

History about elizabethan theatre



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William Shakespeare's Influence on the Elizabethan Theater History The history of the Elizabethan Theater can be traced to the time period (1558-1603), during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. This period witnessed the transformation of the theater in England from religious and moral themes to secular themes in plays, poems and all other forms of literature. The Elizabethan Theater characterized by unique literary expressions, some that faded away easily, but others endured for long. Contemporary drama had a reflection of national pride. Many people were attracted to the romance and poetry in the theaters due to the prevalence of violence (Nagler, 1981). Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare were a major influence on the progression of the Elizabethan Theater. William Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies influenced the primary theatrical performances during their era. It is, therefore, imperative to assert that Elizabethan Theater exemplifies England's structural, historical and theatre production principles that were shaped to a large extent by the influence of William Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare's limelight debut as a famous playwright was largely influenced by the death of Christopher Marlowe who was also influential in the molding of early theaters. At this time, he was famous for the play "Henry VI". In 1564, when "Romeo and Juliet" and "Love's Labour's Lost" were performed, he became an icon in the theatre performance (Lee, 1898). Shakespeare influenced the Elizabethan Theater by determining the theme of the plays, drama and other performance as well as the role of different people in the theatre. During his time, playwrights, actors, and theaters owners acquired a new status of upper classmen in England, they got acknowledgment and rose higher in the society. Shakespeare lay the

foundation for performance entertainment where comedies and tragedies were intertwined as more people were shifting from just wanting to watch comedies alone. The popularity of comedy and tragedy during Shakespeares era led to a distinction between the two through a differentiation in their writing. Tragedy writers were guided by Aristotle's definition of tragedy where a hero or heroine would be brought down by forces under their own control, but fate or through hubris. However, Romeo, Macbeth and Timon did not seem to adhere to this definition. Comedy was inspired by Plautus and Terence Roman " New Comedy". As such, comedies were happy tales about family affairs, domestic troubles and love but avoided politics (Arnold, 1989). Before the end of the Elizabeth's reign, other Shakespeare's plays that were being performed include " Hamlet", " Henry V", " Julius Caesar" and " Richard II".

It is prudent to conclude that the Elizabethan Theater was highly influenced by William Shakespeare's literature. The popularity his work can be traced to the tremendous application of the cultural revival that was being experienced in England during the English Renaissance period such as in the popular and high culture and performance of comedies and tragedies (Lace, 1995). His literature was also a manifestation of the many ideas he drew from his sharp comprehension of the human nature. This helped him create content that would endure for centuries to come while at the same time remain relevant and insightful to the Elizabethan period in terms of thought, history, life and values.

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