule of not being spoken about, which was not in use anymore, but influenced the history of women to a great extent because without being deprived of a voice there would be no reason in trying to gain one), but there was

another change – in the Classical Greece the virtue that was demanded of women was *sōphrosunē*, which meant a whole range of virtues: “selfcontrol, self-knowledge, deference, moderation, resistance to appetite, and chastity”(Women 52). Yet at the beginning of the Early Modern times women supporters had to prove in their literary proclamations that women are even capable of these virtues.

Since the beginning of patriarchy, women’s sexual appetites represented the biggest fear of their husbands, because the wives were in charge of bearing heirs to the husbands’ estates – and the shift from “demanding” self-knowledge and moderation to “not being sure if women are capable of” resisting their appetites shows that two thousand years of historical events, new discoveries, new religions and philosophies did not make it any easier for women.

The characterization of feminine as bad, incapable and passion-driven, and masculine as good, reasonable and self-controlled brought many distinctions in moral standards for both women and men. One of these distinctions is the attitude towards infidelity – women have to moderate themselves and be chaste, while men can seek various kinds of pleasures with the hetairas. This double standard is commented on in several Euripides plays.

2.2 Women and Theatre

Even though women were restricted from appearing in the society – which was applicable only to the higher classes who owned slaves, because women from lower classes had to go out to the markets or on various errands – they were allowed to the performances. Because “live theatre was not an elite art form but enormously popular” (Women 27) and it was “an extension of their world, not an escape from it” (Women 29), even children, slaves and foreigners were allowed to attend. But free men had to pay for entrance for their wives and slaves, who then had to sit in the back, and the capacity of the theatre was not sufficient for the whole Athenian population, so it was the social hierarchy that decided who would get to see the performance. Nevertheless, there were religious activities and festivals in which women played a central role – in rituals for Gaia, Hestia, Hera, Aphrodite, Athena and other female goddesses, women “celebrated their powers of sexuality and fertility” (Women 54). Very important was the worship of Demeter, because men were excluded from these purely female rituals just as women were excluded from various male activities. One exception to the range of female goddesses that were worshipped by women is Dionysos, a male god in whose worship women played an important part. Euripides, *Medea* is an example of an outraged woman criticising the position of women in the society,

2.3 Women and Tragedy

Even though women were marginalized in real life, on the stage they oftentimes took the central position. Yet because all the action in the classical plays occurs outside of the house, the female characters transgress the Athenian gender protocol, which says that upper-class women should not appear in a public discussion.⁸ Michael Shaw in “The Female Intruder: Women in Fifth-Century Drama” comments on this transgression – the coming outside always “implies that something is wrong inside the house which is driving her outside” (256). The woman has to feel betrayed by the society or by the men who should protect her and thus needs to get out of the *oikos* and get the retribution she seeks. Euripides’ Medea says: “Women of Corinth, I have come out of the house to forestall criticism. [...] This unexpected blow has crashed down on my head, destroyed my spirit. [...] I’ve lost my joy in life. [...] For he on whom my all depended, my own husband, turned [...] the vilest of men” (Medea 214-229). This declamation is a beginning of Medea’s monologue, in which she criticizes men and the society for downplaying dangers that threaten women at home. She ends this monologue with a threat: “Elsewhere womankind is full of fear, a coward both in self-defence and at the sight of steel; but when she meets injustice in the marriage-bed, no mind exists that is Aristophanes,, comedies, mentioned in *Women on the Edge*, Introduction, pg. 62 and 80

Other theories described in *Women On The Edge* include Aristotelian argument that the significance of women and family appears in mythology, because the legendary stories are about a few aristocratic families; the tragedies happens among close family members, so the importance of women is based on the position of women from the heroic times and their depiction in the myths rather than on the fact that they were important in real life. Or, another theory claims that tragedies offer warnings what would happen, if women were not suppressed by men. In that case Greek drama “contains no information about the experience of real women” (*Women* 61) and the plays and their performances were a part of “the project of suppressing real women and replacing them with masks of patriarchal production” (*Women* 61). Another approach focuses on the complexities of representation of the gender division – even though the gender roles are sharply distinguished in theory, in real life and in tragedies the boundaries are not that sharp – and suggests that the tragedy has tensions between various binary oppositions built in in order to provide “an ideal environment for Exploring these same tensions within contemporary Athenian society and ideology” (*Women* 61). This theory seems to be in accordance with Euripides being described as a social critic – even in Ancient times the criticisms by Aristophanes and Aristotle show that Euripides wrote differently from his contemporaries.

3. Roman influence

From the rich literary history of the Roman Empire only three representatives were chosen for the purpose of this thesis: Virgil, Ovid and Seneca. Not only were their works accessible in the Early Modern times (both in Italy and England), but they were also important sources for the Early Modern drama and played a significant role in the evolution of female characters. The most influential were: Virgil's Dido from the Aeneid; Ovid's mythical female characters from his Metamorphoses, his heroines in love from the Heroides and his love instructions from the Ars Amatoria – The Art of Love; Seneca's dramatic characters were different from those by Euripides, even though they were often the same mythological heroines, yet his plays were a great influence for the 16th century female dramatis personae.

3.1 Virgil

Virgil, the oldest from the three classical writers discussed in this subchapter, is famous mostly for his epic story, the Aeneid. It describes the journey of Aeneas, a Trojan survivor, who is destined to travel to Italy and found Rome. A.J. Bell in "Virgil and the Drama" claims that the Aeneid seems to be written according to "rules belonging to the drama rather than to the epic" (458) and attributes this fact to the influential Poetics, in which Aristotle states that tragedy is superior to epic. Bell also refers to a theory of T.K. Glover, who argues that the story of Dido, the queen of Carthage, is based more on Euripides' Phaedra and Medea than on Argonautica, a Greek epic by Apollonius Rhodius. Bell adds to this his argument that Virgil was not only influenced by the Greek dramatic characters, but also by the "technical art" of the Greek dramatists (458). To summarize these theories up, Virgil's epic poem seems to be rather a dramatic narrative based on Virgil's Greek literary predecessors.

In comparison with Homer, Virgil's male characters are "lacking individuality" (Bell 462) and Aeneas becomes even "despicable" as a hero when he leaves Dido, because of his treatment of her – he lacks chivalry and any feelings for romance (Bell 463). The female characters, even though there are not many of them, are created in a much complex way and, as Bell states, "Virgil's fame in this respect will always depend on his creation of Dido and Camilla" (462). Dido is a leading character of the fourth book and Camilla of the eleventh. Camilla is a female warrior, who dies because she "bluntly pursued in huntress fashion, and recklessly raged through all the ranks with a woman's passion for booty and for spoil"¹⁶ because she saw a Greek warrior in a wonderful armour and she wanted to take it – she did not see her death coming because she was blinded by greed. Michael Andrews claims this passage from the Aeneid to be a source for Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida – when

Cressida says “this fault in us I find: / The error of our eye directs our mind,” it is what Virgil thought of women.

Nevertheless, in Shakespeare’s play it is Hector, who dies in a very similar situation as Camilla – “what the archetypally patriarchal Virgil stigmatizes as a woman’s passion becomes, in Shakespeare’s play, yet another instance of an irrationality that is human, all too human” (Andrews 221).

If Virgil’s “achievement” in creating a strong female character in Camilla’s case – besides the fact that she is a warrior, which brings in a rather literal meaning of “strong” – is not really outstanding because of his patriarchal “stigmatization”, then the 16 Michael Andrews in “Virgil’s Camilla and the Death of Hector” quotes this passage from the eleventh book of the Aeneid from Virgil, ed. and trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1940). 27 creation of Dido, the queen of Carthage, is undoubtedly more successful. This accomplishment lies in Virgil’s ability to create “within an epic of grand historical scope an intimate tragedy of a woman in love” (Gill 145). She appears for the first time in the first book of the Aeneid and her story ends in the fourth book, of which she is the main character. She falls in love with Aeneas, but because she swore to never love again after her husband was murdered, she is trying to stop the passionate feelings but is unsuccessful. One day when during a hunt they are interrupted by a storm, Dido and Aeneas hide in the same cave and become intimate – Dido calls their relationship marriage to ease her feelings of guilt. When Aeneas is reminded by Mercury that he has to go on to Italy and fulfil his destiny, he decides to leave Dido. She is enraged, but he, made insensitive by the will of gods, tells her he never married her and has to leave.

Later in the night, Dido commits suicide. Her character goes through a whole range of moods – she is madly passionate, loving, suspicious, enraged and, at last, desperate. The story was used in the 16th century by Christopher Marlowe in his play *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. Even though he changed some aspects of the story, his Dido is at first “the bewildered woman and the suppliant queen” and later turns into “the triumphant conqueror who has, literally, taken Aeneas prisoner” becoming “resourceful and proud” (Gill 152). But before this side becomes dominant, “the woman in love reappears” and in the parting scene she is “near-hysterical” and “swiftly changing tactics” (Ibid.) to hold Aeneas back. Marlowe follows Virgil’s pattern of making Dido a woman of emotions, moving on a wide scale of them, making the reader or the audience understand her decisions, while Aeneas is left unmoved, controlled by the gods.

Marlowe was not the only writer who was inspired by Virgil's work – as A.J. Bell says, he “became afterwards the direct or indirect original of half the Renaissance epics of adoration and love” (462). But it is rather difficult to distinguish properly the sources of later works, because Virgil was an important influence even on his contemporaries – among them, Ovid.

3.2 Ovid

Ovid, who lived between the times of Virgil and Seneca, is praised for many of his works – the *Metamorphoses* (a narrative poem consisting of fifteen books), *Ars Amatoria* (a love elegy – basically instructions how to get and keep a lover) and *Heroides* (poetic letters from heroines to their beloveds) are the three of his works that will be, to a different extent, commented upon later in this chapter.

In his *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*), Ovid describes various ways how one should behave to make someone attracted to them. Especially interesting is his advice to women – they should take care of their body, they should recognize their weak points and hide them and, on the other hand, they should take advantage of their fortes. This method is applied even to a sexual intercourse – or rather the wooing part that precedes it. But he not only encourages the girls to hide the bad sides and show off the flattering aspects (or as would Ben Jonson in his play *The Silent Woman* say: to deceive men), he also “enjoins his feminine disciples not to neglect their minds, to add gifts of learning to attractiveness of person, to pursue the liberal arts and study Greek and Latin because as they grow older, the body will decay but these will endure” (Barish 219). In *The Art of Love* it is quite vivid, as Alan Griffin fittingly points out, that “above all, Ovid actually liked women as a sex – something that cannot be taken for granted in the case of many other Latin poets” (Griffin 59).

Ovid shares with Euripides something of his reputation of a controversial writer – he was sent to exile for the last decade of his life and there is a supposition that his exile was connected to his *Ars Amatoria*. Griffin argues that Ovid's punishment from the emperor was harsh – he was a man of the city and his exile was a deserted place in Romania – so that the offence must have been personal. There is a possible explanation – the emperor's granddaughter, Julia, was sent to exile in the same year – for infidelity.

Many critics, Griffin among them, think that the emperor, known for his sort of Victorian attitude towards morals, was displeased by this kind of literary works and thought that they inspire unchaste ideas.

Nevertheless, “the Elizabethan age, the Renaissance, and the Middle Ages had no doubts about Ovid’s merits as a poet and storyteller” (Griffin 58). He even became a part of the school curriculum: “extensive reading and memorizing of the *Metamorphoses* was almost universally required in sixteenth-century grammar schools” (Bate 21). The influence of his work was according to literary critics so extensive that Jonathan Bate wrote a whole book only on Shakespeare and Ovid. He claims that “all fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses* make themselves felt in [Shakespeare’s] works in the form of mythological allusions and borrowings of phrase” (Bate 23). One particular influence of Ovid’s work is based on the fact that he “dramatizes others, most notably victims of desire, many of them women” (Bate 5). These women (among them for example Medea) “are among the models for the soliloquizing that is the distinctive activity of Shakespeare’s most admired characters; the Ovidian dramatic monologue and the Shakespearian soliloquy create the illusion that a fictional being has an interior life” (Bate 5).

On the other hand, his *Ars Amatoria* were still problematic even in the Early Modern times – not only this work of Ovid was not a part of the curriculum, it became a reason for condemning Ovid as wanton – the sixteenth century was a period in which “ways of reading Ovid underwent radical transformation, as a newly unapologetic delight in the poetic and erotic qualities of the *Metamorphoses* came to compete with the predominant medieval practice of moralizing and even Christianizing them” (Bate 25). While reading *Ars Amatoria* as moral or Christian would be difficult, the *Metamorphoses* reached this kind of misinterpretation during the Middle Ages, but “the allegorizing and moralizing of Ovid’s often explicitly erotic tales was an interpretative device that enabled his poetry to retain currency and escape suppression in an age when all education and most art was dominated by the precepts of Christianity” (Bate 25). Yet his works did not “escape suppression” for good – in 1599 “the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London ordered a translation of Ovid’s love poems to be publicly burned” (Griffin 57). Richard F. Hardin states four reasons for Ovid’s fading popularity in the seventeenth century: there were changes in taste and interest in the post-Renaissance period that made the *Metamorphoses* less desirable as a “mythological handbook” or as a collection of love poems (mainly because there was an increase of literary works written in English, so he was no longer needed); Ovid as an author “suffered by comparison” with newly discovered, especially Greek, literary works; Classical literature became less influential on the modern writing; and mythology became “devalued” in the schools because of the Christian reaction to everything.

3.3 Seneca

Seneca is the youngest from these three Roman writers. He lived and wrote during the era of the emperor Nero, which was a dangerous time for a dramatist – Mario Erasmo in *Roman Tragedy: Theatre to Theatricality* describes how the Roman Emperors associated them with ancient heroes or kings. During these times dramatists wrote many versions of this ancient story about twin brothers and for some of them their literary attempts ended fatally – Erasmo mentions a story of M. Aemilius Scaurus, who wrote one of the versions of the story of Atreus and, while his story was “pr. This anecdote is important to portray the era and how in those times the politics played a considerable part in the life of a dramatic author (as will be later important in the Elizabethan times)

Seneca was greatly influenced by Euripides, Virgil and Ovid. Elaine Fantham in “Virgil’s Dido and Seneca’s Tragic Heroines” argues that it is Virgil’s influence on Ovid what blinds the critics of Seneca to the fact that he was influenced by the Virgil’s original and not only by Ovid’s representation of the same story in the *Heroides* and the *Metamorphoses*. The subject of this influence is the above mentioned book four of the *Aeneid* and the character of Dido in particular. According to Fantham, the arguments “for expecting some reminiscence of Virgil’s great queen” in Seneca’s heroine, Phaedra, and her tragic passion for her step-son, Hippolytus, are “the acknowledged supremacy of Virgil’s reputation as a poet in Seneca’s generation, and Seneca’s own fondness for quoting the *Aeneid*” (1). On the other hand, she sees Euripides’ influence in a rather detailed analysis of various metaphors used by Seneca which resemble those used by Euripides in his *Hippolytus*, such as the simile of a rock in the sea for resistance to persuasion (Fantham 3).

To elaborate more on the influence of Euripides or on the differences between the two authors, it is useful to pay closer attention to the texts – the *Medea* written by Euripides and the *Medea* by Seneca are good examples for the analysis because they deal with the same storyline. The first difference that is easily perceived from the beginning is the Chorus – in Euripides the Chorus is represented by Corinthian women who side with Medea and understand her anger; in Seneca the Chorus is represented by Corinthians (probably both sexes, it is not further developed) and they side with Jason and his new wife, their princess. The other differences or similarities are connected to the characters and their behaviour. Euripides’ Jason is a despicable character – as it was stated in the part about Euripides, Jason betrayed his wife Medea and that is why she needs to step out of the *oikos*, to get her revenge. So far it is the same even in Seneca’s case, but the two Jasons differ in character to a great extent. Euripides’ Jason left his wife to become a part of the Corinthian royal family. He

argues that he wanted the best for his children. But when he comes to see Medea after his marriage to the princess, he offers her money and his influence to help her and their children to find a good place to live – they are exiled because Medea is a threat to the royal family. This scene is accompanied by another dialogue between Jason and Medea, when she persuades him that she is not angry anymore and wants the children to stay with him because exile is not fit for them. Jason promises he will try to persuade his new wife, but all in all he does not seem as a loving father who betrayed his wife so that his children would live a better life. He seems unmoved by the fact he will lose them all and rather angry that she did not follow his plan and threatened the royal family.

Seneca's Jason, on the other hand, seems sorry for the things turning out this way. There is a hint that he might have been forced by the king, who picked him to marry his daughter. He wants his sons to stay with him because, as much as he would like to give them to her, he is a father and he simply cannot do that. He also seems more helpless – Medea begs him for a safe place to go but he does not know about any place where she would be welcomed – there is a stark comparison with the “older” Jason, who offers her “to give with an unstinting hand, and introduce you to my foreign friends, who’ll treat you well” (612-14). Seneca's Jason does not have any friends and has reached an impasse – he cannot leave with her and he cannot help her. Euripides' Jason can help her but his attitude is too outrageous for Medea to accept anything and instead, she plans to murder him and his new bride.

Another contrasting pair of characters is the two kings. But this example works the opposite way – mainly to support the above mentioned characters of Jasons. Euripides' king Creon wants Medea to leave his country – this is a result of Jason's insufficient pleading: “I kept on trying to dispel the anger in King Creon's raging heart; I wanted you to stay” (455-6). Nevertheless, the king still wants her to leave. He is afraid that she would harm his family and only promises her a day to set all her things in order. Seneca's Creon is a different person. He wanted to “rid” him “of this outrageous pest by the sword's means” (179-80) but in this case Jason was persuasive enough: “the prayers of my daughter's husband prevailed. I have granted her life” (183-4). Euripides' Jason is facing a milder version of Creon, yet he is not successful in helping her, while Seneca's Jason has to deal with a fiercer Creon and is able to change her sentence from death to exile.

Seneca's Medea is different. She is angry only because of what happened to her. She gets no support from the Chorus, which erases the social-criticism part of the older version. She wants Jason to leave with her – they came together, they should leave together – but he knows of no place to go, so he is not willing. She often seems to be angry more at the Corinthian royal

family, blaming them for her misfortune, than at her husband – which is working because this Jason is the helpless but still caring one. She decides to kill the sons only to hurt Jason – when he during their dialogue talks about being their father, she realizes what will be her next move: “thus does he love his sons? „Tis well! I have him! The place to wound him is laid bare” (549). But even though her story evolves in the same course, Seneca depicted her differently in one special aspect of her character – when Euripides’ Medea plans to destroy Creon and his daughter, she only talks about using poison because she will have time to escape, while if she went to kill them in their sleep with a sword, she would be captured. But Seneca added the aspect of mythological witch; he highlighted her pagan origins in this description of her preparations: “she seizes death-dealing herbs, squeezes out serpent’s venom, and with these mingles unclean birds, the heart of a boding owl, and a hoarse screech – owl’s vitals cut out alive” (731-4). Also in her “dialogue” before killing her sons (which was preserved from the older version) she is different – the two parts arguing are an avenging wife and a sorrowful mother – both parts are female, so when the avenger wins, the deed is still done by a woman. And this woman is even worse than Euripides’ masculine Medea – while the older version takes the dead bodies with her and does not want to give them to Jason, whom she hates beyond measures, this Medea not only kills one son downstairs and then drags the other still alive with her on the roof, where she kills him, too, she also throws the dead bodies from the roof on her husband, who wants to bury them. For a woman such a handling of the dead bodies of her children is profane in comparison with Euripides’ Medea who hugs them tightly.

To summarize these two plays and their comparisons up, Euripides created a woman who felt betrayed and helpless within her social position, just as all the women of her times. Her husband is clearly aiming at better profit and his first wife is not profitable anymore. She is so outraged by his behaviour that she needs to punish him and his new family – even if this Creon is the milder one, he still does not want to help her as a betrayed woman and forces her to leave the country even though he knows she does not have a place to go and that she is the one who is hurt – he represents the society that does not care. When she kills her children, she becomes masculine – the only way, how a woman can achieve a sort of justice in the society is by becoming a man and avenging herself.

Seneca, on the other hand, presents more intimate tragedy that is focused only on one family, on one woman. This woman is a witch capable of killing her children to see her husband in pain. She has no respect for the dead bodies of her children. Her husband seems to be a better character, even though he betrayed her and started thus the whole tragedy. Seneca’s version

does not make his female character even half worthy of sympathy in comparison with the Greek version, yet he still lets her leave unpunished after she avenged herself. Medea became in later centuries a model of a terrifying woman and a horrible mother, but in both plays her action is justified not only by her personal misfortune, but as well by her position in the society – even though the crime of Jason does not seem as awful as those of Medea, he betrayed people who had only him to support them and provide for them – women and children were marginalized groups in the societies of Ancient Greek, Rome and of Early Modern Europe as well.

4. Conclusion

In the seventeenth-century England, Latin plays were staged at schools. Seneca's *Phaedra* was performed in 1546 at Westminster School. William Gager of Christ Church, Oxford, was "the most enterprising practitioner of Latin plays"¹⁸ produced in 1591 this play by Seneca with several added scenes under the name *Hippolytus*. He used this play, in which he tried to "reinforce the portrayal of Hippolytus' purity", in his 1591-2 vindication of the Classical plays as suitable for school performances. *Gorboduc* or *The Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex* by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville was "the first play in the Senecan tradition in English" (Coffey 35). It was performed by gentlemen of the Inner Temple in 1561. Jasper Heywood translated *Troades* in 1559, 18 from Introduction to *Phaedra* by Michael Coffey and Roland Mayer, pg. 34 the *Thyestes* in 1560, *Hercules Furens* in 1561 and John Studley translated *Agamemnon*, *Medea* and *Hercules Oetaeus* in 1566 and *Hippolytus* a year later. The plays were printed separately and in 1581 Thomas Newton collected them together with other Seneca's plays into one publication.

Chapter 2
Poetry of the
Elizabethan Age

Chapter 2: Elizabethan Poetry

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1. Introduction

The Elizabethan period in the history of the English literature known as the age of Shakespeare, this span of time is the golden age of literature. It extends from the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 to the death of James I in 1625. It was an era of peace, of economic prosperity, of stability, of liberty and of great explorations. This age was illustrious for the unprecedented development of art, literature (drama and poetry).

Elizabethan literature was particularly dominated by poetry which developed under the influence of Chaucer's traditions, folk songs and Italian verse forms. The relationship between men and women, the treachery and hypocrisy of courtly life were the main themes during the sixteen century.

During Elizabethan reign, *“England was called a nest of singing birds; every courtier felt it part of his duty to write poetry; sonnet sequences by the hundreds appeared; and English poetry was the admiration of all Europe.”* (From: <http://www.ruthnestvold.com/Augustan.htm>)

This chapter explores Elizabethan poetry. It investigates that vigour's imagination and spreading of independence of thought gave birth to Elizabethan literature in general. After that it moves to exploring the main forms of the poetry of that era, its characteristics and the literary devices employed by poets of that era. This chapter also describes Songs and Lyrics which were the main literary product of this period. Finally, it briefly discusses the biographies and some of the achievement of the most influential poets of the Elizabethan age.

2. The birth of Elizabethan Literature

The English Literature or the so-called the Elizabethan Literature related to the Mediaevalism which preceded it and leading to the Augustin age which followed it.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne in the middle of the sixteen century was through an annihilating religious doubtfulness, with controversies and persecutions. But by 1570 things had changed, mediaevalism in religion had passed for ever, reformation had taken place, and in that year the Pope Pius V published a bull excommunicating Elizabeth and the "heretics adhering unto her", he merely fanned the flames of anti-Romanism and of patriotism till they burned with unquenchable brightness.

England had achieved for making her first bid in religious freedom by getting rid of Rome's tyranny. There were some contributing factors especially when Elizabeth had defended her shores from invasions, beside that the heroism of her seamen had saved her from the unbeatable Armada.

The country was living in prosperity, new lands were attained and claimed for England and returning travellers were telling marvellous tales of unmapped seas, and of lands flowing with milk and honey.

On the literary side, the Renaissance had swept its culture over England its effects seemed to be all the richer for the delay, for nowhere else in Europe was there anything comparable to the quality and output of the writers of the Elizabethan era.

A widespread independence of thought, a purer faith, a great vigour of imagination, a burning jubilant patriotism, all these are reflected in the literary outpourings of the time, the hearty spirit of the age producing new literary forms, lyrics, sonnets, pastorals, religious and metaphysical poems, and, supreme among them all, the plays of Shakespeare.

3. Literary Tendencies of the Age

3.1 Foreign Influences

England was not confined to the privileged at the courts or the scholars at universities, the numerous translations of the celebrated ancient classics were now available for common people who could read original classics. Later on England came under the influence of humanism, openness of mind, love of beauty and freedom.

The knowledge of the world of antiquity was obtained through art's works and recovery writings of the classical period.

The thing that had a great influence on the literature of this period is the idea that was presented in literature of Athens and Rome which said that life was to be lived in its many sided development and fullest enjoyment. Classical poets, orators, sculptors, and architects' forms were cultivated by the artists.

many Greek scholars, took shelter along with their manuscripts and libraries in Italy after the vandals' invasion of Constantinople. Thus Italy became the teacher of Europe in philosophy, art and literature.

3.2 Influence of Reformation

The reformation and the renaissance have a great influence on the writers and the dramatists of the Elizabethan age, Hudson says, *“While the Renaissance aroused the intellect and the aesthetic faculties, the Reformation awakened the spiritual nature; the same printing press which diffused the knowledge of the classics, put the English Bible into the hands of the people; and a spread in the interest of religion was accompanied by a deepening of moral earnestness”*. (From: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/462344/Saint-Pius-V>)

3.3 Ardent Spirit of Adventure

This age was characterized by the ardent spirit of adventure. The different voyagers' explorations have kindled the human imagination and people curiosity. Most of the university Wits and Shakespeare are imbued with the spirit of adventure and imagination.

3.4 Abundance of Output

Huge literary productions of the Elizabethan age like treaties, pamphlets, essays, prose romances, Shakespearean sonnet and Petrarchan ones, lyric and plays were were to be abundantly written. By the end of Elizabeth's reign many great books of modern times were translated into English. An example of that Plutarch's Lives was translated by Thomas North, and John Florio translated Montaigne's Essais.

It was an era of peace and of general prosperity of the country. An intense patriotism became the outstanding characteristic of the age. It is the greatest and golden period of literature in English which developed all genres of literature.

4. Elizabethan Poetry Divisions

The poetry of Elizabethan era mirrors the spirit of the Age. It reflects the spirit of conquest and self-glorification, humanism and vigorous imagination, emotional depth and passionate intensity. Sublimity was considered to be the essential quality of poetry. Spenser, Shakespeare and Marlowe had the immense power to exalt and sublimate the lovers of poetry.

The poetry of this era was remarkable; it refuses to follow the rules of poetic composition, this leads to a development of a new poetic devices and new linguistic modes. All varieties of poetic forms like lyric, elegy, eclogue, ode, sonnet etc were successfully attempted.

4.1 Love Poetry

The love poetry is characterized by romance, imagination and youthful vigour, Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, Spenser's *Amoretti*, Daniel's *Delia*, Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and his sonnets are noticeable love poems of this period.

4.2 Patriotic Poetry

The ardent note of patriotism is the distinctive characteristic of Elizabethan poetry. Warner's *Abbie's England*, Daniel's *Civil Wars of York and Lancaster*, Drayton's *The Barons War* and *The Ballad of Agincourt* are some memorable patriotic poems.

4.3 Philosophical Poetry

Elizabethan age was a period both of action and reflection; Action found its superb expression in contemporary drama. People thought inwardly. The tragedies of Shakespeare represent this aspect of national life. Brooke's poems, *On Human Learning*, *On Wars*, *On Monarchy*, and *On Religion* have philosophical leanings.

4.4 Satirical Poetry

It came into existence after the decline of the spirit of adventure and exploration, of youthful gaiety and imaginative vigour towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. Donne's Satires and Drummond's Sonnets are some fine examples of this type of poetry. In the reign of James I life's gaiety was lost. A harsh cynical realism succeeded. Poetry had grown self-conscious. Poetry had crept under the shadow of the approaching civil conflicts.

5. Elizabethan Poetry's Main Characteristics

England felt the complete effect of the Renaissance during Elizabethan period. Among poetry's main characteristics of this period we can mention the following:

- .A revival of the old and classical literature of Greece and Rome occurred and this was manifested in the poetry of the age.
- .An extreme spirit of adventure, aestheticism and materialism characterized the period.
- .Many poets displayed their skill in versification during this time and England came to be called The Nest of Singing Birds.
- . The period has the great variety of unlimited creative force; includes works of many kinds in both verse and prose.
- . It ranges in spirit from the loftiest Platonic idealism or the most delightful, romance to the level of very repulsive realism.
- . It is dominated by the spirit of romance, full of the spirit of dramatic action.
- . In style it often exhibits romantic luxuriance, which sometimes takes the form of elaborate affectations of which the favorite 'conceit' is only the most apparent.
- . In part it was a period of experimentation, (ex: translations or interpretations of sonnet form, poetical treatment of theological or scientific thought and the geography of all England).
- . It was influenced by the literature of Italy, and to a less degree by those of France and Spain.
- . The authors were men (not yet women) of almost every class;
- . It raises from distinguished courtiers, like Raleigh and Sidney, to the company of poor hack writers.

.Lyric poetry inaugurated at Court by Wyatt and Surrey seems to have largely subsided, but revived later with the taste for other imaginative forms of literature, in the last two decades of Elizabeth's reign.

. It revived not only among the courtiers but among all classes; Almost every writer of the period (except for prose) seems to have been gifted with the lyric power.

.The qualities which especially distinguish the Elizabethan lyrics are fluency, sweetness, melody, and an enthusiastic joy in life, all spontaneous, direct, and exquisite.

. Poetry unites the genuineness of the popular ballad with the finer sense of conscious artistic poetry,

. In subject they display the usual lyric variety.

6. Elizabethan Poetry's Literary Devices

- **Conceit:** an elaborate poetic image or a far-fetched comparison of very dissimilar things. The Conceits were prominent in many love's poems, they were usually about a despairing lover and his un pitying, but idolized, mistress.

- **Stock devices:** themes, characters, etc.

- They show up again and again. This is especially apparent in poems dealing with the tradition of courtly love.
- The idea of the cruel or indifferent mistress
- The idea of the all-consuming passion
- The pale, wan lover

-**Oxymoron:** is a figure of speech that combines normally-contradictory terms. Oxymoron was often used to describe the paradoxical pain and pleasure of lovesickness. Examples about Oxymoron wise fool, failed success, dark sunshine

- **Similes and Metaphors:**

Personification:

.**Allusion:** making reference to a famous historical event, literary figure, or pop culture person/event that would be known of by the majority of the population. **.Apostrophe:** to

address the absent as though present, the dead as though living, or the inanimate object as if it were animate. Ex: an invocation to the muses.

.Rhyme scheme

.Rhythm –accented and unaccented syllables

.Iambic- an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

Scansion: the division of verse into feet by indicating accents and syllables to determine the meter of a poem.

. (iambic feet) (pentameter, etc.)

.ta TUM -5 metrical feet

.A line of iambic pentameter is five iambic feet in a row:

.da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM

.To swell / the gourd, / and plump / the haz / el shells.

Rhythm types:

.Iambic (The most common meter in the English language)

.Trochaic; DOUBle DOUBle TOIL and TROUBle

.Anapestic; I aRISE and unBUILD it aGAIN

.Dactylic: it consists of dactyls which are metrical units with stressed-unstressed-unstressed syllables.

.Spondee: A metrical unit with stressed-stressed syllables

.Pyrrhic; (generally used to vary rhythm)

Meter-rhythm type:

. Monometer-one foot in a line

. Dimeter-two feet

. Trimeter- three feet

. Tetrameter-four feet

. Pentameter-five feet

. Hexameter-six feet

-Bound Verse: is poetry which must conform to a specific pattern:

.Uniform line length

.Consistency in the number of lines in a stanza

.Rhythm must be uniform (but may have exceptions)

.Rhyme scheme should have a pattern

-Free Verse/Polyrhythmic Verse:

.Does not conform to a specific structure

.It is distinguished by an irregular metrical pattern

.The focus is not on the way it is written, but on the message

7. Songs and Lyrics in Elizabethan Poetry

"Oh, Mistress Mine, where are you roaming," "Ten me where is fancy bred," "Come unto these yellow sands," "I know a bank," those are the most charming lyrics during the Elizabethan age found in the plays of the period, made by Shakespeare.

The Elizabethan Lyrics were introduced to defeat the Elizabethan stage's limitations, and they are best read in their setting. The Action is interrupted, and they seize the dominant emotion of the scene, dally with it, and relieve it.

Elizabethan song is the most characteristic literary product of the age. And the Lyrics are found disordered through the volumes of poetry of a different order, or in the Miscellanies and Song Books which were published during the period.

Various factors contributed to the development of Lyricism during this golden era, stability's feeling, peace and contentment had enabled to compile songs and lyrics full of enthusiasm for life.

Everybody had written the lyrics from the courtier to the man in the street, translations from other languages also inspired people to write. The Elizabethans adored music. Music and lyric are closely connected. It was an age of romance which also contributed lyricism's development.

Elizabethan songs were in numerous forms like love songs, religious songs, patriotic songs, fantastic songs, war songs, philosophical songs and religious songs, and they were composed in different kinds of mood, grave, romantic, fantastic, sentimental, mocking and cynical.

Love was the main theme of the Elizabethan songs the pastoral elements like shepherds' feasts, shepherds' loves and joys of countryside characterize most of the songs and lyrics of this period.

Sir Philip Sidney wrote a large number of songs which are characterized by depth of passion, exquisite beauty, romance and fancifulness.

He inserted songs in the Shepherd's Calendar. His songs are characterized by loftiness, sensuousness, picturesqueness and superb musical quality.

Marlowe's genius was lyrical. He sang songs in the pastoral strain: —Come with me and be my love. Shakespeare's comedies and romances are littered with songs. His songs have rare originality and spontaneity. Freshness and rustic realism runs in many of his songs. Some of his songs are fanciful and fantastic.

Some of his songs express the poignant feelings of love. His songs have a magic of their own and are noticeable for spontaneity and sweetness.

Shakespeare's contemporary dramatists also incorporated songs in their plays. Thomas Dekker composed two beautiful songs.

Beaumont and Fletcher contributed —Lay a garland on my horse and —Hence, all our vain delights. Ben Jonson's masques and comedies have many lovely songs.

Lyly's songs are remembered for their delicate melody, flawless diction, and light and refined note. Green's songs are full of English feelings, pastoral and Renaissance fancies. Peele's lyrics survive for their melody and cadence, and Nash's are now

Lodge's songs are more varied and more inclined to pastoralism. Breton's songs are fresh, copious and are imbued with fine artistic feeling. Thomas Campion deserves praises for his attractive lyrics and songs, which he himself adopted to musical requirement. He was stirred

to rapture by sacred and profane love alike. His songs and lyrics are characterized by the deft use of sweet and apt phrases, musical quality of a high order and a mastery of complicated metres. He could express fantastic areas with great ease, spontaneity and felicity.

Samuel Daniel has to his credit a sonnet series called Delia, a romance entitled The Complaint of Rosamund, a long historical poem The Civil War and a large number of masques. Daniel is a master of closet lyric.

Drayton wrote many lyrics, verse tales and pastorals. Purity of his poetic style is admirable. He simplified English language by removing eccentricities and arbitrary inventions.

The Elizabethan lyric is light and airy. It is an expression of the holiday mood of its author. What distinguishes the lyrics of this period is their musical quality, the flight of fancy and the note of gay and joyous abandonment.

8. Poets of the Age

- Sir Thomas Wyatt

Sir Thomas Wyatt was the first poet who introduced the sonnet in England with Shakspeare, Milton, Spense , Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Arnold and many others, he brought harmony, nobility and grace to English Poetry.

Wyatt's true ability as a poet is revealed not only by composing sonnets but by a numerous songs and lyrics he made.

-Earl of Surrey

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, (1516/1517 – 19 January 1547), was an English aristocrat, and one of the founders of English Renaissance poetry. He was a first cousin of Catherine Howard, the fifth wife of King Henry VIII.

He and his friend Sir Thomas Wyatt were the first English poets to write in the sonnet form that Shakespeare later used, and Surrey was the first English poet to publish blank verse (unrhymed Iambic pentameter) in his translation of the second and fourth books of Virgil's Aeneid. Together, Wyatt and Surrey, due to their excellent translations of Petrarch's sonnets, are known as "Fathers of the English Sonnet". While Wyatt introduced the sonnet into English, it was Surrey who gave them the rhyming meter and the division into quatrains that now characterizes the sonnets variously named English, Elizabethan or Shakespearean sonnets.

-Thomas Sackville

Sackville was a great humanist whose only contribution to England poetry is The Induction. He has a sureness of touch and a freedom from technical errors which make him superior to Wyatt and Surrey.

-Sir Philip Sidney

English poet (1554-1586), he was the most celebrated literary figure before Shakespeare and Spenser; he is remembered by Arcadia (Romance), Apology For Poetry (a collection of critical and literary principles) and Astrophel and Stella which were a collection of sonnet.

-Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser called the poet's poet, that's because all great English poets have been indebted to him. C.Rickett remarks "Spenser is at once the child of the Renaissance and the Reformation. On one side we may regard him with Milton as —the sage and serious Spenser, on the other he is the humanist, alive to the finger tips with the sensuous beauty of the Southern romance".

Spenser in his career had many great works which made him among the greatest poets in English Literature and those works are:

.The Shepherd's Calendar (1579)

.Amoretti (1595)

.Epithalamion

.Prothalamion (1596)

. Astrophel (1596)

. Four Hymns (1576)

.The Faerie Queen (1589 – 90)

-Christopher Marlowe and George Chapman

English poet and playwright who introduced blank verse as a form of dramatic expression; was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl (1564-1593)

-William Shakespeare

For all his fame and celebration, William Shakespeare remains a mysterious figure with regard to personal history. There are just two primary sources for information on the Bard: his works, and various legal and church documents that have survived from Elizabethan times. Naturally, there are many gaps in this body of information, which tells us little about Shakespeare the man.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, allegedly on April 23, 1564. Churchrecords from Holy Trinity Church indicate that he was baptised there on April 26, 1564.

Young William was the son of John Shakespeare, a glover and leather merchant, and Mary Arden, a landed local heiress. William, according to the church register, was the third of eight children in the Shakespeare household – three of whom died in childhood. John Shakespeare had a remarkable run of success as a merchant, alderman, and high bailiff of Stratford, during William’s early childhood. His fortunes declined, however, in the late 1570s.

There is great conjecture about Shakespeare’s childhood years, especially regarding his education. It is surmised by scholars that Shakespeare attended the free grammarschool in Stratford, which at the time had a reputation to rival that of Eton. While there are no records extant to prove this claim, Shakespeare’s knowledge of Latin and Classical Greek would tend to support this theory. In addition, Shakespeare’s first biographer, Nicholas Rowe, wrote that John Shakespeare had placed William “for some time in a free school”. John Shakespeare, as a Stratford official, would have been granted a waiver of tuition for his son. As the records do not exist, we do not know how long William attended the school, but certainly the literary quality of his works suggest a solid education. What is certain is that William Shakespeare never proceeded to university schooling, which has stirred some of the debate concerning the authorship of his works.

The next documented event in Shakespeare’s life is his marriage to Anne Hathaway in November, 1582. William was 18 at the time, and Anne was 26 – and pregnant. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born in 1583. The couple later had twins, a boy, Hamnet and daughter Judith, born 1585 and christened at Holy Trinity. Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, in 1596.

For the seven years following the birth of his twins, William Shakespeare disappears from all records, finally turning up again in London some time in 1592. This period, known as the ‘Lost Years’, has sparked as much controversy about Shakespeare’s life as any period.

Rowe notes that young Shakespeare was quite fond of poaching, and may have had to flee Stratford after an incident with Sir Thomas Lucy, whose deer and rabbits he allegedly poached. There is also rumour of Shakespeare working as an assistant schoolmaster in Lancashire for a time, though this is circumstantial at best.

It is estimated that Shakespeare arrived in London around 1588 and began to establish himself as an actor and playwright. Evidently, Shakespeare garnered envy early on for his talent, and he certainly must have shown considerable promise. By 1594, he was not only acting and writing for the Lord Chamberlain's Men (called the King's Men after the ascension of James I in 1603), but was a managing partner in the operation as well. With Will Kempe, a master comedian, and Richard Burbage, a leading tragic actor of the day, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became a favourite London troupe, patronised by royalty and made popular by the theatregoing public.

Shakespeare's success is apparent when studied against other playwrights of this age. His company was the most successful in London in his day, and had plays published and sold in octavo editions, or 'penny-copies' to the more literate of his audiences. Never before had a playwright enjoyed sufficient acclaim to see his works published and sold as popular literature in the midst of his career. In addition, Shakespeare's ownership share in both the theatrical company and The Globe itself made him as much an entrepreneur as an artist. While Shakespeare might not be accounted wealthy by London standards, his success allowed him to purchase New House and retire in comfort to Stratford in 1611.

Shakespeare wrote his will in 1611, bequeathing his properties to his daughter Susanna (married in 1607 to Dr John Hall). To his surviving daughter Judith, he left £300, and to his wife Anne left "my second-best bed." He allegedly died on his birthday, April 23, 1616. This is probably more of a romantic myth than reality, but he was interred at Holy Trinity in Stratford on April 25. In 1623, two working companions of Shakespeare from the Lord Chamberlain's Men, John Heminges and Henry Condell, printed the first Folio edition of his collected plays, of which half were previously unpublished. William Shakespeare's legacy is a body of work that will never again be equaled in Western civilization. His words have endured for 400 years, and still reach across the centuries as powerfully as ever.

- Ben Jonson

Benjamin Jonson was an English Renaissance dramatist, poet and actor. A contemporary of William Shakespeare, he is best known for his satirical plays, particularly *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*, which are considered his best, and his lyric poems. A man of vast reading and a seemingly insatiable appetite for controversy, Jonson had an unparalleled breadth of influence on Jacobean and Caroline playwrights and poets.

- John Donne

he was born on January 22, 1572, in London, England. He is known as the founder of the Metaphysical Poets, a term created by Samuel Johnson, an eighteenth-century English essayist, poet, and philosopher. The loosely associated group also includes George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, and John Cleveland. The Metaphysical Poets are known for their ability to startle the reader and coax new perspective through paradoxical images, subtle argument, inventive syntax, and imagery from art, philosophy, and religion using an extended metaphor known as a conceit. Donne reached beyond the rational and hierarchical structures of the seventeenth century with his exacting and ingenious conceits, advancing the exploratory spirit of his time.

9. Conclusion

As we have seen with the this chapter which speaks about the birth of the Elizabethan literature and the general characteristics of poetry during the age of Elizabeth or what we call the Renaissance era, the second chapter will discuss a form of poetry a so called the Sonnet which was one of the great literary inventions that made a great influence on people during this time.

Chapter 3

Elizabethan sonnet

and sonneteers

Chapter 3: Elizabethan sonnet and sonneteers

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1. Introduction

This chapter will examine the three types of the sonnet, the Shakespearean, the Spenserian and the Petrarchan one, by giving some characteristics and making a comparison between them and then illustrate more through examples of each type of the Sonnet.

2. Origins and History of the Sonnet

Probably the poet Petrarch was first one who developed the sonnet form during the thirteenth century in Italy, in the fourteenth century, raised the sonnet to its greatest Italian perfection and so gave it, for English readers, his own name.

The form « Sonnet » was introduced into England by Thomas Wyatt, who translated Petrarchan sonnets and left over thirty examples of his own in English. Surrey, an associate, shares with Wyatt the credit for introducing the form to England and is important as an early modifier of the Italian form. Gradually the Italian sonnet pattern was changed and since Shakespeare attained fame for the greatest poems of this modified type his name has often been given to the English form.

Among the most famous sonneteers in England have been Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and D. G. Rossetti. Longfellow, Jones Very, G. H. Boker, and E. A. Robinson are generally credited with writing some of the best sonnets in America. With the interest in this poetic form, certain poets following the example of Petrarch have written a series of sonnets linked one to the other and dealing with some unified subject. Such series are called sonnet sequences.

Some of the most famous sonnet sequences in English literature are those by Shakespeare (154 in the group), Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, Spenser's *Amoretti*, Rossetti's *House of Life*, and Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. William Ellery Leonard, Elinor Wylie, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and W. H. Auden have done distinguished work in the sonnet and the sonnet sequence in this century.

2.1 General definition of the Sonnet

The sonnet is a short poem or a stanza; it consists of 14 lines of iambic pentameter rhyming according to a conventionally fixed scheme.

The sonnet deals with a single emotion or a sentiment which the poet introduces it in the first part and completes it in the second part. The second part frequently takes the form of

reinforcement of the first part's impression given from another point of view or some profound reflection suggested by it.

The first part of the sonnet called the Octave, however the second called the Sestet which presents a conclusion in its last two lines, "*the period of renaissance in English literature*".

2.2 Characteristics of the Sonnet

All sonnets are lyrics of 14 lines, iambic (unstressed/stressed syllables – heartbeat), pentameter (five iambs to a line). The two major forms of the sonnet are the Italian, also called the Petrarchan, and the English, also called the Shakespearean.

Like much poetic literature, the sonnet has common figurative language and themes that we call conceits or conventions. Some of the most common ones found in Renaissance sonnets come from the Courtly Love tradition:

1. Love is viewed as torture, slavery, death, war, or a hunt.
2. The lady is treated as a master or queen, a "cruel fair," a celestial object (star, moon), a doe, a tyrant.
3. The lady is praised for her virtue and her beauty. Commonly, the poet objectifies her body by singling out specific parts to honor and worship, such as her eyes, lips, breasts, and hands.
4. The lady has power in her gaze and can destroy or inspire with a look.
5. The poet will often make puns with his and his lady's names. (ex: Petrarch's sonnet)
6. The poet will often speak in apostrophe: a poetic device where one talks to an inanimate object, such as the moon or a dead person.
7. The poet will engage in paradox: a statement that seems contradictory or absurd but may be true. This statement draws attention to something the poet thinks is important (ex: Spenser's sonnet about ice and fire – her ice enflames him and his fire freezes her).
8. Hyperbole is used to express the poet's emotions – exaggeration for effect (ex: Kelli McBride Characteristics sonnet).

2.3 Differences between the Italian and the English sonnet

2.3.1 The Italian sonnet

Known as the Petrarchan sonnet, named after 14 century Italian poet Francesco Petrarca, it is a 14 line poem that uses Iambic Pentameter and somewhat flexible rhyme scheme and that means the first eight line or the so-called Octave, of a Petrarchan sonnet which follows the

same rhyme scheme ABBAABBA, however the last six lines called the Sestet which differs from poem to poem, for example most Sestet's rhyme schemes are in this form CDECDE, CDCDCD, CDDCDD and CDDECE.

The first eight line of the Italian sonnet (the Octave) introduces a problem or an idea, on the other hand the last six lines (Sestet) solves that problem, The change that takes place is known as a Volta, which means 'turn' in Italian.

The term Iambic Pentameter means that each line contains five Iambs, or a weak syllable followed by a strong one, such as the word alive.

2.3.2 Example of the Petrarchan sonnet

on his Blindness by John Milton, gives a sense of the Italian rhyming scheme:

When I consider how my light is spent (a)
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide, (b)
And that one talent which is death to hide, (b)
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent (a)
To serve therewith my Maker, and present (a)
My true account, lest he returning chide; (b)
Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?" (b)
I fondly ask; but Patience to prevent (a)
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need (c)
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best (d)
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state (e)
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed (c)
And post o'er land and ocean without rest; (d)
They also serve who only stand and wait." (e)

2.3.3 The English form

Although the English form is derived from the Italian one, but the former is so different from the latter, it embodies four divisions: three quatrains (each with a rhyme-scheme of its own) and a rhymed couplet which is usually a commentary on the foregoing, an epigrammatic close. Thus the typical rhyme-scheme for the English sonnet is: abab cdcd efef gg

- Difference between Shakespearean and Spenserian sonnet

Spenserian sonnet uses three quatrains as well with a rhymed couplet. It follows the rhyming scheme of abab bcba, cdcd and ee with the notion of 5 syllables.

(From: <http://www.bardweb.net/man.html>)

2.3.4 Basics of Shakespearean Sonnet

Shakespeare has made 154 sonnets in total during the Elizabethan era, his first publication; may 20th 1609 in Shakespeare's Sonnets, Never Before Imprinted, as a quarto (a certain book format).

Among his sonnets from 1 to 126 were addressed to 'young man' or 'fair youth' homoerotic aspect, unusual at the time.

Sonnets from 127 to 154 were addressed to 'dark lady' (who is never actually called like that), who has betrayed the speaker with the man of the first 126 sonnets.

Shakespeare's sonnets are usually written in a meter called iambic pentameter a rhyme scheme in which each sonnet line consists of ten syllables. The syllables are divided into five pairs called iambs or iambic feet. An iamb is a metrical unit made up of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable. A line of iambic pentameter flows like this:

baBOOM / baBOOM / baBOOM / baBOOM / baBOOM.

Here are some examples from the sonnets:

When I / do COUNT / the CLOCK / that TELLS / the TIME (Sonnet 12)

When IN / dis GRACE / with FOR / tune AND / men's EYESI ALL / a LONE / be WEEP / my OUT/ cast STATE (Sonnet 29)

Shall I / com PARE / thee TO / a SUM / mer's DAY? Thou ART / more LOVE / ly AND / more TEM / per ATE (Sonnet 18)

2.3.5 Shakespearean Sonnet Structure

The Shakespearean sonnet contains fourteen lines, in the first twelve lines there are three quatrains with four line each. In the three quatrains a poet presents a problem which will be resolved in the last two lines the so called "the couplet".

.The rhyme scheme of the quatrains is: abab, cdcd, efef.

.The rhyme scheme of the couplet is gg English Renaissance

2.3.6 Example of the Shakespearean sonnet

Sonnet 18:

It was addressed to the Young Man

Quatrain 1 (four-line stanza)

- SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day?.....If I compared you to a summer day
- Thou art more lovely and more temperate:.....I'd have to say you are more beautiful and serene:
- Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.....By comparison, summer is rough on budding life,
- And summer's lease hath all too short a date. :.....And doesn't last long either.

Quatrain 2 (four-line stanza)

- Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,At times the summer sun [heaven's eye] is too hot,
- And often is his gold complexion dimmed;And at other times clouds dim its brilliance;
- And every fair from fair sometime declines, Everything fair in nature becomes less fair from time to time.
- By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed:..... No one can change [trim] nature or chance;

Quatrain 3 (four-line stanza)

- But thy eternal summer shall not fade.....However, you yourself will not fade
- Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st, ;.....Nor lose ownership of your fairness
- Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade ,.....Not even death will claim you,
- When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st. :.....Because these lines I write will immortalize you:

Couplet (two rhyming lines)

- So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,Your beauty will last as long as men breathe and see.
- So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.Your beauty will last as long as men breathe and see.

A summary of the sonnet 18

Shakespeare began his poem by a question "shall i compare thee to a summer's day" Then the author explains why he shouldn't because unlike the summer's day that eventually fades away, her beauty and "eternal summer shall not fade." Not even death can hide her beauty because "so long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, so long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

- **Metaphor:** "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" Shakespeare compares his love to a summer's day and by doing so, an image of a beautiful, warm day with the flowers in bloom and the birds chirping in the reader's mind along with an attractive woman. However a question is raised, how can Shakespeare compare the woman to a summer's day?

- **Personification:** "Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, and often is his gold complexion dimmed." The author's use of the words "eye" and "complexion," beautifully describes the sun instead of just saying that "sometimes the sun is too hot or that its rays are often dimmed."

- **Imagery:** "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May" and ... "often is his gold complexion dimmed." When Shakespeare uses these words like "Rough winds", "darling buds", and "gold complexion" the reader gets the image of a beautiful day and they get the sensation of the sun's rays warm and cozy in their body. The words add to the theme and makes the mind of the reader think of these lovely things which gives the poem a greater effect.

- **Tone:** The author's tone toward the subject is enamored. The way he writes about her, immortalizes her. He puts his subject above everything, telling her she is more beautiful than a summer's day. His words and images make the reader want to feel the same way as he does. Shakespeare wants the image of his love to live forever; "*So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, so long live this and this gives life to thee.*"

(From: <http://brugger.weebly.com/uploads/2/0/1/4/2014824/theater.pdf>)

- **Personal Interpretation:** Sonnet 18 means eternal love and beauty. When he says, "Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade." he means that even death cannot take away her beauty and his love because she is everlasting. That is why "a summer's day" cannot compare to her because it is not everlasting. Shakespeare's words and images make me feel the same for his subject. This woman of such surpassing beauty "... more lovely and more temperate" than a summer's day lives on through his words. Every time I read this, I feel more and more wonder for a person that I don't even know because her "... eternal summer shall not fade."

- **Summary:** Shakespeare is explaining that his mistress is not that beautiful. He shows the reader all that is wrong with her and her imperfections like "... in some perfumes is there more delight Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks:" or "If hairs be wires, black wires grow from her head. However, with all that is wrong with her, he still thinks that his love is just as beautiful as any other woman. "I think my love as rare as any she belied with false compare."

- **Simile:** "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun:" Shakespeare uses a comparison using like or as all throughout the poem to show what his mistress is not similar too.

- **Imagery:** "I love to hear her speak, yet well I know that music hath a far more pleasing sound." He chose these words to describe the way her hair is and it plants an image in the readers' mind of a head of "wires".

- **Irony:** "And yet, by Heaven, I think my love as rare as any she belied with false compare." No matter how many things are imperfect about his mistress, he still thinks she is a gem.

- **Tone:** Shakespeare's tone toward his mistress is critical yet enamor.

Three from the 154's Shakespearean sonnet didn't adapt with this structure, sonnet 99 contained 15 lines, sonnet 126 had 12 lines, and Sonnet 145, which is written in iambic tetrameter.

2.3.7 Language devices

Personification: The use of to explore the natures of the abstract thing like time, death, love and poetry nature or good and evil are turned into people in the sonnets.

Imagery: it is a necessary feature of every Sonnet, providing the reader with lively visions of the subject addressed.

-Antithesis: used to depict conflicts which are these key in Literature.

-Paradox: as a strong means of establishing ideas that seem opposed to reason yet are made compatible in sonnets and stress the complex nature of phenomena, especially the irrational character of love.

-Variable tone: of the speaker, underlying the range of emotion expressed and creating specific moods; lyrical, joyous, sensuous, meditative, ironic and enigmatic mood.

-Iterative Metaphors: they often dominate sonnets throughout, providing a framework for all feelings expressed and emphasizing different aspects that all fit into one image.

-Use of Symbols: Shakespeare applied many symbols in his poems. He mentioned the Flowers and Trees to illustrate the passage of time, the transience of life, the aging process, and beauty. Rich, lush foliage symbolizes youth, whereas barren trees symbolize old age death. Roses signify the attractiveness and fragrance in relation to young man.

Shakespeare uses stars to stand in for fate a common poetic trope, but also to explore the nature of free will. Shakespeare relies on his eyes for making decisions rather than the hands of fate. In contrast other sonneteers who employed the stars as symbols which represents fate, that symbol proves that their love is permanent and predestined.

3. Spenserian sonnet

The Spenserian sonnet is named after the Renaissance poet Edmund Spenser, it contains fourteen lines of Iambic Pentameter ie ; there are five feet per line.

The Scheme Spenser chose was adapted from the rhyme model he used in his famous epic poem *The Faerie Queen* and follows the pattern 'abab bcbc cdc d ee, the sonnet is divided into three quatrains followed by a rhyming Couplet.

3.1 Example of the Spenserian sonnet

Is it|her na|ture or|is it|her will, A
To be so cruel to an humbled foe? B
If nature, then she may it mend with skill, A
If will, then she at will may will forgo. B
But if her nature and her will be so, B
that she will plague the man that loves her most: C

And take delight t'increase a wretch's woe, B
Then all her nature's goodly gifts are lost. C
And that same glorious beauty's idle boast, C
Is but a bait such wretches to beguile: D
As being long in her love's tempest tossed, C
She means at last to make her piteous spoil. D
Of fairest fair let never it be named, E
That so fair beauty was so foully shamed. E
Amoretti, Sonnet No. 41

Key words: Blindness, Disability, Human, Patient Experience, Prayer as medicine, Religion.

In this example we see how Spenser links the ideas of each quatrain into a continuous thought, which he reflected in the Rhyme Scheme. We can also that the Couplet distinguished by elements of Rhyme, characteristically presents a different idea from the rest of the sonnet.

-Summary In this sonnet, the speaker John Milton mediates on the fact that he has become blind (Milton himself was blind when he wrote this). He expresses his frustration at being prevented by his disability from serving God as well as he desires to. He is answered by "patience" who tells him that God has many who hurry to do his bidding, and does not really need man's work. Rather, what is valued is the ability to bear God's mild yoke, "to tolerate whatever God asks faithfully and without complaint. As the famous last line sums it up, "they also serve who only stand and wait.

-Commentary This poem presents a carefully reasoned argument, on the basis of Christian faith, for the acceptance of physical impairment. The speaker learns that, rather than being on obstacle to his fulfillment of God's work for him, his blindness is a part of that work, and that his achievement lies in living patiently with it. (Milton himself went on to write his twelve-book epic poem, "Paradise Lost" after becoming blind.

4. Conclusion

As we have seen with this chapter which speaks about the different types of sonnets, the last chapter will discuss Elizabethan drama (tragedy, comedy) and theatre. It is also a window to discover some of the greatest playwrights of all times.

Chapter 4

Elizabethan drama

Chapter 4: Elizabethan drama

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1. Introduction

In this chapter we discuss Elizabethan drama (tragedy, comedy), theatre and their impact during the Elizabethan age. It also gives an overview about the great playwrights of that time.

2. Elizabethan Tragedy

Shakespeare was the greatest master of Tragedy, he could reached his sophisticated height in Tragedy. "Hamlet," "King Lear," and "Macbeth" those are the finest Shakespeare's works and they represent the noblest pitch of English Genius.

Probably the most famous at thee time of its production, it has held its interest and provoked discussion as perhaps no other play has done, this was due to the splendor of its poetry, the absorbing nature of the plot, and the vividness of the drawing of characters who terrifically combine individuality with a universal quality that makes them appeal of people to all kinds. It was also much due to the delineation of the hero, the subtlety of whose character and the complexity of whose motives constitute a perpetual challenge to our capacity for solving mysteries.

"King Lear" owes its appeal less to its tendency to rouse curiosity than to its power to awe us with an overwhelming spectacle of the suffering which folly and evil can cause and which human nature can sustain. In spite of its intricacy of motive and superabundance of incident, it is the most overwhelming of all in its effect on our emotions. Compared with it "Macbeth" is a simple play, but nowhere does one find a more masterly portrayal to the moral disaster that falls upon the man who, seeing the light, chooses the darkness.

Shakespeare was alone in the production of great tragedy. Contemporary with him or immediately following came Jonson, Marston, Middleton, Massinger, Ford, Shirley and others, all producing great works ; but the man who most approached Shakespeare in tragic intensity was John Webster "The Duchies of Malfi" is a favourable example of his ability to inspire terror and pitty ; and though his range is not comparable to that of Shakespeare, he is unsurpassed in his power of coining a phrase which casts a lurid light into the recesses of the human heart in moments of supreme passion.

3. Elizabethan Theatre

There were two types of the Elizabethan Theatre :

- Realistic and illusory
- Unrealistic and non-illusory

Concerning the non-illusory, it contained some particular conventions as:

- The SOLILOQUY: A (usually long) dramatic speech intended to give the illusion of unspoken reflections.
- The ASIDE:
- The PROLOGUE: n introduction to a play
- The EPILOGUE: A short speech (often in verse) addressed directly to the audience by an actor at the end of a play.

All these forms of communications do not exist nowadays.

The Theatre's type and its stages are the key for determining the adoption of some particular dramatic techniques, the Elizabethan one was open to the sky except for part of the stage and the galleries which were roofed. The stage -called APRON STAGE- projected out into the Pit where common people stood. The fortunate were seated in the galleries. About two thousand people were surrounded the stage. The place where the actors change their costumes and wait for the moment of their entrance. There were two doors for entrances and exits and a BALCONY over them.

Performances took place throughout the day because there were no artificial lighting and no scenery; there were no drape separates the actors from the audience before the show time.

The so-called the A TRAP DOOR used for sudden apparitions of devils or supernatural beings, or could be used for other special effects.

The Globe (the Shakespearean Theatre) included:

GROUNDLINGS: playgoers in the cheap standing section.

The PATRONS: playgoers who paid a higher sum for seats in the galleries.

The NOBLES: playgoers who could even sit on the stage itself.

3.1 English Renaissance theatre

It is derived from several sources:

- Mystery Plays: religious festivals in England and other parts of Europe during the Middle Ages

- Mystery plays were retellings of legends based on biblical themes or accounts
- Old Testament episodes included the Fall of Lucifer, the Creation and Fall of Man, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and Isaac, Moses, etc.
- New Testament episodes included the Nativity, Christ's Baptism, the Temptation in the Wilderness, the Raising of Lazarus, the Passion, the Resurrection, etc.
- originally performed in churches but later became linked to secular celebrations that evolved around religious festivals

- Morality Plays—evolved out of mystery plays; designed to teach consequences of actions

● The best example: *Everyman*, in which an allegorical figure of every man is summoned by the allegorical figure of death to journey to God to account for the life he has been lent. He discovers that his friends Fellowship, Kindred, Cousin, Goods, and Knowledge will not go with him. It is Good Deeds (or Virtue), whom he previously neglected, who finally supports him and who offers to justify him before the throne of God.

- "University drama": attempted to recreate Greek tragedy

- *Commedia dell'arte* Italian: "comedy of artists" or "comedy of humors," a popular form of improvised theater.

● Traveling teams of players would set up an outdoor stage and provide amusement in the form of juggling, acrobatics, dancing and humorous semi-improvised plays based on a repertoire of established characters and storylines

- Masque involved music and dancing, singing and acting, within an elaborate stage design
- “Proto-ballet”
- Architectural framing and costumes might be designed by a renowned architect, to present a deferential allegory flattering to the patron
- Professional actors and musicians were hired for the speech and song aspects.
- Companies:
 - Temporary companies of players, attached to households of leading noblemen, performed seasonally in various locations before the reign of Elizabeth I
 - They became the foundation for the professional players that performed on the Elizabethan stage
 - Tours gradually replaced mystery and morality plays by local players
 - In 1572 a law eliminated remaining companies lacking formal patronage by labeling them “vagabonds”
 - At court, performance of masques by courtiers and other amateurs, apparently common in the early years of Elizabeth, was replaced by professional companies with noble patrons, who grew in number and quality during her reign
 - London authorities (known as the Corporation of London) were generally hostile to public performances, but its hostility was outmatched by the Queen’s taste for plays
 - Theatres sprang up in suburbs, especially in Southwark, accessible across the Thames to city dwellers, but not controlled by the Corporation of London
 - The companies maintained the pretence that their public performances were mere rehearsals for the frequent performances before the Queen; while the latter did grant prestige, the former were the real source of the income professional players required.

3.2 Architecture and Performances

- The first purpose-built theatre for plays in England (since Roman times anyway) was “The Theater,” built by James Burbage in 1576
- By 1600, there were several theatres, each with an upper level which could be used as a balcony

- Four main areas: main stage, gallery, tiring house, and auditorium
- The stage was essentially a platform surrounded on three sides by the audience, only the rear being open for entrances, exits, and seating for musicians to accompany frequent songs
- One distinctive feature of the companies was that they included only males; until the reign of Charles II, female parts were played by adolescent boy players in women's costume.

3.3 Playwrights

- Although most of the plays written for the Elizabethan stage have been lost, over 600 remain extant
- The men (no woman, so far as is known, wrote for the stage in this era) who wrote these plays were primarily self-made men from modest backgrounds
- Some writers were educated at either Oxford or Cambridge, but many were not
- Although Shakespeare was an actor, the majority do not seem to have been performers, and no major author who came on to the scene after 1600 is known to have supplemented his income by acting
- Not all of the playwrights fit modern images of poets or intellectuals: Marlowe was killed in an apparent tavern brawl, while Jonson killed an actor in a duel.

Major Players	Major Playhouses	Major Companies	Entrepreneurs
Edward Alleyn	The Theatre		Cuthbert Burbage
Robert Armin	The Curtain	The Admiral's Men	James Burbage
Christopher Beeston	The Rose	The King's Men	Philip Henslowe
Richard Burbage*	The Swan	The Chamberlain's Men	Francis Langley
Henry Condell*	The Globe	The Queen's Men	
Nathan Field		Worcester's Men	
John Heminges*			
Thomas Heywood			
Will Kempe*			
William Rowley			
Richard Tarlton			

Table 3.1: list of the most famous playwrights of the Elizabethan Age

(From: <https://eckman.english12.wikispaces.com/file/view/The+Renaissance+Theater.pdf>)

3.4 The Globe Theater

The Globe is the most famous of the public theaters because the company that Shakespeare belonged to owned it. It burned down in 1613. Though scholars are not certain what the Globe looked like, stage directions from Shakespeare's plays and historical documents have provided enough evidence for a modern reconstruction of the Globe Theater.

- Wooden structure three stories high
- Held 3,000 people
- Inner yard open to the sky
- The stage jutted halfway out into the theatre allowing for the audience to be in much closer contact with the actors.
- The stage had trap doors in the walls and ceiling
- Scenery was kept to a minimum.
- Actors wore elaborate and expensive costumes.
- Music and lyrics were specifically written for every play

There were so many people attending the Globe theater because they loved to be entertained and they also liked to be close to the stage because then they could see every nuance of the actor's face and performances, beside that they were curious to see witches and devils going to hell or gods and angels going to heaven.

4. Characteristics of Shakespearean Comedy

4.1 Romance and Realism

The Shakespearean comedy is romantic in which place and action are not observable and take place in a far off place, settings are imaginative. Raleigh described the Shakespearean comedy a rainbow world of love in idleness.

Shakespeare's characters are real. His dramatic personages are ordinary human beings and incidents are such as occurring in everyday life.

Romance and Realism are harmoniously put together in *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

4.2 Love

The entire atmosphere of the Shakespearean comedy is surcharged with love which ends with a celebration of many marriages.

In Shakespeare's "As you he has described the love at first sight between Orlando and Rosalind, thoughtful love between Celia and Oliver, pastoral love between Phebo and Silvius.

4.3 Shakespeare's Heroines

In the Shakespearean comedies, heroines play leading roles and surpass their male counterparts. We can notice that Shakespeare has no heroes but just heroines who they are endowed with wit, common sense, human feelings and noble qualities of head and heart. They are also wise, winning and charming. They have beautiful feelings, thoughts and emotions. They radiate joy, peace and spirit of harmony. At the other hand males play just a second fiddle

4.4 Disguise

The use of dramatic device of disguise is common to all the comedies of Shakespeare. In "The Merchant of Venice" Jessica disguises herself in "the lovely garnish" of a boy, and Portia and Nerissa likewise don masculine attire. This device is also employed for instance, in *As You Like It* Rosalina and Celia become Ganymede and Aliena, and in *All's Well That Ends Well*. Helena passes off in bed as Diana.

4.5 Humour

Humor is considered to be the soul of the Shakespearean comedy, it arouses thoughtful laughter, and it is also full of humane and genial laughter.

Shakespeare can arouse laughing from drunkard's mumblings and the repartees of a leading woman. Falstaff is a brilliant comic character of Shakespeare who has a lot of memorable fools such as Bottom and his companions, Feste, Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, Touchstone, Dogberry and Verges.

4.6 Admixture of Tragic and Comic Elements

Comic and tragic elements are commingled in the Shakespearean comedy, however the tragic ones does not dominates the play which ends with joy, such as in *The Merchant of Venice*'s play is pervaded by the tragic element from the signing of the bond to the end of the trial scene. Ultimately the play ends happily, as Antonio, whose who were thretened by Shalock , feels happy at heart as his life has been saved.

4.7 Music and Song

The comedy of Shakespeare is full of songs and music since they are the love's food, Several romantic songs are scattered all over *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

4.8 The Role of Fortune

Hostilities of parents and friends which lovers have to face are finally removed by power's fortune.

Shakespearean comedy shines the spirit of humanity and a broad vision of life. It is large hearted in the conception, sympathetic in its tone and humanitarian in its idealism. Shakespeare created his own hallmark on the comedies in English drama.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, writers and theatre played a very important role in refreshing people' conscience and critical thinking during the Elizabethan age, the Elizabethan society could flourish and prosper through the different works of those great thinkers.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

England prospered in the second half of Elizabeth's reign, and many of the great works of English literature were produced during these years: art, poetry, drama, and learning in general flourished as the confidence and nationalism Elizabeth inspired spilled from the economic sector to cultural achievements. Elizabeth's reign saw playwrights like Christopher Marlowe, poets like Edmund Spenser, and men of science and letters like Francis Bacon. The era also saw the beginning of William Shakespeare's work. Many of the writers, thinkers and artists of the day enjoyed the patronage of members of Elizabeth's court, and their works often involved or referred to the great Queen; indeed, she was *the* symbol of the day. The "Elizabethan Age," generally considered one of golden ages in English literature, was thus appropriately named: these cultural achievements did not just happen to be created while Elizabeth was on the throne; rather, Elizabeth's specific actions, her image, and the court atmosphere she nurtured significantly influenced--even inspired--great works of literature.

From the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth was always a major patron of the stage, and drama flourished under her support. In the 1560s, the first blank verse tragedies appeared, ultimately giving rise to an art form that remains heavily studied today. In 1562, one of the earliest of these blank verse plays, *Gorboduc*, was performed for the Queen.

Initially, a certain amount of class conflict arose over the production of plays, as the puritanical Elizabethan middle class tried to shut down the London theaters on the basis of their "immorality." Thus, under major pressure, the Mayor of London attempted to close all of the city's theaters in 1580. The Privy Council, citing Elizabeth's fondness for plays, prevented this measure from taking place, although they did allow the crowded theaters to be shut down in times of epidemics. Elizabeth, who liked to invite theater companies to her palaces, was against shutting down the theaters because she wanted them to have fully practiced their plays before bringing them to her. As a result, plays became more socially respectable, and by the 1570s and 1580s, exclusive boys' schools like St. Paul's and Merchant Taylor's integrated the performance of both English and Latin plays into their curriculum, initiating the custom of the school play. The Queen even watched some of these schools plays herself. In 1595,

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed at Greenwich palace during the marriage celebration of Burleigh's granddaughter. The play contained several references to Elizabeth and her court, especially to the water-pageant Leicester had put on for Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle in 1575. Then at Christmastime while Essex was gone on the campaign in Ireland, Elizabeth saw a performance of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

Elizabeth herself was known for being a very good dancer and a particularly talented musician. Although she only played for her closest friends, she spent considerable time perfecting her renditions of several of the more difficult pieces of the day. Once her practicing was overheard by an envoy from Mary Queen of Scots who, much to Elizabeth's pleasure, admitted that Mary Stuart, though "good for a Queen", was not nearly the musician Elizabeth was.

Edmund Spenser, whose patron was none other than Leicester himself, often drew from the lives of the big celebrities of the day as subject matter for his poems. In a 1579 poem, for instance, he subtly hints at Leicester's secret marriage to Elizabeth's cousin, Lettice Knollys. Spenser's famous *Faerie Queene* contains multiple references to Elizabeth, who appears allegorically as several characters, including the Faerie Queene herself. Other international figures, including Philip II, Alencon, Mary Queen of Scots, and Leicester are represented as well.

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