

Elizabethan era's effects on shakespeare assignment

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The Renaissance was a time of change and prosperity, a time of rebirth full of innovations and inspiration. "Renaissance," which is actually French for "rebirth," describes the intellectual and economic changes that occurred in Europe from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries (Encyclop? dia Britannica). Europe broke free from the economic stagnation of the Middle Ages and experienced a time of financial growth. The Renaissance was an age in which artistic, social, scientific, and political thought turned in new directions.

In the late Middle Ages, when the threat of invasion from barbarians had lessened, people left the country for towns and cities so they could engage in more profitable pursuits (Encyclopedia Britannica). The more and more people crowded villages and cities, the threat of illness quickly spread.

During the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance (around 1350-1450) the bubonic plague, better known as the Black Death, devastated around one half of the population in Europe (Nagel). The plague spread most rapidly in these cities, where people were in constant close contact with each other.

The only way to avoid this disease was to leave the city for the country.

Unfortunately, the only ones available to make the trip were those who were wealthy enough. The population decrease caused by the Black Death led to an economic depression (Nagel). This left England damaged in numbers and in spirit. Merchants and salesmen had fewer customers which led to fewer things being sold within the marketplace. Products accumulated, and the merchants and traders suffered a huge loss of income (Nagel).

The economic hardship spread though out the entire country of Europe, impacting everyone living there. This inspired many people to write journals and poems about their fears and hardships. Although this was a time of complete devastation and uncertainty, the people of England did not let this hold them down. Instead, they used it more as fuel to grow and succeed in daily life and in the arts. As the devastation of the plague decreased in the late fifteenth century, populations swelled, creating more demand for goods and services.

This led to a new middle class which began to emerge as bankers, merchants, and trades people once again had a market for their goods and services. This is the era in which we really start to call the Renaissance because not only did the economy change; people's spirits were lifted as this new birth and great ideas rolled on. One great innovation that strengthened the growth of the Renaissance was the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in the 1450s (Encyclopedia Britannica). The printing press helped spread the views and humanistic philosophies from Aristotle, Plato, Epicurus, Cicero, and Seneca (Renaissance).

These influential philosophers created the intellectual climate which both fostered the emergence of Humanism, which focused on the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appeal to universal human qualities (VMI's Shakespeare). The more people could relate to what they were reading, the more it would appeal to the people's tastes and preferences. During the Renaissance, there were some very influential rulers in England. One of those rulers was Queen Elizabeth I.

The era in which she ruled is also known as the Elizabethan Era. This era is also considered to be a golden age in English history.

Elizabethan literature mainly reflects the lively self-confidence of a nation expanding its powers, increasing its wealth, and thus keeping at bay its serious social and religious problems (Brimacombe). All of these factors had influential impacts on various writers. One of those writers who emerged during this time was William Shakespeare. Elizabethan theatre grew and William Shakespeare, among others, composed plays that were different from England's past style of plays. Before Shakespeare's philosophy of humanism appeared, there were plays on exaggerations of life, death, the devil, and gods.

Shakespeare's works, which were based around historical events and humanism, have been a major influence on subsequent theatre. Not only did Shakespeare create some of the most admired and inspirational plays in Western literature, he also transformed English theatre by expanding expectations about what could be accomplished through characterization, plot, action, language, and genre. His poetic artistry helped raise the status of popular theatre, permitting it to be admired by intellectuals as well as by those seeking pure entertainment (Baldwin).

His works had an impact on people of that time and continually leave an impact today. Theatre was not the only thing to change during this era.

Clothing during the reign of Elizabeth always reflected the social status of the person wearing the clothes. It was easy to pick out a person of nobility during that time. Elaborate clothing was a direct indication of wealth. Instead

of wearing the same thing twice or cleaning the garment to wear it again, many of the upper class and nobility give their older garments to their servants (Baldwin). Some of the clothes were even given to the local theatre groups for quality costumes.

The cost of clothing is depended on the type of fabric and the color. Purple dye is extracted by crushing thousands of tiny sea snails; similarly, crimson dye is obtained by crushing a certain type of ant (Jett). Processed fabrics like velvet or corduroy were quite costly, as are satins and other fine weaves (Jett). Clothing was used to depict characters roles within the play as well. Costumes were very important to show the role of male or female, and the severity of the role being played. The Elizabethan period brought about change in literature, in religion, and even in clothing.

Another ruler during the Renaissance period was James I. The era in which James I reigned was know as the Jacobean era. This era came directly after the Elizabethan age and shows a unique a style of architecture, visual arts, decorative arts, and literature (Apter). Jacobean literature begins with the drama, including some of Shakespeare's greatest, and darkest, plays. The dominant literary figure of James's reign was Ben Jonson (Pogue). He had dramatic works which followed classical models and portrayed his English wit. All of his dramas take a pessimistic view of humanism (Apter).

Novelty of that time was in great demand, and the possibilities of plot and genre were exploited almost to exhaustion. Still, many excellent plays were written and produced throughout this era. Drama continued to flourish until the closing of the theaters at the onset of the English Revolution in 1642

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(Baldwin). Both the Elizabethan and Jacobean Eras had a strong influence on the brilliant play writers like William Shakespeare. A number of Shakespeare's plays have the reputation of being among the greatest in the English language and in Western literature.

He wrote tragedies, histories, comedies and romances, which have been translated into every major language in addition to being continually performed around the world. Shakespeare based many of his plays on the work of other playwrights and reworked earlier stories and historical material (Benson). For plays on historical subjects, Shakespeare relied on two principal texts. Most of the Greek and Roman plays of that time were based on Plutarch's Parallel Lives and the English history plays are obliged to Raphael Holinshed's 1587 Chronicles.

These Chronicles are known to be the source in which Shakespeare used in numerous plays. Shakespeare had a unique way of bring history into his plays, which made them unique, and intriguing, and easily related by the viewers. Shakespeare emerged full fledged during the Elizabethan Era. This was a time in which it was unheard of to be ruled by a woman but she ruled successfully none the less. Elizabeth was the only surviving child of King Henry VIII of England by his second wife, Anne Boleyn, Marchioness of Pembroke (Baldwin).

Henry and Anne Boleyn were married in secrecy sometime between the winter of 1532 and late January of 1533. On September 7 of 1533, Elizabeth was born in the Palace of Placentia in Greenwich (Brimacombe). Upon her birth, Elizabeth was the heir presumptive to the throne of England despite

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having an older half sister, Mary. Because Henry annulled his marriage to first wife, the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon, Mary was not considered to be a legitimate heir (Brimacombe). This is how Elizabeth won the throne in England (Woolley). After Queen Elizabeth's reign was over, King James I took over.

James was the only child of Mary I, Queen of Scots and of her second husband, Lord Darnley (Encyclopedia Britannica). James was a descendant of Henry VII through his great-grandmother Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII (it is quite the family tree!) James' mother was an unconfident ruler, as both she and her husband, being Roman Catholics, faced a rebellion of Protestant noblemen (Landrum). Their marriage was also not based on a solid foundation but Lord Darnley was murdered in early 1567. This was before young James was 1 year old. Mary then took the Scottish throne.

Her reign was very short lived and she was forced to resign because the people were in favor of her son (Landrum). On July 24, 1567, little James was crowned King James VI of Scotland five days later at the tender age of 13 months old. James ruled in a time where ideas flowed freely including the ideas of poets, scholars, and artists. One of those poets, William Shakespeare flourished during both the Elizabethan and Jacobean Eras. One of Shakespeare's influential works of the Elizabethan era was Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar is one of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies written in 1599 (Jett).

It depicts the conspiracy against the Roman dictator, Julius Caesar, his assassination and its aftermath. The play is one of the several Shakespearian

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plays that are based on true events from history. What is really interesting about this tragedy is that Caesar is not even the central character in the actual action of the play. He only appears in three scenes and then dies at the beginning of Act Three (Shakespeare). The main character of the play is Brutus and the central psychological drama is his struggle between the conflicting demands of honor, patriotism, and friendship (VMI's Shakespeare).

The tragedy starts off with a scene of class conflict, the plebeians versus the tribunes. The plebeians of the time are celebrating Caesar's win over the sons of Pompey, one of the former rulers of Rome. The tribunes verbally assault the townspeople for their inconsistency in celebrating the defeat of a man who was once their leader (Shakespeare). After some time passes, Brutus and Cassius meet to talk about how much power Caesar has gained. Cassius then tells Brutus that he is plotting against Caesar and wants Brutus to join it.

Brutus tells him that he cannot commit to anything right away. What is really awesome about this tragedy is the symbolism used. For the Elizabethan era, this was very intriguing and very advanced because throughout the play certain events that took place meant something significant later in the play, also known as symbolism and foreshadowing. A lion was seen in the streets and an owl was screeching during the day, these are so rare that it must mean that something big was going to happen (Shakespeare). After all of this happens, the conspiracy against Caesar continues.

Midway through the play Brutus' wife does a very unusual thing when Brutus would not confide his problems in her. She stabs herself in the leg to prove her strength and ability to keep a secret to her husband (Shakespeare). This really showed that women of the Elizabethan Era were starting to change, becoming more respected, more independent, and stronger. Elizabeth being the Queen during that time was the start of the reformation. Everyone of that time was expected to honor and respect her, both women and men. Men were growing to respect women more and more, just like in Julius Caesar.

As the tragedy continues, the conspirators arrive at the Senate House and Caesar assumes his seat when a man named Metellus kneels before him and petitions to have his banished brother returned to Rome. Caesar naturally refuses, but is shocked when Brutus and then Cassius come forward and plead for his brother too (Shakespeare). When Caesar continually refuses to change the sentence even as all of the conspirators gather around him, the group attacks Caesar and stabs him to death. As awful as that might be, that is not even the end of the tragedy.

It goes on to show that Caesar was a selfless man who gave each of the Romans a part of his inheritance (Shakespeare). From his own good will, the people of the village received money. After this happens, the plebeians now want to get revenge on Brutus and the rest of the conspirators. Their rioting develops into absolute anarchy and Antony decides that he has done his part in creating social upheaval, and now all they can do is wait to see what happens. After all is said and done, tons of people died, including Brutus.

This was his own tragic style, tragic heroes have tragic flaws and those flaws are what bring the hero down to their end. This was all very popular during the Elizabethan Era because it is what the people wanted to see. They thrived on drama, the bloodier the better (Watson). Shakespearian drama was something completely new to these people. With Shakespeare, almost everyone important died. The people of England could not get enough of this because they continued watching more and more of these plays. Another popular play of the Elizabethan Era was Romeo and Juliet.

Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy about the fate of two young ill-fated lovers. Romeo, who is the son of Montague, runs into his cousin Benvolio and tells him that he is in love with Rosaline, a woman who does not return his affections (Shakespeare). Benvolio tells Romeo to get over this woman and find a prettier one even though Romeo stays unhappy. While all of that is happening, Paris, a kinsman of the Prince, wants to marry Juliet. Her father Capulet asks Paris to wait a couple years, since Juliet is only thirteen (Shakespeare).

While Romeo and Benvolio are still discussing Romeo's broken heart, they run into the Capulet servant holding the list of invitations. Benvolio thinks that they should attend so that Romeo can compare Rosaline to the other beautiful women of Verona. Agreeing with Benvolio, Romeo goes to the feast, but only because Rosaline will be there. As the feast begins, Romeo follows Benvolio and friend Mercutio to the house of Capulet. Once inside, Romeo sees Juliet from a distance and it was love at first sight. Shortly after

this, Romeo speaks to Juliet, and the two come to realize they have an attraction to each other.

They even kiss not knowing each other's names. When Romeo comes to find out that Juliet is the daughter of Capulet he becomes distressed because that is his families enemy. As the play continues, Juliet learns that the young man she has just kissed is the son of Montague and is also very upset. Romeo leaps over the orchard wall into the garden because he is unable to leave Juliet behind and out of his mind. From his hiding place, he sees Juliet in a window just above the orchard and hears her speak his name (Shakespeare). After calling out to her, they exchange vows of love.

Romeo then hurries to see his friend and confessor Friar Lawrence to see if he will marry the young lovers. Although hesitant, The Friar agrees because he thinks it might end the long feud between the families (Shakespeare). After the two are married, Tybalt and Benvolio get in a duel and Benvolio dies. Waiting for the night to fall, the nurse tells Juliet that her new husband has just killed Tybalt but that did not even matter to Juliet because her first duty is to her husband (Shakespeare). That night, Romeo slips into Juliet's room and solidify their love.

The happiness, however, was short lived when Juliet finds out that her father wants her to marry Paris in just three days. This makes Juliet more confused than ever so she confides in her nurse (Shakespeare). The nurse tells Juliet to forget about Romeo, which is not an option for Juliet. In complete disarray, Juliet asks the Friar Lawrence what she should do. The Friar concocts a plan to make it look as if she is dead by drinking a poison, then Romeo will come

in secret and take her away (Shakespeare). Finding out the wedding was pushed up a day, Juliet drinks the poison and the Nurse finds her "dead".

The awful thing about this scenario, and would have kept the people of England at the edge of their seats is that Romeo never received the message with the plan on it (Shakespeare). Romeo soon learns of his lovers "death" and goes straight to her side. There, he and Paris fight and Paris also dies. Romeo then kills himself in her grave by drinking poison (Shakespeare). Not being able to kill herself by kissing Romeo's lips of poison, Juliet takes a dagger and kills herself next to Romeo. The two families in Verona see their children lying dead side by side and realize that the feud is not worth their children's demise.

Peace is rightfully restored in Verona (Shakespeare). This play with all the action and gory scenes is one of the worlds most well known and favorite. It could possibly be the most famous of Shakespeare's plays and is said to be the most ideal love story in Western history (Benson). Like most of Shakespeare's plays, the greater part of Romeo and Juliet is written in iambic pentameter which is a certain rhyming scheme commonly written in lines of five iambic feet (Pogue). The play is also noticed for its continuous use of rhymed verse, especially in the sonnet where Romeo and Juliet have a dialogue in the scene where they first meet.

This sonnet portrays Romeo as a blushing palmer who is praying before an image of the Virgin Mary, as many people in early-sixteenth-century England did at shrines such as the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham (Walsingham.com). Juliet was portrayed as beautiful, innocent, and worthy, just like the

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Virgin Mary. Shakespeare used rhyme, extravagant expressions of love, Italian theme, and implausible plot; this made Romeo and Juliet considered to belong to Shakespeare's "lyrical period" (Pogue). This is important because these elements still affect the way people write their plays today.

In the play itself, some argue that Romeo and Juliet's ultimate demise does not come from their own flaws, but from the actions of others or from unintentional accidents. Unlike the great tragedies, Romeo and Juliet is more a tragedy of bad timing and ill fate (Benson). Again, people of the Elizabethan Era thrived on love and death, it is what they wanted to see, which made William Shakespeare extremely popular. The view of life, death, and love was a refreshing change from the constantly dark drama from the Medieval and the Middle Ages, this is why people adored and adhered to the works of Shakespeare.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is another very notable piece of literature during the reign of Elizabeth I. This play is a switch from tragedy to a romantic comedy. It follows the adventures of four young lovers and a group of want-to-be actors in an enchanted forest, and their interactions with the fairies who live in it (Shakespeare Proquest). Most scholars believe that Shakespeare wrote A Midsummer Night's Dream as a light-hearted entertainment to the marriage celebration. For this play, Shakespeare made it original, not using existing plays, narrative poetry, historical chronicles or any other primary source materials (Apter).

The main plot of this comedy is a complex contraption that involves two sets of couples (Helena and Demetrius, and Hermia and Lysander) whose

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romantic journey is complicated by their entrance into the play's fairyland forest where the King and Queen of the Fairies live (Encyclopedia Britannica). " Less subplot than a brilliant satirical device, another set of characters stumbles into the main doings when they go into the same enchanted woods to rehearse a play based on the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe" (Pogue).

Shakespeare really incorporates outside history and stories into his plays, making them seem most realistic and relatable to the people watching. This was important to the Elizabethan Era because the people of this time just went through the plague. In a way, people loved the easy going comedies to lift their spirits but also enjoyed dramas as a way of escaping reality. A Midsummer Night's Dream contains some beautiful lyrical expressions of lighter Shakespearean themes. These themes include those of love, dreams, and the creative imagination itself (Jett).

This was very advanced for the Elizabethan Era because most poets wrote to entertain or scare. The brilliance of Shakespeare went beyond all the norms of previous literature. If A Midsummer Night's Dream can be said to convey a message, it is that " the creative imagination is in tune with the supernatural world and is best used to confer the blessings of Nature upon mankind and marriage" (Benson). This comedy was very popular in the Elizabethan Era, the entire plot is one of whole-hearted comedy in which all ages could enjoy, and it is still enjoyed to this day.

While Shakespeare continued his wonderful works, the reign of Elizabeth I could not continue. Elizabeth I suffered from insomnia in February of 1603. She died on March 24 at Richmond Palace, at age sixty-nine, making her the

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oldest English sovereign to ever to have reigned in her time (Brown).

Elizabeth was buried in Westminster Abbey, right next to her half-sister Mary I (Brown). The will of Henry VIII stated that Elizabeth I was to be succeeded by the children of his younger sister, Mary Tudor, Duchess of Suffolk, rather than by the Scottish descendants of his elder sister, Margaret Tudor (Montrose).

If the will would have been upheld, then Elizabeth would have been succeeded by Lady Anne Stanley (Brown). From what is known, none of the alternative heirs expressed their claims to the throne. James VI was announced King of England as James I just a few hours after Elizabeth's death (Dunnigan). The Jacobean Era brought a new flow of influential works and great plays. One of Shakespeare's darkest and most powerful plays was written in the time. Hamlet is a revenge tragedy that is one of his best-known and most-quoted plays. Judging by the number of productions, Hamlet is one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays.

Lines and phrases from the play have passed into the popular everyday notice, and in fact, the phrase "To be or not to be" of Hamlet's soliloquy in Act III, scene 1 can be identified with it (Pogue). The play is about the revenge of Prince Hamlet, whose father, the late King of Denmark, died unexpectedly while Hamlet was in Wittenberg University. Hamlet's father was supposedly bitten by a very venomous and deadly snake. The King's brother Claudius has been proclaimed king, and cemented his claim to the throne by marrying Hamlet's mother Gertrude, the widowed Queen.

The entire plot is a vicious cycle of murder, revenge, sins, and lie. Not only are Hamlet and Claudius guilty of these things, but many other major characters involved have shady circumstances around them. What is so intriguing about this play is that people of the Elizabethan Era would watch this play about incest and madness in complete suspense until Shakespeare cleverly put a comedic scene in to rest the weary hearts of the audience. Act five is a little interlude before the major climax and all the deaths.

Shakespeare is a brilliant man and knows that the audience gets really involved in the play. Without the interlude, the people of that time would most likely have had a mental breakdown from all of the awful actions before. People living during this time period would involve themselves deep emotionally in these plays that without the breaks, they would experience intense anxiety and not want to watch any more of the play. This is just one reason why Shakespeare is such a brilliant person in literature. Another great works of William Shakespeare was Macbeth.

This play is seen as an archetypal tale of the dangers of the want for power and backstabbing of friends (Miller). Macbeth incorporates the characteristic features of a morality play. It starts off with three witches, the Weird Sisters, deciding that the next meeting they will hold will be with a certain Macbeth (Shakespeare). Macbeth and Banquo wander into an unfertile land; the three Witches approach them with prophecies. The first witch greets Macbeth as “Thane of Glamis”, the second as “Thane of Cawdor”, and the third that he shall “be King hereafter” (Shakespeare).

The Witches also tell Banquo he shall be the father of a line of kings. While they wonder at these prophecies, the witches disappear, and the Thane of Ross, a messenger from the King, arrives and informs Macbeth of his new title, Thane of Cawdor (Shakespeare). The first prophecy has quickly been fulfilled. From there on, Macbeth begins to get excited and desires to become king even more. After Macbeth kills Duncan, Macduff discovers the corpse of Duncan. In a fit of rage, Macbeth also murders the servants before they can even start to claim their innocence (Shakespeare).

Macduff is immediately suspicious of Macbeth so to stay alive, Duncan sends his son Malcolm flees to England, and his brother Donalbain to Ireland. The rightful heirs' flight makes them suspect, and Macbeth assumes the throne as new King of Scotland because of his relation to the dead King (Shakespeare). Despite his success, Macbeth remains uneasy regarding the prophecy that Banquo would be progenitor of kings. Macbeth therefore sees Banquo as someone who jeopardizes his rule. Macbeth invites Banquo to a royal banquet and then, in secret, he gets murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance (Shakespeare).

While the murderers are able to cut Banquo's throat, Fleance escapes without being injured (Shakespeare). At the banquet, Banquo's ghost enters and sits in Macbeth's place. Macbeth is the only person who can see it, and his display of terror show the guiltlessness he feels. After that, Macbeth goes to the Witches to get more prophecies (Shakespeare). The three spirits tell him to "beware Macduff", but also that "none of woman born shall harm

Macbeth" and he will " never vanquish'd be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane Hill shall come against him" (Shakespeare).

Since Macduff is in exile, the sick Macbeth massacres everyone in Macduff's castle, which means he even killed Macduff's wife and children. Shortly after, Macbeth finds out his wife killed herself and that Malcolm's army advances to the kingdom. A battle soon follows where Macduff confronts Macbeth. Macbeth convinces himself that he has no reason to fear Macduff, as he cannot be killed by any man born of woman. Macduff declares that he was born by Caesarean section therefore making him not " of woman born" (Shakespeare). When Macbeth realizes the Witches have been correct, it is simply too late.

Macduff ended up beheading Macbeth offstage which means the witches' prophecies were all accurate. In the final scene of the play, Malcolm is crowned as the rightful King of Scotland, suggesting that the peace of the kingdom is rightfully restored. However, the witches' prophecy concerning Banquo, " Thou shalt get kings", was known to the audience of Shakespeare's time to be true, as James I of England was supposedly a descendant of Banquo (Dunnigan). The play seems designed to celebrate King James's ancestors following the Stuart accession to the throne (Dunnigan).

The unique thing about this play is that Shakespeare writes the play around actual historic figures. It is based on the historical account of King Macbeth of Scotland by the Scottish philosopher Hector Boece (Apter). King James I of England really enjoyed this play especially because it greatly maligned the

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real-life Macbeth, the King of Scots (Rowe). In the late 1500's, Scotland had a witch craze, which made many people believe there were secret wicked practices without actual physical evidence (Miller). James I, who believed the witch hysteria, wrote a book about the hidden world of wicked witches, entitled *Demonology*.

These witch persecutions showed how the era of that time was vulnerable to such foolishness. It is said that James may have really believed that there was a secretive sect devoted to malicious evil (Morrison). On the other hand, he may have just been another cynical politician trying to unify people under a common imaginary enemy with different cultural practices (Morrison).

Whatever beliefs and practices that may really have existed in Macbeth's Scotland, the "witches" of the play are clearly there for their role in Macbeth's fictionalized story (Miller). Macbeth appealed to all the people of the Jacobean era from his actions.

He demonstrated courage, bravery, loyalty and honesty. People desired these traits because they were heroic and god-like. Gods of that time were important to everyday life and beliefs. Macbeth believes in fighting for his King yet is faced with confusion when he gets the prophecies from the witches (Rowe). Macbeth wants the prophecies to be true yet not to be true all at the same time because he is afraid of how the prophecies would come true. The prophecy states that he would hold the Thane of Glamis and Cawdor, and become the king. However Banquo's prophecy was that his son would be king.

This left difficulty to live life normally for Macbeth because he got to thinking. How would he become King and Banquo's son become the heir? This also set the stage to see if Macbeth would make these prophecies come true by disregarding morals or to wait and hope they come true (Rowe). From interpreting the previous context it foreshadows the events to come. What really confuses the matter is that Macbeth's own description of himself and everyone else's description of him contradicts a bad event to come, since he was described as a loyal and honest person especially to his King (Rowe).

These plays, along with all of the others, were important to the people of England. It would not have been as influential as it was if there was not somewhere to watch these plays. All of these wonderful works by Shakespeare could not be delivered to society without The Globe Theatre. The original Globe was an Elizabethan theatre built in December 1598 and January 1599 in South Park, on the south bank of the Thames (Research Book News). Most of Shakespeare's plays were originally staged at the Globe, including Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear and Hamlet.

What was really unique about the Globe theatre is that it had a built section just for the people of classes. At the base of the stage, there was an area called the 'yard' where people (the "groundlings") would stand to watch the performance (The Record). Around the yard were three levels of seating, which were more expensive in price than standing: the first two were called the Twopenny Rooms and the top level was called the Penny Gallery (Johnson). With this structure, people of all ages and classes could come and enjoy the influential plays.

Set in the middle of the playhouse, the playhouse's 44 wide by 26 foot long stage stood five foot off the ground, low enough to command a good view to courtyard watchers yet high enough to discourage the occasional stage jumper (The Record). Two doors allowed the actors from backstage to enter, this being closed in by a central arras or hanging curtain. Above all of this was a balcony famously used in Romeo and Juliet when Romeo hears Juliet cry "Romeo, Romeo wherefore art thou Romeo" (Shakespeare). Similarly, the arras would have been pulled away so it could be used for Hamlet's stabbing of Polonius in Hamlet.

The Theatre was open to all for the modest fee of just one-penny (roughly 10% of a worker's daily wage), you could stand in the yard at the center of the playhouse (Absolute Shakespeare). The stage set at eye level some 5 feet off the ground, the standers got the closest view in the house. For a little more (somewhere around two pennies), a person could pay to sit in one of the playhouse's three circular galleries (Johnson). The gentry, with time on their hands and comfort on the minds, frequently paid more for the comfort and status, the gallery seats chosen.

A Shakespearean play watcher really had to use their imagination; there were no backdrops, no real lighting or horrific acoustics, and there were very few, if any, props (Watson). As such watching a play would involve watching the actors exaggerating their movements for patrons in the galleries and shouting their lines to be heard by everyone in the theatre. Much of the illusion of a play had to occur in the viewer's own imagination (Johnson). The

only real notable exceptions were the colorful use of costumes, heralds, banners, the odd cannon, and the dramatic use of the balcony's and arras.

People of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Era really expanded and opened their minds to these insightful plays because there were no special effects like the ones we have today. Since there was no artificial lighting, plays usually took place in the early afternoon, lasting from 2 pm until roughly 4 or 5 pm (The Record). Economy was also at an all time progression throughout the Renaissance thanks to Shakespeare and the new innovations. As the fortunes of merchants, bankers, and trades people improved, they had more than enough money to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter, thus boosting the economy.

These people started to want larger, more luxurious homes, fine art for these residences, rich clothing to show off their wealth in public, and various exotic foods to eat (Renaissance). These desires of the middle class stimulated the economy. The middle-class population also had leisure time to spend on education and entertainment. In fact, education was essential for many middle-class professions. Bankers and accountants needed to understand arithmetic and mathematics skills (Renaissance). Those trading with other countries needed to know foreign currencies and languages.

Reading was also essential for anyone who needed to understand a contract. In their leisure time, middle-class men and women enjoyed such pastimes as reading for pleasure, learning to play musical instruments, and studying a variety of topics unrelated to their businesses, especially going to the Globe Theatre for a good play. Without Shakespeare's plays in the Elizabethan and

Jacobean Eras, people would not have been able to go and enjoy a play out of their busy, fast paced and long days. The works of William Shakespeare, combined with these new advancements had a great impact on society.

People of all classes were wealthier, happier, and smarter. Education was taken seriously and many people were literate not only with one language but with multiple languages (Pogue). Education was beginning to advance in the Renaissance Era. There were primary schools which were based mainly on parish church provisions, palaces, grammar schools, and private ventures (Pogue). Curriculum in these schools focused mainly on Latin speaking and reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, morals (Apter). There was also secondary schooling that included a variety of auspices.

These schools put an emphasis on Latin and Greek classics (Apter).

Secondary school students were only a fraction of population that was mainly for boys of ruling families and upper social classes (Apter). Girls just started going to Secondary schools after the rein of Queen Elizabeth. Some bright, poor boys advanced socially and economically through schooling, paid for by various benefactors (Apter). Secondary schools developed skills, values, and interpretive perspectives considered appropriate to leadership roles in the governance of society.

It also developed the professions of law, medicine, ministry, or occupations of teaching in Latin grammar schools or colleges (Pogue). The Renaissance was a time where long-standing beliefs were tested, and Europeans became increasingly confident that they were creating a whole new culture. It was a period of intellectual ferment that prepared the ground for the thinkers and

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scientists of the 17th century (Renaissance). One of the Renaissance's ideas was that humankind rules nature contributed to the development of modern science and technology (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Renaissance thinkers used classical precedents to preserve and defend the concepts of republicanism and human freedom. These ideas had a permanent impact on the course of English life. Renaissance political thought may also have been a source for the form of government adopted in the United States. Above all, however, the Renaissance left to the world monuments of artistic beauty that define Western culture as we know it. As technology advanced, economy boomed, and people kept watching plays, it can be said the Renaissance was truly a time of rebirth.

Shakespeare and other influential writers and poets of the time played a huge role in how people lived. People's daily life revolved around this new form of entertainment. Not only did their mind and heart grow along with the play, but people of all classes got to experience what was going on with society. The demand for education was at an all-time high and made people of all classes grow to appreciate the genius works of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare based his plays and works on history.

Without education and the growth of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Eras, there is no telling what life would have been like in the fourteenth and fifteenth century England. Works Cited Apter, Emily. "The Translation Zone: a New Comparative Literature." Princeton Xii (2006): 298. 9 Oct. 2006. This is an amazing source because it compares all different types of literature during the Elizabethan and Jacobean Era. Baldwin, Lacey. "Elizabethan
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my paper and it gives specific examples. " Elizabethan Period. " 12 Aug. 2005. 28 Oct. 2006 . This web site has everything from the Elizabethan food to the Elizabethan Sports. It gives out very useful information and even further links so the viewer can go in depth.

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