

A short note on jacobean drama essay



**ASSIGN
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In the Jacobean period drama became decadent. There was an exhaustion of the creative spirit. Tragedy degenerated into melodrama and comedy into farce. The audience comprising mostly of courtiers went to the theatre only to be amused. Their tastes had become depraved and the playwrights catered to their depraved taste. Sensationalism is a morbid preoccupation of crude physical horrors, and unnatural themes, such as incest; and growing obscurity and immorality of plays are all symptoms of this decadence.

Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare is not a decadent dramatist in any sense of term. He popularized a new kind of drama known as “Comedy of Humour” in which the emphasis was on realism and on the presentation of the common lapses of human beings. His comedies include “Every Man in his Humour”, “Every Man out of his Humour”, “The Alchemist”, “The Silent Woman”. His two tragedies are “Sejanus his Fall”, and “Catiline his Conspiracy”.

Jonson in his drama relied on realism instead of imagination and on classical form rather than on classical spirit. In his comedies he spotted human follies not with crime. Each of his characters in his drama represented as under certain influences of humour or peculiar habit, passion, affection by which he is immediately distinguished from the rest. The plays of Jonson have a moral basis. No one in his time has mirrored London with so much detailed descriptions as Jonson did.

Beaumont and Fletcher collaborated to write tragedy-comedy. Their two best known plays are “Philaster”, and “The Maid’s Tragedy”. Philip Massinger wrote “A New Way to Pay Old Debts”, “The Virgin Martyr” and “The Maid of Honour”.

Honour”. Thomas Dekker popularized the citizen comedy. “ the Shoemaker’s Holiday” is a humorous study of plain working people. John Ford was a fatalist morbid and disdainful of morality. His two remarkable plays are “ Tis Pity She’s A Whore”, and “ the Broken Heart”.

John Webster is one of the greatest personality in Jacobean drama. His two masterpieces are “ The White Devil” and “ The Duchess of Malfi”. “ The White Devil” is one of a series of studies of famous Italian quotations. The theme of “ The Duchess of Malfi” is persecuted virtue and vengeance accomplished by atrocious means and ardent follower of the revenge tradition. Webster turns from the mere horror of events to the deep and subtle analysis for the triumph of melodrama raised to the level of poetry.